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Member of Parliament for Holborn & St Pancras

“Copied to Rachel Blake for information and joint action”.

20/3/26

Effect of Abstractions on Police resources in Bloomsbury and Covent Garden

We engaged with you on 5th Feb 2021 in a zoom conference regarding the level of crime in the Southern Camden wards. The facts were that Camden was the borough with the second highest level of crime in the whole of London and both Bloomsbury and Holborn/Covent Garden Wards contained 40% of all crime in the Camden Borough. The resolution of these levels of crime was low with very few crimes solved, in some cases less than a 1% resolution of crimes reported.

When the Camden data was compared to the London wide data of an average of 80crimes/1000 population it was evident how much greater the Holborn/Covent Garden and Bloomsbury rates at that date were, with the Crimes being respectively 510 and 449 crimes/1000.

The comment by Noémi Drew your Constituency Office Manager after meeting with you was ' A compelling presentation and good news that we have a promising avenue to explore'. He will be talking to Mopac and to Camden to express his support.

The resulting outcome was that both Bloomsbury and Holborn/Covent Garden were given enhanced PC numbers for the Safer Neighbour Police Teams (SNP) of 6 PCs and 4 PCs, respectively. In addition, the Euston Town Centre Team (TCT) was created covering Bloomsbury and Covent Garden involving 21 PCs working 3 shifts 24/7 to proactively solve crime. We welcomed this response, but the wards still exhibit the highest crime levels in Camden.

On Wednesday 18th March there was a meeting with Police Officers from TCT, SNP, Camden and Panel Chairs to discuss the Drug problems in the Bedford Square area that have been reported by residents for the last 6 years, with limited resolution.

At the meeting Camden issued a presentation launching increased funding for the Camden Community Safety team which is to be increased by 14 new Officers in the Euston TCT area. These Officers will be trained to issue CPWs but have less responsibilities compared to a PC. We understood that at the same time some funding for the TCT night patrols was being reduced. Again, we welcome this increase in resources to deter criminals and improve street safety but would like the TCT funding to be maintained, as considerable crime takes place during the night after daytime shifts have ended.

At the meeting, we were advised about the level of Abstractions, the Bloomsbury SNP have lost the whole team of 6 PCs for a period Wednesday until Monday, the TCT at the same time lost a full shift of 7 PCs, and the Holborn/Covent Garden have lost 50% of their PCs. We understand that this is not an unusual event, rates of 30-40% appear common. Clearly if the designated number of PCs tackling crime is significantly reduced on a regular basis this leaves the area unprotected against crime.

Camden is a borough of diversity having a knowledge centre, many hotels, the British Museum, Retail areas, with major Universities and Hospitals bringing in many Visitors. This activity is considered of strategic importance and provides much employment. The hotels, for example, bring in more than £2bn/year in room payments and the tourists likely to spend a similar amount in local restaurants and shops. The hotels in the area report crimes against visitors occur every day involving phone theft, fake police, pick pocketing and drug dealing. These crimes against tourists are often under reported as the response time is too long and they are not in the area long enough.

In addition to Hospitality, Camden's geographic position in central London and the business environment created has enabled it to become one of the most important business locations in the country. The largest industrial sector in Camden is Professional, Scientific & Technical enterprises. It is home to the 2nd highest number of businesses in London, and the number one tourist destination of the British Museum.

The importance of Camden's contribution to the economy of the UK should not be put at risk. The level of crime in the Bloomsbury and Covent Garden areas is significant. It is vital to maintain the number of PCs and for them not to be regularly depleted.

It is believed that the root cause of high levels of abstractions from SNP and TCT teams is that the full cost of the additional policing required for London's role as the capital city is not forthcoming. This lack of officers results in the serious depletion of resources. It limits the ability of the police to proactively tackle crime in an area with one of the UK's highest crime levels. It is important for funding by the Home Office to be provided to create a specialist team within the MET dedicated to dealing with the needs of London's role as the capital city and not to deplete the highest crime borough of police resources.

This Appeal is on behalf and approval of The Bedford Estates, The British Museum, London University, Imperial London Hotel Group Ltd, Kimpton Fitzroy Hotel, Chair of Bloomsbury SNP, Bloomsbury Residents Action Group, Bloomsbury Association, Friends of Russell Square, The Fitzrovia Partnership, Charlotte Street Association, Gordon Mansions Residents Association and The Central District Alliance