

## Baroness Casey Review of the Metropolitan Police: summary and implications for local authorities

### Purpose of Report

For direction.

### Summary

Safer and Stronger Communities Lead Members requested that a summary of Baroness Casey's Review of the Metropolitan Police be considered by the Board. This Report summarises the findings and recommendations of the Review and highlights some key areas of interest for councils.

LGA Plan Theme: **Supporting local people and places**

### Recommendation(s)

That the Board notes and discusses the findings and recommendations of the Baroness Casey Report, and consider how its conclusions and recommendations are reflected in the Board's work in the areas outlined in paragraph 32.

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## Baroness Casey Review of the Metropolitan Police: summary and implications for local authorities

### Background

1. At their meeting last month, Safer and Stronger Communities Lead Members requested that an overview of Baroness Casey's Review of the Metropolitan Police (the Met/Met Police) be brought to the Board for information and discussion, in recognition of the fact that the review's themes, including police governance and accountability, public protection, and violence against women and girls are key areas of interest to the Board.
2. This paper summarises the findings and recommendations of the Review, and invites discussion on areas of particular interest for local authorities.

### The Baroness Casey Review

#### Background and context

3. The Baroness Casey Review – or '[An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#)' – published in March 2023, was commissioned by the then Met Police Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick in October 2021 in response to the highly publicised sentencing the previous month of a former Met officer for the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard.
4. Its terms of reference were to examine firstly, what standards of behaviour and internal culture exist at the Met, and secondly, the extent to which the standards expected of officers were sufficiently and appropriately adhered to. It is not, therefore, a comprehensive assessment of Met performance.
5. The Review was asked to: engage current and former Met personnel and other stakeholders; review relevant systems, policies, processes, etc; consider the wider regulatory environment; examine approaches to governance and transparency, and consider learning from other sectors internationally.
6. The key findings and recommendations from the Review are summarised in the following sections under key thematic areas. A full list of the Review's findings and recommendations can be found in the Annex.

#### Governance and Scrutiny

15 June 2023

7. The Review found that the Met has serious, fundamental, and systemic failings in how it is run – its management systems are ineffective and facilitate a culture where malpractice goes unchallenged, including an inability to vet inappropriate candidates.
8. Attempts to improve the culture and practice of the Met have been poorly implemented as a result, and often manifest as ineffective, short-term programmes.
9. The Met also operates a highly dysfunctional culture which exacerbates challenges to effective scrutiny, including: an unwillingness to acknowledge external views and criticism; an optimism bias which dismisses systemic failings as individual ones; and an ingrained reluctance to speak-up – if complaints are made, they are often disregarded.
10. The Review's overarching recommendation is that the Met must introduce new governance processes and procedures to tackle its culture, which falls short of its own, and public expectations. Details of the governance changes proposed by the Review can be found in the 'recommendations' section within the Annex.

#### Local Policing

11. Basic Command Units (BCUs) are the local, frontline, front-facing policing units in London whereby consent, trust, and confidence are developed- which are necessary prerequisites to maintain the Met's model of policing by trust and consent.
12. However, BCUs are underfunded, underappreciated, and under-resourced. This contrasts with its central functions which are comparatively well-resourced and trained. This fits within a wider context of unhealthy levels of centralisation, and the perception within BCUs that the Met is 'centrally controlled, locally delivered'.
13. BCU Commanders are also stretched across 3-4 London Boroughs, meaning that they are often too big to connect with local communities and develop effective partnerships, but too small to take ownership of strategies or key decisions. In summary, the balance between pan-London consistency and ability to develop trust and content with a local community is currently wrong and does not allow BCUs to tackle London's varied local challenges.
14. These existing structures therefore do not provide a clear way for local authorities and residents to hold the Met to account for how they police on a Borough basis. The Review calls for a Borough-based approach building on the introduction of Borough Superintendents to ensure transparency, challenge, democratic representativeness, and access to data.

15 June 2023

### Culture

15. Discrimination and prejudices are deeply rooted in the Met – misogyny, ableism, homophobia, and racism are widespread. A fuller breakdown of how this is experienced within the Met according to different groups and characteristics can be found in the ‘findings’ section of the Annex.
16. Internally, women are not treated or represented equally in the Met’s workforce. One third of female recruits reported personally experiencing sexism at work, and twelve per cent recorded directly experiencing sexual harassment or assault.
17. Black and ethnic minority officers experience racism at work in various forms: frequent personal experiences of racist abuse, a biased misconduct system which disproportionately targets black officers, and the prevalence of racist myths and stereotypes.
18. Black and ethnic minority Londoners are over-policed and under protected by the Met. Trust and confidence in the Met are lowest amongst black and ethnic minority Londoners and have been persistently for years.
19. This is compounded by a workforce which is drastically less representative than the city it serves – the Review estimates at current recruitment rates it would take at least 30 years for the Met to reflect London’s ethnic diversity.

### Public protection and violence against women and girls

20. Public protection – which encompasses responsibility for a number of serious crimes such as violence against women and girls (VAWG), serious sexual offences, and stalking – has been moved away from specialised and prioritised central units into the decentralised BCU structure, while also removing the infrastructure and resources necessary to effectively tackle these crimes. In practice, this has led to the de-prioritisation and de-specialisation of public protection, and a strategic culture which views public protection as ‘a job anyone can do’, with the result that frontline officers are overloaded, under-resourced, and under-skilled to tackle these crimes.
21. Despite violence against women and girls nominally being an operational priority for the Met, these changes have had particularly adverse consequences for women and children. In addition, within the Met violence against women and girls has been treated differently from ‘serious violence’ which has led to under resourcing and de-prioritisation, leaving women (both within and outside the Met) vulnerable to abuse.

22. There needs to be a significantly enhanced public protection offer in London, particularly to women and children. The Met should reform and re-specialise Public Protection Teams and establish specialist '[Soteria](#)' teams to handle cases of rape and other serious sexual offences. In addition, domestic abuse services should be victim-centred, well-resourced, and work in a more integrated way with non-police services.
23. Within this, Public Protection and response Officers should have adequate training for dealing with trauma and desensitisation, which should be viewed as a corporate responsibility.

### Key issues for local authorities

24. First and foremost, these findings and recommendations are the responsibility of the Met Police. However, as noted above, many of the issues raised are relevant to the work of local authorities (and areas which the Safer and Stronger Communities Board has oversight of at national level); moreover, councils have a fundamental and basic interest in the effectiveness of, and public trust in local police forces as a key local partner. For these reasons, London Boroughs have an interest in and important role to play in supporting the Met to rebuild and earn the trust of London's communities.
25. The Review is also likely to have at least some resonance in terms of the policing culture (if not necessarily structures) in forces outside the capital, since it seems unlikely that the issues set out in the review will be unique to the Met. Recent reports regarding culture in local fire services suggests there may also be some read across with fire authorities (and in some cases councils). For these reasons, the review and next steps will be of interest to LGA member authorities outside London.
26. The following issues may be of particular interest for councils in London and beyond:
  - 26.1. **Governance, scrutiny, and local policing:** what role can, or should, local authorities play in scrutinising the work and progress of the Met, and other police forces? Although in London this focused in particular on borough/BCU structures, this issue is also a live discussion in the context of the community safety partnerships review, which is considering the relationship between Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). In commenting on the CSP review, some London community safety leads reflected that by focusing on accountability from CSPs to PCCs, the review arguably went against the direction of travel outlined in the Casey Review, which recommends greater accountability of local policing to local authorities. The Review has implications as

15 June 2023

well for the role of police and crime panels' in reviewing and scrutinising the decisions of PCCs, and the on-going support the LGA provides to panels.

26.2. **Culture:** many London Boroughs have responded to the discrimination and prejudice highlighted by the Review by reemphasising their commitment to developing programmes and initiatives to facilitate inclusive cultures and to combat racism. It would be helpful to hear if members are aware of any good practice that should be brought to the Board's attention, and their thoughts on the role councils can potentially play in supporting the cultural change the Review identifies is required in the Met (and potentially other forces).

26.3. **Public protection:** the Board are already aware that nationally, the police are trying to improve their response to violence against women and girls, having previously heard from Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth, the NPCC lead for VAWG. As part of this work, last month, the NPCC published the [first ever strategic threat risk assessment for VAWG](#). The Review recommends the creation of specialist teams to handle rape and sexual violence cases, and better integration with non-police domestic abuse services. The Board may wish to consider how police, council and other support services for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence work effectively elsewhere, as well as the links to the planned duty to collaborate on commissioning victim services, and what support councils, the police and other local partners need to support collaboration on these issues.

27. This list is non-exhaustive, and we would be interested to hear members' broader reflections on the issues in the Review, and the implications for local authorities.

## Implications for Wales

28. As noted above, Baroness Casey's Report pertains only to the Metropolitan Police; however, as with non-Met forces in England, there may be value in police forces and councils in Wales considering what learning they may be able to take from the report.

## Financial Implications

29. None.

## Equalities implications

30. The findings of the Baroness Casey Report have substantial equalities implications both for those working within the Met, and also the communities it serves. Implementation of

the Review's findings will therefore have significant equalities implications for the residents of London and the boroughs they live in.

31. If the Board directs any further work related to the Report, any equalities implications will be identified accordingly.

## Next steps

32. That members discuss this Review and consider how its conclusions and recommendations are reflected in the Board's work around:
- 32.1. Part 2 of the Home Office's review of PCCs and the CSP Review.
  - 32.2. Supporting police and crime panels in holding PCCs to account.
  - 32.3. Community cohesion and the work of councils to promote equality and inclusion.
  - 32.4. Reducing violence against women and girls, support to councils to implement the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the Victims and Prisoners Bill.

## Annex: full summary of findings and recommendations of the Baroness Casey Review

### Findings

33. The findings of the Review are summarised as follows:

33.1. The Met has serious, fundamental, and systemic failings in how it is run – its management systems are ineffective and facilitate a culture where malpractice goes unchallenged

33.2. The Met has not managed the integrity of its service – it is not vigilant in upholding ethical standards, vetting inappropriate candidates, or appropriately disciplining malpractice

33.3. The Met has deep-seated issues in its working culture, which include:

33.3.1. Unwillingness to acknowledge external views and criticism

33.3.2. An ingrained reluctance to speak up – if complaints are made, they are often dismissed, ignored, or subject to bullying

33.3.3. There is a strong reluctance to acknowledge these issues but rather an optimism bias which dismisses them as individual failings

33.3.4. HQ focus on short-term, ineffective programmes and campaigns rather than fundamental, basic changes

33.3.5. Central, specialist units are well-funded, well-resourced and considered the elite of the organisation, while frontline policing is underfunded and unappreciated

33.4. The re-organisation of the Met from a 32 Borough-based police command to 12 Basic Command Units has left the Met unaccountable and untransparent to the communities it serves, and lacking the authority and capacity to police locally

33.4.1. This is exacerbated by wider governance failings such as the defensive and dysfunctional relationship between the Met and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

33.5. As a result of its decline in authority and transparency, the Met fails to integrate and adhere to its own Peelian principles- i.e. policing by consent

33.6. Discrimination and prejudices are deeply rooted in the Met- misogyny, ableism, homophobia, and racism are widespread.



15 June 2023

- 33.6.1. LGBTQ+ officers are more likely to experience bullying than other officers. Trust and confidence amongst LGBTQ+ Londoners have also fallen in recent years, despite a previously positive trajectory
  - 33.6.2. Those with long-standing illnesses and disabilities are also more likely to experience bullying- this is the most common form of claim type against the Met, but there is little evidence of learning from this fact
  - 33.6.3. Violence against women and girls has been treated differently from 'serious violence' which has led to under resourcing and de-prioritisation, leaving women (both within and outside the Met) vulnerable to abuse.
  - 33.6.4. Internally, women are not treated or represented equally in the Met's workforce. 1/3 of female recruits reported personally experiencing sexism at work, and 12% recorded directly experiencing sexual harassment or assault.
  - 33.6.5. Black and ethnic minority officers experience racism at work in various forms: frequent personal experiences of racist abuse, a biased misconduct system which disproportionately targets black officers, and the prevalence of racist myths and stereotypes
  - 33.6.6. This is compounded by a workforce which is drastically less representative than the city it serves – the Report estimates at current recruitment rates it would take at least 30 years for the Met to reflect London's ethnic diversity.
  - 33.6.7. Black and ethnic minority Londoners are over-policed and under protected by the Met. Trust and confidence in the Met are the lowest amongst black and ethnic minority Londoners and have been persistently for years.
- 33.7. These failings, in particular the de-prioritisation and de-specialisation of public protection, have put women and children at greater risk.

### Recommendations

34. The Met must introduce new processes and procedures to tackle its culture which falls gravely short of its own, and public expectations. Recommendations for achieving this include:
- 34.1. Bring in a multidisciplinary team of Officers and staff to reform how it handles misconduct cases – particularly those pertaining to sexual misconduct and domestic abuse
  - 34.2. The Met should embed and enforce high levels of ethical policing standards across all its systems and management- including more rigorous vetting standards to guard against those who would abuse the powers of a police officer.

15 June 2023

- 34.3. Effectively disband and reform Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) and Specialist Firearms (MO19) units, which were found to have some of the most serious cultural and behavioural failings. Reform should involve clear processes for ensuring high(er) standards of behaviour and conduct in these units, including permanent revocation of firearms qualifications for Officers found deficient in these areas
- 34.4. The Government should expedite providing the Commissioner with new powers to instigate these reforms.
35. There needs to be a significantly enhanced public protection offer in London, particularly to women and children. Specifically, the Met should reform and re-specialise Public Protection Teams and establish specialist '[Soteria](#)' teams to handle cases of rape and other serious sexual offences. In addition, domestic abuse services should be victim-centred, well-resourced, and work in a more integrated way with non-police services.
- 35.1. In addition, child protection practices and strategy need to be reformed, including: training officers to prevent 'adultification' of child offenders, particularly amongst black and ethnic minority children, and addressing its approach to child offenders that are both victims and perpetrators.
36. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner should bring in specialist expertise from outside the Met on a permanent basis to support and scrutinise reform and future work
37. The Met needs new governance structures to ensure accountability and transparency to Londoners. The Report suggests a quarterly Policing Board for London Chaired by the Mayor, analogous to Transport for London, while the Commissioner should continue to chair the Met Management Board which is responsible for operational policing and strategic direction.
38. The Met, together with the Mayor, should commission progress reviews after two, then five years to ensure and demonstrate that progress against these recommendations is taking place. The Report sets out a number of proxy measures for progress of these reforms:
- 38.1. Improvements in public trust and confidence amongst Londoners – and the narrowing of these gaps amongst black and ethnic minority, LGBTQ+ Londoners, and all Londoners
- 38.2. Increases in proportion of misconduct cases where action is taken
- 38.3. Improvement in charge rates for reported crimes, particularly for crimes involving violence against women and girls

15 June 2023

38.4. [Operation Soteria ambitions](#), specifically the number of adult rape cases reaching court

38.5. Improvements in response rates and times

38.6. Reductions in the disparity between the diversity of the Met and the communities it polices