Policing and Crime - Resident Services Select Committee

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the report: This report is presented to the Residents' Services Select Committee to provide an overview of community safety in the London Borough of Hillingdon. It reviews local policing structures, performance on key crime and safety issues, recent Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) reforms, and strategic challenges. The purpose is to inform Committee members and stakeholders of current progress and areas for improvement, and to support effective scrutiny of community safety efforts.

Role of the MPS in community safety: The Metropolitan Police Service is the primary agency responsible for preventing and responding to crime and disorder in Hillingdon. The local police work in partnership with the Council and other agencies to address issues ranging from serious crime to anti-social behaviour. Through proactive patrol, crime investigation, and problem-solving initiatives, the MPS plays a central role in keeping communities safe and supporting victims of crime. It also contributes to multi-agency efforts such as the Safer Hillingdon Partnership to tackle underlying causes of crime (e.g. substance misuse, youth violence). Ultimately, the MPS's mandate is not only to enforce the law but to build public trust and confidence in safety across the borough.

Context of scrutiny and accountability: The Select Committee's oversight forms part of the statutory framework for holding the police and partners to account for local community safety. In light of recent high-profile failures and the findings of the 2023 Casey Review into the Met, there is heightened public and political focus on policing standards and accountability. Hillingdon's residents expect transparency, ethical conduct, and results from their police. This report is therefore set against a backdrop of both longstanding expectations (to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour) and renewed scrutiny of how policing is delivered. The Committee's role is to examine performance, challenge shortcomings, and support continuous improvement in the joint effort to keep Hillingdon safe.

2. Overview of Policing in Hillingdon

BCU structure and key teams: Policing in Hillingdon is managed as part of the West Area Basic Command Unit (BCU) of the Metropolitan Police, which also covers the neighbouring boroughs of Ealing and Hounslow. The West Area BCU is segmented into several key operational strands:

- **Emergency Response Teams:** Uniformed response officers handle 999 calls and immediate incidents across Hillingdon 24/7. They provide the first line of policing, rushing to emergencies, deterring crime through patrols, and conducting initial investigations. Response teams aim to quickly hand over longer-term inquiries to investigative units so they can return to visible patrol duties. Hillingdon's response officers are based out of a local patrol hub in Uxbridge to cover the borough.

- **Neighbourhood Policing:** These teams focus on local, ward-level policing and community engagement. Every ward in Hillingdon has a Dedicated Ward Officer (DWO) team – typically at least two police constables – plus a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), who are "ring-fenced" to their communities and not abstracted to other duties. Neighbourhood officers work on crime prevention, problem-solving and public reassurance. This includes Safer Neighbourhood Teams tackling issues like anti-social behaviour, running school visits and youth engagement programs, liaising with faith and community groups, licensing enforcement, and addressing local priorities set by residents. A centrally-coordinated Partnership and Prevention Hub supports these officers with specialist expertise (for example in youth engagement, ASB, or crime prevention) and coordinates daily information-sharing with council teams.

- **Local Investigations (CID):** Detective teams in the BCU carry out investigations into more serious or complex crimes that require longer-term inquiry (such as burglaries, serious assaults, fraud, etc.). They also manage offender targeting (e.g. prolific burglars or gang members) and coordinate the BCU's response to violent crime problems. These investigators work to gather evidence, arrest suspects, and build cases, often in coordination with specialist Met units for complex or high-harm crimes.

- **Safeguarding / Public Protection:** Specialist officers in this strand focus on protecting vulnerable people and high-risk cases. They handle crimes like child abuse, domestic abuse, sexual offences, and hate crimes, as well as managing high-risk missing persons cases. The Public Protection teams work closely with Hillingdon Council (e.g. social services, housing) and other partners to safeguard victims and coordinate support services. Their goal is to provide a victim-cantered approach and prevent further harm, for instance through multi-agency risk assessment conferences for domestic abuse victims.

- **BCU Headquarters and Support:** An HQ function manages critical support services and coordination across West Area. This includes a local control room (for command and control of incidents across Hillingdon, Ealing, and Hounslow), as well as units for training, professional standards, custody, criminal justice (processing cases to court), and administrative support. These enable frontline officers to function effectively and ensure the BCU runs smoothly.

Together, these teams provide a comprehensive policing presence in Hillingdon. The BCU is led by a senior officer (Chief Superintendent / BCU Commander) who oversees local strategy and performance. Each strand is headed by a Superintendent or Chief Inspector, and resources are flexibly allocated based on demand and priorities across the three boroughs.

Partnership approach with council and third-sector: Hillingdon's approach to community safety is firmly rooted in partnership working. The Safer Hillingdon Partnership (SHP) is the borough's statutory community safety partnership, bringing together the Council, MPS, London Fire Brigade, health services, probation, and other agencies at an executive level. Through the SHP, joint strategies are developed to: reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, reduce re-offending, tackle substance misuse, and prevent serious violence. For example, the partnership has identified key priorities for 2024 including: (1) Preventing violence against women and girls, (2) Combatting drug-related harm, (3) Reducing anti-social behaviour, and (4) Tackling other violent crime such as knife crime. The police contribute to each of these priorities alongside council teams (like Community Safety, Licensing, and Youth Services) and community organisations.

Practical collaboration happens through regular multi-agency meetings and initiatives. Hillingdon Police and Council attend monthly tasking and thematic meetings to coordinate actions on hotspots, vulnerable persons and offenders. Joint operations are common – for instance, police and council ASB officers conduct evenings of action against nuisance behaviour, or joint licensing reviews of problem premises. The third sector and voluntary groups are also key partners: charities supporting domestic abuse victims, neighbourhood watch schemes, and youth diversion programs all work with the police to enhance safety outcomes. This partnership ethos recognises that policing alone cannot solve complex social problems, and that a joined-up approach is more effective in preventing crime.

Resource allocation and staffing: Hillingdon's policing resources are drawn from the wider West Area BCU pool of officers. The BCU has circa 1,800 officers spread across 5 departments and 3 boroughs (the exact number fluctuates), with a share of those dedicated to Hillingdon's needs. Each ward in the borough currently benefits from dedicated neighbourhood officers (at least 2 DWOs and 1 PCSO per ward as a baseline), which boosts visible policing at the community level. Emergency response teams are positioned to ensure fast coverage across Hillingdon, the borough accounts for about 30% of West BCU's calls for service. Despite these efforts, resource management remains a careful balancing act. The West BCU must distribute officers between three boroughs based on demand; at times Hillingdon resources are stretched by major incidents or aid to central London events. Maintaining sufficient staffing in key teams (e.g. detectives in Local Investigations and Public Protection) and keeping experienced officers in neighbourhood roles are ongoing challenges. This is especially the case against a challenging financial backdrop. Recruitment is currently paused and there remains an unfilled budget gap of circa £450 million for the financial year 2025. The following sections of this report will consider how these resources are performing against Hillingdon's community safety priorities.

3. Performance on Key Community Safety Issues

This section reviews recent performance data and initiatives in Hillingdon on priority community safety issues. It also examines public confidence in policing and efforts to engage the community, as well as the visibility of neighbourhood policing.

Crime trends and priorities: This report provides an overview of key crime trends in Hillingdon, along with the proactive measures being implemented to address these challenges. The Metropolitan Police, in partnership with the council and community organisations. When considering the figures below it is important to note that those concerning Theft and Motor Vehicle crime are currently including crimes that occur in Heathrow Airport. This skews the picture somewhat by showing crimes occurring in the borough that have not – this issue is being addressed. The key trends are:

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG): Domestic Abuse VAWG incidents have decreased by 7.8%, with 1,870 cases compared to 2,029 last year. Non-Domestic Abuse VAWG related violence has decreased by 7.9%, from 2,042 to 1,880 cases. The BCU has prioritised resourcing to, and expanded, its public protection department to enable improved investigations into domestic abuse, child abuse, exploitation, missing persons and other safeguarding related investigations driving improved outcomes for victims. At a tactical level, Hillingdon police have run targeted initiatives – for example, Project Vigilant which deploys uniformed and plain-clothes officers in the night-time economy to identify and deter predatory offenders around bars and clubs. Neighbourhood officers have also promoted the Street Safe program (encouraging women to anonymously pinpoint locations where they feel unsafe) and organized women's safety focus groups and self-defence classes. These engagement efforts, alongside enforcement against high-risk offenders, aim to improve safety and confidence for female residents.

Homicide: Homicide remains rare in Hillingdon, with only one recorded case this year, there were four offences last year. This represents a 75% decrease in year-to-date figures. All the offences were detected with the offenders currently residing in HMP. Although this is encouraging, each case remains a priority, and efforts continue to prevent serious violence. The homicide unit and specialist crime teams work closely to ensure rapid response and thorough investigations. Community reassurance measures, such as increased patrols following serious incidents, help maintain public confidence.

Violence with Injury: Year-to-date figures show a 9.6% decrease in violence with injury, with 1,860 incidents compared to 2,058 last year. However, the most recent four-week period saw a 21.5% increase, from 121 to 147 cases. This recent spike suggests a need for continued focus on violence reduction. Police have increased proactivity, investigations and apprehension of offenders in relation to this spike. They are tasking units to hotspots accordingly. This includes the use of stop and search in high-risk areas, alongside targeted operations to remove weapons. Partnership work with hospitals helps identify at-risk individuals, and youth engagement programmes aim to prevent reoffending.

Personal Robbery: Personal robbery has seen an increase of 33.3% year-to-date, with 444 reported incidents compared to 341 in the same period last year. However, the most recent four-week period shows a slight 4.4% decrease, with 43 cases compared to 45 previously. While this suggests some short-term stabilisation, overall numbers remain a concern, particularly around public transport hubs and town centres. The police are deploying high-visibility patrols in key areas to deter offenders, while plain-clothes operations target known robbery hotspots and offenders. CCTV footage is being used more effectively in investigations. Additional resources have been brought onto the borough with specialist capabilities to help tackle this issue.

Residential Burglary: Burglary rates have risen with 952 reported cases, up from 872 last year, increasing 4.4% FYTD. The most recent four-week period also shows an increase of 20.8%, with 122 incidents compared to 101 previously. Although still lower than historic highs, continued prevention efforts are necessary to reduce repeat offences and improve home security. The police are using crime analysis and predictive mapping techniques to target high-risk areas and offenders. This is coupled with enhanced patrols, reactive investigations and community engagement. Intelligence-led operations are focusing on disrupting organised burglary networks.

Motor Vehicle Crime: Theft from vehicles has decreased by 6.8% year-to-date, with 1,901 cases compared to 2,040 last year. This doesn't include the impact of counting Heathrow crimes. So the reduction at Hillingdon is actually higher. Theft of motor vehicles has increased by 22% from 749 to 941 offences FYTD. This is due to a recent spike in this crime type and counting Heathrow Crime Figures as part of Hillingdon figures. Police are enhancing patrols in known hotspot locations, including ANPR deployments, and deploying undercover teams to catch offenders. Businesses and local authorities are being encouraged to improve lighting and CCTV coverage, while the public is advised on securing valuables and using security markings. Police are working via the courts to utilise Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) in order to deter prevent further offending.

Shoplifting: Theft from shops has increased by 83.6% year on year from 1,661 offences to 2,792 offences. This increase correlates with a new MPS stance on Shoplifting focusing on responding to incidents where persons are detained or using violence, investigating offences via Op Retail, targeting repeat offenders and repeat venues. Police have used a range of tactics including 'sting' style operations, arresting high harm offenders, target hardening venues and utilising Criminal Behaviour Orders. This is reflected in a detection rate of circa 26% which is currently the highest in the MPS in the last 4 weeks. The increase in the number of offences is therefore largely attributed to two factors: significant under reporting over prior years and increased reporting following the adoption of the new strategy; plus including Heathrow shoplifting figures in Hillingdon's crime figures. Performance in terms of tackling shoplifting has increased substantially.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): ASB covers a range of lower-level incidents – from street drinking and noisy parties to vandalism and groups of youths causing nuisance – that can seriously affect residents' quality of life. Hillingdon experiences a high volume of ASB calls; over 8,000 incidents of anti-social behaviour have been recorded FYTD. This figure includes reports to both police and council and shows that ASB is one of the most frequently raised community concerns. Persistent problems remain in specific localities – for example, repeated complaints about ASB in town centres such as Hayes, or estates troubled by graffiti and minor drug dealing. The police are working closely with the Council's ASB and licensing teams to deploy the right tools against ASB, whether that be dispersal orders (temporary bans on groups in a hotspot), Partial Closure Orders (closing high rise building in Hayes to non-residents), Community Protection Warnings to problematic individuals, or environmental improvements (e.g. better lighting and CCTV through council programs, speedbumps in areas used for street racing). Monthly partnership meetings identify the top ASB locations and agree joint actions. Ward Safer Neighbourhood Teams have been instrumental in these efforts, as their local knowledge and regular presence provide reassurance to residents and enable early intervention. Continued attention to ASB is critical for public confidence – it is often the benchmark by which communities judge their day-to-day safety.

Drug-related crime: Drug misuse and dealing are underlying drivers of various crimes in Hillingdon, including violence and burglary (as drug markets fuel turf disputes and addiction fuels theft). The borough's proximity to Heathrow and major transport links also means it can be affected by "county lines" drug networks. FYTD, Hillingdon recorded approximately 900 drug offenses (possession or supply cases), which on a population basis is lower than the London average rate (Hillingdon is about 32% below the typical London rate for drug crime). This suggests that while drugs remain a concern, Hillingdon is not a major hotspot for drug trafficking compared to inner-city boroughs. Even so, local police carry out frequent drug warrants and operations – for example, targeting cannabis farms in rental properties and street-level dealing in parks. Drug offenses also have a relatively high "sanction detection" rate, meaning many result in an arrest or formal sanction, often because these crimes are caught proactively (e.g. finding drugs during a stop-and-search). The Safer Hillingdon Partnership's priority on combatting drugs involves not just enforcement but also treatment and

prevention: the police refer individuals to drug outreach programs, and the Council commission's services to help users exit addiction. The partnership recognises that reducing drug-related harm can, in turn, reduce associated crime and anti-social behaviour in the community.

Public confidence and engagement initiatives: Public confidence in policing has been tested recently by widely publicised incidents of police misconduct and failure. In Hillingdon, as across London, the MPS has acknowledged the need to rebuild trust with the community. One way of doing this is through genuine community engagement and giving residents a greater voice in local policing. Hillingdon performs well in this space often being ranked 1st or 2nd in the MPS in terms of Public Trust and Confidence. Currently 78% of residents surveyed have 'Trust in the Police'. Several initiatives are in place to boost confidence and ensure the police are listening to the public:

Safer Neighbourhood Board & Ward Panels: Hillingdon has an active Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) – a borough-level forum of community representatives that meets with police leadership to discuss performance, priorities and public concerns. The SNB oversees independent projects (funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) to improve police-community relations and holds public meetings where residents can question senior officers. At the ward level, each of the borough's wards has a panel (or forum) of residents and councillors that meets quarterly with the local DWO officers. These Ward Panels set neighbourhood priorities (such as speeding, burglary, or ASB on a particular estate) which the local police commit to address. By involving residents in priority-setting and reporting back on actions taken, the MPS aims to demonstrate responsiveness and transparency.

Youth engagement and scrutiny: Hillingdon has introduced Youth Advisory Group – a platform for young people to share their experiences and feedback about policing tactics. The Hillingdon Youth Council is also represented on the Independent Advisory Group and Safer Neighbourhood Board. Furthermore, we run a bi-annual New Met for London event for youths. This two-way dialogue helps officers understand and adjust their approach to younger members of the community, hopefully improving fairness and respect. Additionally, young volunteers are directly involved in the delivery of policing in the form of Police Cadets. Engaging youths is crucial in Hillingdon, which has a large under-25 population, to prevent alienation and build trust with the next generation of residents.

Community Monitoring Groups: To increase transparency around potentially controversial police powers, Hillingdon residents participate in Community Monitoring Groups (CMGs) that scrutinise police use of stop & search. There are 24 CMG meetings planned each year in the West Area (eight per borough) where local people review data on stop and search usage, outcomes, and demographic patterns. CMG members can even view Body Worn Video footage of actual stop-search encounters. This oversight helps assure the public that stop and search is conducted lawfully and without bias, and it allows community feedback to directly influence officer training or tactics. In addition, after any pre-planned use of extensive stop

powers (such as a section 60 order authorizing broad searches in a violence hotspot), the police hold debrief sessions with community representatives and council officials to review whether the actions were appropriate. These measures are intended to improve confidence by showing that the police welcome scrutiny and are willing to explain their actions.

Public outreach and visibility: Hillingdon Police have sought to raise their profile in the community through positive interactions. Examples include regular "Street Surgeries" or drop-in stalls in town centres where residents can meet officers informally, and proactive communications via social media (sharing good-news stories, crime prevention advice, and updates on caught offenders). The police also work with the Council's communications team and Neighbourhood Watch to publicise successful operations or joint initiatives, to reassure the public that progress is being made. Another important aspect of engagement is responding to public feedback: through surveys (like the MPS Public Attitude Survey) the police gather data on confidence levels and which issues people most want addressed. Recent reforms (described in the next section) are explicitly aimed at improving the way police interact with the public – "listening to local communities" and treating people with respect are core tenets of the new approach. The continued emphasis on ethics and openness is expected to, over time, translate into higher public confidence in Hillingdon.

Neighbourhood policing and visibility: A consistent message from community engagement has been the need for high-visibility policing – residents want to see officers patrolling their areas and feel a personal connection to their local police. Hillingdon's neighbourhood policing strategy reflects this: DWOs are kept free from emergency response duties so they can spend time on patrol in their wards, attend community events, and visit local schools and businesses. The Met is bolstering this approach with new investments. In fact, under the "New Met for London" reform plan, the MPS has committed to putting additional officers into local policing teams and increasing the number of PCSOs, with 500 extra PCSOs being recruited London-wide and about 240 officers re-assigned from central units to borough-based roles . Every London borough will also have at least one police front counter open 24 hours a day (for Hillingdon this means retaining a 24/7 public-access police station, namely Hayes) . These steps should enhance police visibility in the community. Furthermore, Hillingdon Borough now has a dedicated Superintendent, Chief Inspector and sector based Inspectors.

Already in Hillingdon we have seen town centre teams and expanded ward teams focusing on high-footfall areas like Uxbridge town centre and Hayes, providing a uniformed presence to deter crime. Special tasking's such as Operation Nightingale (an initiative started in Uxbridge to increase uniform patrols in crime hotspots and address long-term problems – which received over £100k funding for deployments) have further increased officer presence where needed . Visibility is not just about walking the beat; it's also about responsiveness. Quick response times to calls and follow-up visits to victims can enhance the sense that police are there when you need them. In this regard, Hillingdon's response teams have worked to meet target times (handling the majority of urgent calls within 15 minutes) and neighbourhood officers routinely make contact with victims of crimes like burglary to provide reassurance. The MPS acknowledges that genuine community policing – with officers embedded in and visible in the community – is at the heart of its mission to deliver "less crime, more trust and high

standards". Continued support for neighbourhood policing in Hillingdon is therefore a critical performance objective, as it both prevents crime and builds public confidence.

4. A New Met for London – Reform & Local Impact

In the wake of recent crises of confidence, the Metropolitan Police has launched an ambitious reform agenda known as "A New Met for London." This two-year transformation plan (backed by £366 million investment) is the vision of Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley to achieve "More trust, less crime and higher standards" across London. The plan was in large part a response to the findings of the Baroness Casey Review, which called for fundamental change in the Met. The key themes of the reform can be summarised as fixing foundations, rebuilding trust, and boosting visibility:

Fixing the Foundations: This refers to improving the internal systems, resources and professionalism of the police – essentially getting the basics right so officers are set up to succeed. It includes overhauling areas like recruitment, training, leadership, technology, and misconduct processes. For example, the Met has created a new Anti-Corruption & Abuse Command dedicated to "ruthlessly rooting out" officers and staff who are corrupt or predatory. They have also recognized the need for speed and assertiveness in discipline – accelerating the removal of those unfit for policing. Vetting and training regimes for new officers are being strengthened, with a review of how to better instil standards and practical skills early on. In short, the Met is doubling down on standards and integrity after acknowledging that "Chief Constables' powers to deal with misconduct are too weak" under current rules. For Hillingdon, fixing foundations means that local officers should increasingly be better trained, better equipped, and held to the highest standards of conduct. Residents can expect, for instance, that new recruits joining Hillingdon's teams will have been more rigorously vetted and more thoroughly prepared for the realities of frontline policing. Over time, as poor performers are weeded out, the calibre and morale of the local force should improve, enabling higher quality service to the public.

Rebuilding Trust (Culture Change): The Commissioner's plan emphasizes that policing must re-earn the trust of the communities it serves, especially after the damage of recent scandals. This involves a cultural shift within the Met – promoting values of respect, transparency, and community service. Practical measures under this theme include engaging with communities to co-produce local policing plans and being more responsive to public concerns. Sir Mark Rowley has highlighted that "trust is dented, it hasn't gone away" and that the way to rebuild it is through positive work with communities fighting crime. In Hillingdon, this has meant officers redoubling efforts to listen to residents (through the forums and panels described earlier) and acting on feedback. It also means being honest about mistakes – for example, local police leaders have publicly acknowledged the Casey Report's findings and reassured the Council and community that they are determined to change. London's reforms also directly address VAWG: treating male predators as seriously as terrorists, with new approaches like using the Cambridge Crime Harm Index analytics to identify the top 100 high-risk offenders against women and girls. The impact locally is that Hillingdon's most dangerous domestic abusers or

sex offenders are now receiving heightened attention from specialist units, which should increase prevention and enforcement in those cases. Another aspect of trust is accessibility: the pledge to have a 24/7 front counter in each borough is part of ensuring the public can reach police when needed. For Hillingdon residents, this commitment (along with improvements to the 101 non-emergency call service and online reporting) is meant to show that the Met is there for them and responsive.

Increasing Visibility (Community Crime-Fighting): The plan recognises that community crime-fighting is how we cut crime, rebuild trust and restore our bond with communities. In practice, this means more officers out on the streets and a shift of focus towards local priorities. The Met has started moving resources from the back-office and certain central units into frontline policing – for example, as noted, 240 officers have been reassigned to local BCUs and an influx of 500 new PCSOs is underway to bolster neighbourhood teams . Each ward in London is to have at least 2 DWOs and 1 PCSO dedicated, which strengthens Hillingdon's existing model. Additionally, the Met is investing in new equipment and technology to support visible policing. Officers are being issued modern mobile devices and apps that allow them to do more work while out in their community (so they don't disappear back to the station to file reports). A new, unified crime-recording system called CONNECT was rolled out, which, despite some initial data teething problems (such as Heathrow Airport crimes being inadvertently counted in Hillingdon's figures), will ultimately streamline how information is shared and allow officers to access crime data on the go. There is also ongoing investment in body-worn cameras (which all frontline officers in Hillingdon now wear) and other technology like better deployment of CCTV and analytics to pinpoint crime hotspots. For the public in Hillingdon, increased visibility should manifest as more frequent sight of police on patrol, more problem solving, proactive policing, targeting of offenders and quicker follow-ups when crimes are reported.

5. Strategic Challenges & Future Priorities

Looking ahead, several strategic challenges will shape Hillingdon's community safety landscape. At the same time, there are clear areas of focus that the police and partners will need to prioritize to meet these challenges. This section outlines the key hurdles and the planned priorities to address them:

Ongoing Challenges:

Increasing demand and complexity: Crime is evolving and becoming more complex. Investigations now often involve digital devices, online platforms, and cross-border elements, which require significant expertise and time. For example, a single fraud or stalking case might entail analysing thousands of messages or pieces of cyber evidence. Even gang crime and drug dealing are frequently coordinated via encrypted apps, complicating enforcement. The police must continuously adapt skills and tactics to keep up. Another aspect of complexity is the blurring line between crime and social issues – mental health crises or disputes that

escalate can fall to police by default. The rising demand across public services has meant police are regularly called to incidents that might better be handled by mental health professionals or social workers, stretching police capacity. This is exacerbated by the societal challenges of prison capacity, court backlogs and immigration. Tackling these challenges requires multi-disciplinary approaches and better coordination with other sectors (health, education, technology companies, etc.). It's an ongoing challenge to ensure officers have the training, specialist support, and inter-agency protocols to deal with these complexities effectively. Effective prioritisation is essential and future resourcing constraints driven by 'tough choices' and a halt on recruitment will create further supply vs demand challenges.

Demand vs. resources: Hillingdon, like all areas, faces the fundamental challenge of balancing growing demand for services with finite policing resources. Emergency and non-emergency calls continue to increase, as the population grows and new issues emerge. However, the police budget and officer numbers have limits with a circa £450 million funding gap. The Met's budget constraints have been well documented – London has "close to 50% less funding per head of population" compared to some other major cities' forces. While recent recruitment drives have boosted officer numbers, austerity in the past decade saw real-term pay cuts of ~17% for officers (2010–2022) and a reduction in experienced personnel. This can affect morale and retention, and thus service quality. In practical terms, West Area BCU must prioritize where to deploy officers at any given time. If a spate of burglaries hits one part of the borough, resources might be diverted there at the expense of routine patrols elsewhere. The challenge is how to do "more with less" – leveraging technology and smarter working to overcome the resource gap. The MPS is lobbying for sustained funding and a fair allocation of new officers to boroughs like Hillingdon, but economic pressures remain. The Committee should be aware that without adequate resources, maintaining low crime rates and rapid response times will be difficult, so advocating for Hillingdon's needs in wider policing allocations is important.

Public trust and confidence: Although reform efforts are underway, the trust deficit will not be repaired overnight. Historic incidents of racism, misogyny, and corruption within the Met (spotlighted by cases like the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving officer, and the Casey Review findings) have left some community members in Hillingdon sceptical or fearful of the police. Restoring trust is a long-term challenge; it requires consistent, positive interactions at the local level and demonstrable improvements in police conduct. Every instance of perceived unfairness or poor service in Hillingdon (e.g. a complaint of rude treatment, or a feeling that a crime report wasn't taken seriously) can set back confidence. Conversely, visible efforts to hold officers accountable and to apologise and learn from mistakes can help rebuild faith. The Met's leadership and the local BCU have acknowledged the scale of this challenge. The community's patience may be limited, so it is critical that promised changes (like those in the New Met plan) yield visible results. The challenge for Hillingdon's police will be maintaining the momentum of cultural change, continuing to engage with critics and communities that feel disenfranchised, and proving through actions that they are a service the public can trust. This extends to improving outcomes (solving crimes, supporting victims): trust will grow if people see that the police are effective and just. Low sanction detection rates for serious crimes, for instance, remain a concern that can erode confidence if not improved.

6. Conclusion

In summary, Hillingdon benefits from a committed policing team and multi-agency partnership that have kept overall crime rates comparatively low. Progress has been made on critical issues such as violence against women and girls, violence with injury, and homicide and key reform initiatives are underway to improve standards and public trust. However, challenges persist. Public confidence, while showing signs of recovery through local engagement efforts, remains fragile and must be continually reinforced by positive action. Certain crimes like robbery and anti-social behaviour continue to impact residents' daily sense of safety and require sustained focus and innovation to address. The balance between growing demand and available resources will test the police's ability to maintain performance.