# London’s leadership fails to address escalating crisis in policing, housing, and transport



London's so-called leadership continues to unveil the depths of its inability to manage fundamental issues affecting the capital—policing, housing, and transport—revealing a crisis of leadership that remains unaddressed. During the recent London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee’s review of Mayor Sadiq Khan’s sprawling £20.7 billion budget, it became painfully clear that the city’s problems are compounded by an administration more interested in political posturing than effective solution-finding.

Policing in London is at breaking point. The Metropolitan Police Service is now facing a staggering £260 million funding shortfall, forcing drastic measures that erode public safety. Officers are being pulled from safer schools initiatives, antisocial behaviour teams are being redeployed, and front counters at police stations are being slashed—yet, amid public outcry, the Met is grudgingly maintaining just 27 counters, with only two open 24/7 at Charing Cross and Lewisham. These token gestures do little to hide the underlying truth: 95% of crime reporting now occurs online or via phone, a convenient excuse used to justify cuts and mask a crippling funding crisis.

Meanwhile, the problem isn’t just local—it’s systemic. Experts like Ian Wiggett from the World Policing Advisory make it clear that the root issue is the chronic underfunding of police forces across the country, a legacy of a government more interested in austerity than safety. The police budget has been effectively squeezed since 2010, with the Met left to scrape by as protest policing and bureaucracy consume an ever-growing slice of finite resources. The result? An “officer-isation” of roles, where police officers are bogged down in administrative tasks better suited to civilian staff, stripping away their ability to serve and protect on the streets.

And what is Mayor Khan’s response? An investment of £151 million for 2024-25—a figure that sounds generous until you realize it pales alongside the looming £450 million shortfall projected for 2025-26. Over 4,000 officers could be lost, along with hundreds of support staff, leaving London’s already strained policing capability in utter disarray. Instead of demanding real reforms or holding government accountable for underfunding, the Mayor persists with token gestures while the city’s safety hangs in the balance.

Housing remains another symptom of this mismanagement. The capital’s burgeoning crisis is hastened by a broken system that favors property wealth over affordability. Report after report highlights that London’s housing market is skewed by overseas buyers and a rising concentration of wealth held by older Londoners, distorting prices far beyond local demand. Yet, riddled with half-measures like slight reductions in affordability standards for new developments, the Mayor continues to shy away from the fundamental reforms needed to genuinely address these distortions.

Transport, too, exemplifies a failed approach. With around 60% of TfL’s income derived from fares—fumes of a model long overdue for overhaul—the network struggles. Ridership remains below pre-pandemic levels, partly due to shifting commuter habits driven by flexible working policies. The Mayor’s recent budget offers a superficial fix: freezing bus and tram fares, while raising prices on other services, essentially balancing shortfalls on the backs of everyday Londoners. Meanwhile, costly concession schemes, like the £206 million expense of the 60+ Oyster card in just three years, benefit the wealthy while the poorest foot the bill—a clear warning sign of a flawed and inequitable system.

Ultimately, London’s so-called leadership appears more committed to political appearances than solving these deep-rooted issues. The city’s fiscal and social crises demand bold, decisive action—none of which is on the horizon. Instead, the current administration’s approach continues to kick the can down the road, leaving residents to suffer in silence while the government abdicates its responsibilities. The future of London depends on real leadership—one willing to confront these entrenched problems head-on, not just make superficial adjustments to mask the ongoing decline.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/zone-1-news/police-answering-phones-tfl-money-32722776> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.met.police.uk/news/met-police-progress-in-closing-ps260m-funding-gap-502211> - The Metropolitan Police Service has announced plans to keep 27 front counters open across London, following feedback from the public. Two counters will operate 24/7 at Charing Cross and Lewisham, while 25 others will have reduced hours. Despite these changes, the Met aims to save £7 million to address a £260 million funding shortfall. The decision reflects the evolving nature of crime reporting, with 95% of reports now made online, over the phone, or directly with officers. The Met is also restructuring to focus resources on frontline policing.
3. <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/could-london-lose-thousands-met-officers-2025-26> - The London Assembly has raised concerns about a potential reduction of over 4,000 Metropolitan Police officers due to a £450 million budget gap for 2025-26. The Met's 2025-26 Budget Submission indicates a need to grow the workforce to 38,000 officers and 19,000 staff, but the funding shortfall poses challenges in achieving this goal. The Commissioner has warned that the budget could lead to a reduction of 2,300 officers and 400 staff, which would have a seriously detrimental impact on policing in London.
4. <https://www.london.gov.uk/transport-london> - Transport for London (TfL) is the largest of the Mayor’s functional bodies, with a gross revenue expenditure of £9.6 billion in the 2024-25 budget, accounting for 55% of the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group. The Mayor announced a fares package for 2025, including a freeze on bus and tram fares from March 2025 and a 4.6% increase in London Underground and Rail fares. The budget also includes operating costs of £8.3 billion and capital expenditure of £2.5 billion, reflecting ongoing investments in London's transport infrastructure.
5. <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-press-releases/londoners-deserve-know-extent-police-officer-reduction> - The London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee has urged the Mayor and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to clearly outline the expected reduction in police officers for 2025-26, following a £450 million funding gap. The Committee seeks transparency on the impact of potential savings on MPS services and activities, and requests an update on the Estate Strategy. The MPS has been advised to provide an updated proposal on the level of officer reductions, reflecting the additional funding secured in the January Consolidated Budget.
6. <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/Mayor-earmarks-additional-%C2%A3151m-to-support-the-Metropolitan-Police-and-keep-Londoners-safe> - The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has announced an additional £151 million investment in policing and crime prevention, bringing the total Mayoral funding for the Metropolitan Police to £1.148 billion for 2024-25. This represents a 103% increase compared to the previous Mayor. The additional funding aims to address the £450 million funding gap faced by the MPS and fill the gaps left by previous government cuts. The Mayor has also increased the proportion of the MPS budget provided by City Hall from 19% in 2016 to 27% in the proposed budget for 2024-25.
7. <https://feeds.bbci.co.uk/news/articles/ce374l0ng1wo> - The Metropolitan Police plans to close half the front desks at its stations to save money, reducing the number of counters across London from 37 to 19. This move would break a pledge to have a counter staffed 24/7 in each of the capital's 32 boroughs. A Met Police spokesperson stated that, given the budget shortfall and shrinking size, it is no longer sustainable to keep all front counters open. Consultation is underway, but no changes will be made until later this year.