

Response to the Mayor's Draft Police and Crime Plan (2022-25)

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

I am writing on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group on the London Assembly. I very much welcome the four key areas of focus in this draft plan and believe that these are the right strategic priorities for policing and crime in London. I am also pleased that, as well as focussing on ensuring the safety of Londoners, this plan recognises the importance of the perception of safety and the importance of ensuring all Londoners, especially women and those from marginalised communities, feel safe.

As always, I welcome that this consultation is open to all Londoners and believe this is incredibly important, as Londoners should be able to comment and have a say on the development and focus of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. I am, however, **concerned that this draft plan does not outline in more detail your priorities for the Metropolitan Police Service (Met) and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), but instead provides what I would consider very high-level strategic priorities backed up with little detail.**

As a member of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, I expect to be scrutinising you, MOPAC and the Met against this plan and it is important that sufficient detail is available for me to be able to do this effectively. Therefore, I would strongly encourage you to provide a broad strategy, which covers key ambitions that is accessible and clear for all, coupled with a more detailed action plan/strategy, which will provide clear direction to the police and give key stakeholders something to monitor, measure and scrutinise you, MOPAC and the Met against. Although this would be my preferred approach for the initial plan, for consistency and ease, my comments below are based on your single plan.

I am also concerned with the draft plan's overreliance on data from MOPAC's public attitude surveys to inform progress against delivery. I am concerned for two reasons. Whilst I understand targets cannot and should not be set for everything outlined, I have referenced data from the MOPAC public attitude surveys over recent years in both the Police and Crime Committee and other sessions of the London Assembly, particularly in relation to the drastic fall in confidence in the police we have seen since 2017¹, and it is clear there is suitable confusion between the Met and the others over the presentation of these figures on the London Data Store².

¹ London Datastore, Community Safety Page, [London Datastore – Greater London Authority](#)

² London Datastore, Public Perceptions of the Police Data, [Public Perceptions of the Police - London Datastore](#)

An exchange in March 2021 over levels of public confidence in the police between Assembly Members and the Met's Deputy Commissioner³ shows the need for further clarity in presentation of the results of MOPAC's Public Attitude Surveys, especially if they are to be relied on so heavily. In a further exchange between the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and I in November 2020⁴ on the falling number of Londoners who knew how to contact their ward officer, when mentioning the data from the Public Attitude Surveys, I was told this could not be relied upon for this issue as there had been a change in the wording of a question in the MOPAC Public Attitude Survey.

I think it is essential that for the duration of the upcoming Police and Crime Plan, to ensure effective monitoring and consistent data, **more work needs to be done to ensure MOPAC is asking the right questions in their public attitude surveys and asking them consistently without wording changes.**

Youth Violence and the Violence Reduction Unit

I very much welcome the public health approach to tackling violence in London and it is something I have long supported. The focus on violence prevention in this plan is welcome and, unlike other areas of this plan, I also think that the metrics being used to measure the success of violence prevention are relatively robust.

I am a passionate supporter of the principle of a violence reduction unit; however, **I have some serious concerns around the transparency of London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)**, which are not addressed in this plan.

Whilst I have no doubt that much of the VRU's work is having an impact, **the absence of a robust and transparent performance framework for the unit, which was set-up over two and a half years ago, is simply unacceptable. It is essential that a performance framework is set out as soon as possible so that the impact of the various interventions can be measured**, and funding can be allocated to those interventions best placed to reduce violence across London. Without such a framework I fail to understand how money can be effectively allocated and given the financial pressures and limited resources available, I am surprised a framework has not already been set out.

It is also worth noting that within projects the VRU funds there will often be several interventions. I understand and appreciate that the VRU monitors and records the success and impact of programmes, but **it is essential that more detailed analysis is undertaken on the impacts of the specific interventions included within these programmes which will allow organisations to develop and mould the programmes they fund to best support violence prevention across the capital based on what works.** It is not clear that this sort of detailed analysis is going to take place, yet for the VRU to be as impactful as possible, this is essential.

³ 17 March 2021, [London Assembly Police and Crime Committee Q&A Session](#)

⁴ 10 November 2020, [London Assembly Police and Crime Committee Q&A Session](#)

It is also clear that more targeted and impactful work is needed by the VRU, with teenage homicides in London reaching 30 in 2021, a record high for this century.⁵ I am confident that with the right monitoring of programmes supported by the VRU, the money and focus can be directed to those projects and interventions which are making the most difference, which is essential if we are to begin effectively tackling youth violence, particularly knife crime.

Violence Against Women and Girls

The actions outlined to make London a city in which women and girls feel safer are welcome and I am pleased to see many of the measures outlined, particularly a commitment to a communications campaign on London's public transport network around sexual harassment and a continued commitment to lobby for a change in the law to make misogyny a hate crime. However, **most of the measures outlined to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) are unnecessarily vague. It is also notable that, even within the 'Increasing Confidence and Trust' section of the draft plan, there are no specific measurable actions regarding how MOPAC and the Met are going to work to gain the trust of women and girls in London again, which has been so damaged in recent months.**

It is all well and good outlining actions MOPAC plans to take to try and prevent and tackle VAWG, but if women cannot trust the police, many of these interventions will be largely ineffective or even potentially counter-productive in some cases. **Ensuring women can trust and have confidence in the police must be the first and most important step for MOPAC and the Met and we need clear, measurable objectives towards achieving this.** I have emphasised similar comments in my recent response to the Met's VAWG Action Plan, which I have attached to this response as an appendix (Appendix A).

This draft plan simply includes vague ambitions and aims relating to VAWG which are not backed up by clear and measurable targets. For example, one of the "specific measures" for tackling VAWG in the Draft Plan reads: "Challenging misogynistic attitudes and promoting gender equality."⁶ There is no meaningful detail on how this will be achieved, or a breakdown of interventions or measures planned. Given the importance of this area of work for MOPAC and the Met we need much more detail on how each of the ambitions outlined will be achieved.

Another area that needs to be given consideration in this plan is **ensuring practitioners, particularly those involved with survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, are aware and trained in cultural sensitivities.** Given both MOPAC's role in commissioning support services and the nature of London's diverse communities, ensuring those supporting and delivering services to women and girls in London are aware of cultural sensitivities is essential. For example, I have heard first-hand from several Black women that support services often fail to understand or appreciate cultural sensitivities, which can be hugely damaging, and I believe work needs to be done in this area and more resource to specific services for these communities.

⁵ 31 December 2021, [London teen homicides: Boy's stabbing is record 30th killing - BBC News](#)

⁶ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

I would also like to see a commitment to ensuring that all services MOPAC funds are trained and aware of cultural sensitivities and **an explicit commitment in the plan for you and MOPAC to lobby for 'Valerie's Law', which would mandate training in all agencies supporting Black survivors of domestic violence to ensure support services understand and respect the cultural needs of Black Londoners affected by domestic violence.** I asked you a written mayoral question back in October 2021 on whether you supported the 'Valerie's Law' campaign⁷, however, this question remains unanswered.

I think it is important that MOPAC communicates much more with organisations working hard to support and advocate on behalf of Black and minority ethnic women and girls in London impacted by gender-based violence. These include organisations such as Sistah Space and the Southall Black Sisters, which do excellent work and will be able to provide real expertise to help better inform and strengthen this plan.

More widely, when you publish your VAWG Action Plan soon, **I would like to see you appoint a Women's Board made up of survivors and key women's stakeholder groups, to hold you and MOPAC to account on your strategy and the measures relating to VAWG outlined in the final Police and Crime Plan.** The Board would also be a good forum to develop and advise you on new policies in relation to women's safety going forward.

Hate Crime

The small section on tackling hate crime is, once again, an area left wanting in terms of detail. Hate crime continues to have a huge and damaging impact on many communities in London and **we need much more detail on how you plan to approach and tackle hate crime in our city** – something this draft plan simply does not provide in any meaningful way.

Every single category of hate crime has increased in London over the last year.⁸ This is deeply concerning. I would like to see much **more detail on how you plan to engage with and support those communities experiencing a real spike in hate crime against them, including London's Jewish community, disabled and transgender Londoners.**

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, almost two years ago, we have also seen a real spike in hate crime against Chinese, East and South East Asian (CESEA) Londoners⁹ and it would be useful to understand exactly **how MOPAC plans to engage with those from CESEA communities and understand their concerns, as well as whether there are plans to collect specific data on crimes against those in the CESEA community in London** to inform work and to understand the scale of the issue better in our city.

⁷ 14 October 2021, Written Mayoral Question, [Support for 'Valerie's Law' | Mayor's Question Time \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

⁸ 3 December 2021, MOPAC report to Police and Crime Committee

⁹ 7 October 2021, [Covid racism fuels 80% rise in hate crimes against east and south east Asians in London | ITV News London](#)

In fact, there is no mention at all of MOPAC's role publishing data on hate crime in London, which needs to be improved. One issue I have continued to flag is that, despite the Met recording data on hate crimes against those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, MOPAC still does not include this data on the publicly available Hate Crime Dashboard¹⁰. The absence of this data allows those impacted by hate crime from these communities to, quite rightly, feel ignored and stunts a real conversation about how we can tackle hate crime towards them. **We know that there is a real issue with hate and intolerance towards those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and it is essential that MOPAC expedites work to present this data on the Hate Crime Dashboard.**

I would also like to see much more detail on how MOPAC will be encouraging and coordinating **more collaboration between the Met, British Transport Police (BTP) and the City of London Police when it comes to tackling hate crime across London**, particularly on the public transport network.

Trust and Confidence in the Police

This draft plan sets out your “determination to increase trust and confidence in policing”¹¹ yet this reads in a similar way to the ambition in your 2017-21 Police and Crime Plan, which was that you wanted “trust and confidence in the MPS to increase, particularly in those communities that have consistently lower levels of confidence.”¹² **Given MOPAC's own data shows confidence in the police has fallen consistently over the last four years from 69% in June 2017 to just 52% as of September 2021¹³ I do not think this draft plan sets out enough detail on how you plan to change your approach to deal with what is a crisis of confidence in the Met.**

Of course, recent events including the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer, the findings of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel Report¹⁴ and the conclusion of the inquest into the Port murders have had an impact on confidence in the police from many Londoners, but particularly those from minority ethnic communities, the LGBTQ+ community and women. I do worry though that the draft plan seems to suggest these recent high-profile cases are the reason we have seen a fall in confidence in the police, when in fact confidence in the Met has been steadily falling since June 2017 and it is something you have completely failed to get a grip on as Mayor.

I understand that the outcome of Baroness Louise Casey's review into standards and culture in the Met will be an important marker in setting clear actions for improvement and that the inquiries surrounding the Sarah Everard case and the issues raised by the conviction of Wayne Couzens will also undoubtedly identify improvements to practices in the Met. However, **it is essential that**

¹⁰ [Hate crime or special crime dashboard | Metropolitan Police](#)

¹¹ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

¹² [mopac_police_and_crime_plan_2017-2021.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

¹³ London Datastore, Community Safety Page, [London Datastore – Greater London Authority](#)

¹⁴ Daniel Morgan Independent Panel Report, [Home - Daniel Morgan Independent Panel](#)[Daniel Morgan Independent Panel](#)

this plan acknowledges the long-term downward trend in police confidence since 2017 and that more analysis is undertaken on why this is to inform the work that needs to be done.

I have been disappointed that, in the case of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel Report, the Met has still not published a full and comprehensive response to the suite of recommendations Made in June 2021, many of which were directly relating to the Met and to issues of culture, vetting and conduct. I understand the Met has set-up Operation Drayfurn to work on a response to the recommendations, but this work needs to be expedited given its importance and changes and improvements should already be being made. Given the crisis in confidence facing the Met it is worrying that a full seven months after the publication of this report, no meaningful changes have been implemented. As Mayor, your Police and Crime Plan needs to set out how you will fast-track this work.

Community Policing

I welcome many of the planned actions and priorities in the 'Creating Safer, More Confident Communities' section of the draft plan including a better focus on online crime, financial crime and crucially, improving the investigating skills in the Met and the number of crimes that see offenders brought to justice. Yet, there is little to no detail on exactly how you will approach undertaking this work. Once again, I think this plan needs to include much more detail on exactly how these priorities will be achieved so that you can be held to account and properly measured against progress.

Safer Neighbourhood Boards (SNBs) are an essential community engagement mechanism and an important opportunity for the police to be held to account locally. However, **despite their important role it is striking and concerning to me that SNBs are not mentioned directly at all in this draft plan.** This is surprising given the particular issues SNBs have faced in the last three years, including repeated serious delays in accessing funding from MOPAC, which has caused delays in many projects that funding had been promised to across London.

The draft plan highlights your commitment to overhaul community monitoring structures – a commitment that I very much welcome, in the hope that improvements can be made in the way that MOPAC engages with and supports such community monitoring structures too.

I understand that a tender has been put out to investigate community engagement, which will report in July 2022. I am concerned at the continued uncertainty for SNBs and would also expect this plan to outline how MOPAC will support community monitoring groups, such as SNBs, before July.

I also welcome a local focus on the most prevalent types of crime in different localities across London, however it is essential that this is done at a much more local level than simply BCU level. Even within boroughs there are vast differences between the types of crimes most prevalent, depending on the area – with BCUs, which cover several boroughs, these differences are even starker.

I would also like to touch on ongoing concerns that have been raised around the changes to the Borough Command Units (BCU), which were introduced in 2018. **The much larger BCUs have been criticised by many and it is hard to see how any borough commander can have effective oversight over such vast areas.** At the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee session on 1 December, where your draft plan was discussed, Tayo Prince, the Chair of the London Communities Policing Partnership set out clear concerns over the effectiveness of the current BCU model and its impact on public confidence.¹⁵

I believe now would be a good time to commit to reviewing the current BCU model to see if it has had a positive or negative impact on confidence in the Met and where and how improvements could be made. A commitment to this piece of work should be included in the final plan.

I would also like to highlight the importance of clarity over the future of the police estate, particularly police stations and front counters, which continue to be reduced under your mayoralty. There is just one brief mention of the Met's Estate Strategy in the draft plan, which states –

*The Mayor will continue to support the ambition of the MPS Estate Strategy to concentrate on fewer – but better – buildings. This approach will provide revenue savings to help protect the front line and will release capital for reinvestment in technology and equipment to help modernise policing. There will continue to be one 24/7 front counter in every London borough. Neighbourhood teams will be based in buildings close to the communities they police.*¹⁶

I am disappointed that there is still no timescale for when the latest estates strategy will be published. At one point I was assured by the Deputy Mayor it would be published following the police funding settlement almost a year ago in February 2021¹⁷ and yet almost a full year later the public still do not have clarity on the future of community police stations and front counters across London.

If one of the four key tenets of this plan is “increasing trust and confidence”¹⁸ **it is essential that Londoners have clarity on the future of their local police stations and front counters.** Of course, I welcome the advancements made to provide a digital front counter, mentioned in this plan, but we know that many elderly people and those who are the victims of certain crimes may not be able to access such an online facility.

The final plan needs to outline when the Met's final Estate Strategy will be published and should include a commitment to keep all remaining front counters in London open at the very least. These include key local police stations like Wimbledon, where the original decision to close the station was challenged at judicial review and deemed unlawful. Communities need long-term certainty over the future of the remaining police stations and front counters across London.

¹⁵ 1 December 2021, [Police and Crime Committee Session on the Mayor's Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021 - 25](#)

¹⁶ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

¹⁷ 11 December 2020, [\(Public Pack\)Minutes - Appendix 1 - Transcript Q&A Minutes Supplement for London Assembly \(Plenary\), 11/12/2020 15:00](#)

¹⁸ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

Police Tactics and Disproportionality

In your opening statement you say you will continue “supporting the continued use of intelligence-led stop and search.”¹⁹ However, I am concerned by this statement. **You have repeatedly claimed over the last five years that you only support intelligence-led stop and search in London, including in your Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021²⁰ and in your ‘Action Plan - Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing’²¹ – but this goes against the reality of what we have been seeing.**

The latest data from the Met’s own Stop and Search Dashboard shows that in 2021, despite only making up around 13% of the population, Black Londoners accounted for 36.2% of the stop and searches undertaken.²² Despite launching your ‘Action Plan – Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing’ originally back in November 2020, it is clear there is much more that needs to be done to reduce the high levels of disproportionality in stop and search in particular.

As such, **I would have expected much more ambitious approach to reforming stop and search practices in the capital, but the plan includes little detail other than “stricter oversight and scrutiny of the ‘smell of cannabis’ used as sole grounds for stop and search.”²³**

Although I welcome the reduction in the use of Section 60 orders in London in recent months, during periods of your last mayoral term we saw record levels of Section 60 use in London²⁴, something which has undoubtedly contributed to the steady fall in confidence in the police since 2017, which I referenced earlier.

This plan needs to be much bolder and there must be a clear commitment to ending suspicionless stop and search.

Counter-Terrorism

I am pleased that you have, once again, tasked Lord Harris with reviewing London’s preparedness to deal with future terror attacks and I think that this is essential given since his last review in October 2016 we have seen no less than eight terror incidents and attacks in London.

¹⁹ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁰ [mopac police and crime plan 2017-2021.pdf \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

²¹ [Action Plan - Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

²² [Stop and search dashboard | Metropolitan Police](#)

²³ 4 June 2019, [Stop and searches without suspicion soar 425% in London police crackdown | The Independent | The Independent](#)

²⁴ 27 July 2020, [Met police increased use of section 60 stop and search during lockdown | Metropolitan police | The Guardian](#)

I am, however, **disappointed that the section on preventing terrorism in the Draft Plan amounts to just 376 words. Given the prevalence of terror attacks in London since the publication of your last police and crime plan, I expected more detail on how you plan to approach the issue of terror and preventing terror in our city.** I appreciate the sensitivities in this area of policing, but there are some clear areas that have simply been left out of this draft plan altogether.

I am particularly **concerned over the lack of detailed information on how you plan to approach and tackle the growing and constantly evolving terror and radicalisation threat posed online.** In the last five years the risks associated with social media have changed, with one key risk being its use as a radicalisation tool more and more, particularly as we have seen many young Londoners closed away at home and in their bedrooms over the last 20 months due to COVID-19. Yet, despite all this, Prevent referrals have fallen during much of this period²⁵, which signals something is not working.

You need to take a lead in coordinating work between the Met, local authorities, social media companies and others to help try and further tackle this radicalisation and encourage reporting from family and friends who are concerned about loved ones, particularly young Londoners.

Furthermore, when it comes to Prevent, I am a strong proponent of making it more open and transparent with consistent and independent oversight, appreciating that there are some elements which must remain confidential. **I also agree with organisations such as the JAN Trust which wants to see Prevent funding devolved to MOPAC. Devolving Prevent funding will ensure money is targeted to the most appropriate projects as regional and local government has a much better understanding of how money can best be used. I would like to see a commitment to lobby for this,** particularly before the government-commissioned William Shawcross review into Prevent reports, which is expected in February 2022.

Given four of the awful terrorist attacks we have seen in London since the last police and crime plan was published relied heavily on vehicles, including the attack in Westminster in 2017 and the subsequent attack at London Bridge, it is essential that you work with boroughs and optimise your position at TfL to look at the benefits of further pedestrianisation in certain key areas of London. **The security benefits of pedestrianisation in locations such as Parliament Square, or at least part pedestrianisation like what we see in Trafalgar Square, are obvious.**

The Met Commissioner herself identified that cars and vans had become the “weapon of choice”²⁶ for terrorists in recent years and touted the possibility of pedestrianising Parliament Square back in 2018.

Furthermore, given the significant expansion of rental transport options in London since the last plan was published in 2017, I am surprised there is no mention of joint working between the Met, TfL, boroughs and the British Transport Police (BTP) in this area, which is concerning given the increased use of vehicle-related terror incidents.

²⁵ November 18 2021, [Prevent referrals plummet as experts warn people at risk of radicalisation may have slipped the net \(inews.co.uk\)](https://www.inews.co.uk/news/prevent-referrals-plummet-as-experts-warn-people-at-risk-of-radicalisation-may-have-slipped-the-net/)

²⁶ [Westminster could become 'pedestrianised security zone' to prevent vehicle terror attacks | London Evening Standard | Evening Standard](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/westminster-could-become-pedestrianised-security-zone-to-prevent-vehicle-terror-attacks-london-evening-standard-evening-standard-a3848411.html)

It is essential that you are coordinating joint work to manage the threat from rental transport, whether car clubs, private hire vehicles/taxis, e-scooters or rental bikes. There needs to be a commitment on such work in this plan.

Child Safeguarding

The commitment by MOPAC to adopt a “child first approach”²⁷ to all their work with children and young people in London is a positive one. I also welcome the commitment in the draft plan for MOPAC to continue to monitor the Met’s progress against the recommendations in the latest Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire Services (HMICFRS) report into child safeguarding in the Met²⁸ from September 2021, which showed improvements, but significant areas that are still of concern.

However, **MOPAC needs to do more than simply continue oversight of improvements to child safeguarding practices in the Met, as has been stated in the draft plan. During the 2021 inspection HMICFRS audited 170 child protection cases of which a staggering 68% were graded as either requiring improvement or inadequate²⁹. After five years and four HMICFRS child safeguarding inspections into the Met this is simply not good enough.**

One of the most concerning elements of HMICFRS’s September 2021 review into child safeguarding in the Met was that they identified significant weaknesses in online investigations. This is particularly worrying given much of HMICFRS’s inspection work took place in January and February of last year when we were in a lockdown and many children were at heightened risk online.

I want to see much more detail on the specific steps MOPAC will be taking to step-up the monitoring of child safeguarding in the Met given the force’s consistent failings.

Online Crime and Digital Capabilities

In her opening statement the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime asserts that:

“It is vital that we, the MPS and all services are now focused on online crime and online harm as business as usual.”³⁰

²⁷ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁸ 1 September 2021, [National Child Protection Inspection – assessment of progress: Metropolitan Police Service 11 January–12 February 2021 \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#)

²⁹ [Metropolitan Police Service – National child protection inspection assessment of progress - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁰ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

Yet, despite this claim the draft plan includes very little solid detail on exactly how this will occur, which is crucial to understand. There is only some limited, vague information on how £187 million investment in digital capabilities will be spent, which includes:

“improvements in the gathering and analysis of evidence from digital devices, delivery of a new digital interviewing capability; and further development of the MPS website – providing a 24/7 ‘digital front counter’ for Londoners.”³¹

I want to see much more information on how MOPAC will be working with the Met to improve the digital forensics functions, which have been a serious and ongoing issue in the Met for several years now. In November 2021 the Met also announced that they were investing £11 million in enhancing digital forensic capabilities over the next three years³². Whilst this is welcome news, there are no timescales for delivery, which is so important given the issues delays returning digital devices are having for victims across London, both in terms of their mental health and wellbeing and causing delays in seeking justice.

Progress on resolving issues around digital forensics has not been fast enough and a more detailed outline of how the planned investment will be used to improve this, and timescales for delivery, are important.

Another glaring omission is any mention of training for officers to improve and develop digital skills. This is completely absent from the draft plan but is incredibly important in an increasingly digital world, with online and digital crime continuing to advance. When the Police and Crime Committee held a session with key stakeholders on this plan on 1 December we heard from HMICFRS Inspector, Matt Parr CB, that when it came to the draft plan

“If I made the most wounding charge, it is that it feels like a Plan written ten or 15 years ago rather than something that reflects the society and the challenges that we have got now.”³³

I believe the challenges around digital investigation training and the way in which the Met process and handle digital forensic evidence need to be urgently prioritised if the Met is to effectively police London in 2021 and beyond. **There needs to be a much more robust and detailed strategy to address digital capabilities and training as part of the final plan.**

I am also disappointed that there has been no mention of a potential expansion of the technology used in the recent trial of the iREPORTit app in London, which allowed reporting of public concerns over potential terrorist activities, into other areas of policing. We know the trial was a huge success, with referrals of online terrorist content to the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) increasing by 15% and with the general quality of reports being of a higher standard through the app.³⁴

³¹ [Police and Crime Plan 2021-25 | GLA \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

³² [The Met is investing £11 million in digital forensics | Metropolitan Police](#)

³³ 1 December 2021, [Police and Crime Committee Session on the Mayor's Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021 - 25](#)

³⁴ 18 October 2021, Written Mayoral Answer - [Maximising the iREPORTit App Technology | Mayor's Question Time \(london.gov.uk\)](#)

In December 2021, in answer to a written mayoral question from me on this issue you stated:

*"I would like other areas of policing to consider the use of the technology that underpins the iREPORTit app and MOPAC have contacted other relevant crime areas of the MPS (including Hate Crime, CSE and Fraud) asking them to consider its use in their areas."*³⁵

Given your comments **I would hope the final version will include more detail on work MOPAC will undertake to expand the use of the technology used in the iREPORTit app, particularly in the areas of hate crime and child safeguarding issues and fraud.**

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

Leader of the Liberal Democrat London Assembly Group

³⁵ 20 December 2021, Written Mayoral Answer - [Expansion of iREPORTit App Technology | Mayor's Question Time \(london.gov.uk\)](#)