

Attention: City of London Budget Committee — Councillors E. Pelozo (Chair), H. McAlister, S. Lewis, P. Cuddy, S. Stevenson, J. Pribil, S. Trosow, C. Rahman, S. Lehman, A. Hopkins, P. Van Meerbergen, S. Franke, D. Ferreira, S. Hillier, and Mayor J. Morgan.

Dear City of London Budget Committee,

I am writing to voice my concern about the 2024-2027 Multi-Year Budget for the City of London, specifically about the funding for the London Police Service. I would like this letter to be added to the public agenda.

I do not support the \$672-million budget ask the London Police Service is making of the City of London from 2024 to 2027. I ask the Mayor and Councillors to reconsider their support for it. While we're told by the police that if they do not receive full funding, London cannot be a safe city, research shows that there are "No consistent associations... found between police funding and crime rates across municipalities, and overall, net increases in spending per capita are not associated with greater net decreases in crime rates" (Seabrook, M. S. et al, 2023). Police do not stop crime, they respond to it. Instead of investing record amounts into policing your constituents, invest in services that build up the community, such as libraries, transit, and social services. If people's material conditions are improved, and their access to services and supports increased, London will then be a safer city.

I am concerned about the continued militarization of London's police services. What do the police see as a use for a second light-armoured vehicle if not to use against its own citizens? Why are they attending SWAT competitions alongside possible war criminals? London police do not encourage community engagement and participation. In fact, for many over-surveilled members of our community, including Black Londoners, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ2+ individuals, and those who are unhoused, police presence actively discourages engagement as they feel unsafe and in danger around police as they and their communities regularly face police violence and abuse. Meanwhile, the library is a welcoming and accessible place that strives to provide more and more basic needs while maintaining its mission amid unprecedented financial challenges.

Why does the LPS not have to patch together grants and donations for a new facility like the many underfunded social services in this city have to on a regular basis? Why are they not willing to budge on a single item in their budget request while essential services such as transit will have to make cuts and changes because they're not receiving their full ask? Your role is to represent and speak for the people — not to vie for re-election. If you fear the backlash from asking the police services to reduce their ask, does that not support the very argument that you should say no to their full ask and show you won't be bullied?

As a resident of Ward 4, every day I see firsthand the impact public policy failings are having on people in our city. I ask that you reconsider allocating the full the London Police Services budget request and instead invest in public transit, public libraries, and other essential social services so that *EVERYONE* may feel safe and engaged in the Forest City.

Sincerely,

Laura Thorne  
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