

Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17 March 2026

Dear Dame Karen,

Independent Review of Police Force Structures

I am writing to inform you that I am today launching an Independent Review of Police Force Structures.

The reforms I set out in the Police Reform White Paper represent the most significant reform of policing structures in nearly 200 years. The current policing model was built for a different century, and it has not kept pace with the increasing challenges we face from modern day criminality.

Our policing reforms will deliver a new world class National Police Service focussed on national, international and online crime as well as delivering functions once across the whole of policing. Fewer, larger forces will have the capabilities they need to carry out specialist investigations like murder and rape, with local policing areas focussed on local priorities and tackling everyday crimes communities face. These changes will deliver the right policing in the right places so that local forces can protect their communities whilst national policing protects us all.

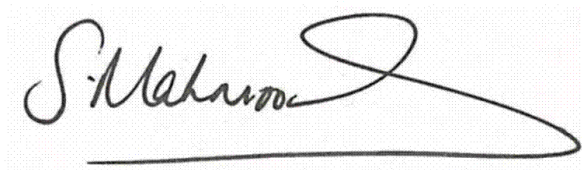
Restructuring the 43-force model is complex, and I am keen to learn from previous attempts. The Independent Review of Police Force Structures will engage widely to make recommendations on the optimum size and configuration of police forces, their governance and accountability arrangements, how local policing can be optimised through Local Policing Areas and options for implementation. This includes recommendations on pathfinder mergers that could take place in this Parliament. I am publishing the Terms of Reference for the Review today. They will be available to view on gov.uk.

I have appointed Lord Bernard Hogan-Howe to lead this review. Lord Hogan-Howe comes to this role with considerable experience in policing, including as Chief Constable of Merseyside Police, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service and, and the Inspectorate. He brings a deep understanding of operational matters to best inform a move to fewer, larger police forces.

Lord Hogan-Howe will issue his full report this Summer, with an interim report delivered to me partway through the review. The review is independent of Government and of policing, though I of course expect it to engage extensively with stakeholders with an interest in the policing system.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and I will continue to keep the Home Affairs Select Committee updated on the review and its recommendations.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mahmood', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP