

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

National Lead Force – engagement

Political engagement continues, promoting the work of COLP as National Lead Force. There was a productive visit of the Shadow Attorney General, Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP, on 19th February. Ms Thornberry is leading on developing Labour's fraud policy position, so the meeting was a useful opportunity to outline the work of the force and areas where further progress could be made across the whole system to make best use of the recent investments made by Government. I also met Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP, Chair of the Business and Trade Committee, to update him on the work of the force around economic crime and the importance of a strong and secure economy to the future prosperity of the UK. It was clear from that meeting that economic security will be the subject of significant political focus in the coming period. I am pleased to report that the focus on economic security will also be reflected in the City of London Corporate Strategy 2024-2029 and goes broader than tackling fraud, economic and cyber crime but includes supply chain resilience and being resilient to global shocks.

The Authority is also working with COLP developing further opportunities to engage with the Tech Sector and demonstrate the benefits of collaborative working between the private sector and law enforcement to tackle fraud.

Budget for 2024/25

I have reported previously on the correspondence the Commissioner and I have sent to Home Office Ministers since summer 2023, raising concerns about National Lead Force funding not benefiting from the inflationary and other increases allocated elsewhere in policing. Following recent constructive discussions with officials, I'm pleased to say that this funding has now been increased by £7m for 2024/25, which will enable the City to sustain and increase officer and staff resourcing levels in line with grant expectations – to support achievement of the deliverables required by those grants. I am grateful for the support shown by the Home Secretary and his Ministers in confirming this uplift.

At the City Business Ratepayers meeting on 30 January, there was no concern raised by the proposed 0.4p increase in Business Rate Premium and at Finance Committee on 20 February this was also approved. It is now to be put to the meeting of the Court of Common Council on 7 March.

Middlesex Street

A major milestone was reached on 13 February when the Corporation's Planning Sub Committee approved the proposal for the City Police's new Eastern base Middlesex Street. A huge amount of work has gone into this, from the City Police,

Corporation Officers, architects and Members. My thanks go to all those involved. The City Police estates programme is gathering real pace – ensuring we have accommodation and facilities which meet the operational needs of City police officers and staff will remain a key priority for the Authority.

The outstanding priorities are: firearms training facility where we are exploring a joint venture with another police service, a property store which we hope to fund a suitable location within surplus and unutilised space within the City of London and a permanent location for the Mounted Unit.

Stephen Lawrence Day event in the City: 23 March

Work is well underway for the event we are hosting in the Guildhall on 23 March to mark Stephen Lawrence Day. I am keen that we build on the success of the similar event we hosted last year, which marked the 30th anniversary of Stephen's death. This year, we are inviting around 200 attendees, about two thirds of whom will be young people aged 15 – 18, drawn from City Schools and Academies, schools with City links in neighbouring boroughs, local cadet forces, and youth charities that are linked through the City. The event is being planned in conjunction with the City of London Police (who will be talking about the new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy they are developing) and others including the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation and the Prince's Trust.

The objective of the day is to recognise the impact of Stephen's legacy, build better relationships between policing (e.g. City of London Police), institutions (e.g. the City Corporation) and the communities they serve, and inspire people towards more equitable and successful futures. We are using the Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation's approach to marking the anniversary this year as a template for our event: thinking about the past, present and future, with a strong power of learning theme.

It would send a strong message if Police Authority Members visibly supported this event. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Macpherson Report which was, of course, prompted by Stephen's murder. There is still much to do around the issues highlighted in that seminal report.

Serious Violence Duty Strategy; Victims Strategy

The City's strategy to reduce serious violence, discussed at the Police Authority Board in December 2023, was published in January (available [here](#)) and shared with the Home Office. A delivery plan has now been developed and implementation work will commence in earnest in March – the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee will receive an update on progress at its summer meeting. Members should also note that the City will be receiving £1m Home Office funding for policing initiatives on serious violence and anti-social behaviour next year (2024/25) – a plan for using this is also in development.

A full draft of the City's victims strategy has been produced and is being reviewed internally. Informal external engagement is planned over March and April ahead of a May target for submission to the Police Authority Board and, if approved there, publication. Members who are interested in reviewing a draft earlier or otherwise

being involved before May should contact Charles Smart in the Police Authority Team (Charles.smart@cityoflondon.gov.uk).

Safe Havens

I'm really proud to say that The City of London Corporation's Guildhall headquarters, specifically the West Wing, has been designated a 'Safe Haven' for women and girls in the Square Mile. This means that trained staff will support people who may be in need by contacting emergency or specialist services on their behalf, and providing water, Wi-Fi, telephones, toilets, and other facilities. My thanks go to the Community & Children's Services Committee, Corporation officers, the Lady Mayoress, Safer Business Network, and the City of London Crime Prevention Association who have all been involved in developing and supporting the safe haven initiative.