

City Of London
Serious
Violence Duty
annual re-fresh
May 2025



Executive summary

As required by legislation this is an annual re-refresh of the City of London's Serious Violence Duty strategy, first published in January 2024¹. The majority of measures in that strategy have now been delivered, with some deferred into 2025/26 or discontinued following further work last year.

Our updated strategic needs assessment analysis shows that, while rising, serious violence in the City remains low in overall volume and that the most serious offences remain very rare. The nature of serious violence – associated closely with the night-time economy and predominantly involving violence with injury offences – has not fundamentally changed since last year. However, sexual offences are increasing (in line with medium-term local and national trends) and there has been a proportionately large (but small in volume) increase in business robberies.

From this we conclude that there are no immediate reasons to alter the priority areas of focus of our initial strategy, and so the City will continue to focus on reducing violence in the night-time economy, reducing sexual and domestic violence, and identifying and mitigating threats and risks from a changing City. This document sets out nine additional actions to target threats (i.e. perpetrators) and vulnerabilities (i.e. potential victims and locations) associated with serious violence.

The most notable change in approach is that this strategy does not include actions to be delivered solely by the City of London Police – these are instead set out in the latest (2025-28) Policing Plan², which has been developed concurrently with this refresh.

A summary of delivery to date is provided at Annex A, with some small alterations to our performance monitoring framework set out at Annex B. There are no changes to the partnership structure and governance arrangements for the Duty in the City of London, which will remain as set out in our 2024 strategy.

¹ Available [here](#)

² Available [here](#)

Section 1: Summary of delivery to date

Our 2024 strategy contained 21 measures of which, at the time of publication:

- 16 have been delivered
- 1 remains ‘live’ but undelivered
- 3 were – following further scoping or developments after publication – deferred or discontinued for 2024/25
- 2 are workstreams that the delivery group was monitoring but not itself delivering, both of which remain ongoing

Full detail of delivery so far is set out in *Annex A* of this document. Most measures have been in place for less than a year, so the evaluation of their impacts is ongoing and not yet fully available for inclusion here. Where relevant, ongoing work associated with completed measures is also set out at *Annex A*. As detailed in Section 3, where relevant, undelivered and deferred measures have been incorporated into our refreshed list of measures for delivery over the next year.

Following publication of our first strategy in January 2024 the City of London received £1 million Home Office grant funding under the GRIP Programme to implement hotspot policing initiatives targeting serious violence and anti-social behaviour, for the financial year 2024/25. The initiatives funded under this grant are also set out at *Annex A*.

The City will, provisionally, again receive £1 million grant funding for 2025/26 and the use of this funding is currently awaiting Home Office approval so is not yet ready to detail here. Nevertheless, the prioritisation of hotspot response initiatives is being informed by the same analysis (with the addition of anti-social behaviour data) that underpins this strategy refresh, so the two are aligned.

Section 2: Updated needs assessment analysis

Our 2024 strategic needs assessment concluded, in summary, that:

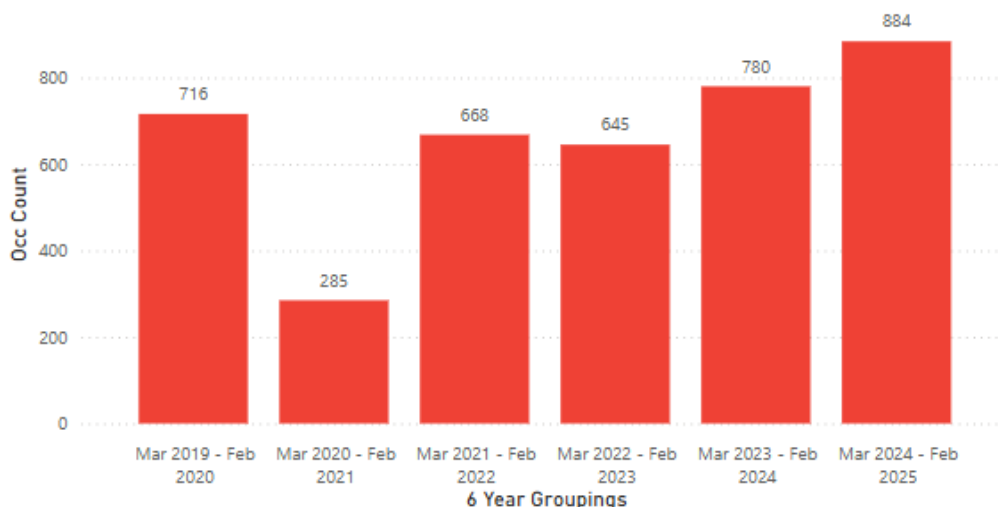
- The City of London records significantly lower volumes and rates of serious violence than other areas of London, including very low levels of the most serious crimes such as rape, weapon-enabled violence, and murder
- Offending is mainly linked to the City’s night-time economy³, occurring primarily in night-time hours and in areas of the City with the busiest night-time economies
- The commonest type of serious violent offending within the City’s definition is violence with injury (in practice, largely assaults without a weapon), though – while remaining low in overall volume – there have been sustained increases in some sexual offences

This analysis has been updated as part of our annual strategy refresh. Figure 1 below shows that volumes of serious violent offending have increased, by 13.3% year-on-year against an increase in overall City crime of 4.1% in the same period.

³ As defined by the ONS, “*night-time economy*” in its broadest sense encompasses any work occurring at night. In this document it refers more narrowly to accommodation, food service, and nighttime entertainment and recreation industries – and in practice predominantly to aspects of these associated with ‘nightlife’ such as pubs, bars, and other licensed premises.

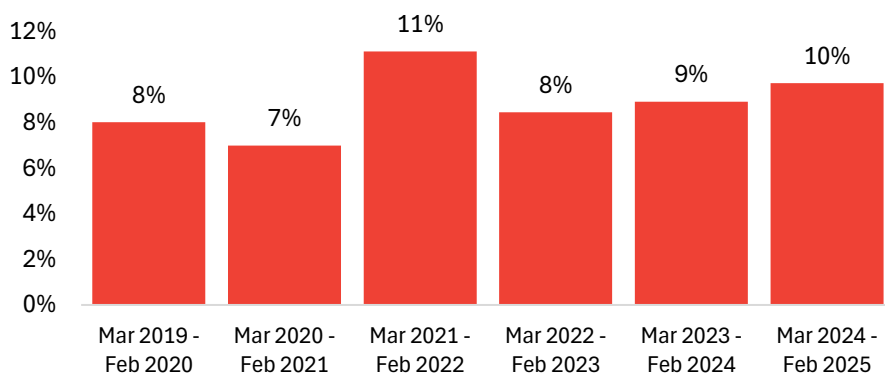
Figure 1 – Serious violence volumes by year – March 2019 to February 2025

Occ Count by 6 Year Groupings



As Figure 2 below shows, however, this has not significantly altered the share of serious violence as a proportion of all City crime, which has risen 1% to 10%. This also remains below national levels – where, on average, serious violence accounts for 16% of all recorded crime.

Figure 2 – Serious violence as a proportion of all City crime – March 2019 to February 2025



In the past 24 months there have been no reported homicides, and two deaths or serious injuries from unlawful driving. Figure 3 below shows the composition of serious violent offending in the City, which remains broadly consistent with past years. Notable points are:

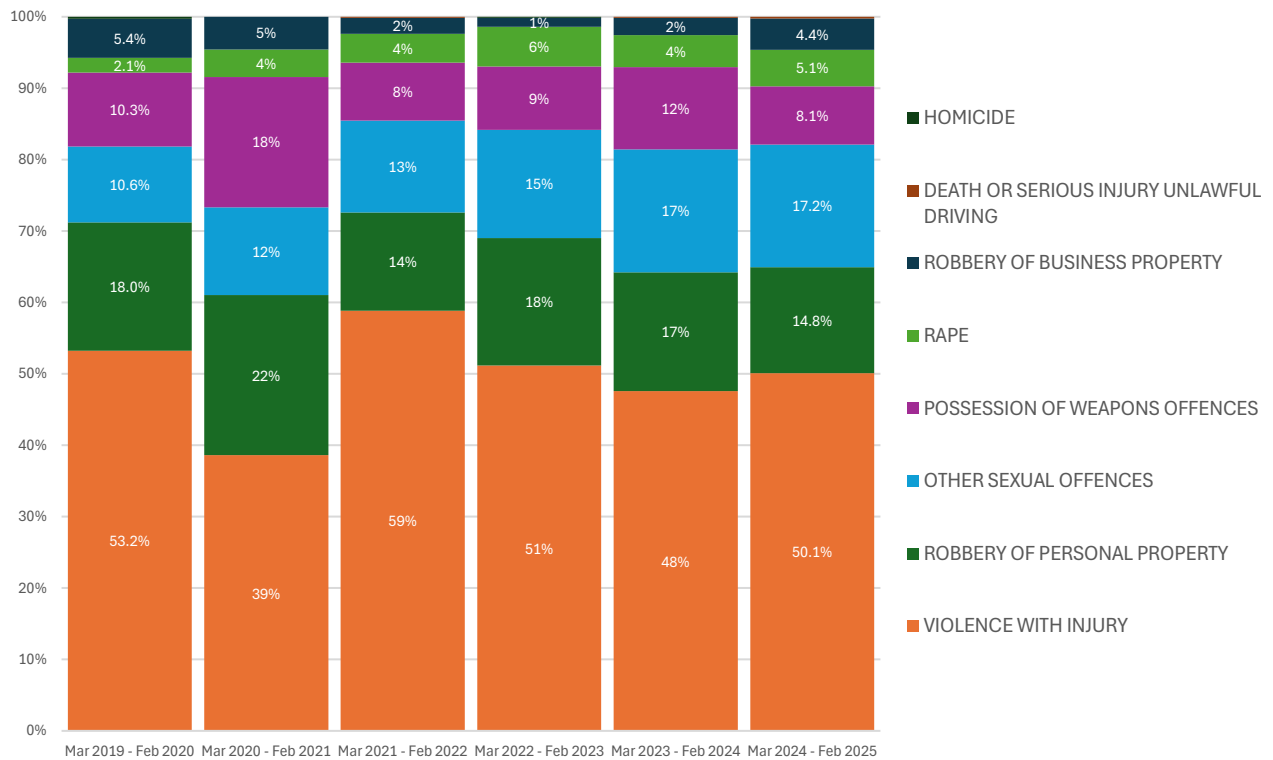
- Violence with injury offences remain the commonest type of serious violence (assault occasioning actual bodily harm and to a much lesser degree assault occasioning grievous bodily harm), and have seen the largest year-on-year *overall* increase⁴. 64% of victims are male, 32% female, and 4% unknown. Violence with injury offences have, to date, been correlated with the volume of footfall in the City.
- Over the 6 year period there has been a gradual but sustained increase in the shares of rape and other sexual offences as a proportion of serious violence – from a total of 12.7% in March 2019 to February 2020 to 22.3% in March 2024 to February 2025. 76% of victims are female,

⁴ An increase of +31 ABH offences (232 to 263), administering poison or drugs with intent to commit an indictable offence +26 (46 to 78), and +12 GBH with intent offences (26 to 34).

20% male, and 4% unknown. This mirrors national trends, and as the Office for National Statistics has observed⁵, notable factors are improvements in recording practices and increased reporting by victims.

- 7% of sexual violence offences are domestic related, with – overall – 6% of serious violence in the City being linked to domestic violence (that is, including non-sexual serious violence with a domestic component). Victims of domestic violence are significantly more likely to be City residents (27% compared to 14% of all serious violence).
- The largest year-on-year *relative* change in share of serious violence is robbery of business property – rising from 2% to 4.4%. An increase in robberies has also been seen nationally, and as our 2024 strategy set out, retail crime is more broadly an area of concern in the City.

Figure 3 – Shares of serious violence by offence category – March 2019 to February 2025



Our updated needs assessment also found that, for the year March 2024 – February 2025:

- 77% of serious violence occurred in night-time economy hours, with 29% occurring in just 18 hours of the week⁶
- 45% of serious violence occurred in four⁷ of the City’s 25 ward areas, with just four streets accounting for 20% of all serious violence by volume

⁵ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁶ Thursday 3-6pm, Thursday into Friday 9pm-2am, Friday into Saturday 10pm-2am, Saturday into Sunday 10pm-4am

⁷ Bishopsgate, Tower, Castle Baynard, Farringdon Within

- If using the Crime Harm Index (that is, adjusting for the harm or severity of the offence), 50% of all harm from serious violence occurred in five of the City's wards⁸
- The City of London Police's positive outcome rate for serious violent offences remains high, at 22.1%, continuing a long-term upward trend (it was 14.4% in the year to February 2022, 15.2% in the year to February 2023 and 21.5% in the year to February 2024)
- Repeat victimisation and reoffending are low – 3.6.% of recorded offences were repeat victims and 7.4% were repeat suspects or offenders⁹
- Serious violence is predominantly linked to people who are not resident in the City (86% of victims, 91% of suspects/offenders) and to adults (94% of victims and 92% of offenders/suspects are 18 or older).
- 5% of serious violence is linked specifically to homelessness or begging – that is, where the victim or offender is identified as homeless or where crime occurrence reports reference homelessness or begging. This is a rising subset of serious violent offending in the City.
- Serious violence involving sexual *and* domestic abuse is very rare, just over 1% of such offending

A 2024 consultation for the City of London Police's next Policing Plan found that the public's top four crime concerns in the City are terrorism (ranked 1st by 31% of respondents), acquisitive crime (by 20%), knife crime (by 19%) and violence against women and girls (15%). Night-time safety and drug-and-alcohol-related violence were ranked as top priorities by only 1% of respondents.

As such, the conclusions of our updated analysis are:

- While rising, serious violence in the City remains low in volume and as a proportion of all local crime, including when compared to national averages
- Broadly, the types of serious violence in the City have not changed substantively and it remains largely lower-harm in nature, though the rising trend of recorded sexual offending continues and robberies of businesses is an area to monitor closely
- There continues to be a very strong 'time and place' element to local serious violence, which occurs mainly in night-time-economy hours and areas
- There has been a significant year-on-year improvement in securing positive outcomes for serious violence cases
- While elements of serious violence feature among local communities' crime and policing priorities, the night-time economy and alcohol-related violence are not perceived as top issues – which, we note, is in line with the first two conclusions above

Though this updated analysis again demonstrates the comparative safety of the City of London, it should be emphasised (as we set out in our 2024 strategy) that in this context any incidents of serious violent offending can have significant effects on public perceptions of safety. Moreover, violent offending and in particular sexual violence are amongst the highest-harm crimes occurring in the City and so their reduction will remain a top priority for crime and safety in the City.

⁸ As at footnote 5, with addition of Portsoken

⁹ Note that these figures are for the period October 2023 to September 2024

Provisional evidence from hotspot response initiatives

The City of London Police has implemented a range of initiatives in 2024/25 targeting serious violence and anti-social behaviour (see *Annex A*), funded by the Home Office's hotspot response programme. As these commenced from April 2024 and concluded in April 2025 a full evaluation of their impacts over the financial year is not available for this document, but will be produced as part of the 'review of uniformed presence' action set out at Section 3, below.

Evidence to date shows that the City of London is on track to deliver its target of 9,000 total additional patrol hours across its various hotspot response initiatives. This additional activity has delivered several hundred additional arrests, stop-searches, and uses of ASB powers as of December 2024. Most encouragingly, the proportion of serious violence recorded in our four identified hotspots was, in Q3 2024/25, the lowest seen in 6 years. Tentatively, this indicates that additional visible patrolling and associated enabling measures are having a meaningful impact on preventing serious violence.

Section 3: Refreshed measures to reduce serious violence

Our 2024 strategy set out three priority areas of focus:

1. Reducing violence in the night-time economy
2. Reducing sexual and domestic violence
3. Proactively identifying and mitigating threats and risks from a changing City

The conclusions of our updated strategic assessment confirm that priority #1 remains central, and priority #3 continues to be important in the context of rising and changing footfall patterns and to monitor and respond to wider changes in the City more generally.

The updated assessment also confirms that, for priority #2, sexual violence remains an important area of focus. However, it shows that domestic violence is a relatively small (6%) share of all serious violence, with very little offending involving sexual *and* domestic violence. For this year, domestic violence will continue to be a component of the priority #2 area of focus, but if it remains in overall terms a small component of serious violence this will be reconsidered in our next annual refresh.

Under the above priorities, measures will continue to aim at making incremental improvements in the targeting of 'threats' (i.e. perpetrators of serious violence) and 'vulnerabilities' (i.e. potential victims and locations of serious violent offending).

Most significantly, this re-refresh has been developed alongside the City of London Police's Policing Plan which sets their operational and organisational priorities for the next three years. As such it does not include additional policing-only measures, which are instead set out in the Policing Plan.

The City Police will continue to be a core partner in the Duty and the implementation and relevant Policing Plan measures will be monitored by the Safer City Partnership sub-group on serious violence (which, as in our initial strategy, will remain the delivery group). It should also be noted that this refresh has been produced alongside the development of the overall Safer City Partnership strategy for 2025-28, which has additional priorities on preventing ASB, violence against women and girls, and acquisitive crimes and an overarching focus on prevention.

Enabling measures on data sharing, analysis, and information-gathering

- We will continue to explore options to improve the regular sharing of ambulance callout and hospital admissions data locally, noting that national work is underway to improve this as part of the NHS' *Information Sharing to Reduce Violence* (ISTV) programme¹⁰

Priority area 1 – Violence in the night-time economy

Measures that target threats

- We will conduct a review of the uniformed presence in the City's night-time economy, incorporating evaluations of our 2024/25 hotspot response initiatives, with a focus on identifying what has worked to prevent and respond to serious violence¹¹

Measures that target vulnerabilities

- We will commission updated research on the City's licensing landscape and review our multi-agency licensing approach in light of its conclusions, focussing on enforcement and intervention policies
- We will conduct specific analysis of lighting and CCTV coverage in violent crime hotspots, drawing on latest evidence from 2024/25 hotspot response initiatives and data, to inform a refresh of their strategic use as crime prevention tools. We will aim to include a specific assessment from a Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) within this analysis.

Priority 2 – Reduce sexual and domestic violence

Measures that target threats

- We will aim to fund a trial of the *Circles* programme to provide behavioural change interventions for sexual offenders and suspects

Measures that target vulnerabilities

- We will review the coverage of screening for domestic abuse in City healthcare settings, both to assess scope for improvement and to make sure that incidents are not being under-reported

Priority 3 – Identify and mitigate threats from a changing City

- We will, through the 'future demand group' established through our 2024 strategy, make a detailed assessment of potential threats and mitigations associated with increased footfall ambitions under the City of London Corporation's *Destination City* programme
- We will deliver specific recommendations to the *Destination City* programme on how new pedestrianised routes can be designed to reduce violence
- In response to the rising proportion of such offending, we will conduct a brief risk and threat assessment of serious violence affecting homeless and rough-sleeper communities in the City, as an area of potential vulnerability

¹⁰ A deferred, altered measure from our 2024 strategy. See *Annex A* for detail

¹¹ A deferred, altered measure from our 2024 strategy. See *Annex A* for detail

Partnership working

The City's implementation of these measures will continue to be overseen and co-ordinated by the Safer City Partnership (SCP)¹², the City's local community safety partnership. The SCP's members include the local authority (City of London Corporation), City of London Police, health, fire and rescue, and probation services, and representatives from the City of London Crime Prevention Association (a local safety, security community and emergency services partnership) and the City's Business Improvement Districts. Alongside the above, we will continue to explore opportunities for broader and deeper partnership working on serious violence through the SCP.

¹² Further detail available at <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/community-and-safety/safer-city-partnership>

Annex A : Detail of delivery to date – 2024 strategy and hotspot response interventions

Measure	Current status	Ongoing action
Conduct more regular and more sophisticated surveying of community attitudes	Delivered - New City Police 'Commonplace' survey platform is in place	Ensure ongoing regular sharing of survey outputs
Fund a part-time analyst in the Safer Business Network to map City crime data	Delivered – An analyst has been funded and Safer City Partnership receives regular reporting on this work	The business engagement officer in the Safer Business Network, funded by the City Corporation, will link ongoing reporting of this work to the Corporation’s community safety team, and the SCP’s Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) delivery group
Expand the use of community safety patrolling in the night-time economy	Delivered – Parkguard Ltd is providing expanded patrolling up to April 2025 and reporting in detail on activity	Assess impacts of patrol activity and explore options to maintain beyond April 2025
Help establish cross-borough problem-solving team on ‘bridge crime’	Delivered – City Police and Corporation are regular participants, up to end of project in April 2025	Deepen BAU collaboration on bridge crime with boroughs
Assess options to strengthen licensing system further	Delivered - Options to strengthen have been discussed within the partnership, concluding current system is effective and proportionate, subject to further detailed research	Commission independent research into City licensing landscape
Fund a trial re-introduction of Taxi Marshalling scheme	Delivered - Scheme is active and partnership is receiving periodic updates on its work	Review its outcomes in more detail
Re-institute ‘safety thirst’ scheme for licensing	Delivered - Scheme was re-launched in early 2024	Monitor uptake among City licensed premises
Licensed Premises receive regular training on WAVE and Ask for Angela	Delivered - Partnership continues to fund rollout of this training to licensed premises, with Ask For Angela now recommended under City licensing regime	The business engagement officer in the Safer Business Network, funded by the City Corporation, will monitor and expand coverage of this training in the City, now reporting to the VAWG delivery group

Expand the use of Touch DNA	Delivered - Expanded use of Touch DNA has been funded and is now operational	Monitor usage of new service
Hotels given training on recognising vulnerability and exploitation	Delivered - Engagement with hotels through the Licensing Forum has increased and Licensing Manager is in regular contact with security leads at major hotels. Periodic training sessions were delivered over 2024	Ongoing police engagement with the hotel sector – <i>Operation Makesafe</i> -will now be reported to the VAWG delivery group
Increase police engagement with the hotel sector		
Scope options to implement Project Vigilant	Delivered - Project Vigilant (now <i>Servator VAWG</i>) has been implemented with Home Office hotspot funding, up to April 2025. Officers have received dedicated training, providing ongoing benefits.	Review impact as part of wider review of uniformed deployment in the night-time economy
Fund a business engagement officer in the Safer Business Network	Delivered - Post has been funded and partnership receives regular updates on the work	Business engagement officer will continue to deliver range of work, as set out above, reporting to VAWG delivery group
Seek to become a leading 'beacon' member of EIDA	Delivered – City Corporation's Beacon membership announced in April 2024. It is now meeting regularly with EIDA on implementing internal domestic abuse policy improvements and scoping wider engagement opportunities	Oversee improvement to City policies and pursue external engagement opportunities, in tandem with VAWG delivery group
Set up performance monitoring framework for strategy	Delivered – A dedicated serious violence analyst is now in post and regularly producing this	Review metrics as part of strategy refresh – see <i>below, Annex B</i>
Undertake short review of drink-spiking offences	Delivered – A review has been completed and presented to Corporation committees in February 2025	
Establish a 'future risks group' (<i>now future demand group</i>)	In progress - Terms of Reference, participants, and areas of focus have been agreed but the group has not yet met	N/A – incomplete

Improve data-sharing between City Police and partner organisations, with focus on health data	Deferred / rescope - Discussions with NHS concluded there was no scope for unilateral improvement in City in 2024, as the wider Information Sharing to Reduce Violence scheme is being refreshed across NHS.	Explore narrower options for improved sharing of health data – see <i>above</i> , Section 3
Conduct assessment of uniformed presence and deployments in the night-time economy	Deferred - Subsequent award of £1m hotspot policing funding means this has been deferred to 2025 so that impacts can be captured in evaluation	Deliver this assessment in 2025 – see <i>above</i> , Section 3
Explore options for local implementation of Project PIPA behavioural change programme for domestic abuse offenders	Discontinued / rescope - Internal review concluded City does not have sufficient volumes of eligible domestic abuse perpetrators to justify bespoke scheme. Discussions about joining a London-wide scheme with MOPAC are ongoing.	Review options to join scheme following conclusion of London trial. Separately, the City Corporation has now partnered with the Hackney Domestic Abuse Intervention Service to provide access to perpetrator programmes for resident City offenders
Implement Operation Soteria Bluestone	Wider work being monitored – Implementation progressing in line with national delivery dates. Significant improvements seen in rape charging rates and sexual offence positive outcome rates.	Continue to monitor
Undertake detailed review of City Police VAWG capabilities	Wider work being monitored - City Police has reviewed its capabilities and submitted return to HMICFRS, on which it is awaiting feedback	Continue to monitor

Hotspot response initiatives

With £1 million Home Office grant funding for the hotspot response (aka GRIP) programme, the following initiatives have been delivered in the City in 2024/25 to target serious violence and anti-social behaviour:

- Additional patrolling by Dedicated Ward Officers, Proactive Acquisitive Crime Team, and Cycle team
- Additional taxi and private hire cab checks
- Additional patrolling and dedicated training for officers under the *Servator* VAWG tactic to combat sexual offending in the night-time economy
- Additional CCTV monitoring staff
- Dedicated project analyst
- A programme of enhanced problem-solving training for frontline officers and staff
- Investment in improved geo-spatial patrol and hotspot mapping software and analytics

Changes to Performance Monitoring Framework

Our 2024 strategy included a performance monitoring framework detailing the metrics we would use to understand serious violence in the City and the impacts of strategy measures.

Having reviewed this framework as part of this strategy re-fresh, the following will be changed:

- *Hospital admissions for knife & sharp instrument wounds* – will be recorded annually instead of quarterly, as the very low volume of such incidents provides limited insight on a quarterly basis
- *Number of outstanding high-harm suspects for SV offences* – will be amended to ‘number of outstanding suspects for SV offences’ as the ‘high-harm’ distinction is unnecessary in this context
- *Victim satisfaction metrics* overall will be reconsidered in longer time. A combination of very low response rates (due to low underlying occurrences) and the fact that higher-harm-and-risk victims are not surveyed as a matter of policy mean that insights from these metrics as previously specified is limited. An alternative way to gain statistically-robust insights on victim experiences and outcomes specifically for serious violent offences requires further consideration.