

The truth Boris Johnson tries to hide

£600m = The amount cut from the Met budget between 2010 and 2016.

£800m = The amount expected to be cut from the Met budget between 2016 and 2020.

The number of officers in every ward neighbourhood policing team when Boris Johnson came to power = 6

The number of dedicated officers left in neighbourhood policing teams after seven years of Boris Johnson = 2

In the 12 months to July 2015 violent crime rose 24.4%

Across the same period overall crime rose 3.5%

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THE COST OF BORIS

The End of Neighbourhood Policing?

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The End of Neighbourhood Policing?

There should be no doubt that under Boris Johnson London's police force has been depleted.

Boris Johnson's time as Mayor of London has left the Metropolitan Police Service weakened with fewer police officers and local Safer Neighbourhood Teams all but dismantled. As of 2016, £600 million will have been sliced out of the Met's budget, and there are still further swingeing cuts of £800 million expected to be announced by the end of the year. This will have devastating consequences for our capital city. The next Mayor needs to do what Boris hasn't and crusade against the Home Office on these budget cuts. No wonder the Met's Commissioner stated "The time has come to fight our corner." Assembly Members have been fighting this corner for some time.

'5,655 lost officers'

Since 2010 the Met has lost 5,655 uniformed officers (both PCs and PCSOs) from the streets of London. This is from a Mayor who promised to always have 32,000 warranted officers policing the city. In reality he has utterly failed, with police officer numbers falling below the 32,000 target three quarters of the time.

Many of these cuts are down to the Mayor's 'rearranging' of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams set up by his predecessor. Previously each ward in London had a team of six uniformed officers - one Sergeant, two PCs and three PCSOs dedicated to that local area. Since Johnson's restructure that number has dropped to just two uniformed officers—one PC and one PCSO—who often have less than 2 years' experience on the job. This is not the worst of it; because of consistently low officer numbers local police are being regularly 'extracted' from their local areas to fill gaps elsewhere in the Met. It is no wonder that when I speak with local residents, they are worried that their police are now rarely seen.



'Drastic cut backs'

Looking to the future, there seems to be no relief in sight. Indeed the Mayor's own Policing Deputy warned him of 'drastic cut backs' and stated that as we get closer to 2020 police numbers will start to fall off a 'cliff edge'.

The Mayor has also failed on his pledge to double the number of Special Constables (local community volunteers who work alongside the police to support and strengthen them in local areas); in fact the number of Special Constables has fallen by 40% since 2008. Another manifesto promise broken.

Despite promises of "no cuts to the front line" between May 2010 and July 2015 over 5,500 uniformed officers were lost from London's streets

"There's a bigger risk to public safety if we don't take radical action ... We've saved hundreds of millions already, but from 2016 onwards it will be much harder."

- Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe

Despite the fact that further cuts to the Met have been known about for years, the Mayor's successor will inherit no tangible plans for the future. By focusing on the painful, but predictable, backroom cuts the Mayor has left the toughest challenges for his successor to deal with. How do you balance massive budget cuts, with a rocketing population and rising crime? These are questions Johnson has simply dodged answering.

'Violent crime on the rise'

The result is as predictable as it is distressing. As the cuts started to bite, we have seen violent crime rise by almost a third, while public satisfaction and confidence in the police is starting to fall. At the same time we are seeing fewer arrests and cautions being made. The Commissioner, not a man known for 'shroud waving', is obviously worried, writing in the Guardian he claimed: "There's a bigger risk to public safety if we don't take radical action ... We've saved hundreds of millions already, but from 2016 onwards it will be much harder." Despite being Mayor for almost eight years it's clear Johnson won't step up to this challenge.

London has a unique set of challenges in terms of policing. The city's global profile makes it a serious terrorist target and the capital continues to face significant problems with gangs, youth and knife violence. Look at the rapidly changing and growing population and it's clear the police are being asked to do more than ever, with a fast reducing balance sheet.

The effect of five years of budget cuts are beginning to show, as it appears the long-term trend of falling crime is coming to an end. The Met's Assistant Commissioner, Helen King, recently wrote that, "the rest of the country has seen a rise in crime for sometime that we are now starting to see in London." She is right; total notifiable offences are now up 3.5% across the capital.

'Boris vetoed plans for 1,000 more officers'

While the future may look bleak, there are alternatives to these drastic budget cuts. Earlier this year my colleagues and I put forward a plan, which would have frozen the GLA's share of the council tax at the 2014-15 level and raised £10 million. This would have contributed towards over 1,000 additional police officers. Boris vetoed the proposals and pushed ahead with his plan which saw a tokenistic cut of a penny a day to London's Council Tax. What would you prefer, a penny in your pocket or more police on the beat?

With already stretched police numbers and resources, we cannot know what the Metropolitan Police Service will look like in 5 years. What we do know, however, is that we cannot have another Mayor who takes local policing for granted, who uses smoke and mirrors to deceive Londoners, and dodges tough decisions. We need a Mayor who will take the fight to Government and battle for the resources the police need.

RECEIPT

Cost of Boris

- £1.2bn planned police cuts**
- 63 Police stations closed**
- 5,655 uniformed officers cut since 2010**
- All neighbourhood PCSOs under threat**