

Committee(s): Police Authority Board	Dated: October 2023
Subject: Chair's Update	Public
Report of: James Thomson	For discussion

Middle East Conflict

I am saddened by the tragic events in Israel. The conflict in the region has resulted in community tensions and protests in London principally outside the City of London. The City Police has increased visible policing and has been undertaking work to reassure affected communities. Richard Riley has been coordinating between the Corporation and City Police with regards to recent events and has been invited onto the City Police Gold Group. There will be a longer update at the Board.

Economic Crime Briefing

I am pleased to be opening the annual Economic Crime Briefing hosted by the City Police on 19 October. This brings together strategic economic crime leads from each force and region to hear the latest policy updates, share learning and understand the operational forward look.

This event this year is significant as the City Police launches its economic crime and fraud strategy to implement the policing objectives from the Government's Economic Crime Plan 2 and Fraud Strategy, both published earlier this year. This is also the first year that Police and Crime Commissioners have been invited to the event, to help build the linkages for local accountability and raise fraud up the local political agenda. This is particularly relevant in light of the increased focus on fraud in the Government's revisions to the Strategic Policing Requirement, which now places greater emphasis on fraud capabilities that local forces are required to have.

Speakers at the event include Anthony Browne MP (the Prime Minister's Anti-Fraud Champion) and Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing in London and APCC joint lead for victims).

This year it has been opened to PCCs and we are expecting some 10 to 12 PCCs to attend.

Independent Review into Disclosure Regime and Fraud Offences

I am pleased to note that on 16 October the Government announced the independent review into the disclosure regime and fraud offences to be led by Jonthan Fisher KC. Members will recall that we hosted a disclosure roundtable that resulted in a letter from myself, City Police, HMRC, CPS, FCA, SFO and others to Ministers advocating for and supporting a review in this area together with some specific ideas of focus.

Party conference contacts

The Deputy Chair and I attended a number of events at the recent party conferences, building links with relevant individuals, promoting the City and the work of the City of London Police, and emphasising the point that the City (and UK)'s prosperity and security are mutually reinforcing. I spoke on a panel hosted by Lloyds Bank at the Conservative Conference. These contacts are feeding into planning for a number of direct meetings back in the City over the coming weeks with Government Ministers and their Shadow counterparts.

Business crime week

The National Business Crime Centre, hosted by the City Police, has coordinated efforts across the country to promote National Safer Business Action Week (16 – 22 October). The campaign involves Business Reductions Partnerships, Business Improvement Districts and the private security industry working with local police forces to deliver a focussed operation with joint patrols, the targeted intervention of offenders and a range of crime prevention activity including raising awareness of the local issues with the general public. The Deputy Chair and I are scheduled to join a City Police patrol around the City during the week.

Safer City Partnership

I am pleased to see that the City's Safer City Partnership (SCP) Strategy Board has agreed to fund a range of initiatives to help prevent and reduce crime in the City, using Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) monies. They include the reintroduction of a taxi marshalling scheme, support to projects being undertaken under the guise of the Safer Business Network including work to prevent violence against women and girls, and support to the City Police's Op LEWIS, a dedicated operation to tackle users of cycles, e-scooters and e-bikes who commit road traffic offences and anti-social behaviour in the City. I look forward to seeing the results of these initiatives, and hope that the SCP will make further progress in using available POCA funding to support crime prevention and reduction projects.

Members of the recently re-established Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee received a training session on 5 October about the role of scrutiny in relation to Community Safety Partnerships, with practical pointers about making such scrutiny effective and efficient. The session was well received.

Serious Violence Duty strategy and victims strategy

The Police Authority Team continues to develop both these strategies in conjunction with the City Police and partners. A comprehensive 'needs assessment' analysis of serious violence in the City has now been produced in draft and is being finalised with partners; a draft strategy is also soon to be shared for finalisation. An initial draft victims strategy is with the City Police for input.

The plan is for both strategies to be published early in the New Year, following consideration by PAB Members.

Police Authority Board Dinner

The City of London Police Authority Board saw just shy of 140 guests at Grocers' Hall. Lindy Cameron from the NCSC was guest speaker stepping in at short notice. There was significant positive feedback from the event despite the interval during my speech caused by a fire alarm evacuation. Fortunately we had the Borough Commander of London Fire Brigade amongst the guests who was able to facilitate a rapid inspection of the premises with the crew from Dowgate Fire Station.

Passing Out Parade – Orange Cohort

On 30 September, I attended the passing out parade for the Orange Cohort. The format was the best ever and was well received by the officers, their families and friends.