Appendix 1

Budget and Performance Committee
Thursday 16 September 2010

Transcript of Item 6: Front Line Policing

John Biggs (Chairman): Welcome everybody to today's Budget and Performance Committee. Can I welcome our guests and thank them very much for coming. This is the first of the Committee's meetings looking at frontline policing which is a very topical issue, given the funding constraints that we are anticipating; and in the context of many years of growth in police numbers in London. We have planned two sessions on this issue: today's and a second session in December with the Deputy Commissioner, Tim Godwin, and Kit Malthouse [Deputy Mayor for Policing] as our guests.

Today we will see you as our expert external advisers to this Committee. We will also have one or two other conversations with people and we are doing a lot of deskwork because we think that this is quite an important issue. When we are in the Assembly we always talk about police numbers as a very sacred issue but we are trying as a Committee to get beyond that and look at some of the more detailed questions of what we actually mean and what we actually expect from people.

I'd like to invite our guests to introduce themselves very briefly.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I'm Betsy Stanko, the Head of Strategy, Development and Research Analysis in the Metropolitan Police.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I'm Bernard Hogan-Howe, Her Majesty's Inspector of Police covering London which includes, obviously, the Metropolitan Police and also the City of London - I have other responsibilities which are wider - but probably that is particularly relevant for today.

John Biggs (Chairman): And a former Chief Constable.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Yes, from Merseyside. I was also Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police from 2001 to 2004.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Dr Tim Brain, former Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and Association of Police Officers lead on finance for five years. I am now an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Cardiff University.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): Professor Marian FitzGerald, Visiting Professor of Criminology at University of Kent. For several years I was one of the authors of a major study of policing for London; a study of police and community relations in London and I have watched developments since then with great interest.

John Biggs (Chairman): Thank you very much. Without further ado then, I will start with what is hopefully a good opening question which is: how should we as policy makers and how should the police respond to the public's aspiration for more police on foot patrols. Whenever we talk to people they say that they want more police, I think we need to burrow a bit further into that.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): The question is, assuming first that foot patrol is the answer to safety in itself and it is a standard response from many people on any survey. I run a public attitude survey in London. We question 20,000 people a year, which is 5,000 people a quarter. It enables us to basically interject into the Metropolitan Police a ground level understanding of people's needs, wants and expectations of policing.

From that work we are able to take a look at borough-wide differences but I am not here to talk about that at this point, I am here to talk much more widely about what it is that people want and expect from policing. Visibility is one of those main topics that we certainly do ask about. We are using, in the Metropolitan Police, confidence in local policing as our main measure of the way in which people expect things from police; that is, we ask them, "Do you think your local police in your area do a good job?" We have been asking that question over a number of years.

We know that what drives that question is good engagement, fair treatment, effective policing and alleviating anti-social behaviour. Those are the four main drivers. Visibility is a part of that but visibility by itself will not necessarily deliver to Londoners across the board better safety, better access, better engagement. We know that some people, for example, all they want from police is good information. They want to know what is going on in their local area, what are the police doing about it and what they can do if they need to get in touch with police. So that is actually critical again in terms of counterbalancing visibility; so it is not about bodies on the street in uniform necessarily, it is about a whole service around information, accessibility and using our channels of access in a smarter way.

So visibility, yes, it is one of those kinds of things that people say but it is, to me, almost a common sense option.

John Biggs (Chairman): What are the other indicators that the public perceive as being important to policing?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): It differs between those who have contact and those that do not have contact. Those who do not have contact want good information; they want to know what is going on, where it is going on and what the police are doing about it. To me, that is something that the police service can be pro-active about; it is also something which was very much involved in the delivery of localised ward level policing in London.

Give people information about what people are telling them locally and what the kinds of issues and concerns are. That feedback group can become more sophisticated; and they can rely on better and different kinds of technologies. There is room for improvement in terms of the ways in which people get information and those who need police; that is those who ask them for help and assistance particularly on crime expect to be treated fairly, treated seriously and that the contact with the police is very good. So we know that those who have good contact and are treated well have more confidence in police than those who are not treated well have less.

John Biggs (Chairman): There is an interface, if you like, between the fear of crime, which we might be trying to reassure people on, and their likely experience of crime. Most people will tell you they live in area where they fear crime. Then I think most other people will recognise that the area they live in may not actually be as safe as the area down the road or may be more safe than the area down the road and that they would rationally recognise that policing priorities might be better directed towards places where there are more problems. How do you, in terms of attitudes, deal with that?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Within my academic life, fear of crime is one of my research specialities. One of the things I have

learned from the kinds of work I have done in the Metropolitan Police is that information is an antidote to fear. That is a very important point.

We know that in all analyses of fear of crime, the two categories of people who say that they fear crime the most are those who are women and those who are elderly. As I approach both of those categories together, one of the things that is quite important is that you cannot change being a woman and you cannot change getting older.

So, in terms of policing, we need to be smarter in terms of thinking about fear of crime; it is much more about a defused sense of anxiety. What our research tells us is that those who know about, for example, serious crime, those that actually experience things, are the keys to telling us how to do policing better; we should pay attention and deal with those who identify problems because, again, we know those who identify problems can help us with the problem-solving process around better policing locally.

The other thing I have learned my from my survey is that people who live in London, they pay their taxes to a borough, they live in a ward and that ward can be contiguous to sometimes three boroughs or more. The other important part about this is that locally based problem-solving has also got to be informed by as much diffused information across borders as well as within borders. We can talk about that. So, in terms of thinking about local policing, we just have to be clear about the kinds of boundaries we are talking about and not bound and bind local policing teams into areas that they themselves know need information across some of those boundaries.

John Biggs (Chairman): The likelihood of seeing a foot patrol in Gloucestershire, a very large county with a fairly small police force is far less than even in London; so how do you deal with that issue, or how did you in your past life deal with that issue?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): The first key to unlocking that was resources. Until about the beginning of the last decade, the police service had enough resources to just about fulfil two of its principle three tasks. Those three tasks are: to respond to every incident; to investigate every reported crime; and to provide some community base for its work. We could do the first two of those reasonably well and increasingly well after the slow build-up of resources and the uncertain build up of resources from the 1970's.

What we could not do, and could only provide loosely, was a community base for that the work. For example, in Gloucestershire we had 16 sector areas - I think we call them Inspector Neighbourhood Areas - and there was a community police officer for each one. That was the best we could do with the resources we had, but it is not beat patrol in the way that people would like to see it. We have been able to rectify that to a healthy extent in the last decade through two routes; more police officers and, of course, the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) which, in Gloucestershire, are fully integrated into the neighbourhood teams and have worked very well on that basis. So that is how Gloucestershire was able to do it but you have a two-lane approach to providing presence, and I talk about presence rather than visibility.

You have to have a two-lane approach in a rural area because you do have intensely urban areas like the City of Gloucester but you have, obviously, very large stretches of countryside as well. The key to unlocking it has been resources.

John Biggs (Chairman): And do you find a different model works depending on the topology of the area that you are looking after? We have a one size fits all neighbourhood policing model in London, and although I know we are not trying to reinvent neighbourhood policing here today, would it make sense in Gloucestershire to have a very different model? So in the centre of Gloucester, people might want to walk

around, and in the countryside of Gloucestershire they probably need a car (or Olympic style cycling prowess).

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Well, there were a variety of solutions to that. We had mobile police stations as well. In essence, you are correct that there was a two style approach to it. One of the problems with the national approach to neighbourhood policing was it was extremely centrally prescriptive and, indeed, over prescriptive and ignored the essential variations that must take place nationally.

John Biggs (Chairman): We will move on in a second. Merseyside is somewhere between London and Gloucestershire on the map; I suppose it is a bit less urban. It is a lot less urban than people might imagine from what I am told.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): There are a lot of people in a very small area. What we try to do- I think you see it around the country and the Metropolitan Police are doing it but I am going really to address this even more in the future - is to apply resources towards where it is most needed; the problem is probably repeat offenders, victims and locations. So I think the one size fits all solution is going to be quite difficult. The great benefits we have had over the last ten years is the significant increase in resources of which I think the Metropolitan Police has benefited from more the most. When you look back to 2001 when the Metropolitan Police should have been around 26,500 strong, it was around 26,000, it was actually under-resourced at that time.

Today the Metropolitan Police has over 33,000 police officers. So during that time there has been a big increase and at the same time there has been an increase of 5,000 PCSOs (and that is around 50 per cent of the nation's PCSOs. So by any standard, that is a huge increase; you are talking about a 25 per cent increase in police and then obviously again you have got Community Support Officers (CSO) who had never existed before. The great opportunity that has presented is that in terms of foot patrol, the CSO generally should be walking and meeting people. That group was not there before and they cannot be redeployed easily; they are generally not driving vehicles so they are not re-deployable.

They have generally not got the skills base that a police officer would have or the powers; so generally they are not re-deployed to other things. This means they are able to go walking in an area and keep that relationship going. So there has been a huge surge and the Metropolitan Police model is similar to what I think you see around the country, police led but resourced mainly by CSOs. You usually have an inspector structure as well over the neighbourhood. So I suppose first of all that has been a great opportunity. I think in the future the opportunities will have to be to concentrate those resources where they are going to be most met, where they are going work most.

John Biggs (Chairman): Returning to the question of public confidence, how does that interface with what you are talking about?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Well, I would say three things really: one is that, clearly, in the neighbourhoods where people live you get different patterns. That is indicated in London, Westminster Village which are both different to Croydon for example. I think, first of all, where people live they want to have a relationship, the second is where people group, so people group in Westminster at certain times of the day but later in the evening you do not see as many of them around but in the West End you will.

So I think there has to be a patrolling pattern that meets where thousands and millions of people congregate. It can be the railway stations. I n New York they actually they do it pretty well and I think there is more opportunity perhaps for the Metropolitan Police to concentrate on that. The third one I

would suggest, the one that we pushed in Merseyside, was that we applied resources where there were more problems; we had to have an anti-social behaviour squad. So they went round to try to resolve the big repeat locations, the big repeat offender areas. The fourth one is to really work with the schools.

There is a need to research two things. For about 60 per cent of the people in a community, their most precious asset is their school - they might be an uncle, they might be an aunt. If you can get patrolling patterns that coincide with when people meet their children or when the children are leaving this really reassures the public. So it is a hub for actually investing time in because you meet the parents, you meet the school, and you build up a relationship and you are seen.

So I think the critical thing for me would be to invest where people are and then make sure that you keep a regular patrolling pattern. It is a challenge because there are always things to distract you but I think the more that you are able to keep to that type of pattern, the more you have got potential for reassuring people.

John Biggs (Chairman): Professor FitzGerald, how would you answer this question about how we manage public expectation where resources are reducing?

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): I do not want to get bogged down in detail about the limitations of public surveys and the conflicting results that we are getting from the proliferation that we have had recently. I have actually written a detailed briefing paper which I can circulate to Members which goes into some of that and a lot of other things I will be touching on.

One of the things that the community is going to have to grapple with is that resources have expanded like wildfire and particularly in London over recent years, but now we are facing a time when some hard choices have to be made. It cannot just be around preserving frontline policing; it is about how we get the balance and that is going to raise some big questions about how the current balance is managed between the visible policing, of which there is an insatiable public demand for, and always has been, and always will be. The more you throw out there, the more they will always want. What is it delivering in terms of the core business of policing and how much of your resource do you need to devote to the invisible or less visible aspects of policing (including dealing with serious organised crime and major threats to security which affects very few members of the public and which is a lot of the work that goes on including preventive work that people will be unaware of).

So I think, really, the community, from my point view, has to take a long hard look at what is the current balance between the allocation at the centre, the allocation to boroughs and within that what is the balance between the visible and the less invisible aspect of policing. Is that balance right?; I mean, some figures I have just came across this morning, which I will build into a revised version of the paper that I mentioned, suggests that there has been a huge increase in officers in the Metropolitan. I think 30-something per cent since 2001 compared to 15 per cent across the country overall; so a vast, vast expansion in numbers.

Where have those officers gone? What I found out first thing this morning was that nearly 40 per cent of officers are in central services, the allocation between boroughs. I will do a bit more work on it but it looks a bit odd to me in terms of levels of crime. So what is the current basis of the allocation? Get a grip on that, then say what sort of cuts are we facing. And then where should those cuts fall in order to maximise the way in which everything works together?; I think there are some critical issues there to deal with in order that we can manage economies of scale where everything works better together, where we can preserve services but we are working smarter.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): For me there are two issues in this debate: one is the public perception and what the public wants, and the other is what is effective policing and the question is whether visible policing is the kind of bridge to that. I think our next question, Chair, is more about that and the role of visible policing in actual tackling crime, crime prevention and so forth. So can I just focus more on the first part and pick up where Professor Stanko left of.

One school of thought says that if you get crime down eventually that will affect public attitudes; the other school of thought may say, "No, perception is reality, you have got to manage the perceptions and manage the realities separately." So what you appeared to be saying to us was that the public could be reassured and their insatiable desire for visible policing could actually be modified by alternative routes of giving them information. So can you pursue that line of thought?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): We actually have done probably the only published experiment on that and that has now been published in the British Journal of Criminology where we experimented giving local information to people to see whether or not it actually had an impact on their confidence; so that information is now in the public domain and has been reviewed

What we have to understand is there are different kinds of people who often live cheek by jowl and the nice thing about London, I think, that mitigates against higher crime is that actually very different kinds of people live on the same street. So, in my street you have got council flats, you have got owned houses, you have got all kinds of owned flats; a mixture of people living in the same places. So they all have very different policing needs and if you can give people the kind of information that they need, those who may never have contact with the police whatsoever, if they are not victims of crime, if they are not concerned about anti-social behaviour that directly affects them.

People come and go; the important thing is knowing the service is there if they need it. The other thing is that, in the research that we have done, half of the people in London say they see a police officer at least weekly; that is pretty high.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): When Professor FitzGerald was with us four years ago, my recollection was that the essential thing that came out of that scrutiny that we did was that the Safer Neighbourhoods Teams were all about fear of crime and not crime itself; that was what Ian Blair [former Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, 2005-2008] came and told us. If you are saying that a leaflet through the door, a text message - especially given that we are all on our smart phones every hour - would actually reassure us more than having expensive bodies partially patrolling some of the time, then that is a very important conclusion. I wonder what others would say to that as a route that we should be going down.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): We know that crime is not equally distributed in London and that is absolutely true for local areas. So, where there are places where the need for policing to intervene in crime - because actually serious organised crime happens in neighbourhoods; people live next door to crack houses; they are neighbourhood residents - it is very important to know that policing is never separated from crime prevention and from doing something about crime.

What we have been doing over the past five years in the maturation of Safer Neighbourhoods is recognising that there are very different ways of responding to local environments, depending on what that local environment is. So what you are trying to do is match the policing need to the kinds of crime in that particular area; of course it is not absolute. Then in terms of smarter policing, can I assure Marian that, the work we are doing around getting prepared for the Comprehensive Spending Review is actually focused on

doing the kinds of analysis necessary in order to take a look at what smarter policing would look like in order to stack the kind of localised need with other kinds of support needs across the whole of the service.

I know that criticism is always about silence, but when you put those together through an analytic product you can then police better.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): I'm taking it as read that the hotspots and the need for response and so forth is there as well as the sort of targeted intelligent processes. Specifically regarding the additional visible policing overlay. Can we wind that all up and resort to leaflets and text messages or not?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): If I could just make an observation. Not everywhere adopts such a segmented, dare I say, attitude rather than approach to what neighbourhood teams or their equivalent names do in their area. Certainly in Gloucestershire we would be looking for the neighbourhood teams to be engaged in problem solving on behalf of communities, not simply visibility; visibility is part of one of the problem solving techniques that you have at your disposal.

So the spring for action are the problems that communities face. Genuine confidence – and not the measure that was the confidence measure of the last Government (which I think was an extremely unhelpful definition of confidence) in policing is about more than just having a feel good factor; it is about the belief that the police in your area, whatever resource you plug into, will solve the problems that affect you. I had better just mention the problem with serious and organised crime and the impact that could have on a neighbourhood's, confidence is a much broader measure.

Last night, I was watching the tail end of a programme on Bobby Moore – of all the unlikely things for me because I am not a football fan – however, his pub burned down in the East End two decades ago. The problem the police faced then was getting access to intelligence; they had much less evidence that would help them identify the perpetrators; and that is about confidence.

Confidence is not simply about how good you feel about the police in your area or how much you see the police in your area.

John Biggs (Chairman): If you see them all time but they are useless that is probably not quite as good as rarely seeing them but having your problems solved.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): A very strong juxtaposition but exactly a good summary.

John Biggs (Chairman): Are there any other thoughts on that?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): The first thing for me, I think, is that it is not either/or; I think it has to be both and I do not think you can leaflet people and try to persuade them it is a good idea not to see a police officer. I think really you have got to do some straight talking about it. The public keep saying they want to see police officers and if we are not careful, the service will keep saying, 'Actually, you do not really need that'. I think you have got to get to the bottom of that because I do think you need to have a level of patrolling from the available resources. I think if you tried to persuade the public that it is not a good idea it does not work; it just does not run. I think it is really sensible to at least get a level of patrolling and meet some of that need.

My second point goes into what Marian was saying, which is what percentage of resources that are allocated to the Metropolitan Police – £3.5 billion – are put into territorial policing. At most, it is around 61

per cent. If you looked at the other 39 forces, their average is three-quarters in territorial policing to a quarter in the rest. Now the reason why in London that is different, is before you start allocating the pots between the 32 boroughs, which is where Marian was going to, you should ask, are you content that that percentage is right. It has broadly been the same probably as long as the Metropolitan Police has been there, certainly for the last 10 to 20 years; so are you content with that percentage.

I think the second thing is that the specialist area, the 40 per cent of the Metropolitan Police usually has a very strong and well articulated argument for why it needs more resources. You could go to Croydon and they will keep telling you they need more patrolling officers but a Counter Terrorist Unit would have a very clear argument as to why it needs a rape investigation unit. So I think the specialist can actually make a well articulated case for growing their resources and you might want to keep asking the question with a reducing murder rate why the murder team is the same size. Now there will be reasons that murder investigation has moved on, you need disclosure officers, a lot more forensic analysis, the investigation may have just changed over the years; I accept that entirely.

Now I think you have to keep asking these questions because otherwise the resources remain where they have been traditionally and it may be that that needs to be looked at.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): Four quick points. That confirms my sense that we have got to look at front line policing in that wider context. We have also got to look at different types of frontline policing. Frontline policing is not just Safer Neighbourhoods; it is also response teams, it is also squads to deal with public order - that sort of visible policing. So a lot of that needs unpacking and contextualising.

I had a lot of concerns when I was doing policing for London about that. Yes, London has special needs, a national capital, international responsibilities and so on. Once you have got the balance right, how do you preserve what the boroughs have and give them control and continuity over how that can be used? I think that a lot of what is in boroughs is not used most effectively because of the depredation of the centre. I think that is a big issue. Information makes all the difference, yes, but what sort of information?

People do not believe statistics and most of them do not actually like statistics. Most people's attitude and perceptions are formed by personal experience, as Betsy mentioned, whether that is good or bad. That affects very few of the public, but personal experience, what they hear about from other people including war stories, rumour and so on and what comes through the media does. If we want to talk about how you actually change people's opinion, you have to take account of all of those. For some it may be using the media to actually counteract some of the rumour and myth and so it will not come through the use of statistics. Visibility and accessibility are important.

One of the things that came out in a policing for London study was that people were saying that because, in the good old days when it was thought to be more efficient, a police officer patrolling would only come across a burglary in progress once every ten years, so what was the point; that was the orthodoxy then. They were all in cars trying to meet target times for response, putting on the blues and twos [flashing lights and sirens] and people were saying, 'All we ever see is them rushing past with sirens blazing and the yellow boards telling us about a serious incident'. That was actually raising fear of crime, so that need for a visible, accessible presence remained; but what you do with that was what my concern was at the last enquiry.

How does it join up with and contribute to, in a unique and particular way, the core business, the policing; that is what I think Tim touched on in terms of the problem solving - the long-term stuff. They are just not there. You cannot afford the luxury of them just plodding around generating more confidence; however you may be able to measure that.

Darren Johnson (AM): In terms of visibility and public engagement - we have talked about patrols but what role do local police stations and front counters play in that and play in the public perception and so on. How important are they?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): I cannot speak for London but I can speak for Gloucestershire and the answer is increasingly less. If you are looking at where the principle point of contact between public and police is, it will be in your control room or contact centre. The number of telephone calls mainly that you get, increasingly electronic transactions, but telephone calls is a key area, particularly since the way the old document producing forms have changed because everything now is on huge databases that can be checked very easily. That used to generate a lot of people coming into police stations to produce their driving licence, certificate of insurance, MOT, etc; that has dwindled. I cannot speak for London.

Your neighbourhood base is more about something else than it is about contact these days.

Darren Johnson (AM): The neighbourhood base in my ward is not publicly accessible or publicly advertised.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): That presents a difficulty because to actually keep that station open 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, you are going to require about six or seven full time staff or equivalent to do that. That is a very heavy penalty to pay for perhaps having one or two people come to the station a day. It is another version of what we have just been talking about, which is confidence.

Darren Johnson (AM): So you are saying if we get the visibility right and the communication right in other ways we do not actually need the local police stations?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): That is not what I am saying, no. What I am saying is that your starting point was how important the contact is. In terms of actual contact, there are other areas that are more important. In terms of confidence, you need to look at how you feel about your area. It is like the local Post Office or the local shop or the local school: it says something about your area and it then gets meshed into this bigger issue of confidence. If I could just say before I finish, it may be different where you have your main stations - which have customer centres - which generate other reasons for public access.

Richard Tracey (AM): Of course, you will be aware that what we hear from our constituents is that most certainly they want to see police officers on the beat.

One question I would like to put to particularly those who have actually been serving officers is the one that has come up quite a bit recently with the Commissioner. That is whether you need two police officers patrolling together constantly which is one of the major beefs of a good many of our constituents; although as the Commissioner has himself said that are a good many occasions now when one is OK, providing the safety factors are there and so on. What do you think about that for a start?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): In principle it is right. There are no two ways about it. I think what you have to do is you have got to take your own staff with you and I think what you can sensibly do and, I think this is what they do in the Metropolitan Police, is risk assess each of the beats.

If you ask someone to walk in particular areas at certain times of the day when everyone knows that is actually quite challenging then it is probably wise to make sure that you have got those two officers joined together. I think the challenge is to make sure that is happening consistently and this is where the

Metropolitan Police, I think, through their governance and themselves need to show that - what the targets are for their officers patrolling lone at certain times of the day.

So I think the idea, first of all in principle has got to be right, this country is a safe country and if police officers cannot walk alone then who can! So, I think that has got to be right. I think the only overlay I will put on that, is that there are certain times a day in certain areas where you are wise to make sure that you are at least dual patrolling; that usually pays you dividends because you have got officers who will intervene in things that previously they might have thought twice about. You just have to work out, strategically, what can you achieve and then find out why you are doing it, because if not, people can default to their comfort zone.

Richard Tracey (AM): Dr Brain, do you agree?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Yes, the only thing I would add to that is that what will act against a doubling up, double crewing, double patrol, is active local supervision and that will be, if you prefer active local leadership principally Sergeant and Inspector level. Now the Metropolitan Police have rather more Inspectors than Sergeant's than the rest of the country per police officer. How they are distributed I do not know, but they are the ones who are crucial in making a sensible risk-based approach to double crewing happen because otherwise, as Bernard says, the default will be to the comfort zone. Because officers operate on confidence as well, somewhere towards the middle of the 1990s there was a real crisis in confidence in officers patrolling and responding. There were a few high profile incidents, there was a lot of public and political agitation around assaults on officers and there was a kind of mass hysteria in the mid 1990s.

That is when we saw long batons, side handled batons, sprays, protective vests etc. Of course, for every tragic incident we get, we are going to get hundreds of non-incidents but that is not what grabs the headlines. It has been very difficult I think to roll back that confidence issue for the last 15 years.

Richard Tracey (AM): I am inching to patrolling together but you constantly seem to see or too regularly, perhaps I should re-phrase, too regularly you seem to see four in a group having a pleasant chat and, of course, we can all stop and have a pleasant chat but we do not actually expect police officers to be just taking that opportunity.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): There is no justification for that. I mean I am a visitor to London and I see in certain areas PCSOs hunting in packs and I query why. I do not know why and I am not a London council tax payer and I am not a London police officer but it seems excessive in some areas and I support what Bernard's saying around clear policy statements and then active and effective local leadership to make it happen.

Murad Qureshi (AM): Dixon of Dock Green certainly did not go around with anyone else! The question I wanted to ask really was, one of the things I pick up is not just visibility that people or residents in my local neighbourhood and other neighbourhoods want; it is also when they are victims of crime the crime is actually solved. I actually think one of the things that we do not focus enough on is detection rates for mundane crimes which, for whatever reason, do not seem to be as appealing as a homicide but actually determine a lot of people's experience of the police service and whether they will go back. I just wanted some comments and views on that as a perception.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Could I just check with you. Do you mean that you think that people do not think there is enough detection?

Murad Qureshi (AM): The crimes are not solved in the way that they would expect and that other things seem to be a priority in London.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I agree with you. It seems to be a fundamental part of policing, that if you can, you catch the person who did it and then you do something about it. You see a spread of detection rates. I think first thing, as those in the room will know, there is a bit of a science around what is a detection. I am not going to bore you with that here.

The easiest one to understand is someone who is prosecuted, goes to court and there is a sanction; that is very straightforward. Then there is a whole industry around those who go to, for example, prison, they have offences taken into consideration but they do not necessarily get a penalty at court. And there are other ways of counting detections. So that is point one. Sometimes, the detection looks like different things. The fundamental ones everybody understands is a prosecution and a sanction and the second thing is that there are only three ways of detecting crime: you either catch them doing it, someone tells you who did it, or you get forensic samples that link the offender to the scene; and you have to maximise those three opportunities.

London has challenges because, obviously, we have a high turnover of people. If you rely on someone telling you who did it, it may well be that you do not notice unusual patterns of behaviour and the normal intelligence may not work in the normal way. If you have got people teaming through from different countries it may be harder. So the detection rate is not as good as the rest of the country but it does have particular challenges.

The final thing which I always think about with detection rates is that it varies according to the crime and that is for two reasons: murders have a very hard detection rate, I think you are talking about 90 per cent at the moment, something in that order in London; vehicle crime has less than 10 per cent. There are two reasons for that: one is that you have a higher amount of evidence left at one scene and very low evidence with a car crime. Equally, car crime may not be viewed as important as a murder for which you put lots of detectives on to it and you would probably get a result; with a car crime you cannot put a team of 40 on to it.

So, they are some of the realities but I think from where you started, I would agree but there needs to be more emphasis on where a crime can be detected.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): I think this question touches on absolutely essentially what I said about information, what shapes people's perceptions. It is that sort of thing, their own experience and other people's experience of when they need the police for something fairly low level; and it is low level relative to the things that have been driving the service which is meeting Government targets that do not include those sorts of things, and getting satisfaction and getting feedback.

Someone may be caught for another offence but, actually, you realise that they were also the person who committed a crime against Mrs X; Mrs X ought to be informed. Simple things like that; that is the sort of information that we are talking about which needs to be out there. But you are absolutely right this touches on some real stuff about how people form their perceptions and it is not just to do with how many people they see going around, even though they will always say they want more. That is the real world stuff.

Murad Qureshi (AM): Can I just delve a bit further into the variation in the detection rates across the country. Is the Metropolitan Police looking at crime differently from other regions like Merseyside or Gloucestershire?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): There are variations around the country but I think from what I can see, is that generally the broad detection rates at the moment for the rest of the country on average is about 29 per cent. This roughly means that one in three crimes broadly is getting detected and for London it is about one in four. That masks so many things, it really would be boring to enter into too much detail but you do have to get into some of the detail below that to work out where they are applying most effort and having most success. There are some things that you can do to maximise detections and perhaps the Metropolitan could still learn from other people too.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): In fairness the Metropolitan Police has always been lower and that is partly to do with some of the stuff that Bernard said about the mobile populations, the size of the populations, the scale of people coming from outside committing crime and so on. If you look at it over decades, you always get huge variation in detection rates, Wales is always high because there are rural areas where everybody knows everybody else and crime is committed within those areas and people will talk to the police. The gap has actually closed for the Metropolitan Police, it is always lower but it has closed recently.

John Biggs (Chairman): Indeed. One of the reasons we have the HMIC is to do some of that comparative work and highlight good and bad practice and, occasionally, there are scorecards. Nottinghamshire did very badly a while ago but these trends come and go.

Going back to the core questions here, there is a very important point that comes to me out of this about information - it may be that if someone finds a secluded street, breaks a car window, steals something out of the car, we all know the likelihood of that being detected is extraordinarily low. If there is no evidence from a management point of view, it probably would not make much sense for the police to put much resource into trying to detect that because of the lack of evidence. If you are the person who owns the car and has lost your item you will be mighty cheesed off with that result because you will think that the authorities are not putting the resources in.

So there is something about the way in which you handle the information. If you pick up the phone to the station and someone says, 'Well, sorry mate we do not investigate those ones, there is no chance of a detection', that leaves you feeling a lot less confident about the policing than if they perhaps take you through a bit more of the process of what has lead to that decision. I therefore think the flow of information is quite important for public confidence.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): But if you also return the information to the neighbourhood to say, "Actually we have had a spate of car crime, can you help us with this?" unless people become more engaged in that pact with policing, with the cuts we will actually be able to succeed in increasing both sanctioned detections as well as minimising the kind of crime that will happen locally. Crime will be solved in many ways through co-operation of the people who are around the areas and around the crimes that happen. So unless people are willing to talk and unless the police give back the information that they receive from the public, there will not be that relationship. So it is how well they do it and how often they do it and how timely they do it in order to then have that feedback.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Looking overall at this, there is of course, the issue of resources. It is worth recalling that we have had squeezes on resources before which were perhaps not as great as the one we are about

to get; however the response in the 1980s were the three Es: economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Something that the Metropolitan Police adopted at that time, and many other forces followed suit, was that the public phoned in with, say, a report of car theft or theft of milk or whatever, they were allocated a crime number because that was perceived to be what people wanted so they could get their insurance claim going up, and that was what they did. That approach was economic and it could be argued it was efficient because the chances of solving that crime were quite remote. What it certainly was not was effective, either in terms of reducing crime levels or in keeping public confidence, genuine confidence on side.

So, in fairness to central Government and its directives, it always envisaged that those three E's would be in balance; what we have there was a solution that only emphasised two of them. That is a danger for the future and if I could just make one quick observation going back to the beginning of what you said and I do not wish to sound a trite at this point because it is actually important. The police service, I think, is unique in having its measurement of success geared against a fictional 1960's TV character! Emergency, Ward 10 does not drive the health service in the way that Dixon of Dock Green drives the police service. People who have never seen him on telly still think that is the ideal and it is worth remembering in the original Blue Lamp a solo patrol officer, George Dixon, was shot by Dirk Bogarde.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): If I could just add just one quick point on that because it goes back to the first question really, which is all the research shows I think that where a police officer attends, generally confidence is increased, we have just done some work around anti-social behaviour and find that confidence levels improve when anti-social behaviour is dealt with.

If the police say, 'We are not coming' for whatever reason in whatever way we say that we are not able to or we are going to put it off, this confidence goes down; whereas if you attend, even if you do badly, at least you cared enough to go and try to find out if there was evidence, if there was something you could have done. You cannot always do that as well over the phone. In principle it sounds more efficient.

John Biggs (Chairman): Right. Which points you in two different conclusions, I think.

Joanne McCartney (AM): One of the successes it seems to me over the last ten years in Safer Neighbourhoods Teams is the engagement with local authorities. Frontline policing has often been a joint effort where it has worked best. In the Metropolitan Police we certainly have a lot of officers now that are paid for by local authorities and have taken over their roles.

So, for example, in my own neighbourhood the park rangers have gone and you now have the parks police but it seems to me in the times of cuts local authorities, and someone talked about silos earlier, the danger is we are going to retreat into silos and not put money into those funding pots.

I just want to know has there been any work done about the level of confidence where the partnerships are not better than others and is it a driver of public confidence and is it a great danger for us in London?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Unfortunately, the question that was set by the previous Government was do local authorities and councils do better in terms of anti-social behaviour and crime in their local area? The results showed that there was a huge variation of the people who had no idea, who did not know how well the police and the local authorities worked together.

So, actually, when you are asked to rely on the public for that question the evidence that we have is quite mixed and that is why I keep coming back to what kind of better information. I am not talking about statistics, I am talking about information, about where meetings are held, what are the public priorities,

how they are being dealt with; so that is where it is quite important to relay a different kind of information to people so it enables them to take action for themselves and to take action on behalf of their neighbourhoods.

Joanne McCartney (AM): The reason I ask is because with my Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and the Panels, the predominant issues they raise are often ones that the local councils and environmental officers are responsible for dealing with.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): Two quick points. One is the place surveys which are done at local authority level by the Department for Communities and Local Government which are quite interesting. What they show is information that has been in other surveys which is that you will often quite, despite quite high levels of crime or whatever, have a relatively even measure in police confidence across all your areas but there is much more variation around local authorities. Local authorities consistently rated worse than police, where you have that comparison, but one of the big concerns in terms of demands for the future - and we will talk about the Olympics and all the rest of it - one of the big concerns has to be that with everyone experiencing cuts, not only retreating into silos but police always pick up an awful lot of business which is not strictly theirs. The police will always be phoned about whatever is going on that someone else ought to be dealing with. As local authorities retreat and those services are not there, that is going to actually increase demands on the police and in negotiating that, there needs to be some clear protocols whereby incidents that come to the police that is not their business should be passed on to the relevant people and they should be expected to deal with it; I think that issue has become ever more urgent at the moment.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Can I just add to that, and this is trying not to swing the blue lamp, but I have heard what Marian has just said and I think she is spot on that re-negotiation of what the police pick up is important, and I have not yet seen it. What happens is that there is a catch-all at the bottom of the pile and then because at 3 o'clock in the morning there is no-one else to do it they will do it. I think it is a grand ambition but I think it stands to be delivered.

Just finally in terms, I think that question about what is core funding for the local authority is providing an actual police service so how many PCSOs are paid for, how many officers are paid for; it is as well to get that account laid out. Secondly, if the local's authorities change their profile of spending some of it directly on security, they may have park patrols. Secondly, what about schools welfare officers because there will be an impact if truancy increases; so I think someone, perhaps the police authority or alternatively the GLA, may want to think about that.

And the other issue to think about, is that if there is going to be reduction in police grant, it will differentially affect different forces in this country. What is not clear is how that allocation will be made in terms of each force. Here you have, I think, it is about 80 per cent, 85 per cent in the Metropolitan Police essential grant to be in one form of another. In Surrey that is something in the order of 30 per cent. A 25 per cent cut in grant would differentially affect those two organisations.

(John Biggs (Chairman): Great, very helpful.

Roger Evans (AM): Professor Stanko, have you looked at the Manchester experiment which focuses police on to crime hotspots and what do you think of that?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I have not looked at the Manchester experiment, basically, because in the ten years I have been in the Metropolitan Police I have been bringing the thinking around location both strategically as well as helping to improve the analytic productions and approach to understanding what a hotspot really is and

what it means. So, I think what Professor Sherman [Professor of Criminology, Cambridge University, Institute of Criminology] is doing in Manchester probably is not much different than what we are doing here. So, the question is, were we willing to actually experiment. We have in the past, for example, done some work around challenge wards and we know that we get a better performance by concentrating on particular places.

We know a lot about the kinds of main concerns or issues that are affecting hotspots; they tend to be either residential areas which are residential/estate issues and high street leisure issues. So once you know those and transport modes, if you have got those three main issues affecting your hotspots then indeed you are going to overlay your operational policing and response to that, we can also do times, we can do places.

It is quite important, for example, in terms of thinking about addressing issues around school children and robbery for example, the response to youth violence was very much, again, focused on places, times and people.

As time has gone on - I have been in and around the Metropolitan Police for ten years - we are getting better in terms of aligning our strategic understanding and all of our products behind people, locations and victims.

Roger Evans (AM): You mentioned high streets as being a particular hotspot there. There is a tension between neighbourhood policing and high streets, because very often in London, high streets are the boundaries between wards and a ward may actually have several high streets on its boundaries in different places. So that particular area may have several neighbourhood police that converge on it but no one who is actually responsible for it as a whole and you have a situation where if a crime occurs on one side of the street, it is dealt with by one team or another, it is dealt with by another.

There are a lot of local solutions that people have come up with to try to manage those problems in particular areas, but is there any guidance that the Metropolitan Police has on dealing with that? It seems to be a common problem across all boroughs.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I agree. The Metropolitan Police has 630 teams and 624 wards; so there are some cross boundary teams. People do not live in boundaries, we think about where we live within certain kinds of areas but actually because I shop in Chiswick High Street and live in Hammersmith it does not necessarily mean that I am not a member of Askew Ward which is where I live. I am also a board panel member; I will just throw that in for those of you who are interested.

We do not live in bounded areas and I think the flexibility needs to be built into the safer neighbourhoods or neighbourhood policing so that they are not necessarily bounded by areas as well. You can do that by understanding where people are reporting crimes because, again, we can read and analyse this stuff much better than ten years ago. Woeful are the pins on dots on maps which I experienced many years ago, both in New York and here.

So we have an understanding of that and we are putting that much more into practice.

John Biggs (Chairman): Is there an HMIC perspective on hotspots, for example, because presumably what is happening in Manchester is being studied elsewhere. On the face of it, we do some of this in London, we have town centre teams, we have safer transport teams, but maybe we should be more thoughtful about the way in which we deploy resources.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I think in terms of HMIC, and Betsy was fairly kind really, in terms of their performance at the moment they are being looked at, you mentioned Nottinghamshire, but they have been in that category in terms of their performance; so I think it is early days to see whether that particular work will bear fruit. I think what everyone knows is that broadly 10 per cent of the victims and 10 per cent of the suspects can account for two-thirds of the crime. So I think that is really where the investment goes.

I think if you end up in a position where a boundary runs down the middle of such an area, you can get the benefit of joint patrolling as you said from two wards, and probably it is best to have very clear explanation about who is responsible for that area. So it seems to me that if you stick within your boundaries you can end up with issues that you prefer not to have. You can always revisit the boundaries and sometimes it is true right across the country and not just the Metropolitan Police that you could get trapped into these boundaries, and when you try to change them you end up with a big political issue about why you are putting that thing in my ward.

John Biggs (Chairman): So if we turn that question back to front then, there is a risk that because it is locked into silos every ward will have a team that are the same size or every borough will have a town centre team or safer transport, officers will be deployed at hubs whether they are safe or not very safe hubs. That silo thinking could mitigate against a more thoughtful deployment of resources.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I am not sure because it is going back to earlier when I think Tim mentioned that we can start talking about the neighbourhood officers being the only officers who patrol in that area.

Of course, what you usually have is a response line. So while the neighbourhood officers and CSOs are walking generally during daylight hours and into the very early morning, you have still got a 24 hour service that is running call response. Now they are usually - I think this true around the country - running across the neighbourhood boundaries; so when you pick up a phone and you want help now, if the neighbourhood officers cannot get there you can expect a response.

So you have got a layer. I am not saying it is perfect - and around the country it is challenged - but it is not a bad model. It just seems to be productive, certainly in terms of getting response rates higher which you have talked a lot about, people wanting to see officers, meet them and talk to them. There is also a huge surge in demand which is about when I pick up the phone and I want someone here, I want them here now and the Metropolitan Police will receive probably 10 million telephone calls a year; which is a massive demand.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): The other side of the coin is just a note of caution about if you pull too much and concentrate too much on your hotspots in the name of efficiency, you are going to actually forgo all of the gains of safer neighbourhood policing; you have got to get the balance right.

John Biggs (Chairman): OK. That is helpful.

Richard Tracey (AM): There is a question of a credible measure of frontline policing and I can recollect, going back over two years at least both as a member of the MPA and as a Member of this Committee, we have been hearing that the MPA was developing a measure of frontline policing. We are still waiting. This seems to be constantly delayed and I do not know whether it is partly that the Assistant Commissioner for territorial policing has changed a couple of times in that period. Is it possible to produce a credible measure of front line policing?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): In a word, no. There used to be a patrol time indicator that was based on activity analysis, data collection, it was put into a huge machine, churned round, and was based on an equation that Einstein would have been proud to support.

It did not vary year-on-year very much. It was so retrospective that it could be of no possible use either in terms of management action or accountability and the amount of time spent collecting it was disproportionate to the use that it could be put and it is of very dubious credibility.

There are ideas of replacing it which is to use commanding control data: you pull that off, you churn it round and you get a lot more accurate information because people log on when they are going on patrol and they tell you what they are doing and therefore you can get all of that data.

That is the theory. In practice, people do not necessarily have tight radio discipline, they do not radio in everything they are doing and, actually, getting all of that information, cleaning it up and making it useful is probably back to where we were in the first place, which is disproportionate effort. So the question is, can you get measures; the answer is you can but your question was, is it credible and I do not believe that is possible for a very long time.

Richard Tracey (AM): Any other views?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I support Tim to a point. My only hope for the future and I think the breakthrough really is mobile data. The Metropolitan Police has invested quite a lot in this; whether or not the software is yet to be where it needs to be I think is the debate.

But I think when the officer can actually first of all self-deploy, can update the systems, you will not be able to build software that actually finds out what they are doing when they are updating it. I think that probably the police service could be criticised - and I include myself in this - for attempting a comprehensive account of everything it does and I think it needs to pick out the really fundamental things that matter.

The first question people are asking is, "Are you now out of the police station?" Number two is, "How long are you spending investigating crimes when either way you do not detect it?", "How long do you spend in court?" That is a really important measure because quite often the courts think that we are there, I have to be careful here, but sometimes it can be that we are a free resource (when clearly that is not the case) as a professional witness.

I think mobile data starts to get to an area where you should be able to collect data easily without the activity base costing a lot, which is currently the nightmare of paper records. That would really be a real breakthrough. Is it there now? No. I think there is some hope there.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): This is all terribly mechanistic, bean counting sort of stuff and it is all probably terribly important but I would take a much broader view of what you want.

Certainly, avoid any spurious assumptions about a link between the numbers of officers out there and the trends in crime for reasons for which I go into in my paper. I also recognise the very, very serious limitations of judging anything on the basis of surveys; that is also in the paper. I think we have missed a trick in terms of when we introduce Safer Neighbourhoods Teams and some really hard measures like crime reports.

Now, initially, crime should have gone up - and the experience of Chicago actually was that crime went up -, because if it is successful and you have got more police officers out there seeing what is going on and they become more approachable so people tell them about things they would not have got on their mobiles from report, crime should have gone up. So I have got some questions about why it apparently did not.

You also need to know if you have you got an increase in the intelligence report. These have been touched on. They are coming in through your Safer Neighbourhoods Teams; you do not expect them to do the detection but are they actually bringing in the sort of information which specialist teams detections and so on can act on, and if they are you will see detections going up? Things like that.

There is also the issue of public co-operation in investigations. In a lot of the highest crime areas it is most difficult to get people to co-operate with police because they are scared of reprisals. Winning over that confidence so that you get the co-operation is key. You should be able to count that and it should be in what you record; all those things should be in your records and improvements in those are, to me, the real measures about whether it is working.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): But I would also turn it around to say they are actually doing the rights things. Are they spending a lot of time concentrating on a frontline measure which deflects away from talking about effectiveness and really effective policing and I will just raise that as an issue.

John Biggs (Chairman): One of the other motives behind this question is the productivity of police officers. What amount of time do officers spend unproductively in the canteen; this is the type of thing that people talk about.

One of the other drivers behind this is, as we have discussed already, that there has been a big increase in police head count. That becomes a very potent part of the political debate about whether we have enough policing in London; if we have 32,000 officers instead of 33,000 then that is a massive decline in police officers and we are going to be less safe as a result of that.

So the question would be whether there are measures of policing capacity rather than simply police officers who happen to be walking down the street or available for and fit for duty. Are there other measures such as the deployment of civilian officers who increase the capacity of policing of an authority or other measures that the role of PCSOs who are held in very mixed esteem across the community and how that relates to measuring policing capacity. So it is sort of a rounder question about how we get ourselves off the hook.

I am an opposition Member here so every time there is a reduction in police officers, I kick the Mayor and say, "You promised 33,000, there is now 32,000, you have failed" and perhaps there can be a more rounded debate which talks about measures of safety relating to the deployment of resources.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): I think that is a much more mature way of going about it. I think it is a worthy ambition, I think the difficulties are with constructing the technical means to do that. Now Marian has come out with a broader set of measures that can take you some way along the line of what you are trying to achieve, which is trying to track the effectiveness of the units that you have rather than simply measure the units.

Certainly, if you were in business that would be what you would be seeking to do, looking at the output and productivity and not simply the input. We have been trying to do that for a number of years; it is just very difficult and Bernard has come up with mobile data which may yet unlock the key in that mechanistic

sense. In fairness, there have been attempts to get a basket of indicators over the years that gives you a round assessment of what policing in your area (but which is normally meant to be a force or perhaps a basic command unit) is doing.

The tendency is, however, that people look at one of those items in the basket rather than the basket but it is a very worth ambition. It is probably not going to help you with the kind of cuts that you might be facing in that it will not be available in time and the cuts are going to significantly more than just a 1000.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): It just seems to me that in terms of governance it is a great opportunity to actually see what the public want and make exactly that rounded assessment.

Certainly in Merseyside, one of the things that we did - I arrived there in 2004 and every area has different challenges, - was we made an assessment with the authority that there were three priorities that we were going to sort out. So number one was, we were going to sort out our telephone answering; 85 per cent of people who have a view of the police and as you said a relatively small amount of people have contact, so when they are telephoning you, if you do not answer the phone, you cannot do anything to help, you do not know how much help they need. So we sorted that out. The second one was anti-social behaviour and the third one was the amount of crime and the point you made earlier about the detection rate.

Now, of course, we had another 58 things we could have done but it seems to me that it is an important part of the political process to articulate very clearly what are the priorities because we have had quite a debate today and at the end of the day if you are a business, and I am not saying this is a business, but business makes most progress where it has clear priorities. If you are wanting three or four things sorting out then probably to say that clearly and then to accept that, it is not a perfect world there will be risks, there will be leakage and I think a really important part of that governance process is to say, "Right, we want you to sort these things out very clearly".

John Biggs (Chairman): There is a number of areas where you can look at alternative measures and indicate those and move things on. You fundamentally agree with Dr Brain then - and I'm going to misinterpret him perhaps - but that this a bit of a holy grail that does not really exist?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I am not sure there is a comprehensive account of policing. Then again I am not sure you need one. It seems to me in London there will be a different answer. There is counter-terrorism to think about and seriously organised crime; at the end of the day you have to decide which of those things you want to make more progress on most quickly.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Coming back to Dr Brain's last comments about whether the cuts are going to be significant. Even at the end of October when we get the Comprehensive Spending Review we will not know then how it has been apportioned between forces or the specific grants that may be affected as well. In an article for Policing Review extrapolated the number of police and civilians that we could be likely to be losing. Just looking at our analysis I think, it was between 5 per cent and 7 per cent nationally and to see how you think they would be apportioned between police and civilians. I take it that you are counting PCSOs as civilians; is that correct?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Absolutely. What we do not know yet is really where the baseline is; we know theoretically what the baseline will be. It is this financial year, 2010/11; but in policing terms the only measure of where the baseline will be nationally is yet to come which are figures published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. They are still churning it out. I did some homework of my own and from all the databases across the country that I could discern the net budget requirement

of the 43 forces including the Metropolitan Police is £11.6 billion. So it is possible to get a baseline, it is possible to identify the unit cost of police staff, full time equivalents and police officer full time equivalents across the country.

It is then possible to isolate the grant element that the police service gets from the central Government. Although it comes in several forms it is possible to identify those grant elements. It is possible to work out, because we have a 80/20 split between people and material technology, that 80 per cent of the grant is spent on people, who is responsible for those people and from that you can actually work out permutations of what 25 per cent, 33 per cent, 40 per cent would look like and translate that to full time equivalent posts.

Obviously, you are building several blocks along the road there and at any one point the ground can change from underneath your feet. It is not entirely clear whether we are talking 25 per cent cuts in absolute terms, you have got so much money now and there will be 25 per cent less real money in four years time, or whether we are talking relative terms. In other words you could make an allowance for inflation, growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) etc.

The emergency budget seems to suggest that you make allowance for inflation in GDP, hence the lower estimates in terms of cuts. It is still 25 per cent but because of growth in inflation and GDP it looks like less than that in cash terms. Having said that, just a few weeks ago the Inspectorate of Constabulary put out its own guess work or speculation or extrapolation, whichever you prefer, on what the cuts would be and it said it would be £2.4 billion; it did not make any allowance for inflation or GDP. I work on the basis that they are probably rather better informed than I am.

So that tends to suggest that the cuts will be more absolute than relative and they will be more at the extreme end of any extrapolations rather than at the lower end of them. That gives you the figures that I have come up with in that article. It is worth noting that the Independent Institute of Fiscal Studies estimates that we are effectively taking public spending back to where it was in 1997/98 and, therefore, you can work out quite easily what policing resources you had in 1997 or 1998 here in the Metropolitan Police or in any other force in the country.

The huge caveat comes in - and Bernard has already mentioned it and you have already referred to it in your question - that we do not know how the cuts will be apportioned force by force. So those are all ballpark figures; they are strictly extrapolations because in other words we are moving from something we do know into areas of something where we do not know. You are doing it on the basis of proper calculations and not just simply guesswork, which is speculation.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Your extrapolations are at the more generous end than the HMIC. You suggested that we could be looking at nearly 4,000 police officers out of the Metropolitan Police and I want just to comment and look at some of the factors that would deal with the apportionment. We have police officers that cannot be redundant, we are not talking about people losing their jobs, we are talking about people not being taken on. So we know that the Metropolitan Police has put a freeze on recruitment at the moment and we also know that to date that the PCSO budget has been ring-fenced; is that something that HMIC is looking at and making representations about or are there other factors that would determine what the force can do with regards to police officers and the civilian balance?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Obviously, what the test would be is how much money you have and whether it is important to look at the personnel line officers and civilians as a budget line. Very simply, police officers are more expensive to employ than civilians. Now that is a generalisation because, obviously, there are some very high grade civilian employees who merit very high salaries indeed; but that is a generalisation and it is roughly in the proportion of three to two.

For every two police officers you lose that is full time equivalent posts, you would have to lose three civilians so that is your measure. The more police officers one keeps in an organisation, it does not matter whether it is the Metropolitan Police or any other force, the more police officers you keep then the more you have to find out of other budget strands.

As you have fewer civilians in absolute numbers, but they cost less, you have to find disproportionately more civilian posts in order to balance your budget. The difficulty that you have already alluded to is whilst it is not entirely clear that you cannot make police officers redundant, at least that seems to be the case; I think that is as far as I could push it today! I think it would certainly be contested strongly by the Police Federation and other staff associations.

However, it certainly is possible to make civilian employees redundant. The difficulty that any force will face is that it is not simply possible to take your police officers and take them over to doing the jobs that the civilians were doing because, if you do, you will walk straight into an employment tribunal. There are huge headaches that the forces face as they approach the next few years.

Joanne McCartney (AM): The danger is we have officers backfilling civilian posts. --

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): We are facing more of this huge uncertainty and different calculations and all the rest of it. However, I do think that we have an opportunity before that to actually take stock of where we are now and, in particular, given the huge increases that we have seen over the last few years to actually say, "Where have these very significant increases in personnel over the last nine years been deployed?" including looking at what additional posts, departments, units may have been created as a result.

Leaving aside the business about redundancies, we should be able through that to identify the scope in principle for abolishing post and functions which are not themselves productive in terms of service delivery both visible and invisible and which do not directly support service delivery (for example, through clerical, IT and other technical support crime pattern analysis and so). We should be taking stock of that now and making some serious decisions about whether there is surplus that has been created in these times of plenty which should be the first things that we should look at if we want to preserve the essential services; we should look at taking a bigger slice out of that when we know what we are facing in terms of cuts. I think that would be a sensible thing to do now while we are facing all of this uncertainty.

Once you have cut out the slack and you have seen that there is scope for cutting out the slack, then you can look at the basis on which resources and particularly the increased resources in the last few years, have been allocated to essential police business, starting with how that is split. As I said at the beginning, there has been invisible police work and visible police work; there has been a balance between boroughs in the centre and so on. Once you have a real handle on all of that you then are much better placed for when you know what you are facing in terms of cuts, to see where you can make cuts and what cannot be sacrificed.

One final point on the replacement and the relative cost of civilians and police officers is - you have to bear in mind things like there is a much higher turnover of PCSOs than there is of police officers and if you are having to train them up each time there are those hidden costs as well. All that would have to be factored in.

Darren Johnson (AM): In what areas should it be possible for the Metropolitan Police to find savings through improving productivity and cutting costs?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Just first of all to pick up where Marian finished. If you took the parallel with the Ministry of Defence: at the moment, what is happening with it is that there is a strategic defence review; coincidentally they are also having a CSR which is looking at what money will be available to everybody. So you have got a nice parallel where they are creating a plan and then they are going to have the money, hopefully, to implement it where they will have options.

I suppose the challenge for any police service in any part of the country is looking at what the plan is, and then having to implement the cuts. The thing to remember around the Metropolitan Police is that, first of all, its funding pattern is different to the rest of the country. You have first of all the central grant. The central grant is split between at least two layers. I would encourage both Government and London generally to think about a single grant because I think it is really difficult to work out what money is being applied to what purpose.

Certainly, when we got in to inspect it, it appears that sometimes resources could move between the boxes depending on what the answer should be. Secondly, your first mechanism for thinking about this is turnover. Broadly, the Metropolitan Police loses 2,600 people a year which is around 1,000 police officers. 900 are Community Support Officers, but that 900 may not continue; 25 per cent of them move on to be police officers. If you are not recruiting presumably that will not happen. So someone on the human resources side needs to give a very clear analysis of what happens with that 2,600. You may lose less police officers but they are more costly, so somebody has to work through those numbers.

I am a little trapped in the sense that we have done some value for money work on the Metropolitan Police and on 42 of the forces just trying to show where there are outlays where they appear more expensive or they have more people and either more productive or less productive. That is only a draft form and it is on its third draft, it is going to be shared with both the Police Authority and with the force in a formal way within the next few months, and there is another inspection to come.

I do not think it defeats any confidentiality to say one of the things we are looking at is around core management, around investment in investigation and around the investment in intelligence. Where they appear to have a disproportionate amount invested and may want to think about that in the first hit if they have to. The other thing that I think is worth looking at is always reserves. I will not speak on behalf of the Government as we are independent but it seems to me that first of all what is essentially grant; secondly, is that the organisation should able to sustain itself through four years through any of its reserves.

Certainly, the Metropolitan Police's reserves have significantly increased over the last few years and they now rank around 9 per cent. Now, much of that is earmarked and I am sure there will be a reason for some of that and I am sure it is something that you would want to consider as well as any central Government. Of course, reserves are broadly in two broad pots: either earmarked, in that they are expected to be spent or a pot which is marked, "We do not know whether we are going to need it or not" but even the un-earmarked stuff is not insignificant in growth over the last couple of years.

You can look at police overtime. The Metropolitan Police does spend significantly more per head; of course, it is paid more per head but even if you take a percentage of the workforce pay bill there is something there I think that is still worth looking at. Of course, they make extraordinary demands, when they get something like G20; there are things that happen here that will not happen elsewhere and the Metropolitan Police consumes its own need. It will put 1,000 people into a protest, it will drag them from the boroughs and there will be a cost so I am not saying that that necessarily means that even if they are spending more overtime, they are doing it inefficiently. There has got to be a place where any organisation would start to look, particularly for the Metropolitan Police.

And then, I suppose, there are two approaches: if you have got a plan, invest in it but understand that you may have to salami slice as well and everybody will have to take a share of the cut. My final point would be, I do not want to be looking to the support functions to make sure that they have not grown disproportionately and whether that be in business or in public service you find, I'm afraid, that they do grow too much and they need cutting back every so often.

If you were taking over a business you would do that without thinking about it, public service needs that sort of rigour.

Darren Johnson (AM): That is extremely helpful. Dr Brain, is there anything from other forces that London can learn from? --

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Well, Bernard has already alluded to the overheads in the Metropolitan Police which are much higher than provincial forces; whether they are justified or not only you can tell me. What I can say is that if you look at the forces that HMIC considers that you should compare the Metropolitan with - which is West Midlands, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire - they come in on average.

Their budgets are around £0.5 billion so they are big, expensive organisations; if you look at the Metropolitan Police its net budget is £2.6 billion. So making a valid comparison to say, "Well, the unit costs there are much better than they are in the Metropolitan Police" is very, very difficult. If you look at the unit costs for staff, you would expect in 2008/09 the unit cost across England and Wales, excluding London, was £46,450; in the Metropolitan Police it is £55,394. The price of a person to work in the Metropolitan Police on average is much, much more expensive than, if I can quaintly use the term, the provinces.

Certainly, if you are to make significant savings it is around the use of resources in terms of people and the processes they are engaged in. There has been a very strong drive, probably since the end of the 1980s, to relieve the administrative work on operational officers and you have these support units that are called various things in various forces - admin support units, evidence gathering teams, process teams, they have different names but they are fundamentally doing the same work. It is when, generally, the arresting officer makes an arrest, after the initial work of processing of logging in custody, the evidence that relates to the individual officer, the process relating to that prisoner is then handed over to these evidence gathering teams. The idea being that you can get the officer back on the streets and get them out there.

The problem is, of course, this looks like an overhead. One of the big difficulties that there is going to be almost immediately is defining what is the back office. I think we can sort of say, "Yes, a secretary or clerk…" - there are not many of them but they exist – "an accountant or a human resources officer; yes, that is back office". When you get to, shall we say, the control room that looks pretty close to the frontline to me and if the technicians, the vehicle workshop personnel who are there to keep the show on the road, your IT personnel, if they are not going around with their sonic screwdriver the thing falls down very quickly.

So how do you define the back office? What you can say is that those forces that have gone in favour of some kind of thorough process review generally using lean methodology; that is the current flavour of the month, have had some success. The disadvantage is that those forces that have done it already will not be saved the axe; the rain will fall on the just and the unjust unlike. So if you have made a huge saving and you have got to 1 April 2010 and you are feeling pretty good about that, the bad news is you have got it do it all over again.

Darren Johnson (AM): So we are at a real advantage in London then by being this huge, inefficient, sprawling --

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): In all seriousness, what I will say is the more inefficient a force is in the use of its financial resources, and I am making no suggestions as to who you might say that is, the more inefficient you are then the greater scope you have for cuts.

Now whether, as Bernard alluded, that means there is going to be some differential applied I cannot say, but a force that is recognised as being pretty efficient and has done a lot already will get a smaller slice of the cut than a force that has done very little is anybody's guess. We have got to go back to the fact that this is going to be a total bill; so if one force gets away with less than a 25 per cent cut in grant terms then other forces will have to take more of that burden.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Could I just add two quick things Chair. One is that, on reflection about the question, there seems to be some symbolic things which may not always deliver huge amounts of money but I think you have seriously got to consider whether you continue to pay. There was an investment ten years ago now in police recruitment to pay for rail travel that was something in the order of, I think, about £20 million a year and you are not recruiting.

These things, I think, have to be revisited. An exit strategy is not straightforward but at the very least it must be considered. We have looked in some of the areas that Tim was talking about. HR, I think has actually got their ratios of HR people to the employed to a pretty good level. I think there is some more they are yet to do, the Finance and IT, I think there is still something there to look at. He has mentioned about the control rooms, there is an investment on the boroughs and the IBOs (Integrated Borough Operations). It is not something you see in places; you need to keep it invested --

IBOs came in when the Metropolitan went from 32 control rooms with 32 call handling centres to three. So they were not quite sure that this thing would, this is in my terms, work in the terms it was expected and the investment was in some of the boroughs to actually make sure that call handling was handled in the way that everybody wanted.

If the call handling is happening well in the three centres why does it need this investment in the same way? And the final thing and partly it reminded me of what Tim was talking about is; you can always look at things like vehicles because you find that the number of vehicles can grow. I think the Metropolitan Police has done an awful lot of good work around outsourcing and increasing the amount of time spent on the road but you do find that the vehicle fleets grow which is ironic given that when we started we wanted people to walk more often. So I think there are always things that can be looked at even though it is not going to be easy by any stretch of the imagination.

John Biggs (Chairman): Are you able to help us with this Professor Stanko?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Much of it, you will not be surprised, is outside my remit. I think what we are doing and what I can assure you of is that I am part of a team that is actually doing the strategic visioning that is trying to make sure that actually whatever we do with the pot of money that we get is actually mapped onto the best model of policing that fits London.

John Biggs (Chairman): So is the Metropolitan Police any good at measuring productivity?

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): Getting better.

John Biggs (Chairman): Although historically not great.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): I will leave that to Bernard Hogan-Howe to answer.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): That is a terrible rumour! I think it goes back to what we were talking about earlier: is there an easy measure of effectiveness. The Metropolitan Police is not in a different position, I do not think, from the rest of the police service, I think that productivity measure is quite difficult. We are just undertaking some work on, as I said, value for money and value in the police which is partly focused on how much police cost and are they expensive right across country, some places are cheaper than others.

The second measure is, well even if they are expensive, that is exactly where you want to spend your money. There is no easy measure at the moment. We are looking at things like detections per officer, arrests per officer but that does not tell the whole story. How many incidents do they attend and if they do, how long do they spend there? Is it good to spend two hours with a really vulnerable victim that we reassure or should we be in and out in five minutes and move on, because that is what we need to do?

So I think the Metropolitan Police is in no different position and there is not for me a clear lexicon around that.

John Biggs (Chairman): Talking to some of the borough leaders around London, the general conversation goes something like this. You can do a 5 per cent or 6 per cent saving this year, maybe next year, but once you are doing that every year for four or five years, you need to fundamentally re-engineer what you are doing. Within the Metropolitan Police there is obviously a tension between deployment of people in the frontline, if you like, in the borough, generic policing, and specialisms.

This is a far too complicated a question to answer in three minutes or something, but is there is a second view within the policing community about the sort of ways you can tackle that question? I do not know what the answer would be; it might vary from police to police.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I think that people have seen this money problem coming and it becomes a political problem. Number one if you look at structure - I understand you have had this conversation perhaps in a previous meeting - you want to stick with the 32 Basic Command Units (BCU) which are congruent with the 32 boroughs. That is point one: do you want to change that?

Number two is, do you want to look at the management costs? Within a borough you will have a certain management tier and you will have a certain investment in that, can you afford to continue at that level? If you looked at some of the smaller forces, Surrey, Norfolk and I think Hertfordshire, instead of having three BCUs or four BCUs within a force instead of having BCUs, basically the force becomes a BCU. I understand from the present management at the Metropolitan Police that they are looking at that seriously but it can have political implications as well. If you wanted to crush together Westminster with another borough, how would that go down? It is not straight forward.

I think you can look at the support staff costs that we have talked about already and the service amounts, the amount that you spend on service. I think the structure and the management costs are always a fruitful thing to look at.

John Biggs (Chairman): There could be a parallel between the model that is developing in some places where two local authorities will share a Chief Executive but would maintain their separate identities. And

specialisms; so we have a unit that looks at, I do not know, the smuggling of endangered species. Are things like that so specialist that they are lost when you see cutbacks?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I think there are two answers to that. I think it is a fair area to look at and I think you can quite easily ask people who are involved in wildlife and those sorts of things to form part of a general unit or even ask one person to do more than one thing. The result will be that you will get less attention to it and you probably will not get massive cost savings. There is usually not huge investments in these very specialist areas; antique squads and the rest of it. You can make cuts but I do not think you always get the benefits.

The Metropolitan Police has looked at two areas which I think have been productive; one is about sharing intelligence so they have now grouped together intelligence functions from, for example, counter-terrorism and serious organised crime. There has still been some growth in intelligence spending; every time somebody forms a unit they often want their own intelligence. So I think it is a constant battle to keep these things under control.

And the second point is around surveillance. Everybody has their own surveillance units; counter-terrorism has one, serious organised crime has one, pan-London boroughs, pan-London units and there is an opportunity for them to work together and when one team has got downtime to redeploy to another. Now the Metropolitan police has done things on that but I think there is still more that can be done.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): We can list all of these areas that we might look at but I think going to back to your original point, Chair, is that we do actually need to take this opportunity to stand back and there is expertise out there. The Metropolitan Police is vast and complex and it has defeated most people, better people than all of us collectively over decades if not centuries.

There is an opportunity and there is expertise out there to stand back and look holistically at work force re-modelling, taking all of these things into account. I think the time is now and I think from what Tim has said about unit costs but also, what I drew attention to in terms of the extent to which the increases have been much larger over the last ten years in the Metropolitan Police than they have anywhere else. I think the bottom line is, there is probably a lot more resilience in the Metropolitan Police than there is in a lot of places that are facing the cuts that are coming

Gareth Bacon (AM): As the Chairman said earlier on there has been a lot of focus, naturally I suppose, about reductions in police numbers.

The Mayor's, Deputy Mayor for policing, Kit Malthouse, told this Committee at a previous session that it is not the head count that matters but what police officers are doing with their time that matters to the general public. That is an area that we are going to focus on a little bit now. It is really about how we can get more police officers into frontline activity rather than what is perceived to be back office or non-operational activity.

I accept what Dr Brain was saying about the slight blurring of distinction between what is frontline and what is back office and that is something that you may care to comment on in a moment.

How can we actually make sure that more officers spend more of their time in what is perceived to be frontline activity rather than in less productive, non-operational back office activity?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I think we really would need to go back on a lot of the conversation we

have already had to some extent. Certainly IT is one way of helping that but, of course that is an investment at the front end and that really is not where everything is. I think the capital investment is difficult. The second opportunity usually is to get cheaper staff to do some of the things that you do not need to do; but again is this going to be a real challenge. I think there is work you can do around restricted officers.

Gareth Bacon (AM): About what, sorry?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Restricted officers - a group of police officers who are either classed as recuperative, or restricted. I think within the Metropolitan Police at the moment there is about 2,300.

Now, what that means is, and it is sometimes a function of age, sometimes a function of physical ability, they may not be physically up to all the tasks that you expect of a police officer. Therefore, you have not got the flexibility to deploy them in the way that you want. You can actively manage that and try to make sure that the distinction is that they are recuperative if they can get better, they are restricted if that is unlikely.

The challenge is for the police authority is that if you give them a medical pension because they fail that medical test, you will have to find that money now and you will not get their contributions until they would have retired. Therefore, there is an incentive to actually keep them working and put them into a productive role. It is always worth keeping an eye on what those productive roles are; have there been jobs created for them; are they backfilling a member of police staff which is an expensive option but it may be cheaper than a medical pension.

I think that needs active management and the numbers can be significant and 2,300 is quite a lot so someone needs to, I would say, always keep an eye on that type of thing. You may, therefore, find you can re-deploy people for things that they could do more effectively as a police officer or alternatively you may have to accept that you are going to have one less police staff member. It is a difficult dilemma.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): The starting point of this analysis is something that Marian has already alluded to which is to ask the question whether any post is necessary, does it align with what your priorities are. There is no doubt about it that having a reduced cash limited budget clarifies what are priorities and what are essential and non-essential posts because you may view something as essential in an ideal financial world or even just a comfortable financial world.

When the pressure comes because you have really got to make some cuts, and I have been there, Bernard has been there, we have all been there in our organisations. Certainly at the end of the 1990s we were not sitting down when we did force budgets to work out how much we were going to be growing; we were going to be working out how much we could manage decline. It is as recent as that. We have got used or the police service has got used to having growth and some comfort to give it that resilience and that has allowed posts to become more specialised. Let's just take an example of cold case review teams; it is something that is a national standard which Bernard's colleagues go around enforcing. Cold case reviews are a really important attribute; teams go back and re-visit cases which may have remained undetected for 20 years. You then get results using modern techniques, you get a proper justice outcome and you get people who were victims in the past a measure of some satisfaction. Is that something you now want to be doing?

Now that is not effectively a financial judgement, not even a process judgement; that is a value judgement. That is the kind of decisions that you, the Metropolitan Police Authority, those who are still serving will

have to face. You have got to go back to that first question which is, is that post essential, not desirable but essential and that is where you start building your base from.

Gareth Bacon (AM): So an examination really is required in to what Professor FitzGerald referred to as the surplus posts that were created in the times of plenty. You would recommend that as a starting point?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): It is a starting point. One person's surplus post is somebody else's essential post and you have got to remember there is a world out here, it is not just the Metropolitan Police or any other police force creating posts for their own ends. There are very often particular political and social pressures that demand a response; you just named one which was wildlife crime.

We have one wildlife specialist in Gloucestershire and the job is shared. We have to manage it that way. But there is this pressure, if there is a particular a problem often the police solution to it is to form a squad, even if it is only a one person squad. So that is often good in terms of effectiveness but generally is less good in terms of efficiency and economy. So you have got to go back and make those value judgements.

Now, identifying what is a surplus post; to start with I suspect will be relatively easy, you could say, "Yes, that one there, that one there, that one there". Then the pain will come on and I think the likelihood is, and you can push it stronger than this, but the likelihood is that the financial pain will be significant. If you are going to lose 5,000 posts, that is really not something that you would want to be doing but you could probably absorb it. If you are talking about losing 10,000 posts, it takes you back to a scenario that you were familiar with in 1997/98; replay the tape and remember what the Metropolitan Police was doing and looked like in 1997/98 and ask yourself, "Well, can we go back?"

Of course, you do not go simply back there, you can be more efficient and more focused on what are you doing but that is going to be the task of leadership over the next few years. Collapse the bag in a more structured and sensible way rather than how we have done in the past.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I'd like to say that I would never propose a zero base budgeting approach to £3.5 billion; it would be a nightmare certainly in the time that is available. There may be elements of a budget where you might ask people to justify particularly if they look like outlines or you intuitively thought, "Actually this is an area we do not really understand." You might ask someone to explain carefully why it is that they have been investing in for 20 years in that way and do they need to continue at that level in the future and that will squeeze out sometimes very good explanations of why you ought to carry on doing it.

And the only final one to put in equation is; the Olympics will be here in 2012. It might look attractive at the moment, but counter-terrorism could be looked at as something that people might want to squeeze harder or seriously organised crime. If you take it out now, in 2012 that date will not move. So I think there are bigger pictures of things to think about within that zero based budgeting as well.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): I do want to just support Bernard on that for a second before it is lost. One has to go through a straightforward analysis of process and posts to track things which are obviously inefficiencies and that is really important. Before you start worrying about what is the bigger picture, you have to go through that process first.

Gareth Bacon (AM): Can I just ask you a question about operation practice then because I think the bane of most police officers lives, certainly every police officer I have ever spoken to, is the amount of bureaucracy they are required to undertake and follow. I think the value in the police report that the HMIC

produced very recently which identified a very similar thing and they suggested a reason for that, which is the police's approach to risk and risk aversion.

I think certainly in these post McPherson days, the police force is almost being forced to be as risk averse as possible because of the various shortcomings that we unveiled in that process. Do you think that where we are now is the most productive way that we can be doing things? Do you think the amount of bureaucracy that is required, the amount of form filling and reports that need to be written following every arrest and every caution is necessary? Or should we actually be looking at that and looking at ways to reduce that in order to get police officers back out onto the streets and doing things that the public will consider to be frontline rather than back office?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Well, because we raised that criticism, I think I am only about the fourth person who is trying now to do a piece of work to reduce bureaucracy. So what we did immediately was form a committee. We are working our way through that; we are trying to come up with some suggestions to be more constructive than might be just a criticism. I think there are two elements to bureaucracy; one is clearly some of the work needs doing and the IT is not good enough to support some of the things that need to happen. So transferring data between agencies is a nightmare, it could get better; I think there is hope there.

I think the main thrust of your point, I think, which is around how we manage risk. I think when it demands of us - rather we have not always worked as well as perhaps we could have done with the academic side I think, is working out what is the risk and, therefore, how we mitigate it. Because I think, I should not say we, but generally the police generally try to remove it and probably that materialises as bureaucracy when in fact if we said, "Actually, if we do this in this way we will remove it, if we did it with 50 per cent of the best resources it might happen 2 per cent of the time" What we have not got is a very good academic knowledge or body of knowledge which actually allows us sometimes to make those very sensible decisions because we do not always know the most effective things to do or the worst outcomes.

I do not think that is a get out clause but I think there is a significant piece of work to do sometimes with academia and sometimes we do our own research to work out what works best. There are some significant areas in which we over-invest to remove all risk.

Gareth Bacon (AM): Can I ask you what your understanding of risk is because my understanding as a civilian would be that it is a risk to the public if the police do something incorrect. There is a danger that various public sector organisations but those particularly at the front end, the sharp end, their understanding of risk is risk to themselves and prevention of another situation where the police force can get absolutely beasted in the media for months on end. Best practice then, is avoiding that kind of showdown with politicians and the media. What do you understand risk to be?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): My definition would be that it is the risk to the public, which if you get it wrong would be a reputation risk to you.

Gareth Bacon (AM): So do you think then that the bureaucratic framework that is in place now is always required to protect the public or is it being developed to protect the police service?

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): I think it is a combination of both. I think you have got a joint access there. I think the genuine motive is to protect people, I mean what we are talking about, the risk around people dying or people getting seriously hurt? It is generally the main risk you worry about, so systems are put in place to stop that happening, can they get over-bureaucratic, yes, I say this against my own previous

existence, but ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) can play a part in it, HMIs have played a part in it, of course, enquiries have played at part in it.

Every time that a public service is called to account for not doing something on one occasion they will put in place a system to make sure that one occasion did not happen again and that is where the bureaucracy sprouts, so it is not easy. We are in a litigious society which does attract blame and does attribute blame and I think it is going to be difficult to remove. Because even if a police authority or Home Office say they were not going to regard risk in the same way, I am not sure the civil courts have announced that.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): I do not think we should just assume that all bureaucracy is to do with managing risk. There has been a huge proliferation in bureaucracy particularly since 1997 and as Bernard has already alluded to there have been several serious reports on how to reduce it. Very little action has been taken as a result and I would cite in particular, if you remember Jan Berry was appointed, much to her surprise as the Reducing Bureaucracy Tsar by the previous Government. She produced a very sensible, practical report last November which provided not prescription, but a clear structure within which any force that really was serious about doing this could operate.

That has sat on forces shelves without them even being aware that it was there, I suspect because both civil servants in the Home Office and politicians knew that it was implicitly so critical of some of the nonsense that they had spawned that they were not prepared to back it and push it.

So there are plenty of things that could be done and I think really, for my mind, and some work that I have been doing in depth in another force, I would say that really before you start salami slicing off what you have already got, if you want to reduce bureaucracy you should get officers themselves to stand back and list of all their requirements, all of the additional requirements placed on the service by the Government since 1997.

Then identify with your officers who are worth maintaining, which should be continued but radically streamlined and which should be ditched completely; and I suspect there is a huge scope for savings out there and people out there know but they have never been given the push to get on and do it.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): And just as a bit of hope on that - is that this is to some extent political but the present Government said it will not enforce targets. What it said is it will not enforce a central target but I keep reminding the police service that does not mean that there will be no targets; there will just be lots of local targets I suspect, but there will be no central targets. It is something called an annual data return that every force provides to the centre, now if you do not have that you will not be able to answer Parliamentary questions when other people ask, how good is a particular force at doing certain things?

Some of things that have grown up are really hard to understand there is still return for breathalyzers. That started in about 1964 I think when people thought that was a real change, it is still going on and you see the summer campaigns, you see the Christmas campaigns. Up to today you now see a return for taser use. Now, people around this table might say, "Actually I want to know about that" that is a new thing, the public are worried about it and people die; but every time a new thing comes along, the Police Service gets a form and it every time it does it, it fills it in.

It used to be the case if you used your staff, your truncheon, I am not sure that is still happening. That is the nature of the beast I'm afraid, every time somebody says, sometimes say, not always, what is the answer to this question, it generates a question which the service methodically goes off and gives you the answer to.

Gareth Bacon (AM): Before Professor Stanko comes in can I ask a clarification question of Professor FitzGerald.

You made a comment just now that since 1997 a whole range of different things are now being done and your suspicion was the reason that civil servants and politicians were not interested in the recommendation that come out in a report that you just mentioned was because it would reflect badly on them and what they had done. Some of us in the political world would agree 100 per cent with that sentiment, nationally the political scene has changed somewhat.

Would it, therefore, be your contention that if there was a direct political lead, and I mean from the new Government, which would be offering some backing to the police forces around the country rather than condemnation, that now would be the time to really go for that written grant review?

John Biggs (Chairman): I think there may be some babies in the bathwater.

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): The one thing that I would really fear would be central Government getting prescriptive again about reducing bureaucracy. It has got to come bottom up and the systematic why that I have described, otherwise you will have the same civil servants getting it wrong again. Because what knowledge exists up there that actually understands that ground level, day to day, 24/7 on the streets work that can actually really understand where the cuts need to be made and what is worth preserving. It has got to be bottom up because if we leave the civil servants to do it all over again we will be in the same old mess.

Gareth Bacon (AM): So empowering localism then would be a good thing?

Professor Marian FitzGerald (Visiting Professor of Criminology, University of Kent): Indeed, but on a collective basis because I think you will get a broad consensus coming up from all forces about a core of stuff that could and should go.

Professor Betsy Stanko (Head of the Strategic Research and Analysis Unit, Metropolitan Police Service): It is very important to think about the balance between how do you account for what you do and that is really, really important and what do you actually do. Without some kind of account, I absolutely agree that it has gone mad, but there are also some ways that you really do not know what police are actually doing unless there is a way of recording stop and search for example and/or work around high risk matters, so for example, rape or domestic violence. There has to be some accountability for actually what you do and make sure that you do the right thing.

Gareth Bacon (AM): Thank you for that.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Anything that involves writing a document appears to be labelled bureaucracy these days. There is a danger about going the exact opposite. I think we all agree that we should cut out the bureaucracy where it is not effective but there is that issue about account.

If I look at two issues that have been raised, firstly the stop and search, the officers tell me they actually see that as a protection to them as well as it being an account mechanism, it is a protection mechanism to say the thing was done properly.

Tasers: I have to say that I think it is a useful bit of bureaucracy and I do not think you can compare giving an electric shock to somebody to a breathalyzer. So I think there is some differences that we have to be aware of.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): My only point is that one person's bureaucracy is another person's useful piece of information and --

John Biggs (Chairman): I think there is a cross party consensus about this very issue and there are questions about review and time limiting and all sorts of possibilities that might make things more efficient.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): A mention was made earlier that you cannot make a police officer redundant but there are various sorts of regulations around pay and conditions; working practices and shift patterns. Those of us who are on the Fire Authority and I know a number of us who are with the Fire Authority will know there is a whole review of shift patterns precisely for, yet more effective service.

The proposition is, if central Government is saying to police forces, less national resources, can police forces or police authorities say to central Government, "Well, then we need a change in the rules to allow us to manage those resources more effectively" So the proposition is are there a full set of restrictions that we ought to be sweeping away?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): If I can perhaps make an observation about shift patterns first. Thirty years ago, police regulations set down an eight hour normal tour of duty: you could have what was called a quick change over, finish for example at 10.00pm and be back at 6.00am. You would generally work a block of whatever shift you were on; so seven nights would be an example.

It was not unusual to come off night duty and within four days be on early turn, I worked those shifts, so this is within living memory; probably Bernard worked it as well. This was prescribed by police regulations which in the absence of police officers being employees, police constables being employees, the Crown office holders is what governed their working arrangements, it is the alternative to employment law.

Now there have been several goes over the years to dispense with the police regulations, free them up and shift patterns is a good example. Quite a long time ago there was a move to free up police regulations to allow extended hours, shifts, which was the magic bullet of its day, which would enable you to mould your shift patterns so that you have most officers on at the peak of demand and that you actually gave them more sensible working arrangements.

With shift patterns you avoided those quick changeovers, those huge blocks of one particular shift and actually gave them some more time off. You would still work the same number of hours in total, there was no lessening of that but by working a 9 or 10 or even an 11 hour day it banked up hours that you could take as days off.

The result of the change has replaced one set of complications with another because it is still quite hard to get your times to match, by giving officers more time away from the work place they have got less time to spend on the bureaucracy or the evidence gathering or training etc. Extended hours shift systems are great for when you overlap but they are poor for giving you resilience across the other times of the day and night.

What I am saying is 'babies in bathwater' is a pretty good analogy here. I would not recommend going back to the old systems but the new ones are not perfect. One can from time to time, look at police regulations and try to free them and modify them and sweep away some of the inconsistencies and inadequacies. In the absence of employment law there is probably going to have to be a Government's mechanism.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): I take your point that there is no perfect shift pattern and indeed some discretion and flexibility is needed there. My point is are there national rules that prevent, say, the Metropolitan Police doing that sensibly and should we be trying to get rid of those national rules in an era where we have to work flexibly and make every pound of taxpayers money work.

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): Essentially no. The Metropolitan Police can devise its own shift system for its officers.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): So you are saying on shifts there are no national restrictions at all around working patterns and so forth --

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): You asked the question: is there anything to stop the Metropolitan Police devising its own system? There is nothing to stop them the Metropolitan Police devising its own system but police officers are now governed by the Working Time Directive. The Working Time Directive, for example, outlaws those quick changeovers that I just outlined which were a standard practice 30 years ago.

It was actually quite an efficient use of your time to come straight off duty and be back less than eight hours later. So they are not entirely free but can they devise their own work system free from an inhibiting police regulation, in essence they can.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): What about the central issue of making police officers redundant?

Dr Timothy Brain (Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Universities; Police Science Institute, Cardiff University): What can happen without any shadow of a doubt is that police officers can be retired when they are eligible to take their pension under regulation A19. It is an option that has not been used as far as I know, it certainly has not been used generally but it is a residual tool in police regulations. So when you are coming up to your age limit or your service limit, 30 years at the moment is the general one, you could be compulsorily retired.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): So the general question is from the rest of the panel is, in this era where we are trying to find new ways of doing new things to make every pound pay, are there restrictions from the national setup that should be swept away.

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): Two quick things. One is that the Home Office is carrying out a review which is going to be lead by, I think, a senior business person not yet identified which will report in January. It is an opportunity for any force to contribute in the consultation side about those terms and conditions that might need to be changed, so I think that is something that an authority might want to think about. They are going to look at things like 50 per cent of the police overtime being spent on eight days a year called Bank Holidays. So I think there are issues to think about structurally.

Secondly, in terms of the Metropolitan Police, they have got better but there is still quite a number of shift systems. Now sometimes that reflects the difference in boroughs, Westminster is different to Lewisham, which is different to Haringey, etc. They have all crushed down on the shift systems but I think there may still be more to do and I think they acknowledge that and I think it is always worth --

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): We can do that locally, we do not need --

HMI Bernard Hogan-Howe (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for National Agencies and the Metropolitan Police): No. I mean the other thing In addition to what Tim has said, is that it

has to be done it is a legal requirement, it has to be done with agreement with the Federation. Now that might be a natural thing anyway, you would want to make sure you negotiate on these things.

Can I just finally mention on A19, what that means is that it concentrates you looking at people with 30 years service, not necessarily the ones who are least productive.

Mike Tuffrey (Deputy Chairman): Okay. Thanks.

John Biggs (Chairman): Can I thank you enormously for your evidence and your attendance today and if you have further written submissions I think they may be very gratefully received. I think that was a very thoughtful and useful session.