



# LONDON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

## BOARD MEMBERS

J. SUKHERA, CHAIR  
S. TOTH, VICE CHAIR  
COUNCILLOR M. CASSIDY, MEMBER  
DEPUTY MAYOR J. HELMER, MEMBER  
MAYOR E. HOLDER, MEMBER  
J. LANG, MEMBER

June 18, 2020

Dear Colleagues of the Board and LPS Administration,

### Re: Racism and the Culture of Policing

We are witnessing a historic moment. We have a choice to make. We can, and should, take decisive action on the issues of anti-Black racism and the culture of policing.

Over the course of the past few weeks I have been listening and reading. I have been speaking and consulting with those who have reached out to the Board. I have spoken to each member of the London Police Services Board as well as the London Police Service members and administration. I have also spoken directly to members of London's Black community who have shared their concerns and hopes for a better future for themselves and for their children.

While the Board should recognize our jurisdiction and defer operational matters where appropriate to our Chief, there are some clear actions we can take that are in our purview, and other matters where we can make our advice explicit. In some areas, we must work in direct partnership with other Boards and levels of government to address anti-Black racism in our community.

This document synthesizes key areas of discussion and provides suggested actions for the Board to consider at our June meeting. In addition, I am proposing that we dedicate a substantial portion of our July meeting to listening, engagement, and consultation with thought leaders and experts on anti-racism in policing.

A few general principles for the Board to consider that may guide any decisions on this matter:

1. Wherever possible we should be mindful of the requests from Black community members regarding police presence in their community.
2. Wherever possible we should support improved interactions, partnerships, and trust between London Police and vulnerable members of our community.
3. Wherever possible we should appreciate that incremental reforms are not substantial enough to achieve the transformational change that is necessary to address the scourge of systemic racism in all facets of our community including but not limited to policing, healthcare, community-social services, and other sectors.
4. Wherever possible we should be guided by actions that have a meaningful and sustainable positive impact.

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## 1) Police Funding

We have already adjudicated and scrutinized the budget in the past year. During our review it was apparent that our budget was quite lean by comparison to other jurisdictions. We acknowledged that calls for service have not decreased and there is very little room for reallocation. That stated, there remains an opportunity to ask the Chief where there may be flexibility in the budget. Upon direction from Chief Williams, we should consider any reallocation as an opportunity for reinvestment. Should there be any savings, we should be clear about where we believe this funding should be redirected. As a principle, the Board should advocate for reallocation in areas that will have a meaningful and sustainable impact.

Proposed actions to consider:

- a) Direct Chief Williams to seek where cost savings are possible and report on impact of any such savings.
- b) Provide information to Council as to recommendations on where those funds may/will be re-invested.

## 2) Mental Health Response

There is consensus among all parties that this is an area for improvement. This is a topic we have already attempted to address as a Board. Our past efforts have included advocating for sustainable funding for police-community partnerships. We should continue to collectively advocate for improvements in mental health funding that are directed towards community based initiatives. Given the gravity of this issue and the consensus among disparate parties on the need for change, the Board should consider that any reallocation and/or savings achieved through the budget should be prioritized towards early intervention and prevention in mental health.

Proposed actions to consider:

- a) Direct Chief to report back on mental health calls and trends within LPS.
- b) Collectively advocate for sustainable funding for community-police partnerships in mental health.
- c) Propose cross-sectoral roundtable on anti-racism and mental health crisis response to inform further action.

## 3) School Resource Officers (SROs)

Several members of our community have expressed significant concern about the role of school resource officers. This is an area where more information and engagement with all stakeholders is

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necessary. Although there are some merits to SROs in the literature, there are also legitimate concerns that have been brought forward that the presence of uniformed officers in schools can be triggering and traumatizing for some members of our community. While we must recognize that deployment of officers is ultimately within operational jurisdiction, the Board has a responsibility to continue to engage with concerns that have been posed regarding SROs.

Proposed action to consider:

- a) Suggest further consultation with School Boards and racialized Londoners on SROs.

#### 4) Anti-Racism and Bias in Policing

Systemic racism will not be addressed through one action or in one meeting. The Board should continue to engage with the community and with members of LPS on the issue of racism and bias in our service.

Proposed actions to consider:

- a) Affirm the Board's commitment to addressing racism and bias within our community.
- b) Request the Chief report back on suggestions on how to embed anti-racism initiatives into the existing business plan.
- c) Reallocate the Board's annual travel budget towards training and engagement related to addressing anti-Black Racism

#### 5) Policing Culture

Any discussions regarding policing culture must recognize that policing is a heavily scrutinized and regulated profession. There are multiple systems and independent oversight bodies in place. There have been significant revisions proposed to policing legislation at a provincial level which is ultimately outside of our jurisdiction as a local board.

We must also appreciate the high degree of professionalism, compassion, and commitment to service that is evident within our members. The Board should recognize that there have been significant improvements in transparency and public reporting in the past year.

Addressing concerns that have been raised in the area of policing culture will require partnership and collaboration with all parties. As a Board, we can continue to encourage improvements related to improving transparency, reporting, and enhancing public trust.

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Proposed action to consider:

- a) Request the Chief report back on proposed internal reforms regarding transparency, discipline, and improving culture/climate within LPS.

## 6) Data and Transparency

Community advocates and other jurisdictions have utilized policy to improve collection and transparency regarding race-based data. We can learn from other jurisdictions and thought leaders on how London may be a leader in this area. Improved collection of race-based data, analysis, and transparent public reporting is an important mechanism to address bias in policing. Ongoing community engagement may help reform a race based data collection strategy for LPS.

Proposed actions to consider:

- a) Engage with the community and LPS on co-designing a race-based data collection, analysis, and reporting policy for LPSB.
- b) Suggest the Chief consider working towards a race-based data collection, analysis, and reporting strategy that complements LPSB policy.

Dr. Javeed Sukhera, Chair

London Police Services Board

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