

Caring for the Capital's Well-being

The *Wolmar for London*
Policing and Health Vision

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Our Vision



Smarter police
procurement



A London police force
for Londoners



Vision Zero
traffic deaths



Learning how to improve
health from other cities



Safer
Neighbourhoods



Operation Safeway
and enforcement



Sustained campaign of
simple health messages



Restorative
justice for
victims



Appointing a Health
Commissioner for
London



Targeted support for
under-5s in least well
off families

Prevention is better than cure, especially when caring for Londoners' safety, health and wellbeing

Everyone, including politicians, agrees that it is much better to act to nip problems in the bud rather than trying to patch up the consequences afterwards. As Mayor of London, Christian Wolmar would implement ambitious goals in policing, such as a Vision Zero for traffic deaths, and in public health to reduce obesity and target help for London's children. Neither the Metropolitan Police nor the NHS has been able to get a grip on prevention, but this will be a key Wolmar strategy.

The good news headlines are that despite all the challenges since 2008, crime has been falling in many areas and in terms of health, Londoners are living longer. Behind those headlines, however, the picture is complicated by many shaming statistics on the difference between affluent and poorer areas, and many people we have spoken to during the WolmarforLondon campaign want more radical change than politicians are offering.

Safety, Security and Policing

There is a huge amount of respect for the job the Metropolitan Police do in protecting Londoners on a day-to-day basis. It speaks volumes about the ability of our police force that crime has been falling steadily for many years.

But London's police force can and must be improved.

Policing is an issue that has been raised often at many meetings I have spoken at around London. Yet little attention was paid to the issue during the General Election campaign. Many years ago I worked for a charity involved in legal issues and more recently I wrote a book with the help of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, called *Forgotten Children*, about abuse in children's homes, a subject that inevitably raised a lot of questions about policing.

Too much for one person

The Met's biggest problem is size. The Met is a monster – it has more than 52,000 staff, and absorbs one-quarter of the policing budget for England and Wales. In personnel numbers, it is larger than the next five forces combined. In 2011, Blair Gibbs the mayor's adviser who then worked

for the Conservative thinktank Policy Exchange wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that the Met is just too big for its boots.

A previous Commissioner of Police, Sir Paul Stephenson, said in a recent interview, "Running the Met is too much for one person; there is too much going on, too many balls to be dropped. So I rely – too heavily? – on a team to help me manage and that doesn't always work."

Indeed. There has been no shortage of what Sir Paul calls "dropped balls" in recent times – we all know about the high-profile ones such as Stephen Lawrence, Jean Charles de Menezes, Ian Tomlinson, Mark Duggan, the phone-hacking affair and Plebgate – but there are countless less well known ones.

A London police force?

The Wolmar for London campaign has ideas about how to make the Met more manageable, which include looking again at whether some of its current work, including terrorism, diplomatic and royal protection, and even traffic enforcement, could be better organised.

Currently, the Met takes the lead on terrorism. It mounts operations around the country, interviews suspects and charges them. This is done in

conjunction with the Security Service (MI5) which has the national lead on terrorist intelligence, while the Met – for purely historical reasons – has the remit on executive action against terrorists and terrorism.

The MPS is not the police force for the whole country – though certainly it seems like it wants to be. For instance, why was it solely the Met who provided those very fit looking young men and women who protected the Olympic flame during its 8,000 mile trip around the UK? How come it is Met officers who went off to Kenya to co-ordinate intelligence on bombings there?

There is a confusion of roles

Serious organised crime has already been taken away from the Met and reorganised into the National Crime Agency.

A national force for terrorism seems a natural step, as with serious organised crime. So, indeed, does one for the new types of cyber crime that are emerging. These are crimes that know no borders and are in no way confined to London.

This would not diminish the standing of the Met. Quite the opposite. It would allow the focus to be genuinely 'Working for a safer London'. As Mayor of London, I would reflect on

what Londoners want – and they want a police force for Londoners that is totally dedicated to improving their safety and reducing crime.

Where are the traffic police?

During campaigning, we have heard officers and public complain that there are no traffic police in central London. The depots where traffic police used to work, such as in Drummond Crescent near Euston have been closed, and now only depots in outer London, such as Merton, Barking and Hampstead, remain. Londoners' perception is that traffic police, a key function, have effectively been phased out. The occasional visible blitz such as 'Operation Safeway', stimulated by a spate of cycling deaths, only serves to show that most of the time this basic function of the police has been all but abandoned in London. Many motorists have now learned that they can speed and break the law with relative impunity. However most drivers want this lawlessness to stop and the roads to be safer and effectively policed.

A more responsive police force?

Robert Peel, the founder of the police force more than 200 years ago, set out nine principles including “The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.”

Sometimes this may not fit in with how police officers view their role, but we should be governed by Peel principles, in particular that people want to know that they can live their lives free of crime and free of anti-social behaviour: that is not done on the basis of police presence, but on crime and disorder absence. The presence of police with machine guns at railway stations does nothing to reassure the public – quite the opposite – and raises the horrible spectre of ‘friendly fire’ deaths.

The anonymity of the police, a deliberate policy, needs to be reversed. Why should a newly promoted sergeant have to move away from the station or area where he has served for a couple of years? Why cannot a police constable develop long-term ties with the community?

Police should have local priorities, agreed with communities, and they should be monitored on their progress and partnerships to achieve their targets. Communication is key.

Safer Neighbourhoods and designing-out crime

I am not the first putative politician to say this – nor will I be the last – but the very unsexy areas of crime prevention and “designing out” crime are important factors in reassurance – something the Met has never prioritised. People want to feel safe in their homes, on the streets, in their workplace. Telling people – especially women – to stay off the streets because London is too dangerous is an admission of failure.

I agree with Labour’s Crime and Justice manifesto which was launched with this message: “Communities only flourish when people feel safe and secure, living lives free from fear and intimidation. This means having police on the streets, a criminal justice system that works for victims not criminals and action to prevent crime before it occurs.”

Setting local targets

Policing is a local function. The lofty world of Scotland Yard is of little concern to the residents of Barnet, Carshalton or Ilford. They want their local streets, their houses, their

shops to be safe. My local shop in Holloway was burgled recently; the thieves sawed through two padlocks, opened the shutters, set off the alarm, dropped several gin bottles, and yet still got away with the till, cigarettes and alcohol. People want police to target on their local problems; Kensington people do not care what is happening in Whitechapel and those in Newham do not give a fig about Kingston.

Local targets must be achievable not aspirational, checkable and practical. There must be a visible local presence, which does not mean dutifully walking on the beat chatting to a colleague. Rather it means like my local PCSO did for a while, dropping a leaflet in every couple of months and providing his mobile phone number. That was better than seeing two officers wandering past my office at home once a week.

Outsourcing and the Met

Public procurement of big IT systems can lead to expensive mistakes. During the campaign we have heard police officers despair of not having the right systems and equipment and what this costs in terms of inefficiencies. This is not just the relatively simple things like tablet computers and smart phones, but also the entire £250m IT system that the Met uses, according to the London Assembly's

Budget and Performance Committee which in 2013 cited examples such as officers taking 30 minutes to log-in to computers and having to re-enter information into 10 different systems. The NAO had similar criticisms of Police procurement across the UK. Because of cutbacks, the Met is outsourcing another £500m of work to private sector contractors, such as Capita and Serco, when actually this expertise may be best retained in house.

All of this is meant to be supportive. We do have an excellent police force. I spend a lot of time abroad and I am quite happy to confirm that in dealings with day to day police, Britain is head and shoulders above most countries.



Our *Policies*

*After nearly three years of travelling
the capital, canvassing and listening,
we have developed this set of 4 key
policies for helping Londoners be
safer and more secure.*

A London police force for London



- A rapid one-year independent review of the current responsibilities of the Met and whether any of its current work – from traffic to terrorism – could be better organised so that the size and scope of the Met is reduced to a more manageable organisation.
- This review would also consider the overlapping accountabilities of the Met to both the London Mayor and the Home Secretary, as illustrated recently with the confusion around the current Mayor's purchase of a German water cannon without Home Office permission and the consequent waste of several hundreds of thousand pounds .
- The review will consider whether the Met is being asked to do too many “cleaning-up” roles such as guarding premises after London Fire Brigade forced entry, the expectations of officers to be nurses or social workers and using custody cells as “places of safety” for people suffering from mental health issues.

Safer neighbourhoods and restorative justice for victims



- Scotland Yard and City Hall agree that there should be more local policing and much less shipping-in of officers from distant areas. But little has been done to deal with the housing shortage as it affects key workers such as police officers. As Mayor of London, Christian Wolmar will amend the GLA Housing Strategy to make it much easier for London boroughs to offer “key-worker homes” to local police officers, NHS staff and other crucial staff who help keep London running.
- Safer Neighbourhoods are a priority. As well as more local police officers and safer neighbourhood teams, a Wolmar mayoralty will work with the Ministry of Justice and London boroughs to put in place quickly new “neighbourhood justice panels” where needed, to mobilise local volunteers to help tackle the root causes of anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, to help “design-out” local causes of crime, and to force offenders to face up to their actions and making restoration.

Vision Zero traffic deaths, Operation Safeway and enforcement



- As part of the Wolmar Transport strategy a “Vision Zero deaths” approach will be taken where every transport fatality will be treated in the same way as an aviation or railway disaster, with an investigation into causes, lessons and potential actions.
- As Mayor of London, Christian Wolmar would build on the Met’s “Operation Safeway” by working with the London boroughs to agree what additional powers and technology PCSOs and traffic wardens could use to ensure continuous enforcement of traffic safety laws throughout London. This is particularly important in relation to the default 20mph limit that is necessary to cut the road death toll.

systems that London needs. All GLA commercial contracts, including the forecast £500m police outsourcing plans must be set up properly and well managed in the future.

Smarter police procurement



- Bad outsourcing in health and transport has led to increases in costs and a loss of control. A Wolmar mayoralty will act to review the governance currently in place and to ensure that the Met has the skills and experience to deliver the IT

(Right)

As Mayor of London, Christian Wolmar would apply the lessons of Operation Safeway and seek additional powers and technology for PCSOs and traffic wardens could use to ensure continuous enforcement of traffic safety laws





(Above)
Oxford Street breached the EU's
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) limit for
2015 in just four days

If it's good for health, it's good for London

The Mayor of London works with London boroughs on their vital public health work and there would be priority areas for the Wolmar mayoralty after consultation with a wide range of groups and experts:

- The rise in obesity (and hence heart problems, cancer and diabetes) and mental health problems.
- The increase in communicable diseases
- Neighbourhoods without established community, leading to stress and loneliness.
- Air pollution leading to asthma, damage to children's development and premature deaths.
- Poor housing leading to problems with stress, and other general health issues particularly those associated with dampness and allergies.
- Low-pay, which bring stress and poor quality food choices.
- Family hardship and poor relationships causing increasing mental health problems in children, low resilience and illness.

The London Health Commissioner – taking health seriously



- Appoint a Health Commissioner and Food Ambassador, ensuring that all government department silos are harvested, their knowledge base and ideas co-ordinated - and turned into action.

Joined up thinking with other cities



- A Wolmar mayoralty would join hands with Manchester and the leaders of other big cities, to identify the most successful initiatives to improve the health of Londoners and reduce health inequalities.

Sustained campaign of simple health messages



- As Mayor of London, Christian Wolmar would lead and sustain a campaign of simple messages to heighten awareness of health and good food.
- It would build on work in schools and work places to enable healthy activities and support healthy initiatives such as green ambassadors.
- Campaign via health centres to expand their offering to include food and exercise specialists, exercise programmes, cooking skills, and social activities such as gardening as a way of boosting both physical and mental health
- Encourage schemes to teach every London child how to grow a carrot – as a way into thinking about food and where it comes from.
- Give every London child the chance to walk to school in clean air and on safe routes.

Targeted support for 0-5 year olds in least well-off families



- A Wolmar mayoralty would launch an urgent investigation into the harm done to London's Children's Centres by the one-third cuts to their funding. While it is clear the Mayor cannot fund a massive increase, highlighting the damage will put pressure on central government to bring forward resources and the Mayor will target his own limited funding towards these vulnerable groups.
- By rebuilding centres of excellence for the under-5s, children's centres will once again be able to address parenting issues, child development and provide model nursery care and health visitor services all under one roof, while reducing stress levels on new mothers and families.

Regulate where necessary

- Reduce the number of fast food outlets open at lunchtimes close to secondary schools
- A Wolmar mayoralty will support planning that provides community areas with meeting spaces and walkable areas.

A champion for change

- As Mayor of London, Christian Wolmar would use the high-profile of the position to act as a figurehead to influence change, when some of these aspirational aspects lay outside the executive power of City Hall. A Mayor of London prepared to support these progressive policies and to use his role to publicise them would make a huge difference to million of Londoners' lives.



Christian Wolmar is seeking the Labour nomination for the 2016 London mayoral election.

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