

Committee(s): Police Authority Board	Dated: February 2024
Subject: Chair's Update	Public
Report of: James Thomson	For Information

City of London Policing Plan

The agenda for the February Police Authority Board includes the draft of the final refresh of the 2022-25 Policing Plan, the document that sets out the priorities for keeping the City of London the safest business district in the world and protecting the United Kingdom from fraud, economic and cyber crime.

I am grateful for the input we have received from the Police Authority Board Members on the Plan. We also hosted a session led by the City Police on 11 January to which all Common Council were invited and which saw 30 Members attend. Members provided some very positive feedback from having been invited and updated on the Policing Plan.

The vision remains the same: keeping our Square Mile safe for all those that live, work or visit, continuing to lead and develop the policing response to tackling fraud, economic and cyber crime for the nation, and ensuring we put victims of crime at the heart of all we do. It feels more important than ever that the City Police, the Police Authority and wider Corporation, and partners work collaboratively to deliver on that vision.

National Lead Force – engagement

The Security Minister (Rt Hon Tom Tugendhat MP) and new Prime Minister's Anti-Fraud Champion (Simon Fell MP) visited the City on 23 January to receive an update on delivery of the key elements of the Government's Fraud Strategy and the City of London Policing Plan. The meeting was very positive, covering a range of important issues including funding pressures; encouraging engagement from policing across the UK in the Strategy; the replacement for Action Fraud and its role in transforming our approach to tackling fraud; and key opportunities for effective engagement with the public through the upcoming Government communications campaign and internationally via the Global Fraud Summit in March. A follow-up visit is already being planned with the Anti-Fraud Champion.

Budget for 2024/25

As reported previously, the Commissioner and I wrote a joint letter to the Policing and Security Ministers following the publication, on 14 December 2023, of the provisional police funding settlement for 2024/25 raising concerns about, particularly, the affordability of our National Lead Force (NLF) work. My concern remains that as things stand, our budgetary position will undermine our ability to deliver fully on the objectives in the City of London Policing Plan with regards to its national roles and the Government's ambitions as set out in its Fraud Strategy. We are having constructive discussions with Home Office officials about this issue, which I raised

directly with the Security Minister during his visit to the City on 23 January. We are seeking a meeting with Ministers to discuss this issue further.

Serious Violence Duty

The City's strategy for reducing serious violence is due to be published in w/c 29 January, following clearance by the Police Authority Board in December and clearance from all partner organisations (health, probation, fire and rescue, the Corporation). A copy will be shared with the Home Office and the Police Authority Team will arrange some comms around publication, likely in early February. I would be grateful if Authority Members could reinforce those comms on their channels.

Middle-East Protest

On Saturday 13 January, I and other Police Authority Members/Members (Melissa Collett, Naresh Sonpar and Joanna Abeyie) saw at first hand the policing operation around the very sizeable pro-Palestinian march which began at Bank Junction before heading to Westminster. We also visited the Metropolitan Police's control centre in Lambeth to observe the wider policing operation and receive an excellent briefing from DAC Taylor at the MPS. This was hugely instructive. I think that such transparency is enormously helpful in building greater understanding of operational policing challenges, particularly in the area of public order policing. I would strongly encourage Members to take up future such opportunities.

The march was overwhelmingly peaceful. I wish to record my thanks to all those involved – including from the City Police and Corporation, the MPS, other police forces who provided officers under mutual aid, and a range of other partners – in the successful policing and security operation around the march.

This is the second march to start at Bank Junction, the previous one was on 9 December 2023 and I also observed that. Some concerns have been raised by Corporation Officers about Bank Junction becoming a default start location for these marches at weekends. My understanding is that as part of planning for these events the cumulative impact is assessed and we should not expect this to be the case. The next major march is not expected to start in the City.

Holocaust Memorial Day

I attended the Holocaust Memorial Day event at Guildhall along with T/Assistant Commissioner Nik Adams. Also present was Deputy Commissioner Dame Lynne Owens and Assistant Commissioner Matt Jukes from the Metropolitan Police. There was a significant security operation in place and I would like to thank all those from the City Police and City of London Corporation in the planning and delivery of what was a very moving and thought provoking and important national event.

Visits to City Police Specialist Units

I spent an enjoyable and instructive evening with the City Police's Roads Policing Unit on 26 January. They are integral to policing in the City and are a very proactive crime reduction team beyond just policing the roads with regards to traffic enforcement.

So too are the Cycle Team, now a permanent fixture as reported to the Authority Board in January. Members will have seen the communications during the recent neighbourhood policing week about the Team and their success in seizing illegal e-bikes and e-scooters.

On 15 January, I enjoyed a visit to the Mounted Unit's Recruitment Open Day which saw significant interest from potential recruits with 15 officers attending interested in joining. The event attracted good coverage from BBC London News and there was some excellent social media coverage following that. Overall the social media coverage from the City Police has noticeably increased its heartbeat.

With regards to the Mounted Unit, the temporary stabling at Scotland Yard is putting some strain on the Mounted Unit with only two stables available and distance into the City impacting deployments. It is now critical that we secure a location for stabling in the Square Mile and I am working with the City Surveyors Department to secure this along with certain other residual accommodation requirements. Stables also have the potential for significant community engagement as they do in certain other cities.