

JULIA LOPEZ MP
Hornchurch & Upminster



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Mark Rowley QPM
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police
New Scotland Yard
Victoria Embankment
Westminster
London
SW1A 2JL

JL21360
5 December 2022

Dear Sir Mark,

First, I would like to offer you my warmest congratulations on your appointment as Metropolitan Police Commissioner. I hope that you are settling in well into this most challenging of roles, and I apologise that I was unable to attend your most recent meeting with London MPs. Unfortunately, ministerial commitments intervened, and I hope this was communicated to you by my team.

I have been in touch on many occasions with your predecessor, the Mayor of London and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to highlight my concerns about policing resources for outer London boroughs, which I feel have not kept pace with the changing crime picture. I have also raised my consistent view that Hornchurch Police Station should not be among the Met's property disposals due to the potential impact on neighbourhood policing operations.

Hornchurch Police Station was first identified for disposal by the Mayor of London in 2017 however, following a strong local campaign and legal challenges by Havering Council, the Council secured in 2018 the possibility to purchase the station and lease a small part of any replacement development back to the MOPAC in order to retain a police presence in the area. Regrettably, there has been little progress on this since then and the site remains in a state of limbo with both Havering Council and MOPAC advising that they remain committed to the deal despite neither being able to cite any progress. I think there is now an opportunity under your leadership to review the disposal altogether.

I have recently been in conversation with our local BCU Commander, Chief Superintendent Stuart Bell, and I am aware that you wish to enhance neighbourhood policing operations as a key strand of your leadership. I very much welcome this objective, particularly following recent burglaries in otherwise low-crime areas within my constituency and reports that Havering has seen the highest growth in knife crime of all London Boroughs. This includes notable incidents in recent years such as the killings of Jodie Chesney and Daniel Laskos in Harold Hill and Harold Wood respectively, alongside a number of knife attacks in Hornchurch Town Centre. While Havering

Telephone: 020 7219 2631
Email: julia.lopez.mp@parliament.uk
Web: www.julialopez.co.uk
Twitter: @julialopezmp



remains a relatively low-crime area, it appears that the nature of crime may be changing in Havering faster than it is in other parts of London and it is clear that additional resourcing is required to tackle this and the rising fear of crime it has generated.

In view of this changing crime picture in outer London and the increased officer numbers from Government recruitment – I understand that the East Area BCU alone has 350 additional officers since 2019 – I am very much of the opinion that the Met's estates strategy requires urgent review to reflect the changing reality on the ground. Havering is a geographically large borough and without a base in Hornchurch, response and neighbourhood officers will have to travel long distances to go on shift or respond to crimes in my constituency. In recent years, the neighbourhood team in Hornchurch town centre have been able to make a real difference through things like Op Gambler, and I know when speaking to officers that they are also grateful to have a local base from which to undertake paperwork or change into uniform. I have made Hornchurch's case to the Mayor before you took up your current post, however Mr Khan replied to me in September that he wanted to press ahead with the disposal.

Through my conversations with Chief Superintendent Bell, it appears there may now be an opportunity to get this decision reviewed. I would therefore be very grateful if I could be granted the opportunity to discuss this with you in person so that we get to the right outcome for Havering, its people and your officers.

With best wishes,

Julia Lopez MP

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster