

London Assembly (Plenary), 5 March 2014**Transcript of Agenda Item 4:
Question and Answer Session – Policing in London**

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): We now come to item 4, which is the main item of business today, the question and answer session on policing in London. Can I welcome our guests this morning, Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, and Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. Can I invite the Commissioner to make an opening statement before we begin the questions.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Chairman, Assembly, thank you for the opportunity to say a few words at the beginning. First of all I am just going to explain a few of our successes during the year, because I am sure you will want to question me on things that we need to develop, so I think it is a fair thing to explain some of the things we have achieved.

We have got a vision about total policing and of course what we want to do together is keep this great global city safe. I think that is something you will share as well as I will, and make sure that I deliver for you and for the people of London. We have started on that in terms of transforming the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), and I do think there is need for transformation.

We need to save £600 million and we are going to do that. We will have fewer buildings, we will have fewer staff - sadly, in terms of our police staff - and we will have fewer managers. At the end of this, over the next couple of years we will have more frontline officers and better technology. I think that is a good outcome, which we should be proud of. I am generally proud of the quality of our people, what they do every year, what they have to deal with day by day and night by night. Because of that quality we are bringing crime down. There is a debate about the reliability of police figures, but I think if you look at the British Crime Survey data you also see a similar fall in crime, so I think we can be sure that there is a drop in crime during the period we are talking about.

In fact, during this last year, and the last two years, we have also seen a reduction in stop and search. I am going to just briefly talk about that because I think it is an issue that might be pertinent for this Assembly. I said when I arrived that I wanted to see us get better at stop and search. For me that meant that we could target offenders, so we would target people who are criminals and make sure they got stop and searched. That is an unequivocal promise.

I thought we could do less and increase its effectiveness, reduce the complaints and reduce the disproportionality we have seen in stop and search over the years and that is what we have delivered. Since January 2012 stop and search is actually down by 37% from a total then of 500,000 stop and searches to today around 312,000. Section 60 [of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994] searches, which are the searches put on by senior officers for a discrete amount of time in a discrete area are down 91%, which means 95% fewer searches in those areas.

We have also reduced during the same time stop and account from back in 2009 over 800,000 to today something of the order 300,000 to 350,000. Stop and account we kept going, if you remember, because the Government decided that they did not want stop and account and I said I would keep it because the public of London said that is what they wanted and it is a promise I made to Stephen Lawrence's parents, so we have kept that going, so we can give those statistics.

We have seen arrests rise during those stop and searches, and in fact from an 8% arrest rate we have risen to around today about 17%. Disproportionality has come down, so that now you are as likely to be stopped if you are from the Asian community, or appear to be from the Asian community, as if you are white. It remains true that in stop and search you are 2.5 times more likely to be stopped if you are a black male. I accept that is a difference we may want to discuss. In the stop and account you are as likely to be stopped if you are a black male as if you are white, and if you are of Asian appearance you are less likely to be stopped. I think these are significant improvements. We have also seen during the last year alone a 49% reduction in the complaints about stop and search.

At the same time we have done that we have actually seen crime come down. We have seen about a 7% crime reduction and within that some very significant reductions: violent crime, including knife injury, which is relevant for stop and search, in terms of injury against those under 25 is down very significantly during this period and robbery has fallen by 70%.

We have also improved the way we deal with telephone calls of which we get nearly 5 million a year. We now get to actually answer the phone on average in five seconds for the 999s and 101s in 12 seconds and we are one of the best call handlers in the country. We get to 92.6% of our urgent calls within 15 minutes. We have a plan and we are improving the way we deal with technology.

We have seized 91,000 uninsured vehicles over the last two years and we may talk about why that is so important. I hope we can show that we are improving.

We are piloting body-worn cameras. From April 2014, 400 officers will be carrying these to improve our accountability.

We have seen public confidence rise. We have seen it rise from 64% to 68% and I think that is a significant benefit.

There have been challenges we may talk about today in terms of recruitment. Our numbers have dropped over the last two years, as we have tried to get this money out of the back office into the front. Even over the last few weeks our numbers have risen to 30,291 and within the next few weeks we will recruit a further 700 officers, so we are getting nearer to 31,000 and over the next two years we will get back to the nearly 32,000, despite the £600 million that we have to save.

Despite the fact that I am proud of what our people achieve, I am also prepared to challenge those who behave badly. We have actually, over the last two years, dismissed twice as many officers for misconduct as in the previous two years. They have not been high numbers, but we

have taken severe action where we thought it was appropriate. We have agreed our values about courage, integrity, professionalism and caring, and that is what we try to reinforce through our benefits but also through our sanctions.

We have a Code of Ethics, which has been created nationally and we have seized on in the Metropolitan Police Service very quickly and I know that the Mayor, together with the Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh] has created an Ethics Panel, which we are now working with for the future.

Finally, just to say we are changing the way we use technology. It is not always straightforward when you are trying to save £600 million, but over the next three years we will invest £200 million in the capital that is needed to improve the technology we have. I think that will deliver us a fantastic opportunity to improve the way that we stop crime, arrest offenders and help victims.

Just to emphasise the point about losing £600 million. This is not a complaint - it is just an observation of fact. The recession means that public service generally has to spend less money, but I think we can show that despite that we have a good plan.

Finally, as a Commissioner, really it is probably the first time, I think possibly ever, that the Commissioner has seen such a significant reduction in funding and still has to deliver an improvement, because most of our predecessors have funded improvements on the back of very significant growth in money and people.

Darren Johnson (Chair): Thank you very much for that opening statement. We are now going to go straight into the four tabled questions on the order paper. If there are questions on matters on the update which are not covered in the written questions that were tabled then we can come to those at the end if there is time.

2014/1244 - Safer Neighbourhood Teams

[Caroline Pidgeon MBE](#)

Are you satisfied that Safer Neighbourhood Teams are visible, contactable and effective under your new Local Policing Model?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thank you, Caroline, yes. The answer is that I am very pleased with the way the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) are working. Obviously the new Local Policing Model (LPM) is now being rolled out. I think it is not quite a year old but we have come a long way. I think I would stress two points: that we are ahead of target in getting more officers out into the SNTs. Remember I kept going on about the 2,600 more that we were going to have. We have got 2,336 of those already out there, which is way ahead of our schedule and they are working longer shifts.

You have done a very interesting survey of quite a small number of people, but a very interesting survey, a snapshot survey, nonetheless, of people's attitudes to SNTs and response times and there is some stuff in that that I find very useful and interesting. They are working longer, they are out there when the public needs to see them and you have more officers working late shifts and weekends, whereas before the LPM most of the SNTs were on a 9.00am

to 5.00pm timetable. As Sir Bernard has just been saying, the proof of the pudding really is in the eating and you are seeing some very significant reductions in crime, plus a small but appreciable increase in confidence.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you for your answer, and thank you and the Metropolitan Police Service for your response to our survey about the phone and email responses and I am reassured that that will improve.

What I want to focus on today is the changes you made to SNTs where you reduced the dedicated ward teams to only one police constable (PC) and one police community support officer (PCSO). The feedback I am getting is that it is not really working on the ground. I am hearing from people that they have not seen Safer Neighbourhood police officers in their area for weeks or even months, and that the dedicated officers are being moved all over the place. Yet in your Police and Crime Plan you specifically claim that you are going to make the police more visible and accessible.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It seems to me that your changes are doing quite the opposite.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I hear what you say, Caroline, about the anecdotal evidence that you are getting. The surveys that we have done say there is an increase in the number of the public who say they have seen police on patrol at least weekly. That is going up and that is the name of the game. We have had a lot of conversations over the years in the Assembly about why am I obsessed with keeping numbers high in spite of the difficult financial circumstances, and that is because you need to have the numbers to keep the police out there and visible.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You say it is anecdotal but let me give you a specific example. I recently asked the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) about residents on a particular Rotherhithe estate where there have been muggings. They said they had not seen their SNT for weeks. The answer I got back from the Metropolitan Police Service revealed that only 23% of officers' time was spent in wards. Some of that was doing investigations - it was not doing the patrolling and the reassurance work. Basically more than three-quarters of their time was spent across the borough and on London-wide operations. I just do not feel that that is good enough when you only have two people who are dedicated to the ward. Will you guarantee that the two officers who are supposed to be dedicated to wards remain in their wards and are not abstracted to go and do other operations?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK, I certainly will look at what is going on in the Rotherhithe ward, and Sir Bernard may want to comment on this. Typically in Southwark now on a Friday night the borough commander has 60 officers on duty as a result of the LPM, compared to 18 before the changes. I think most people will say that is a good step forward.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The issue is it is the dedicated officers, the PCs and PCSOs who are dedicated to a particular ward. That is just an actual example rather than an anecdote. In a recent answer to a Mayor's question you stated to me that the, "Dedicated PC and PCSO should not be abstracted from their wards - they should remain in the wards, only exceptionally should

they be taken out". The evidence I have in the writing from the police is that 75% of the time these officers are taken elsewhere. What I am saying is will you guarantee that those dedicated officers remain in those wards?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think I have given you a pretty fair answer there, Caroline, which is you have asked particularly about what is going on in Southwark. The data I have is that on a typical Friday night, as I say, the Borough Commander has 60 officers on duty compared to 18 before the changes. Whether they are being abstracted or not I do not know, I have no evidence to suggest they are. The information I have is that we are able to get more officers out into the SNTs and more are patrolling the streets.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I think what you are talking about is the general pool of officers. I am saying that there is a dedicated PC and PCSO per ward. I would like to see that higher than just one of each, but I am saying that even those are being abstracted, even though your policy says they should not be. Will you look into that to make sure they do remain in the wards where they have been allocated?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Well, of course. I note that all the data that I have seen seem to be going in the right direction in the sense that more people are saying they have seen patrols under the LPM in the very areas that you talk about actually. The Borough Commander is able to dispose of more officers on duty on a Friday night that he was able to before and crime is coming down. Obviously I will look at it and obviously report to you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: As part of looking at that will you also review whether actually you need to increase the number of dedicated officers per ward rather than having a pool that gets diverted to certain parts of the borough?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I think obviously you have to exercise common sense here, Caroline. What you do not want to have is a rigid and inflexible system that means that some officers are kept rooted and anchored to one particular spot, where the issue may be developing somewhere else. Everybody in London can see that you would want to be a little bit common-sensical there.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you review the dedicated number, because it may be in certain wards that you might need to have additional dedicated officers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): As I say, what we have done is increase the SNTs.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, I heard that, will you review the dedicated officers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We have another 2,336 already of the 2,600 that we said we would get into the SNTs. Now the overall neighbourhood officer numbers are running at 4,500. That is pretty good.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you review, yes or no, the dedicated officers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will look at it but I urge you to exercise common sense and judgement, and not to try to impose a structure on policing in London that actually does

not suit the needs of the population. There is no point in having officers, as I say, tethered to some particular place when the need for their presence may be elsewhere.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I do not want to see the decimation of neighbourhood policing and that is why I want to see the dedicated officers.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You are seeing the very opposite.

Darren Johnson (Chair): Thank you. I am not going to put this on your group's time but I know the Commissioner is keen to come in, so I am going to bring you in for a brief comment.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): One is just that we are having a review, so we will take that type of feedback into account. I will have a look at Rotherhithe. It is an operational deployment decision about where we put the officers. This is not a Mayoral policy issue. If we change the model it will be an operational decision.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you.

Joanne McCartney AM: I will start with the Commissioner, if I may. I am glad to see you are reviewing it, because about a year ago you said that this time you would have a review about the LPM. How long do you expect that review to take and will you make the results public to this Assembly?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We will. If you remember there were two tranches, so there was the first tranche which I think was in February and the second tranche in June. As the Mayor said, we have only had probably about six months of all the boroughs being in this position. I think we need all the boroughs to have been working at it for a year, so I think we have another few months. I know that between March and June the Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing [Simon Byrne] is going to sit down with all the Borough Commanders and assess where we are - instead of doing it on a paper basis he will have a conversation - so by June, July we should have something that we can share.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK, because following on from Caroline I am hearing exactly the same things. Not just people that I talk to but Residents' Associations are saying that actually the contact with their SNTs is very poor at the moment and they do not see their officers.

Can I ask you, I have been asking for a while now for current data on staffing levels by ward level on PCs and PCSOs. Do you have that information? Can you give it to me outside this meeting?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. Just going back to the other feedback, one of the things I have said already is that we are at the moment just recruiting again. Over the last 18 months we should have had 32,000 police and we had about 30,000, a 2,000 gap. What that means is that not all the neighbourhoods are staffed to the level they need to be, nor are the homicide teams nor some of the other people. Some of the things we are experiencing are partly a result of the changes and partly the result

of the general vacancies. There are not enough people doing these jobs, so I accept that entirely. In terms of the numbers, of course we will provide them.

Joanne McCartney AM: Good, because I think the cut in numbers has been very problematic and there have been gaps. You are able to provide me with data on current staffing levels by ward, by borough?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. Just to be clear, Joanne, what I can provide very clearly is who is posted to those wards. If you then say every night how many people are working in those wards that gets a little more problematic because the Territorial Support Group (TSG) might come in, traffic, neighbourhood teams, but the general deployment we should be very clear about.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I ask the Mayor, because I asked recently for that information and I was denied it by MOPAC, who said that the information is not currently available as the Metropolitan Police Service were in the process of redeveloping and improving their relevant data monitoring systems.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Joanne, I cannot give you the data now and certainly I cannot explain why you did not get the answer that you want. I hear what Bernard has said. I have absolutely no problem about making sure that you get the data.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you, because if I hear concerns from residents I obviously want to check whether their SNTs are fully resourced or not.

Talking about anecdotes, I hear from local residents as well. I was particularly concerned that when I was door-knocking a couple of weeks ago I actually came across a PCSO who said that previously he would have gone into difficult situations, he would have talked to young people, but now he is very reluctant to do so, because if he got into trouble he is not convinced that if he hit his panic button backup would come and support him. He put that down to the changes to local policing. If I am hearing that from staff within the Metropolitan Police Service it gives me great concern. I am just saying, Mr Mayor and Commissioner, does it give you concern as well?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): If it was accurate I would accept it, but it is hard to understand because the Mayor has given one example where we actually have more officers out for longer periods, particularly in the evening. It is hard to believe that, in fact, if they pressed their button they would not get help. I just do not understand that and I would like to talk, or not so much me, but someone may talk to the individual to understand why they are so concerned. I think that is a little hard to understand.

Joanne McCartney AM: I think it is because those officers that used to be there were no longer there.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have lots of evidence where, for example, we are now visiting far more people who are victims of crime. I made a promise where, if you remember, in the past we have screened out calls and we were not going to visit victims. The only reason we are getting to all these calls - about

200,000 more last year, which is a huge number where we are visiting scenes of crime - is because the neighbourhood officers who were only working in the day are now working in the evening and being expected to do more of the things that we expect a police officer to do.

I have heard some feedback from some people who generally go to meetings with neighbourhood officers. I want them to keep that contact but I prefer that they arrest people where they get a complaint of crime. They have to strike a balance. You have to keep the contact but there is some evidence in the past that they spend a lot of time in meetings. I think that has changed and to some extent accounts for some of the feedback we get.

Joanne McCartney AM: I think the concern is whether you have changed too much. I think that reassurance policing seems to be going backwards now, which is a great concern.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Given that we know that there are more officers on the street, the fact that some people do not see officers at meetings could be a positive thing, if we are genuinely getting more officers to respond quicker to incidents and deal with the public's concerns, not just attend meetings.

John Biggs AM: I take it as genuine that the change in neighbourhood policing is intended to make London safer. This is a question to the Mayor. How do you deal with the fact that there has been a massive increase, more than doubling in recorded wounding and grievous bodily harm (GBH) under this new responsive model?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not know the data to which you are referring, John.

John Biggs AM: I can give you the numbers, it is your data.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): All the figures I have seen suggest that there is a significant fall in crime, in crimes of violence, and there may be, in the general downward trend - I do not know over what time you are referring, I do not know what categories you are talking about - but in the general downward trend violent crime, knife injury against under 25 year-olds is down by a third, the murder rate for this year 2013/14 is one of the lowest on record, robbery has fallen by 17.3%. I do not know which set of statistics you are referring to but overall there has been a very significant fall in crime.

John Biggs AM: They are your figures. I know that where there is not an answer you try to answer a different question, but the question is about wounding GBH where 2012 recorded figures 7,270 across London, 2013 15,900, so 118% increase. In Barking and Dagenham an increase of 145%, which is bad news, it is a bigger increase. Tower Hamlets got off relatively lightly - the increase was only 88% in that recorded crime. Can you account for that in any shape or form?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Again, I can only tell you that all the figures I have seen suggest that that is a blip, the kind that you always see in a general downward trend.

John Biggs AM: This is presumably about people experiencing violence.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): If there are lessons that we can learn from something in particular that is going on there I am sure we will.

John Biggs AM: It is more than a blip. It is about people experiencing violent crime. Perhaps the Commissioner can come to your aid and explain this more than doubling.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Violent crime is going down.

John Biggs AM: We are talking about wounding GBH, which is not one of your top seven, but it is a pretty top seven for people who experience it.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I also admit, John, I have not got the figures in front of me, I am struggling a little bit, but I accept in principle what you are saying. I think what we have seen generally is that we know that all the wounding and the stabbings of people generally is down a lot. I am struggling to understand the figures that you are quoting, because we know that in fact we arrest an awful lot of gang members, and we have actually reduced stabbings and shootings, so it is a bit hard to understand the figures you mention.

John Biggs AM: They are your figures. They are the Metropolitan Police Service Crime Data for Full Year 2012 compared to 2013, and unless you changed the categories which I do not think you have done and unless you have got it wrong, which did happen in terms of recorded crime --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is not impossible but I will need to take note of the question and I would need to go away and look. I am not being resistive but it is hard to understand from what I know of the stats.

John Biggs AM: I think we are all delighted if recorded crime is declining in London. I think we are obviously concerned there are particular places where it is not declining. Tower Hamlets has had a particular issue. We should be alarmed if there are particular categories of crime which are increasing. On your own figures wounding GBH is on the rise in London and that must be of great concern to all of us.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Let us assume for the moment that the figures are right, I take your point, I just do not have them in front of me. What we do know, as I say, on the whole is that young people crime, where young people have been either shot, stabbed, that is down by about a third. I cannot account for what you have just described, so I am going to have to go away and look at it. It is not something that I have spotted within the 800,000 crimes we have every year.

John Biggs AM: It would be helpful if you could write to the Assembly and clarify.

Darren Johnson (Chair): Yes, if we can have that clarification in writing for the record that would be very useful, Commissioner. Thank you.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): This is a question for the Commissioner. Sir Bernard, we had a very useful meeting, I felt, in Redbridge last month when you came along and spoke to

local people there and some of them raised concerns they had around crime and confidence in the police locally. One of my constituents from Wanstead asked you if we could reinstate the Ringmaster telephone system to alert people to crime problems in their area. You made a commitment at the time that that was something you would look at, if you could update us on that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We are still looking at it, only because I think there is some cost involved and it is something that we have to make sure that we can afford. Certainly, as I said at the meeting, it seems to me it is a good system. It is relatively cheap to operate, although it may be a little difficult, the expense to installing it, but broadly they work. I do not have an answer today because I did not realise the question was going to come, but certainly we are looking at it with an open mind and trying to do it. It is just, I think, a question of cost.

Roger Evans (Deputy Chairman): Perhaps you could just send me a short briefing to tell me where we are with that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Of course.

James Cleverly AM: There are two points. The conversation has moved on slightly, so unfortunately I am rather going to drag you back in time to an earlier conversation with regard to visibility of policing and the LPM.

This is to the Commissioner. What attempts have been made to reconcile the type of people to whom visible policing is visible? I am very conscious that in my constituency, for example, we have large residential areas and a large commuter population, which means during the week, during the day, there are very few people visible. In Beckenham, for example, where there is a very active youth night time economy, visibility on a Friday and Saturday night needs to be higher. The people that we then ask about the visibility of policing tend to be the middle-aged people in the suburban residential streets who were all up in the West End previously. How do we reconcile who we are talking to when we talk about visible policing and how do we make sure that the metrics we get around that visibility are really useful?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have an attitude survey, and the one in 2013/14 I have looked at to see whether or not visibility so far as the people surveyed had increased, so you try to get a broad spread. You get a spread by age and you get a spread by people who ideally are out and about at different times of the day. Obviously, what that shows - although this Assembly may not accept that - is that in fact by one percentage point, so very small on a 35% base, they thought they would see more officers over the 2013/14 year period. I will not claim too much on that because 1% I do not think is a great deal, but at least it was showing that it was not going down. We do try to survey what we think is a representative sample.

We know that in terms of people in the frontline, we have already talked about the numbers that we have put into it, as a percentage of the whole staff it has gone up from 45% to 47% into the frontline. It would be great to get it up to two-thirds, but we have to do what we can achieve at the moment. I think generally we are putting more people there. Some people say they see more of them but I think we have to accept that people would always like to see more.

The reality is we will not see an officer on every street corner, but that has never been the case while I have been in the job but people often claim it.

Also finally, we do get some high visibility at big events. In central London we see some high visibility because we have to have officers deal with some of the more public events in the centre of London and some of the suburbs sometimes say, "We don't see them as often". It is a fair point, but equally we have responsibilities around Parliament, which means that we do have more investments that are seen more often in our guarding locations than people in the estate will see in the evening or night.

James Cleverly AM: Just an addendum to the question that John Biggs made with regard to the figures around GBH. We seem to be basing a lot of the conversations on anecdotal evidence, so I will do the same. The conversations that I have had with police officers in my borough, they say there is a corporate encouragement, particularly in crime against the person, to take a tough stance. When you provide the Assembly with figures about GBH, will you also make sure that alongside of them there are the figures both in the past and now for actual bodily harm (ABH) and the other - what used to be the "subordinate" crime types in that - crimes against the person? I would be very keen to see whether there are figures that used to sit in that ABH category that have, by default, been locally reclassified as GBH, because I believe that some of that reclassification may account for it and I would like to test that hypothesis.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It can. It is very difficult in talking about these types of statistics because every time an explanation is offered it sounds defensive. One of the things we look at is the overall amount of violence - were more people assaulted or less - then you look at the seriousness of the assault. Charging decisions over the years and crime recording statistics have meant actually which category it falls into can change, but I am not sure, to be fair on the challenge that I had from John Biggs that that accounts entirely for the last year, but we can certainly give the overall number and then we can break it down further.

Fiona Twycross AM: I have a question for the Mayor. I am concerned that people's anecdotal examples should be taken quite seriously because this is what people are telling us on the doorstep, what Caroline is picking up, what Joanne is picking up, what everybody who has spoken about the anecdotes is picking up on the doorstep. I do not ever remember a time when fear of crime has come up as much as it is currently on the doorstep. It is notable for every single time, and I go several times a week knocking on doors, annoying people, asking them if they have any issues, it comes up as an issue. I do not ever remember a time when crime has come up as much as it is now. For example, in Val's constituency, on my doorstep in Dulwich, there has been an increase in burglaries of 11% which people are talking about, they are concerned about it and they are talking to their neighbours about it. In Herne Hill there has been a 44% increase in burglaries. I spoke to a resident whose neighbour's door had been kicked-in in broad daylight, where three other neighbours on the same street had had similar problems.

Because I have been trying to identify what it is about the patterns that I am getting when people are talking to me and part of it seems to be about what is happening on borough boundaries. I am quite concerned about the impact of the changes to the police model on

borough boundaries where you are getting some sort of sense that things are being centralised, but on borough boundaries there seems to be spikes. The issue seems to be that the police simply are not present to the same level as they were previously and that this is leading to unacceptable spikes in crimes such as burglaries. Obviously Joanne picked this up from the PCSO she spoke to, that people are being told by their local police that the impact is being affected by police numbers and the patterns of policing. We have evidence from Streatham, from Hackney and Bow. We have real examples of people telling us that this is happening. These are all areas where the visible policing has fallen, where they have seen police stations closing and where they are seeing fewer PCSOs on the street.

Wards near borough boundaries do appear to be particularly affected, from what we are being told. I think this could indicate that some of the patterns of crime appear to be changing to reflect a shift in resources and depletion of SNTs and centralisation of resources. I appreciate that preventative crime mapping is being rolled out but it feels to me that is quite a reactive approach that would potentially have an impact on the area from which police arbitration then moved away from, so the issue is being shifted from one area to another. The only real solution, it feels to me, is to reverse the changes to SNTs. I think Caroline's point about what is happening in Rotherhithe is also very relevant.

Will you ask MOPAC to investigate changes in patterns? Not necessarily the overall level of crime but whether the pattern is changing.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Yes.

Fiona Twycross AM: Also look at fear of crime on a ward level?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): OK, Fiona. There are some very interesting points there. Yes, Sir Bernard and I can sit here and tell you that there is an overall reduction in burglary, which there is, and an overall increase in confidence, which there is, but you are pointing to something very interesting which we must attend to, which is there may be unintended consequences of the LPM that are leading to problems on borough boundaries. I cannot sit here and simply contradict you. Of course I could not. We would have to go away and look at what it going on, and particularly in those wards which are experiencing burglary figures or whatever that are bucking the trend. See if there is something to do with the SNTs, something to do with the number of police out there that could be correlated with that. I think that is the best I can offer you.

Fiona Twycross AM: It is the only common thread I can think of in the areas that it has been raised with me.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It may be that there are other factors.

Fiona Twycross AM: It could be, but the only common thread I have identified is that they are all on borough boundaries and obviously where you have centralisation that is an impact. I think it would be great if you could also look at crime rates for wards generally on those boundaries and it would be helpful if you could establish if they are higher than the rates overall.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I certainly think that MOPAC should have a look at that and I am happy to try to help there.

Fiona Twycross AM: Thank you.

Navin Shah AM: The Police and Crime Committee report in August last year asked MOPAC to provide clear guidance about who is expected to sit on SNTs and how will they be representative of their communities.

Mr Mayor, the question I would like to put to you is what are you doing to ensure that these boards are representative of London?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The boards should be representative. I cannot, I am afraid, give you a complete breakdown so far of who is on them or who is going to be on them, but it is totally our intention that they should, like the police themselves, reflect the city they serve.

Navin Shah AM: There is a serious concern here because I understand that the Police and Crime Committee recently heard from some of the SNTs that there is little black and minority ethnic (BAME) community engagement. If that is the case obviously this does need to be addressed rather early and seriously and effectively.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not know that that is true, Navin. I will certainly make sure that we investigate that and you are right that that should not be the case.

Navin Shah AM: There seems to be the evidence appearing that there is this problem that the BAME communities are not coming forward to engage with the boards. That clearly seems to be the pattern - particular issues are representation of the black younger community members who are not engaging. I would just like to ask you, would you actually consider having targets or a clear strategy so that that representation is properly there to reflect London's diversity?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I will talk about it with Stephen Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and we will see what we can do to tackle the problem, if indeed the problem is as you have described it. I have no reason to doubt you, Navin, in saying that you have had this anecdotal evidence that the boards are not reflecting London in the way that we would all like. Let us look into it and then let us see if we can come up with a practical solution.

Navin Shah AM: Yes, fine, thank you.

Tony Arbour AM: It was widely said by your political opponents that in times of cuts and recession crime was likely to increase in London. We have heard from you and we have heard from the Commissioner, very encouragingly, that crime figures are improving, crime rates are going down. Can you assure me, and indeed London, that crime truly is decreasing, or is it related to the fact that crime is being screened out?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): No, crime is coming down and the number of crimes that are being screened out are also coming down, as you would expect, Tony. I want to pay tribute

really to the work of Sir Bernard and the Metropolitan Police Service overall in what they are doing. The drop that you have seen in crime figures is the biggest in recent years and it is now going faster. The falls in crime in London are now out-pacing the rest of the country. We had a long discussion about this recently. The official national statistics up to the end of last year confirm bigger falls in London, down 9% compared to down 3% in the rest of England and Wales.

Tony Arbour AM: You confirm that it is not related to screening out. Would you therefore say that crime is decreasing precisely because of your strategy and the strategy of the Metropolitan Police Service of increasing the number of constables, people who are actually on the front line, and decreasing the people in the back offices with lots of silver braid on their caps?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have a very distinguished gentleman on my right who has plenty of silver braid and I am all in favour of them. I think the leadership of the Metropolitan Police Service is extremely good.

The issue is partly to do with getting more officers out on the streets. It is also to do with using new technology, with all the things that we have been talking about, with using automatic number plate recognition, with using smart policing, predictive policing, all those kinds of techniques are being explored by the Metropolitan Police Service. The Metropolitan Police Service is in many ways a pioneer of good policing techniques in the world and I think you are starting to see some of the results. That is of massive economic benefit to London because London is increasingly getting a global reputation as a very safe city and that is extremely important.

2014/1257 - Culture of the Metropolitan Police Service

[Joanne McCartney](#)

Are you satisfied with the culture in the Metropolitan Police Service today?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Thanks, Joanne. I am satisfied. I think the culture has changed and is improving the whole time and I think it revolves around exactly the four virtues that the Commissioner identified. Can you remember what they were? Were you paying attention to his opening remarks?

Joanne McCartney AM: I am asking you questions, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Courage, integrity, professionalism and caring, I think I heard.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is right.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It sounds right to me.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Then can I move to the Commissioner. When you were appointed in 2011 you stated that one of your aims was to develop the culture of the

Metropolitan Police Service and that that was about diversity, values and also transparency. We have seen lately a lot of questioning, both in the press and wider media, about the culture in the Metropolitan Police Service and it is not helped by headlines regarding 'plebgate' PC Keith Wallis being sent to jail and him and another being sacked around that case. We have had recent headlines about the Diplomatic Protection Unit and pornography. We recently had a headline about another case of racism. All these do raise questions about the culture, so could I ask you are you satisfied you have a grip on the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service and what more do you want to do?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I think we have got a grip on the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service. I think we can identify things we need to improve. There is no doubt there have been some high profile incidents, to which you have alluded to, although I think the one you mentioned last is an employment tribunal that is going through and we have to wait and see. We cannot probably judge too much on that.

I have to step a little carefully around the 'plebgate' issue because, as you said, one officer was convicted within the last few weeks and he, together with another officer were sacked, I think it was only last week, and there are another four officers who are due to go to misconduct hearings over the next few weeks, so I do not want to prejudice any of that, so I am not going to talk directly about that.

There is no doubt that it will impact on people's perceptions of the Metropolitan Police Service. I think what we know though is that people's perceptions of the Metropolitan Police Service, or any police service, are when you meet them do they do a good job? I think that is where we need to concentrate our efforts. We need to target the people who do not represent our values and get rid of them. If we can develop them and train them that is something we can always look at.

One of the things that we have done since I have been here is to identify and work with the 10,000 leaders in the service. It is a huge number of people, but it is coming down because we are losing managers and supervisors. This year we will do it with 8,000 - to actually just physically get them together which is part training and part looking them in the eyes and telling them about what I expect of them and then encouraging them to do their job, which is to lead the other 40,000 who need some of their care but also need guidance in driving up standards. One leg of our strategy, as you know, is to have a war on crime, to care for victims, but do both in a professional way. If you do that I think you can really maintain the support of the community high standards which are trained in and maintained.

We can show that we are improving all the time, but I am not blind to the possibility that some of the people we employ will not be up to it. I do not think they are very large in number, but where they are they can have a massive impact when they get it wrong and it is my job to make sure it does not happen.

Just finally to say that at the extreme end, when we are talking about criminality or corruption, we do have a lot of officers and staff dedicated to routing them out and making sure that we deter them and put them before the courts and get them out of the organisation. I stand by my comments a couple of years ago now, I said we do not want racists in the Metropolitan Police Service and we are doing our best where they exist to get rid of them.

Joanne McCartney AM: The Mayor said he is satisfied with the Metropolitan Police Service culture, are you, Commissioner --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Can I just clarify? I am satisfied with the ambitions and with the aspirations that are set out by them. I think there is always more to be done, Joanne. I do not want remotely to give the impression that I am complacent. Particularly one thing I perhaps should have said and the Commissioner has not yet mentioned is our continuing desire to get back to what Navin was saying, to recruit a police force that looks like London.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Just to try to answer that question you asked, which was am I satisfied. You are talking to somebody who is never satisfied really. Genuinely, I think my job in part is to be the irritant and always to try to get better, because I think if you are complacent the people who follow you tend to be complacent too. I am never satisfied. There are still more things to do. I am not going to sit here and say they are all angels, because they are not. We all make mistakes. I think there is still quite a lot to do and I am determined to do it and this year we will do more work. I think particularly race remains an issue in this city and remains an issue for the Metropolitan Police Service.

Joanne McCartney AM: One of the things you said that goes to culture is whether your staff are doing a good job. It was very concerning when we read the Metropolitan Police Service staff survey from last year where 30% of staff and officers said they did not believe that they themselves would get a good service from the Metropolitan Police Service and a similar number thought that some victims were more deserving than others. Did that concern you and what steps did you take to address that?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It did very much, because if our own people cannot go out and sell us we have lost, in that case, probably about 30,000 or 40,000 ambassadors. I think it is a concern. I think to some extent we have to recognise it is probably a feature of the fight that morale can be an issue for all public services at the moment. We are seeing less funding, we are seeing salaries fixed and we are seeing pensions go down. The combination of that for the police with, at the end of the day, still quite a testing job, means I think it is quite a difficult thing for them to believe that the service is getting better. I think police in general sometimes can be a little cynical. There is all that playing a part and if you played the same question across the police service of the country at the moment, sadly, you might get the same answer.

We worked hard and we are just surveying again, so we will know in a few months time did it get better or worse and we will let you know the answer to that too. I want them to feel as though we are working through our leaders, but they are going to be ambassadors for the service. There is an awful lot to be proud of. Sometimes I think some of our staff get a bit confused about how they feel and the quality of service we are delivering. Some of it is incredibly good, but sometimes we concentrate on the negative. You hear it in this room sometimes, but we are as bad and unless we do promote the good then we are weaker for it.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you for that. I think it is a concern if your own people cannot sell you, it is very worrying.

Andrew Dismore AM: You just said that you were not complacent about some of these things, but last Friday commenting in the *Evening Standard* on the case that Joanne just referred to about the diplomatic protection group officer, you said you want to move, “The ‘implacable enemy’ of racists within the force out of the force” and, “We are actually doing a pretty good job”. That sounds pretty complacent to me.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do not agree with you, not least of which it was not actually relevant to the article in which it was placed. It was actually mentioned, I cannot remember the date of it, it was about two years ago. If I know the context in which it was said I would be happy to respond to it. It certainly was not a response to the claim in the *Evening Standard* which was about an ongoing employment tribunal in which I had made no active comment, because I would not expect to.

Andrew Dismore AM: The reason I raised this issue is that in February 2013 I asked the simple question how many race discrimination claims have been brought against the Metropolitan Police Service and how much compensation had been paid in the previous three years. I had to table five additional questions, one after the other, month after month, to the Mayor to remind him that I had not had this answer. I finally got the answer only in November, some nine months later.

It seems to me that if you are actually on top of this issue I would not have to wait nine months to know how many cases have been brought against the Metropolitan Police Service and how much you paid out in compensation, would I?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You are running a few things together, of course, but first of all I think you have accepted that in fact the comments that were made in the *Evening Standard* were not relevant to the article in which they appeared.

Andrew Dismore AM: I do not know that because I just read what was in the *Evening Standard*.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have just explained that and unless you are contradicting me then I think you are accepting it.

In terms of the statistics I will look at, if you have had a long time to wait for the statistics and we have had them then I would apologise for that, because you should have got them as soon as we had them. If there has been some difficulty in getting them then I will try to understand that. I agree with you that we should know where we are on the subject. I think generally it is available. Sometimes it can be a little difficult getting statistics together, but nine months does sound excessive, so we will have a look at that.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have the statistics here if you want them - discrimination was down 14%.

Andrew Dismore AM: I have got the statistic here. The answer was given in November. There were a total of 67 claims, half from officers and staff and half from the public, and

£666,000 was paid out in compensation. That is not the end of the story, is it, Commissioner, because immediately afterwards I wrote to you and asked how many disciplinary cases have been brought as a result of these claims. Again, six months on, I am told I will get the answer, if I am lucky, I suppose, in mid-April. Surely if you are on top of these issues about racism you would know how many of your officers had been subjected to disciplinary, would you not? Can you at least give me assurance that at least one of these has been dealt with?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You are making a series of claims which I would like to check out, because I cannot understand, as you have explained it, why it has not been clear.

I am broadly agreeing with your point, because I am struggling to understand why the length of time that you declare is what has happened, so I would like to understand that.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, so would I, but the fact remains it took nine months to find out how much you paid out --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do not know exactly, Andrew, what you asked and I do not know over what period of time --

Andrew Dismore AM: It is six months now --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Hang on, just a minute. What I do not know is exactly what you asked. I do not know in what format you have asked for the information and so that is why I would like to take some time to consider it, because you may be right, or you may be wrong. You may have asked such a detailed question it has taken some time. I do not know without knowing the exact question.

Andrew Dismore AM: I am surprised about that, because they were asked by way of the Mayor's questions in a letter to you. I wrote to you and asked you the question.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You may be surprised, but I get quite a few letters, I just cannot remember the exact detail of the way in which you raised the question. You are now choosing to challenge me in a public forum, without the detail of the letters. I am quite happy to go away and look at it, but I cannot recall the question, neither can you by the sound of it. What is the question that you are asking?

Andrew Dismore AM: I have got it here and on Monday I had the answer from the Mayor. It is a simple question, "How many of these cases have resulted in disciplinary action?" An answer from the Mayor on Monday night, a written answer, saying I will get the answer in mid-April. Why is it taking from November to mid-April to answer a simple question of how many of these 67 cases have resulted in disciplinary actions? Surely if you are on top of race issues in the Metropolitan Police Service you would know how many of your officers have been subject to disciplinary action. Do you know how many cases there has been?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I think you are making the same point again but the only thing I can say to repeat my answer is that I will do my best by looking into what you have said and if we have made a mistake or we have taken

too long of course I would acknowledge it. I cannot understand from what you have said why we found so much difficulty. I am accepting your principal point.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, thank you.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I am prepared to go away and look at it.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you. Do you know how many officers have been subjected to disciplinary action for race matters in the Metropolitan Police Service? Do you know how many officers have been?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Sorry, Andrew, if you give me notice of these questions I will provide them in this type of forum. If you give me that notice and give me the opportunity of course I will answer it.

Andrew Dismore AM: Hang on a minute. I am surprised, Commissioner, if you are saying you think you are doing a pretty good job and you are the enemy of racism in the force, I am surprised that that is the sort of figure you would not have readily to hand.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I am surprised that you think that.

Andrew Dismore AM: I am not surprised. I mean in round terms, can you tell me if at least one of these officers has --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is quite superficial criticism. I accept entirely that is your view but I am afraid there are not going to be many people who share it. There are quite a few statistics involved with the Metropolitan Police Service and I do not carry all of them in my head.

Darren Johnson (Chair): We note the Commissioner's willingness to go away and provide those statistics.

Andrew Dismore AM: I am just surprised, Chair, that senior management of the Metropolitan Police Service do not know some of its basic information about race claims against the police, race disciplinary actions in the police. I am just amazed that you do not actually have any information about this, if you are serious about going down this issue. It is not surprising that people still think that the Metropolitan Police Service is particularly racist, if it takes you well over a year to answer some of these simple questions.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): OK, Andrew, the Chair has already set out what I have offered to do and I cannot add any more.

Darren Johnson (Chair): We note the Commissioner's commitment to come back to that in writing and clarify.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Just for the benefit of anybody watching this who may wonder what the figures are, broadly speaking, on discrimination cases and the performance of --

Andrew Dismore AM: I gave the figures earlier on, you do not need to.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not think you did actually, Andrew. The number of complaints is falling sharply at the moment and oppressive behaviour is down 9% and discrimination cases are down 14%, malpractice down 14%, failures in duty down 17%, incivility down 19% and so on. I think when you criticise the police and you criticise the Commissioner for saying that he thinks that on the whole they are doing a pretty good job, I think that is unfair. I think if anything 'a pretty good job' is an understatement of the success that the police are having at the moment.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I would like to ask the Commissioner, I want to pick up on this issue of culture and the culture of perks for top officers. I asked the Mayor at the recent budget meeting about the chauffeur-driven cars for top officers in the Metropolitan Police Service. This is a culture which does not seem to be shifting. Can you confirm that senior police officers not only have access to a pool of cars and drivers but they also have access to hire cars and drivers, so you are basically hiding this cost below the line?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Certainly I do not think we are hiding anything. If we are, it is being hidden from me too. The only thing I can imagine you are talking about, Caroline, is obviously there are cars provided and some people may think that is the wrong thing, but they are. When a car is off the road then it may be that a car is hired in replacement, but there is not a separate pool of car hire. We hire quite a few cars in the year. I think the fleet is something in the order of 6,000 vehicles. We have reduced it over the last year, mainly because of finance but also because it is a wise thing to do, so we have actually reduced the fleet, but we do always have a number of cars that we will hire on a daily basis. That is the only thing I can imagine. I do not think anything has been hidden in that respect.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Perhaps you could come back to us with the detail, because it is one thing your fleet of cars which you expect police to be out in, there is another thing about top officers not getting on the Tube, as the Mayor has asked for and encouraged, but coming to say a meeting here or whatever and being driven around. I realise for security and so on there may be reasons yourself and certain officers might need to be and I understand that, but when I have a Commander coming to have a chat with me about my report on SNTs and I say to him, "How did you get here?" and he said, "Oh I have a driver and a car".

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You have lumped two things together but we are used to that. There is a plan to have fewer drivers, so there will be fewer drivers. I take that point. To try to put some balance in this, because you make a fair point, can we afford to provide cars for senior people when we have got so little money. I realise that. One of the things we all have to keep an eye on is that we have to attract the best talent to lead London. When you talk about my salary, for example, it is higher than my colleagues around the country, for which some may think there is justification in terms of the scale of the job.

Darren Johnson (Chair): If you can draw your comments to a close now, Commissioner.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I will just say that is not the case for the Commanders. The rest of the country is providing this type of package and if we do not do this sort of thing, even though people might feel it is unpalatable at times, the danger we run is we do not have the best talent. That at least has got to be in mix. If we get that wrong and we end up with poor leaders I think that can be a problem. It has to have that balance, that is all.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Commissioner, Mayor, my questions are about the recruitment and retention of female and BAME staff and officers in the Metropolitan Police Service. In May 2013 Mayor Johnson, in answer to a question from me said, "I am committed to the representation of female and BAME officers to all ranks within the Metropolitan Police Service". Despite the warm words and some action, the Metropolitan Police Service Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) - so this is your information I am giving you - shows decreased numbers of both groups following the Metropolitan Police Service change programme. It may well be the information from your EIA - and I have not had a chance to talk to her yet about it - that recently led Baroness Lawrence to state that, in her view, very little had changed in relation to race equality in the Metropolitan Police Service. The information that is available from the EIA shows that following the Metropolitan Police Service change programme, if you were to look at the proportion of female police staff, it will have reduced to 55% compared to 58% in 2010.

There was also commentary within the EIA and some of the commentary related to people leaving the service. Firstly, there was a good financial package. However, a quarter said that they were leaving because of poor organisational culture such as unfair treatment, discrimination, working conditions, poor management account and not feeling that the service was improving.

I will just mention that for BAME officers, at the moment 10.5% of officers in the Metropolitan Police Service are from BAME backgrounds. I do not know if you know the figure of improvement you have made since your tenure, but the Metropolitan Police Service change EIA projects that by 2016 we will get an increase of just 0.5%, taking that to 11%.

My question is whether this less-than-positive information from your EIA has triggered any mitigation, perhaps a review of the Metropolitan Police Service's recruitment and retention strategy. Does the Mayor share my concerns that this is hardly inspiring and that the Metropolitan Police Service and MOPAC need to develop sustainable and creative initiatives aimed at increasing both women and the ethnic diversity of the Metropolitan Police Service?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): There is quite a broad amount of information there, so just to start by making the point that for the last two years one of the difficulties we have had in changing the profile of the organisation is that we have not been recruiting. In fact, the obverse has been true when we are talking about police staff. As I said, we are losing over the next year or two up to about 3,000 of our police staff. Of course, we have police officers retiring and we have not been recruiting, we have the first opportunity. Over the last few weeks, we are starting to see hundreds of officers come in. Over the next two to three years, contrary to the rest of the country, we will recruit 5,000

officers, so we have a chance to remedy exactly what I think we are agreeing on: that we need people from London who represent London.

The second thing we are doing in our strategies around recruitment is to target Londoners. The law says that I cannot stop people from Hull, Manchester or wherever applying to London, but we have targeted our recruitment strategies in London to try to make sure that Londoners hear it. We have it on bus-stops and in various places so that they see it, whereas people elsewhere do not.

Finally, we have tried to change our terms and conditions so that we make sure we incentivise people to be in London. It has not been popular with all our staff, but police officers have had 70 miles of free travel on the rail to which the Metropolitan Police Service has contributed significant amounts of money over the years. We have actually said to the new recruits that that will not be available, so that means that generally people are incentivised to be from London. Of the first batch of the recruits as they go through, at the moment about one in five are from minorities, so not the one in four we would like. We are seeing more white males retiring because that is what they were like when they were recruited 30-odd years ago. Generally, we have hope in the offing in the way that other forces cannot change their profile because they are not able to recruit.

On the point you make, I am struggling a little bit about the police staff. We have always had a high percentage of women in our police staff and I think that is what you are alluding to, Jennette. It may be that the profile is changing from 58% to 55% given that we have lost so many in the 3,000. The exit survey you are talking about was of those people who were leaving us because of course none were made redundant. It was all financially incentivised to leave early and they obviously thought that was a good package on the whole. Of course, the exit survey was of that group that was leaving, not all by choice, so how they responded I cannot entirely account for.

Finally, I will just say that if you think about our diversity across our employees, all of them are important, so in the police staff it is about one in four who are from minorities. For PCSOs it is about one in three. In terms of our specials, it is one in four. In terms of police officers, as you said, it is about 11%. That will increase over the coming year. What I cannot give you a prediction on because I do not know who we are going to recruit or exactly by what percentage the level will change, but it has to if we have recruited about 20% and we are losing more white males at the other end. I am afraid I am struggling to give you an exact percentage.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: You are agreeing that 11% is satisfactory. In terms of people who are members of BAME communities and females, if you look at the numbers who applied for the Certificate of Knowledge in Policing from August to December 2013, they show that about 24% of those applicants were from BAME groups and 30% were female, which is a good start. Can you let me have the data to see what attrition there has been in terms of what the figures are?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is the problem. It is the attrition.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: That would actually tell us because it is not an issue that BAME Londoners do not want to apply for a good job.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Absolutely.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: It certainly is not a problem with women. It is to do with culture and much more is needed to actually get these percentages up to be representative of Londoners.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): There we agree.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I agree very much with what Jennette has said. The figures you are giving are a little bit negative. From my memory, actually, there has been a small but noticeable improvement in the overall numbers. What Sir Bernard says about the entry-level numbers both for BAME groups and for women is very striking. You have some very high numbers.

The final point you made is right. It is the attrition rates that are concerning. We had this big drive recently because we are now recruiting and Ray Lewis [Senior Adviser, Mentoring, GLA] has been trying to help with this whole thing. However, one of the things that is very striking is you get these huge numbers of expressions of interest but then somehow or other we are not delivering quite that proportion when it comes to getting them into the force itself. We need to work out why that is.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: We need to do more.

Kit Malthouse AM: Just in terms of context, Commissioner, I just wanted to ask you to confirm that the Metropolitan Police Service still remains the most diverse police force in the United Kingdom and that BAME and female participation in the Metropolitan Police Service is the highest it has ever been currently.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is. I would have to go back and say Jennette still has a point and we need to be more diverse. At the moment about one in three of the recruits is a woman, so it is not one in two. In terms of the minorities, I have already said. It is true that we are the most diverse and in fact often we are pointed towards the military as being a good comparator. The military actually has a diversity of about 3%, many of whom are people from the Commonwealth, so we have done well, but we cannot be at all complacent while we are nowhere near what London looks like at the moment. It is not a sad reality. It is a great reality, in a sense. As fast as we are trying to run towards London, it is running away from us in terms of its change. As a big organisation, our bureaucracy means that we are quite slow at dealing with that. Yes, we have made great progress. Probably ten years ago the Metropolitan Police Service had about 300 police officers who were from minorities. Today it is over 3,000. It is a massive change, but we are not there yet.

Kit Malthouse AM: Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: This question is about people being made homeless by MOPAC, which is to do with the culture of the organisation and part of how it exercises its wider duties towards people to whom we would have to agree it has a duty of care, people who are its tenants, and

also to do with the transparency of the process by which this is carried out. May I ask specifically about residents who have contacted me from 30 Griffiths Road in South Wimbledon and who are on short-hold tenancies with MOPAC? Many of them are keyworkers like nurses and teachers and some of them have been there for up to 14 years. They are afraid because, like many Londoners, they cannot afford to buy or rent another property in the area. For any development, developers will come in and redevelop the site into homes that they will no longer be able to afford.

Mr Mayor, do you accept you are in a slightly bizarre situation where, on the one hand, MOPAC is making people homeless and forcing them into a situation where they cannot afford to live in their home borough but, on the other, as the Mayor, you have a commitment to affordable housing and an anti-homelessness strategy? Do you think that the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service does not fit in with that wider culture?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I have to look into it. Thank you very much, Tom, for drawing my attention to this case. I had no previous knowledge of what you are referring to at 30 Griffiths Road, South Wimbledon. I do not have the details before me. I will have to go and establish what is going on there. Generally speaking, one of the objectives of the estates strategy recently has been to liberate considerable quantities of otherwise inert property in order to allow development for the benefit of London, either as residential property to help to tackle the very problem we both care about or indeed as schools. Since March, we have had £89 million of receipts from property sales and have contractually exchanged on £400 million worth of sales of Metropolitan Police Service property. That is more than double the original estimate, by the way, of £40 million. Three of the local police stations will end up, at least partly, as educational facilities, I am sure Members of the Assembly will be pleased to know, including free schools, but obviously many other sites will be there for residential occupation.

Tom Copley AM: The money from the site that is being sold in South Wimbledon will not be going into affordable housing, will it? The money from that will not even be going into frontline police officers.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Many of the properties that are made available will be useful for --

Tom Copley AM: The money from the estate sale is going into infrastructure, is it not, not into frontline police officers?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): One of the objectives of the estate strategy was not just to get cash, as you rightly say, to invest in policing but to make property available for residential use.

Tom Copley AM: The money from the sale of the estate is not going into police numbers, is it? It is going into infrastructure like information technology, is it not? Is the Commissioner nodding?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It is all fungible, but what you have is £89 million of receipts so far from the property sales, which is double the original budget estimate. That is good news for police funding.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): I do not want us to get too far into estate strategy under this item because we are straying away.

Tom Copley AM: I appreciate that you need to look into the situation, but will you commit to helping these residents who are being made homeless at very short notice to find new accommodation in the area? Will you make that commitment?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course. What I certainly undertake to do, Tom, is to look into the case and see what duties MOPAC has towards these residents and, if we have not been sufficiently caring towards them, then try to rectify the matter.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): I have some sympathy with the Commissioner when it comes to ensuring the police force looks like London, not least because London is changing very quickly. In parts of London, we have a one-in-four turnover amongst households every year. Therefore, you need to be careful when you approach this target that you are actually trying to predict what London will be like when you have completed your recruitment rather than recruiting to targets from, say, a decade ago.

One of the things that would really help, though, is if you can ensure that officers, particularly senior officers in boroughs, occupy their positions for a bit longer than they do at the moment and become accustomed to working with local people and building partnerships. They do seem to move around a bit too often, which makes them the Metropolitan Police Service's people rather than the borough's people. That is quite unusual amongst public services. Most people in public service in London are more closely connected to the people they serve in the boroughs. Can you look at that as a new approach, please?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Two things. One is that I agree for the reasons that people have obviously agreed with what you have said. We have moved them too quickly. I have made a promise that we believe we can aim to keep them there at least two years. People may say they want them there more.

The second thing is what I think is a good development. We are actually including the chief executives of some of the boroughs in our selections of chief superintendents because we think it is a good thing that there is a professional view not only from a police officer but also from a partner, one of the biggest partners they will work with. That seems to have been helpful in helping to make sure they have good chief superintendents. That is not to say the local authorities pick them. It is to say they play a part in making sure we have a rounded character and hopefully will get a better partnership with them in the future.

The final thing to say will sound defensive, but it is just an observation of fact. The short career of a police officer has been a 30-year career. By the time they become a senior officer, they are often towards the end and it means there is an eternal pump driving them away. I cannot defend it, but I just observe that that is part of what causes the problem.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): I can see the good intent behind including council chief executives in the selection process, but of course that is of limited value if the selection

process is happening every two or three years and if the choice of people they are given to select from are all people from different boroughs on the other side of London.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes, I understand. I am not going to defend it too long because it is really hard to defend. We have some good examples. Greenwich might be an example where we have a good borough commander who has been there for about three or four years and is doing a good job.

I would also remind everybody, as I always do when we talk about this, people want to keep good people and they always want to move the people they cannot get on with. I am left with the problem of trying to resolve both. Often, there is also another pump happening. If it is not working out and we have tried everything we can, we do change people and people often celebrate that. There is a balance to be struck.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): That challenge is no different to the one we face in other walks of life professionally. Another question about the Metropolitan Police Service culture: do you think a rollout of body-worn cameras amongst police officers will make a difference to the culture in the Metropolitan Police Service?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I believe it will. I think it is helpful. As I said, we are experimenting on whether it is with 400, but it is experimentation with effect to doing it, not to see whether we will do it. We are going to do it. It is how we do it. Within a year, we anticipate we will have them with all officers and we have to sort the money out and the logistics. We are giving them to patrol officers, neighbourhoods and response, firearms officers and other groups of specialists and we will see whether or not there are any particular problems depending on their specialities.

The big issue that we ought to address together is, for a start, whether the camera, once worn, should be on all the time. There are arguments both ways. If you keep it on all the time, it changes the nature of the relationship with the public. If you have it off and have to turn it on for an incident and if you do not turn it on, it leads to the suggestion that you purposely did not turn it on. There are things like that. There is disclosure that we have to work our way through. However, I expect by the end of the year to see a far bigger rollout and in principle it is good to be open. Often, it would have resolved some of the issues that people have later found troubling, giving us an account.

The only other issue that has been raised to me is a bit of a concern by firearms officers, for example. When you are taking a decision whether to fire or not, a human being will have taken a lot of information in, having looked around. If the camera gives one view, it may be a narrow one. They have a little bit of a concern about that. If you have more than one officer, obviously you have more than one camera. It is an issue, but I am not sure it should stop us doing it. We have to mitigate any of the issues there. You are better off seeing what they could see at one level rather than having no information. We can think of cases - for example, the Mark Duggan case - where at least it would have been helpful to have had more video of what happened and perhaps that would have resolved some of the issues that have taken so long to resolve.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): It is not a magic wand. It is a tool and it depends on how you use it.

Just to look at the future of a tool like body-worn cameras, would it be possible at some point in the future to actually have them modified for live feed in that way that we have managed on occasions with cameras on buses? If we have an incident taking place, you can actually see it from the command room and you have another view of that incident. I know you have some very good stuff in the police helicopter now, but you would actually have a view of what it looks like on the ground as well and maybe see things that you could not see from above.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It sounds possible. I suspect we are going to take it in phases. The first one will be getting it out there and getting officers used to it and working out the issues we have to resolve. I can see the benefits of a live feed and I can see some difficulties. The bottom line is that if you talk about kids on the street now, they can actually feed a live video over their phone, so it should be entirely possible technically. It is certainly something that could be beneficial. What I can see is that if you get lots of these feeds at the command of an incident, you might get confused by it, but that has happened before as well.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): That is managing information. I am sure we would rather have our own equipment than have to commandeer someone's iPhone.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. That is one of the final points I would make. Although some people make arguments that the police should not have them for some of the reasons I have gone through, my view is that we could end up with the only people not having cameras being the police because everybody else is monitoring things. That would be a bizarre outcome. For openness and for that reason, it is essential, really.

Jenny Jones AM: Commissioner, I have been worried for some time that the rollout of Taser in the way that it has happened will change the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service in that it will perhaps reduce the amount of negotiation and so on that happens at incidents. Do you have any thoughts about rolling Taser out any further?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): No, although I have some officers who would like me to decide that. I do not think it is necessary at the moment and we need to review where we are with the decision we have made only about 18 months ago. We have probably only had all the officers that we now have with Taser for about a year. For me, there is no clear evidence that we need to change and we need to review what we have done already before we think about progressing it further.

If you remember, the reason I thought it was important to do it was because the officers who needed the help, particularly in the outer boroughs, were sometimes waiting for the specialist officers - firearms or TSG - and could be waiting 40 minutes for them to arrive. Frankly, by that time, it was a waste of time, whereas the officers in Westminster quite often were getting a response within ten or 15 minutes. It is trying to remedy that problem, which is why we extended its use. I have to say that all the evidence we have at the moment - and we have shared it before and we can share it again because we are reviewing it for the same reason - is

not that we have seen more people who have had the Taser fired at them disproportionately. We are not seeing serious injuries and we have not had many complaints that the process has been abused because, generally, we can trust officers to make the right decision.

Jenny Jones AM: Obviously, as you say, we need to look at the results and I would say 18 months after the rollout might be an appropriate time. At the moment, you are not expecting to roll out Tasers any further?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. I am not trying to use any sophistry. I mean that there is no intention to do it. I do not think there is any need. If we had a horrific event and we had to review it, I would discuss it, but there is nothing in my mind that makes me think it is necessary to contemplate it now.

Jenny Jones AM: Good. Perhaps you can give me the names of the officers who do want a further rollout. I could have a word with them. Thank you.

2014/1257 - Convicting criminals

[Roger Evans](#)

How do you intend to catch and convict more criminals?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We had this conversation earlier this week. The first thing I would say is that I accept this is an area we need to improve in. I am not going to sit here and say that we are good at this. We have seen some improvement this year. We have seen an overall increase in detection by about 2%.

I can go through a list of things which are a little problematic for the Metropolitan Police Service and for London. For example, we have a transient population and 29% of the people we arrest are foreign nationals. Those sorts of volumes of people make detection more of a struggle than you would find in some parts of the country. When we take fingerprints from a scene in one of our boroughs, we might properly have checked it against a database of another European country. We cannot do that. It is entirely possible to do it slower time but, if we are not careful, by the time we have checked these things the offender has boarded easyJet, returned to their country of origin and disappeared away. There are some structural things we need to do better.

You will bear in mind that this year we have put about 200 officers into the Foreign National Offenders Unit and that has paid dividends. We have actually excluded from this country about 1,500 people who were criminals and who would not otherwise have been excluded because we actually have our systems together.

However, it remains a real challenge. As the Assistant Commissioner for Serious Crime [Mark Rowley] says, we need to industrialise the way we deal with this issue.

I am accepting, first of all, we need to do more. We have done some things. There is more to do, particularly, around technology and closed circuit television (CCTV). It may be true in this city that we have challenges. We also have great opportunities. The CCTV in this city gives us opportunities that you do not see in more rural areas, so we have to make sure we do more than that. We have a strategy that we are rolling out this year. At its simplest, it is about asking

people to move their cameras to head-height. At the moment, most CCTV cameras are up in the air which means that facial recognition software does not work as well because it looks at the tops of people's heads. We need to shift the cameras and then we need to get better at what we do with them.

Finally, as I said on Monday, the Chinese have years of various animals. For me and for the Metropolitan Police Service, this is the year of detection. It is something that professionally we have to get better at. I can explain some of it, but I cannot explain all of it. I am going to a seminar within the next four weeks with the Borough Commanders to explain where I think we can concentrate our efforts and to offer some ideas, rather than condemn them for what at times we just could do far better.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): You made a very good point about encouraging people to fit their CCTV in a way which is actually helpful for solving crime. We hear a lot about people who have had CCTV evidence and they do not feel the police have used it appropriately and that may be one of the reasons.

I know that another of the reasons is that there are so many different CCTV systems about and there is a compatibility issue. Does the Metropolitan Police Service actually have a compatibility standard which you could recommend for people so that when CCTV evidence is available in future it is more likely to be evidence you can actually make use of?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We do. It is a bit of challenge to get all shopkeepers and all businesses to actually converge on that. If we can get our act together at our end - to be fair to everybody - and say, "If you give me an image of this quality, we will use this facial software to compare it against the 300,000 photographs we take every year of the people we arrest and then we will get a hit", then we have something to offer businesses and local authorities to actually maintain the standards. At the moment, our service is not there.

Really, what has happened is CCTV has developed in a fairly ad hoc way without any strategy. As more money has come along, people have invested in it. There has not been a strategy at the beginning that says, "This is how we intend to develop it". Now we have two great stores. We have a store of images from prisoners - millions over the years - and we have a store of images from people who have committed crimes and we are not easily able to compare. That is entirely possible in these next few years and that is where we are going to invest our efforts. I agree with you that if we can make clear our standard, when people make new investments, they will presumably try to invest towards it.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): One of the good things that came out of our experience with the riots back in 2011 was the knowledge that so much of the CCTV we had from those was actually extremely high-quality and we were able to identify suspects. When it comes to public CCTV systems in town centres, on buses or on trains, do you liaise with the operators there to make sure that they are of a standard that you can actually use if you need the evidence?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. On the whole, the public systems are the best. The majority of the public systems, the ones you

have described, are all very good because they have had some good investment over the years and we work pretty well with those organisations - Transport for London (TfL), for example - about making sure we can harvest those images.

Going back, sadly, to the riots, if you remember, there were over 5,000 people arrested and 3,500 charged. The conviction rate was very high. I cannot recall it off-hand. I think it was over 90%. The majority pleaded guilty because they had that image which they struggled to contradict. It is a very powerful piece of evidence which over time we have used, but when it gets into volume, bear in mind that just in that case we put about 800 people into looking at all of that footage. We had about 250,000 hours of footage from the riots. It was a hugely people-intensive process, but technology is moving at a pace where we can actually use technology to search that sort of stuff in a far slicker way. We have a strategy which we might share - if they were interested - with the Police and Crime Committee about how we are trying to improve that.

Finally, whatever we are going to do there, we need to get it out to the public and the businesses because I am sure they will try to help. Unless we are clear about what we want, it will fail.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): I am interested that you mention the CCTV used by small businesses around London because you are probably aware that we did a survey of small businesses - quite a small sample, to be fair - based on the Metropolitan Police Service's own figures which showed that there were 80 crimes committed against businesses every day. The disturbing thing was that three quarters of the people we spoke to in retail outlets mostly around London told us that for crimes like shoplifting they no longer report them to the police because they do not have the confidence that they are actually going to be addressed and because they also feel the amount of time they spend answering questions and reporting the crime is disproportionate to the benefit they are going to get from doing it.

How can we change that attitude and improve confidence amongst businesses when it comes to reporting that type of crime?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): First of all, shopkeepers and small businesses particularly are probably just commenting on their experiences. Over the years, sadly, the police have become less investigative around things like shoplifting, so sometimes it is just reflecting on reality. Certainly, for me, shoplifting is theft and that means we should investigate it.

It is a little bit hard for me to say that if the shopkeeper or the business decides not to invest some time in that prosecution process, I can take full responsibility for that. What you cannot do is arrest somebody on the basis of a preliminary investigation and nor can you pursue a prosecution without evidence. They have a part to play. They cannot just say, "Please arrest them and take them away and deal with them". They have to play some part in that, but I accept that for small businesses it is quite a big investment of time.

On the whole, we make it work and we arrest many thousands of shoplifters, particularly professional ones who are out there to make a business of it. I accept that people's experience

with the police has been that it is all a bit too much trouble. However, for me, it is theft and they should be locked up.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Just so you know, Roger, all types of theft have seen a reduction in the proportion screened out in the last year, so we are on this problem.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): Those screening-out figures are important to keep on top of. Another area where screening-out has been a concern to us has been in the field of burglary, of course, which is a key MOPAC target. We had a very useful meeting with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Assistant Commissioner in Havering last week when they came to speak to local people. It was a very positive session of questions from people who wanted to help the local police. However, one of the people who raised a question was a local magistrate who said he had been burgled and within days of the burglary and whilst he was still co-operating with the police he had a letter to say his crime had been screened out and would not be investigated further. That seemed to be symptomatic of perhaps an approach which drops crimes too quickly.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It would be interesting to see what Simon [Byrne, Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing, Metropolitan Police Service] said about that. I would not be that happy. I would need to understand the timings and exactly what the case was, but generally, if you come to a conclusion that in fact there is no reasonable possibility of investigation, it is better to be frank about that early.

However, I agree with you. We should not do it too early. The basics of it are going to be whether the victim knows who did it or has some information and whether the neighbours know, whether the forensic evidence shows anything, and whether you have any intelligence in the system that shows that we know who did it. They are the three core things that we have to look at. Beyond that, unless we put a large team into it as we do with a murder or a rape, the most serious of crime, then the chances of success later are going to be limited.

I accept your broad point, which is that we ought to invest a reasonable amount of time at the beginning to see whether a neighbour has CCTV or made a note of a registration number, which is one of the reasons for me that it is so important to visit victims of crime. We have increased visits, as I said earlier, by 200,000, because I can guarantee that if we do not go, we will not detect it. If we do go, we have a chance. If we talk to a witness, we have a chance of making a success. At the very least, the victim ought to feel we are taking it seriously. We have tried to get more people to visit victims of crime and certainly all burglary victims should be visited. If there is evidence that they are getting closed down too early, I would want to see that.

Roger Evans AM (Deputy Chairman): To be fair, in that case the borough commander and Simon Byrne [Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing, Metropolitan Police Service] did accept that things could have been done better and certainly the person who raised it was satisfied with the response, so I was pointing it out more as a symptom of a problem rather than a particular case you need to do anything more with. It is generally something we need to improve on.

Kit Malthouse AM: Commissioner, I wanted to ask you about some specific crime types where you might be putting some effort in. First of all, on my old favourite of dangerous dogs, we had a particularly unpleasant attack in Gospel Oak just before Christmas where a four-year-old girl had her face ripped off by a dog. Pleasingly, the owner was convicted for just over two years a week or so ago - he got the maximum - and the dog was destroyed. The Sentencing Council is about to increase the maximum sentence quite significantly and I wondered what efforts you would be putting in to maybe bolstering the work of the Status Dogs Unit over the next couple of years. I know you did a lot of work on this in Liverpool.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): If I am honest, I have not given my mind to it particularly. It is something I would certainly have an open mind about for the reasons you have said. One of the things even over the last few months I have been thinking about - on the back of that case, actually - was whether we could do what we did in Merseyside, which was to have an amnesty for people with dangerous dogs. That did work. I cannot remember the numbers now because it was a while ago, but I think people gave in about 1,800 dogs which were illegal. There are four types of dogs which, as you know, people cannot own but, sadly, they do. By having an amnesty, it gave them a chance to clear the decks.

The only thing was that if we went that way, one of the things we discovered in Merseyside was we ended up with a very big kennel bill - in our terms it was about £250,000 and goodness knows what it would be here - because we could not recover the cost from the person who was contesting whether it was a dangerous dog. With that caveat, if there was support for us doing that and people like this Assembly could help with this, we could work with other people. It is a wise thing because some of these dogs are very dangerous, as you say, particularly for kids. The law says they are not legal.

Kit Malthouse AM: There is, of course, legislation about to be put through the House [of Commons] by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on dangerous dogs, so maybe we could feed some of that concern in. I certainly sense that this is not a problem that is abating. If anything, it is rising. I think it is the case that more children under ten are killed or injured by dogs than they are by any other weapon, other than their parents, in the UK.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): From this Assembly, what I would be happy to do would be to go away and research, first of all, the straight numbers, what the trends are and if there is political support, ie the people of London wanted us to do something about this. What I do not want to do is to start taking dogs off people and then suddenly find people asking "Why are the police doing that?" Sadly, you end up with some really hard cases where an old person obtained a dog from a family friend who did not know it was illegal, has formed a relationship with it and it will probably never hurt anybody. It is something to discuss before we embark on that sort of thing.

Kit Malthouse AM: There is definitely a communication issue. I know a lot of parents in that area of Gospel Oak are thinking about leafleting the area to say, "Look what this man got and what his dog did", because people, unless they happen to read the local paper, do not necessarily know.

The second area I wanted to ask you about was child abuse. It is not an area we talk about in any great detail. It is certainly not one of the MOPAC seven. My perception is that offences are on the rise and that reporting is perhaps on the rise given some of the high-profile cases you have been dealing with recently. I wondered whether you were happy with the resources that were being devoted to child abuse investigations in the Metropolitan Police Service at the moment.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes, at the moment. The biggest rise, we think, is in the legacy cases. The Jimmy Savile [British entertainer and alleged paedophile] case provoked and encouraged people to come forward. We are now seeing with some of the criminal prosecutions that some of those have not been successful and that is causing everybody to try to work out where we are on these legacy cases. The majority of the rise in recording of this has been due to historical offences. I am not sure we have seen a real rise now.

We are looking at whether or not we have enough officers in the sexual offences units, which includes sometimes child abuse, because we have this surge of reporting. We have to have a look to see whether we have too big a caseload. Mark Rowley [Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Crime and Operations, Metropolitan Police Service] has moved, from memory, about 150 officers over from some of the other serious crimes to try to help, given the volume of work. We have not seen any absolute rise in the present recording, I do not think, at the moment.

Kit Malthouse AM: Presumably some of the resources from some of the other high-profile investigations like Operation Weeting which are coming to a close could also be spent now on things like child abuse.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The other thing, of course, is we have seen over the years fewer murders and we have actually moved people from the murder team. It is no good having murder teams for murders that are not being committed, so we are moving some of those.

The final thing I would mention is a broader point than child abuse. In terms of sexual offences generally, I am not content yet. Let us start at another place. We need to start thinking now about where we should be, and the health service and the prosecution system in terms of dealing with sexual offence victims for the next five years. It has come ahead massively over the last 20 years, but there is still some evidence that we together could help victims of sexual offences to go through the system better and more sympathetically. About 80% of the people who report it - and these are only the ones who report it - are vulnerable in one way or another. It could be psychiatric illness, drugs, drink or many reasons. I am not sure that we as a system, including the police, are sympathetic enough, so we have something to do there. I hope over the next couple of months to be able to announce some kind of independent review of how we in the Metropolitan Police Service do it together with other people. Part of that will look at some of the legacy things and how we look to deal with that in the future.

Kit Malthouse AM: Great. I wanted to ask you about gangs. Obviously, you have had some spectacular success on gangs since the launch of the Gangs Unit back at the end of 2011. Serious youth violence is down 38% overall.

I note, though, that teenage homicides rose in the calendar year last year by a small amount. Do you have a sense that we are bumping on the bottom and that, as you press your advantage and press the Gangs Unit against these people, you are likely to see further falls in teenage murders?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): In terms of teenage homicides, it is sad that there was a slight rise in the murders and, as you say, numerically very small but for the families horrible. Overall, we have seen violence affecting young people linked to gangs has come down quite significantly.

We believe there is something in the order of 260 gangs in London concentrated in 19 boroughs and those are the ones we are targeting. That includes about 4,000 to 4,500 people. We at the moment have either under arrest or judicial restraint around 1,300 to 1,500 of them, so about one in three. I said when we started it that I knew it would not be a quick fix. We can enforce so much, but it is going to need more to enforcement. The second leg we have to work really ruthlessly on is diversion where we can divert. There is some evidence that is working but together we still have to keep that determination to keep it going. Finally, I have put 1,200 police officers into this, including some at the centre and some in the 19 boroughs. We are not taking them away because the problem is not going away.

Kit Malthouse AM: I am conscious that given that there would have been a bump of arrests right at the start, a lot of those people in gangs would have had sentences in the 4 to 6-year range and that means they are going to be out in the next 12 to 18 months. Are there contingency plans being put in place? Obviously, when they re-emerge, their attempts to re-establish themselves may result in more violence.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): As you know, there has been a debate over whether we have a gang problem, but declaring it allows us to actually create a plan and to bind all the agencies into that. The Probation Service has a good plan to help manage these people when they come out. We work with them around the persistent offenders. We have a good system. The test will be as they come out, and they will come out in volume, can we manage them in the community? There will be a test. Of course, there is a big change to London probation this year, which is a massive change to all the structure. That is going to be quite a challenge, given the size of London, so there are some risks in the system. We have a good plan, but the test will be how we manage them as they come out. It is best that at least we took them off the streets.

Kit Malthouse AM: Absolutely. Finally, I just want to ask about female genital mutilation (FGM). This is obviously an issue which has risen to national prominence now, but fundamentally the campaign on it started in this building back in 2010. I wondered if you could update us on any progress on moving towards our first and only successful prosecution.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The sad reality is that since the law changed there has not been one in the country. We now have five cases with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) with varying states of confidence. There is a fair chance that one of those five will be successful.

We have various operations that are running. Firstly, we try to work with the communities we believe are most affected. Secondly, there are things like airports. We should be taking the press to an event at one of the London airports within the next few weeks where Laila Hussain, who has been a campaigner for this, and I will go, just to get the traction and explain to people what we are doing at the airports. Frankly, for the countries where people are going to get this despicable thing done, we warn them that it is illegal here, and should they do it and return they are liable to prosecution. We had an operation within the last few weeks and had a good outcome from that and that is leading to another investigation.

Our strategy is to hit the cutters. It is a really difficult area for children or even adults to criticise their parents who arrange this, but the people who are making the money out of it are even more despicable. There are two groups: those in this country and those abroad. We know some countries where it is happening quite regularly and we also know the seasons of the year when people are arranging it, so that is where we are concentrating our efforts.

Just finally, anybody can speak in this area and make clear it is wrong and I think everybody here would accept it is wrong. There has been some equivocation in some communities and it has to be very ---

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Just on that, Commissioner, it is absolutely vital that everybody in this city should understand the steps the Metropolitan Police Service is going to take to root this out and to prosecute those who are involved across the board. This is one of those subjects on which we have to be very, very tough. If you look at what has happened in France, they brought in a ban at roughly the same time as we did. They have jailed 100 people in France. They have struck off at least a dozen doctors. We have not had anything like the same impact on the problem and we cannot be too squeamish or too nervous about this. There is an event here at City Hall, as I am sure many Assembly Members will know, on 18 March to ramp this even higher up the agenda.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Could I mention just two quick things? One is that we need more public referrals from people in health and education. Finally, there is a slight law difference in France which I will not go through now, but it is something to consider here.

Kit Malthouse AM: Sorry, just a quick numbers thing. You said you had five cases with the CPS. How many ongoing prosecutions are there that are not yet with the CPS?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have counted them in the same category. They are at the stage that either we are exchanging advice with the CPS or they are making a charging decision.

Kit Malthouse AM: You have another one that just came in, so in total there are six.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes.

Kit Malthouse AM: OK. Thank you.

Tom Copley AM: Commissioner, I wanted to ask you about Operation Encompass. The Metropolitan Police Service is saying that this operation is in place “to combat begging and rough sleeping across the six London boroughs” and arrests will be made where criminal offences are detected, but a lot of the details are very sketchy. What exactly is the scope and remit of Operation Encompass?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The first thing is that obviously the people who are rough sleeping often need help, so the idea is to point them towards that help if they are prepared to accept it. Sadly, we also know that rough sleepers are actually victims of crime and quite often they attack each other. If that cycle is not interrupted, it means we can actually get murders or serious crime that goes with it. The idea is to put them in touch with help if they will accept it and, if there is criminality, then obviously it is something we have to deal with. Sadly, some of the people who live on the street are wanted and that is one of the reasons they may be living there. The idea is to make sure they get the help, but if they are involved in criminality we need to interrupt that.

The final thing is that there is a complex, as you probably realise, around Park Lane, Marble Arch and Oxford Street where there are people living rough. I went down about five weeks ago at 6.00am in the morning and had a look at the subway underneath Park Lane. There have been on some nights 50 or 60 people sleeping there who then go out the following morning and beg on Oxford Street, so there is a cycle of things that needs to be interrupted, but that is probably quite different to homelessness. That is a group of people who, frankly, have a little bit of a business around begging and other things, but that is slightly different.

Tom Copley AM: This action has been criticised by housing charities and Crisis has said:

“We would be very concerned to see how aggressively targeting and potentially criminalising some of the most vulnerable people in society is going to help anyone.”

You were saying you are putting them in touch with agencies that can provide support, so it is not just a case of moving people on and you are actually taking steps to get people in touch with charities?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It would be a bit unfair to say that the intent is to criminalise. Obviously, if you end up with a crime then you will deal with it, but it is not that easy to actually find a crime. If somebody is sleeping in a doorway, it is not in itself a crime. There are other things that you have to encourage them to do because the shopkeepers are not very happy about people sleeping in their doorways and we get people who are complaining about that activity and some of the consequences of it. Then you get the homeless who do not want to be moved, so the idea generally is to try to put them in touch with help.

What we find is we get quite a lot of people who are not from Britain and who do not always understand the things that are available. Certainly I have seen that on Victoria Street where, within metres, there is some really good care - I think the Catholic Church provides it down there - but actually they do not know it is there. There is a genuine attempt to put them in touch but, frankly, to remove the problem and reduce it, partly because businesses do not want

it, partly because the people are vulnerable and partly because occasionally there is criminality involved, too.

Tom Copley AM: How are you measuring the success or otherwise of this? Are you keeping count of the number of people you are referring to homelessness charities? I presume you keep track of how many people you arrest. What is your benchmark for success?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I am not going to try to pretend we have the statistics perfect on this, but there are two things. Firstly, you find that each year, at least in London, there is a survey of the homeless who are living on the streets which is carried out by charities and is usually more accurate. Secondly, there are people who are fed through that process. As you know, there are things like food banks at the moment. People are going to feeding places at odd times of day and you can get a fairly good handle on what the homeless population is. Those are the things that tend to be relied on. Finally, we get complaints from the public if we do not get it right. People think there should be fewer homeless on the streets and expect the police to do something about it.

Tom Copley AM: If we were here in another six months' time and I was questioning you, would you be able to tell me how many people had been referred to homelessness charities by Operation Encompass?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. If you give me a bit of notice of the question, it would be helpful. The only other thing would be that what we might not have a record of is when an officer meets somebody in a shop doorway and says, "There is a place down there. Would you like to go there?" I am not going to encourage them to have a bureaucracy around that. The better measure is from those people who provide a service to the homeless and whether they find there are more or less and what condition they are in. The police would give you some information, but I do not think it would be comprehensive.

Tom Copley AM: Thank you.

Len Duvall AM: Can we return to sanction detection rates? It is a question to the Commissioner. We clearly do seem to have a problem. We are below the rest of the UK, but I suppose more importantly we are also below similar authorities and police organisations. The Mayor set targets for sanction detection in the MOPAC seven crimes. Are you going to meet those targets? Do you want to share some of your thinking around those and some of the strategies around improving sanction detections?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. It would be fairly realistic to say that in the last few days of the financial year we are unlikely to hit all the targets. We have got somewhere. We have made improvements and that is why we always look at whether we make improvements even if we do not hit our targets. I have accepted that we need to be far better. We are going to have a meeting at the management board this week and then we need to discuss it with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

One of the things we have found that has been helpful in terms of sexual offences is, instead of counting rates, we count absolute numbers because the rates can drive gaming. One of the

things we have found was to work with sexual offences to encourage reporting and also try to get the number of detections up. That is something we ought to look at for all crime. Even so, I expect to get more of them, but the rates can be confusing.

Len Duvall AM: OK. In the areas you spoke about to the Police and Crime Committee last week, you mentioned the area of foreigners which we will return to. In others areas, there was improvement and quality control, I presume. Do you want to share with the Assembly some of those issues that you are working on?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): There are three big issues, really. Detections are driven by three things. One: we catch people doing it. We catch quite a lot of burglars. People do not always accept it, but about one in five burglars we actually get there quickly enough to catch there or in the area. Two: forensics. Finally: witnesses. People tell you who did it or victims sometimes know, or a witness or informant knows. Those are the three big buckets that we have to fill.

When I was referring earlier to the seminar we are going to hold, what I want the borough commanders to keep in their minds is how we keep filling those buckets. I will not say just the Metropolitan Police Service but the police service generally in the last ten years attends the scene and records the crime, but what about actually detecting it, if we can? Sadly, we have become a little administrative. We record it, but actually doing something about it for me is really important. That is where we are concentrating our efforts.

Finally, one of the biggest investments we make is millions of pounds in forensics. It is a very significant investment and we need to make sure we are getting bang for our buck, not only from the officers and the crime scene investigators (CSIs), but from the people who provide the forensic service.

Len Duvall AM: In terms of sharing with the Assembly about the screening-out processes, in my understanding there are two screening-out processes, one at the local level in the boroughs and one centrally. How do we check on the quality control? What steps are there and checks and balances so that the right screening-out is taking place and something like violent crime is not screened out? There may well be some patterns there that require further investigation.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Screening-out is encompassing two things. The first one is whether there is any benefit in a further investigation beyond the investigation we have carried out. With that sort of screening-out, you stop the investigation. The other one is when sometimes things are recorded as 'no crime' or, alternatively, put into the 'no crime' bucket and that is where the central one provides some corporate oversight. You have seen some of the claims we have had recently. Are we getting that right in the Metropolitan Police Service? Particularly around sexual offences, are we no-criming things that actually should be crimes? The corporate crime recording people are looking to put some level over the 32 boroughs. However, the crime screening in terms of whether we carry out another investigation is generally carried out locally. I would not expect somebody centrally to gainsay that, really.

Len Duvall AM: We might return to that. Mr Mayor, can I just come to you? The Commissioner last week told the Police and Crime Committee (PCC) that one of the reasons -

and there were a number of reasons - for the lower sanction detection rate was the high number of foreign offenders.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The point you mentioned just now, yes.

Len Duvall AM: Yes. Do you see a need to advocate for greater partnership working with European partners to track crime and criminality across Europe?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am always very, very enthusiastic about co-operation between police forces and the sharing of data. What is less clear is whether you need to have a single judicial model or whether you need to have the home affairs of this country effectively under the jurisdiction of a supranational body.

On the practical point of sharing of data, obviously.

Len Duvall AM: Of course. Do you say with a section of your political party that you would remove the European arrest warrant or do you support the European Arrest Warrant for tackling and getting the sanction detections down?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am in favour of the maximum speed and flexibility in getting criminals. [Sir] Bernard [Hogan-Howe] has mentioned just now that one of the problems is that you have a large proportion of crime on the streets of London that is committed by foreign nationals. If there are faster ways of getting them back --

Len Duvall AM: You do support doing that. I have that. I have the drift of that. You are in favour of everything that does that. Do you support European Arrest Warrant, yes or no, Mr Mayor?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I would have to get back to you on the efficacy of the European Arrest Warrant and whether it is working well. I certainly think it is important that we should have a smooth and effective --

Len Duvall AM: We have heard enough, Mr Mayor. It is painful watching you answering this question, honestly.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I do not see why. It was very kind of you to ask me a question. Let me give you the answer. It would be a very good thing to have smooth and effective arrangements to make sure that people who commit crime in London and then go to other European jurisdictions are readily transferred to face justice here. Whether or not you need the arrangements that are currently in force, I could not give you any immediate comment.

2014/1258 - Definition of domestic extremists

[Jenny Jones](#)

Will the Metropolitan Police Service update its definition of a domestic extremist to take account of the recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) in the

report A Review of National Police Units which Provide Intelligence on Criminality Associated with Protest published in January 2012?

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Who is this aimed at, Assembly Member Jones?

Jenny Jones AM: I will have a go at both of them, but perhaps the Commissioner first.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): OK. First of all, as Jenny points out, there were recommendations in this 2012 report which was asking the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to create a new definition. That was set against the context of deploying covert undercover officers, particularly at that time around the National Domestic Extremism Unit. A follow-up HMIC inspection published in June 2013 found:

“The Metropolitan Police Service has fully considered the positioning of the public order and domestic extremism intelligence functions and made satisfactory changes.”

However, in 2013, HMIC also said that it was concerned that despite much work undertaken to consider a new definition, the Oversight Board from the Home Office and ACPO that was considering this had decided to keep the existing definition. HMIC had suggested a change, there had been consideration and it had been rejected.

The Metropolitan Police Service reflected on this and we have taken a lead. In 2013 we decided to introduce a clearer definition, we believe, to be used by the Domestic Extremism Unit, which will become the ACPO definition, we believe. The newly revised definition is that domestic extremism relates to the activity of groups or individuals that commit or plan serious criminal activity, motivated by a political or ideological viewpoint.

Jenny Jones AM: I am slightly worried about that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I thought you might be pleased with that one.

Jenny Jones AM: Could I have a copy of that?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What is wrong with that?

Jenny Jones AM: The specific thing that HMIC said was about serious disruption and so on, but it also brought in a bit about it being serious crime.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): “Serious” is what he just said.

Jenny Jones AM: Did you include that? Did I not hear it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. That is the definition.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): What HMIC might have said is that it would try to include serious public disorder and probably what this definition does is to include serious public disorder if it passes the test of serious criminal activity. The test is serious criminal activity.

Jenny Jones AM: My problem is always that these definitions are so wide that they could include all sorts of people who are not criminals as such but, for example, demonstrators. There was a demonstration where several hundred cyclists lay down on the road outside Transport for London. I am worried that in your definition they could actually be seen as domestic terrorists, which seems to me ludicrous.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I will just try to reassure you, and you may not be reassured, but if you look to the definition, I am trying to think now of the definition of 'serious arrestable offence', for example. It is generally talking about serious violence, serious threat of violence, theft, very serious theft, very serious criminal damage. People say "criminal damage", but it could be arson. That would be very serious criminal damage. The seriousness is a good test and it does not mean that people who protest are covered by this. That is not the point. The point is that if they plan to commit serious criminal offences during their protest, the law provides them with no defence that they were protesting if they have committed a serious crime. It is trying to provide reassurance that people who only protest are not covered by this definition. It may be you need to see it in writing, which I suspect from your reaction you have not.

Jenny Jones AM: OK. Thanks very much. Mr Mayor, I wonder if you would answer a question for me. You recently wrote that the law should treat radicalism of a child as child abuse and that children who have been radicalised should be removed from their parents. On a radio show, you then said that it might be true for British National Party (BNP) people as well. Is that an accurate portrayal?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What I said was that if a child was at risk of being conditioned to become a killer or a suicide bomber in such a way as to threaten the livelihood of the child and the wellbeing of the child, then obviously that is a matter for serious concern. It has been put to me that there is some confusion about the application of the safeguarding laws and some doubt about whether they would support intervention by the bodies concerned, though they are generally doing a very, very good job of protecting us from harm in this matter.

Jenny Jones AM: At first glance, there might be people who are attracted to that idea - and I am not one of them, obviously - but once you go down that route, you are actually starting to think about police surveillance of families or undercover police getting involved and that sort of thing. There are policing repercussions to this.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am sure it will be no secret to you, Jenny, because you had been on the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) for many years and you will be very --

Jenny Jones AM: With honour.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- familiar with what goes on in our counterterrorism activities. It will be no secret to you that there is probably a small number - in the low thousands - of individuals who are under observation of one kind or another. Obviously the surveillance cannot be intense the whole time, but there are plenty of people of concern in London.

Jenny Jones AM: I do not know if you know this, but Lee Rigby's [murdered British soldier] killers actually came from Christian homes and one of them had a friend who was in the Army, so how would your ideas catch people like that? I just cannot see that your idea really has any validity.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Of course they might not have caught those individuals, but it has been put to me that there are other individuals and other children who are at risk of serious harm.

Jenny Jones AM: This is not your idea? This has come from somewhere else? Somebody else has given you this idea? It has been put to you, you said.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): That is right, yes. Obviously, it is not something that I have sat staring a wall and it floated into my head. On this rare occasion, I have consulted other people than my own ample store of knowledge and have written on that basis, but I am not disposed to --

Jenny Jones AM: Give their names.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): -- go into names, Jenny, much as though you may desire it. As you expect, in the course of my job I get briefings on this kind of thing and it was put to me as a matter of concern.

Jenny Jones AM: Briefings? OK. That opens up all sorts of areas. Tell me: when do you think a child could be radicalised? Do you think they could be radicalised as a toddler or by the age of ten? You have obviously had briefings on this, so what is the outcome?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): You must seek more detailed briefings yourself and I am sure there will be people very happy to give them to you on a confidential basis.

Jenny Jones AM: It is not my idea. It is your idea.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): The impression I formed is that there could be, for instance, the younger siblings of a convicted terrorist who are at risk and who are receiving the same kind of messaging either from their parents or indeed from their step-parents. That is something that is difficult, is potentially very dangerous for the child and indeed for the wider public and is worth consideration.

Jenny Jones AM: Can you understand that your definition of 'radicalism' and how people might be radicalised is so broad that it could be absolutely unusable?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): With great respect to you, Jenny, I do not think that my definition and your definition coincide. What I said specifically was young people and young children who are being inculcated in a set of beliefs might lead them to become killers or suicide bombers and it is pretty clear what I am talking about.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): OK. Thank you. We will leave that there.

Tony Arbour AM: I have been concerned, Mr Mayor, to learn that during the Olympic Games authorisation was given for there to be sound cannon here in London.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): We do not need sound cannon. We have Jenny.

Tony Arbour AM: Perhaps I can explain it. I should say first of all that I believe the police should be given the equipment which they feel they need as necessary to ensure the safety of Londoners, which of course is why I back the proposal to have water cannon.

However, I am concerned that there has been no mention at all of sound cannon. Sound cannon not only was authorised during the Olympic Games and was based in London, but it is widely available - I do not say "used" - widely available throughout the world. Many police forces have acquired sound cannon. Sound cannon have very many advantages over water cannon. One of the objections to water cannon, you will recall, is the cost and lack of manoeuvrability. The manoeuvrability of sound cannon is more or less infinite. The price of sound cannon - and I only have a figure in US dollars - ranges upwards from \$5,000.

Perhaps I should explain how it works. It emits a noise which means that people - rather like in the Munch picture, *The Scream* - have to put their hands over their ears, in which case they drop the bricks they were thinking of throwing at the police and drop the Molotov cocktails they might have been throwing at the police. The pitch of the noise can be altered. The range of the sound can be altered.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): What about earplugs?

Tony Arbour AM: That is precisely what I said when the idea was put to me. If you knew that the thing was going to be put on, you might walk around wearing earmuffs or stick cotton wool in your ears. Nevertheless - and really, this is the gravamen of my question - was and indeed has the use of sound cannon been considered by the Metropolitan Police Service and, if so, given the apparent advantages of it, why has that not been proposed?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): First of all, Tony, the bit I did not recognise, unless someone's keeping something from me, is that I do not know that we authorised this. One, I have never heard of it --

Tony Arbour AM: I am told it was the Ministry of Defence (MoD), but because it was based here.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I can only answer for the police, but I have not heard of this.

Tony Arbour AM: No, I thought you just asked me who authorised it.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The only thing to make clear in this Assembly is that I never authorised it. As far as I know, the Metropolitan Police Service never authorised this piece of kit. I have never heard of it.

I do not think you quite answered the Mayor's question and I do not know the answer either. Can it be defended against by ear-defenders? That needs to be considered.

In terms of whether there is a better option, we would of course consider it. The advice I have at the moment is that it is not a fully approved piece of kit that actually will work everywhere it has been deployed. I am open-minded to any possibility that would be beneficial. If it is a better option, of course we would consider it, but I have not seen the evidence yet that it is working anywhere effectively.

Tony Arbour AM: Can I ask you whether or not you knew it was deployed during the Olympic Games?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): It was not deployed.

Tony Arbour AM: Did you know that it was deployed during the Olympic Games?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I could –

Tony Arbour AM: You did not know that it was deployed here in the river during the Olympic Games on a boat?

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Deployed in the river? What, to shush the river up?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have said quite clearly I have not heard of it. What the military were deploying is for the military to answer for and they would deploy it for slightly different reasons to the ones that we would.

Len Duvall AM: Mr Mayor, in terms of your article, you raised some very important issues and of course you are creating a debate, but actually it is quite ill thought out. Some of your evidence that you are using to suggest that we need intervention is just not correct and that has been pointed out by Jenny Jones.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I did not hear Jenny say any such thing.

Len Duvall AM: However, on a range of issues around tackling radicalisation, is it not better if we used your efforts to persuade the police and the criminal justice system to do something about the radicalisation that is still going on in our prisons? That is a far bigger threat where more of the same is not making a difference here and it is a threat.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Len, I am not going to disagree with you there at all. In the balance of where radicalisation is taking place, I would have to agree completely that the prisons, in my view, represent a far more serious and potent breeding ground for this kind of

thought than in some of the homes I have been talking about. The fact nonetheless remains that there is concern about the ability of the spectrum of bodies involved to try to help these kids and protect them and about the radicalisation of quite young kids by their immediate families, biological families, step-parents or whatever.

Len Duvall AM: I share that concern, Mr Mayor, but I am just not sure about the approach and the discussion. It needs to be better defined and you have started the debate but it is not going to go much further than here. It is not because people do not want to intervene. It is the difficulties of intervening. If we think about violence in our communities, violent games and violent issues on the internet coming through, it is causing a much greater threat to our young people. Would you advocate taking those children away from their families? There is a really difficult issue around that and yet there is more impact --

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): I am not certain about that.

Len Duvall AM: You might not be certain about it, but equally you have raised it in your column in a general way and I can raise those issues about violent games leading on to increased violence in our communities.

Boris Johnson (Mayor of London): Len is making a point about violent games that has been made a lot over the last 30 years. The evidence is a bit mixed on that. My information - and obviously I get briefings on this matter - is that there is a concern about radicalisation in London. It is something that needs to be dealt with in all sorts of different ways. Len, you are completely right to talk about what goes on in prisons, just as it is also right to look at preachers of hate in mosques, but there is another particular problem that we need to be robust in tackling.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you. All the groups are out of time, but are Members content to have a final word from the Commissioner on this for the record? Commissioner.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): First of all, thank you. Just in terms of the issues that Boris raised, the principal point, which I think we are agreeing, is that you would not want to expose a young person or a child to a threat that we all would prefer was avoided. That is the principal thing. We all know that there are some risks there.

In terms of the prisons point, there is an awful lot of work happening, but there are some dilemmas for the Prison Service, too. Of course, if they group these people together it becomes rather a political issue. If they do not group them together, they have the problem of actually who they come into contact with and whether they radicalise them. Changing people's beliefs is a profoundly difficult thing, even when they are in prison. To be fair to the Prison Service, I know a lot is happening for the very reason it is raised: it is a serious threat.

Darren Johnson AM (Chair): Thank you very much. That concludes the questions this morning. Can I thank the Mayor and the Commissioner for their attendance. Thank you.

This page is intentionally left blank