

LONDONASSEMBLY

Work of the Police and Crime Committee in 2016-17



June 2017

Who we are

The **Police and Crime Committee** is a cross-party body, chaired by Conservative Assembly Member Steve O'Connell. We examine the work of the Mayor and his Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), to make sure that he is delivering on his promises to Londoners. We also investigate other issues relating to policing and crime in the capital.

Our work involves a range of activities, including meetings with MOPAC, the Met and other stakeholders, site visits, written consultations and roundtable meetings. The committee meets formally, in public, twice a month:

- One of these meetings is used to hold a question and answer (Q&A) session with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Met on current issues.
- The other is used to consider a particular topic or aspect of policing and crime in greater detail, hearing from a range of people and often resulting in a report with recommendations to the Mayor.

We routinely publish the findings and recommendations of our investigations, including the responses we receive from the Mayor. These can be found on our [investigations page](#).

Your Police and Crime Committee members this year were



Steve O'Connell AM

Chairman of the Police and Crime Committee



I became Chairman of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee at a time of great challenge for policing in the capital. Funding for policing is drastically reducing; overall crime is falling, but certain crimes, such as knife crime, gun crime, and serious violence are starting to rise; the number of specialist investigations the Metropolitan Police has to carry out is growing; and broader pressures on public services means that police officers are expected to do more in their day-to-day work.

It is, therefore, more important than ever to ensure that those responsible for keeping us safe are doing so in the best ways possible. To this end, we seek to challenge and influence the decisions and actions being taken by the Mayor through his Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), the Met and the wider criminal justice system, on behalf of Londoners.

This report summarises the work we have done this year. We have challenged slow progress and poor performance in areas such as custody healthcare, and in tackling electoral fraud; we have gathered evidence to influence the Mayor's priorities on issues such as serious violence and violence against women and girls;

and we have engaged with decision makers and Londoners on issues such as tackling knife crime, and safety at major events like Notting Hill Carnival. All of this work has contributed to the development of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, which sets out his priorities for policing and justice over the next four years.

In the year ahead, we will hold the Mayor to account on his commitments and continue to examine the issues that matter to Londoners. We plan to pay particular attention to the crimes that cause serious harm, such as gun and knife crime, and those that can increase the fear of crime in communities, such as antisocial behaviour. We will also look at the needs of specific groups of people in London, such as victims of crime and women who enter the criminal justice system, to ensure these are being met as far as is possible.

Our work benefits from your involvement. I would encourage you, whether as an organisation or an individual, to contribute your views to our investigations and let us know about the policing and crime issues that concern you. While we can't resolve individual cases, your input helps us to identify the issues and ask the right questions of the people that are tasked with keeping London a safe place to live, work, and visit.

I would like to thank everyone that has been involved in supporting our work this year.

Some of our achievements this year

- Our investigation into safety at the Notting Hill Carnival created the impetus for a **major review of crowd management arrangements at Carnival** and of how the Carnival is run.
- Our investigation into electoral fraud in the capital led to the Met undertaking a set of related **investigations into historical allegations of electoral fraud** at the 2014 Tower Hamlets Mayoral Election.
- We continued our work into how people in police custody receive appropriate healthcare: be it for physical injuries, mental health issues or substance abuse. As a result of our work, the Mayor has agreed to a **review of the Met's custody healthcare arrangements**.
- We said that the Mayor needs a clear plan for supporting people with mental health needs that come into contact with the police. The Mayor has made new **commitments on health and criminal justice, including a trial of new Mental Health Investigation Teams**.
- Our reports into Serious Youth Violence, Violence against Women and Girls, and tackling extremism all **contributed to the development of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan**.

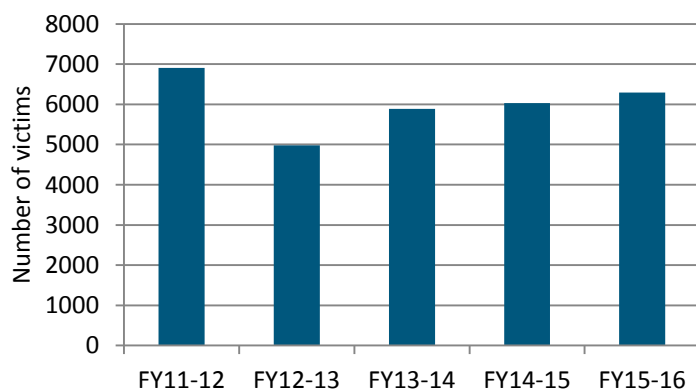
Serious Youth Violence: fear is fuelling violence among London's young people

One of our first major pieces of work was to look at the issue of Serious Youth Violence (SYV), in particular the increase in knife crime among young people.

We examined the impact of SYV in the capital; how organisations work with young people exposed to violence; and the opportunities the Mayor has to help tackle and prevent it.

We found a worrying rise in SYV in London. The number of victims of SYV is up around 20 per cent on four years ago: in 2015-16, that was over 6,000 victims.

The number of victims of serious youth violence has been rising slowly since 2012-13



Source: Metropolitan Police

Around half of all reports of youth violence in London involve a knife. We heard about the belief among some young people that they need to be prepared to defend themselves. This is fuelled, in part, by a perception of the number and severity of weapons on the streets, or by young people seeing or hearing about friends being hurt, and feeling they need to carry a knife for protection.

Our report, [*Serious Youth Violence*](#), published in September 2016, summarised the available data on SYV, and set out what needs to be done to tackle the rise in crime. This includes the need for:

- a better understanding of the drivers of SYV
- an increase in confidence amongst young people to report violence
- more effective and appropriate messages to London's young people about the realities of knife crime

We concluded that if a serious incident occurs, there needs to be more of a concerted effort by the police and other agencies to reassure young people that they are safe, and to tackle the immediate sense of danger.

Our report has helped to support discussions at a local level with young people about serious violence and knife crime. Our findings were also reflected in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan.

Violence against Women and Girls: is the Met equipped to deal with an increase in reporting?

Reports of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in London are rising as victims gain confidence to come forward. This is to be welcomed, but reporting has not translated into increased action against alleged perpetrators.

We looked at the available data and spoke to organisations working with victims, to understand what more can be done to improve the way VAWG is tackled and how victims can be better supported.

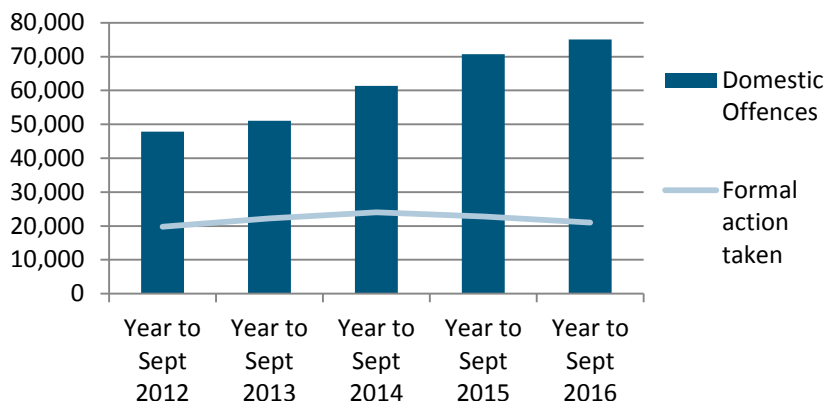
The low level of action against perpetrators suggests that the Met has struggled to keep up with the increase in reports. In the year to September 2016, for example, there were over 70,000 domestic offences reported, but only 28 per cent of these resulted in a charge, caution or other outcome. This compares to 41 per cent of the 48,000 offences reported in the year to September 2012.

Our report, [*Violence Against Women and Girls*](#), published in November 2016, concluded that while the increase in reporting should be seen as a success there is a risk that public confidence will be lost if the resources available cannot meet demand.

We called on the Mayor to provide visible leadership on the issue. To ensure that services meet demand, we recommended, for example, that the number of Independent Sexual Violence Advisers is increased, to help survivors and guide them through the criminal justice process.

The Mayor has committed to a refresh of the current VAWG strategy, and to a campaign to raise awareness of the issues and tackle unacceptable attitudes towards women and girls.

While domestic offences are rising, the total number of people that have had formal action taken against them has remained fairly constant



Source: MOPAC domestic and sexual violence dashboard

Preventing extremism: Do our existing strategies prevent the growth of extremism in London?

Protecting people from extremism is becoming more challenging. With an increase in online radicalisation, for example, it is increasingly hard for public services to identify those who are vulnerable and at risk, and provide them with the necessary support.

This year we called on MOPAC to make more progress in helping public services across the capital effectively tackle extremism.

We heard about the good work being carried out at a local level to tackle extremism. Practitioners across the London boroughs are working together to find ways of delivering high quality interventions despite the support and funding provided by Government being patchy.

We also found, however, that progress elsewhere has been slow. Over a year ago MOPAC, along with partners like the Met and the Home Office, set up the London CONTEST Board to oversee London's counter-terror strategy. We were told that the Board needs to do more, and at a faster pace, to help improve information sharing, transparency and interventions for people at risk.

We [wrote to MOPAC](#) recommending that it do more to make sure that all parts of London have the tools they need to support vulnerable individuals, by working with the Home Office to commission projects on a pan-London basis, rather than in specific local authority areas. We also stressed the need for the Mayor to commit to regular, open and honest communication with the public about what is happening in London to tackle extremism.

The report contributed to the development of the Mayor's Draft Police and Crime Plan, with the findings and recommendations being directly reflected in the Plan.

Notting Hill Carnival: time to stop dancing around the issue of public safety

Notting Hill Carnival hits the headlines every year, but unfortunately often for the wrong reasons. Following reports that arrests at Notting Hill Carnival had reached record levels, we carried out an urgent piece of work looking at the existing policing and security arrangements, and to identify any improvements that can be made to keep people safe.

What we found in terms of crime was worrying. While the number of crimes at Carnival has risen over recent years, what is most significant is the rise in serious and violent incidents. Last year, the Met Police recorded 151 offences of violence against the person at Carnival: an 86 per cent increase on 2010.

One of the most obvious risks for Carnival is overcrowding, which makes keeping people safe from harm difficult. This is made all the more acute because of the number of people going to Carnival and its street-based location. Public safety at Carnival is a growing problem.

Putting these two issues together, we concluded in our report, [*Notting Hill Carnival: safer and better*](#), that there is a clear and present risk to people's safety and the reputation of Notting Hill Carnival. We said that if

Carnival is to thrive, those who know it best need to look at how the situation can be improved. We also highlighted our concern about the ability of the London Notting Hill Carnival Enterprise Trust Ltd—the organisers of Carnival—to deliver the event effectively.

We asked the Mayor to do two things: to help the Carnival Trust to become a stronger, more formal, organising body; and to work with them to look at what changes might improve the safety and quality of Carnival. We stressed that the Mayor and Carnival organisers should engage Londoners on any proposals for the future of Carnival.



Members of the Police and Crime Committee visited Carnival 2016

The report received a high level of public attention and Carnival organisers admitted that public safety is an issue that needs to be addressed. The investigation created the impetus for MOPAC to commission a major review of crowd management arrangements at Carnival and of how the Carnival is run, with changes expected this year.

Electoral Fraud: fraud identified, but why no criminal prosecutions?

In response to public concern, we held an urgent investigation to clarify the involvement of the Met and MOPAC in tackling allegations of electoral fraud in London. We paid



particular attention to the 2014 Tower Hamlets Mayoral Election, following an Election Court Judgement that found that corrupt practices had taken place.

We explored how allegations of electoral fraud are tackled and the types and volume of accusations in London in recent years. The Met told us about the process for an investigation and the difficulties of gathering sufficient evidence necessary to seek the prosecution of offenders.

Following the discussion we [wrote to MOPAC](#) to request further investigation into the work carried out by the Met in relation to the Tower Hamlets Mayoral Election.

In a significant move, the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime agreed to our recommendation and wrote to Her

Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to request an independent investigation.

In addition, our work prompted the Met to launch its own investigation, Operation Lynemouth, to look at whether there is sufficient evidence to mount criminal prosecutions related to the 2014 Tower Hamlets Mayoral Election.

Visits and other meetings

- We examined the Met's arrangements for healthcare in custody with a visit to Brixton Custody Suite. After seeing the facilities, we heard from staff about the challenges faced in respect of care: including staffing; a shortage of drug and alcohol workers; and difficulties in finding secure accommodation. The visit supported the committee's questioning of MOPAC and the Met at its regular Q&A meetings, and, following the committee's work, the Mayor committed in the Police and Crime Plan to a review of custody healthcare arrangements.



Committee members heard from staff at Brixton Custody Suite about the healthcare provided for detainees

- Following high profile incidents of violence at football matches at the London Stadium, we visited the Stadium to assure ourselves that the security procedures both in and around the Stadium were effective. We met with key personnel, toured the security facilities and heard about the improvements being made to the security plans.

Our work for 2017-18

In the coming year, we will hold the Mayor to account for his commitments in the Police and Crime Plan and continue to examine the issues that matter to Londoners.

We will hold investigations into topics such as **antisocial behaviour, gun crime, and women in the criminal justice system.**

We will also continue our regular examination of MOPAC and the Met through our monthly Q&A meetings, looking at topics such as **counter-terrorism, knife crime, serious violence, hate crime and neighbourhood policing.**

How can I get involved in the committee's work?

- Contribute to our investigations. Details on our current work can be found on the [Police and Crime Committee webpage](#).
- Get in touch with us via policeandcrimecommittee@london.gov.uk.
- Raise issues of concern with [Assembly Members directly](#).
- Tweet us [@LondonAssembly](#) and follow Committee Twitter conversations with #AssemblyPolice. 
- Come to a committee meeting at City Hall – you are welcome to come and [observe our debates](#).
- [Watch our meetings live](#) from your computer, mobile or tablet.



Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
More London
London SE1 2AA
Enquiries 020 7983 4100
Minicom 020 7983 4458
www.london.gov.uk