



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Secretary of State for the Home Office
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

CC:
Sir Mark Rowley QPM
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
Broadway
London
SW1H 0BG

22 July 2025

Dear Yvette,

Re: Cuts to police station front counters

We are writing as South West London MPs, and the London Assembly Member for South West London, regarding the Metropolitan Police's plans to close half of its front desks in London, with others facing reduced hours. You will no doubt understand that this has caused significant worry for our constituents.

First and foremost, we must recognise the brilliant service provided by our local police officers who work incredibly hard to keep our community safe. Yet, we know that years of underfunding and cuts to community policing under previous Conservative Governments, combined with a crisis in recruitment and retention of staff, have taken their toll. Further cuts only put another nail in the coffin of community policing.

Two of our constituencies, Twickenham and Wimbledon, would completely lose their front desks, whilst the operating hours of Kingston police station's front desk would be reduced. Across London, the number of counters will be reduced from 37 to 19.

This comes as our constituents are seeing all types of crime – violent and knife crime, as well as vehicle, bicycle and phone theft – rise across the capital whilst policing numbers fall by 1,700 officers due to insufficient funding. Whilst we recognise that the constituencies we represent are statistically amongst the safest in London, we have all noticed an increase in correspondence from constituents expressing their anxiety about crime in the local area.

The Hamptons • St Margarets • Strawberry Hill • Teddington • Twickenham • Whitton

For Richmond, the closure of the Twickenham and Lavender Hill counters would be a huge blow – particularly as, when Richmond police station was shut down, part of the assurances for residents included access to counters in nearby areas. This is despite many wards in Richmond Park already being a significant distance from Twickenham police station, and the constituency of Richmond Park no longer even having a front desk to lose, as all three of the police stations previously in it have been closed.

Axing Twickenham police station's front counter leaves the entire borough of Richmond without a single public access point for our local police. The planned closures would mean that the closest 24-hour counter for Richmond Borough would be Acton, Sutton or Lambeth.

Many people, from both in and out of the borough, engage with Kingston's significant night-time economy. With reduced hours at Kingston police station's front counter, many people will feel as though their safety is not being prioritised, and that there will be nowhere to go in an emergency.

Under the plan, the front counters at both of Merton Borough's police stations, in Wimbledon and Mitcham, will be closed entirely. Wimbledon police station, which currently offers a 24/7 front counter service, is set to lose this vital public access point under the proposed closures. This means residents will lose the ability to report crimes in person or seek help at their local police stations.

We cannot understate the importance of these front desks for community policing. Being able to go into the local police station is a crucial element of front-line policing, not only providing practical assistance for victims of crime, but also providing a reassuring presence and building relationships with the community. At a time when the Met is trying to build trust, cutting the ability of residents to speak with local police face-to-face is the last thing we should be doing.

The time to protect community policing, and protect people, is now. We urgently ask that you commit to funding the Met Police in full.

Yours sincerely,

MUNIRA WILSON, MP for Twickenham

SIR ED DAVEY, Leader of the Liberal Democrats and MP for Kingston and Surbiton

SARAH OLNEY, MP for Richmond Park

PAUL KOHLER, MP for Wimbledon

GARETH ROBERTS, London Assembly Member for South West London and Leader of Richmond upon Thames Council