London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – Wednesday 29 January 2025
Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Question and Answer Session with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Service – the Mayor's Draft Police and Crime Plan 2025-2029

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I would like to welcome our guests, Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and Matt Twist [KPM], Assistant Commissioner (AC), Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Good morning, both. I would like to officially say it is wonderful to have a police officer here. We are very, very grateful for you attending. Congratulations [to the MPS for] coming out of special measures, and I know you would like to just say a few words about that to start with.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Chairman, thank you. I am very happy to be here. Good Morning, Committee. Last week [23 January 2025] marked a very significant milestone in the MPS's journey with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary [and Fire & Rescue Services] (HMICFRS) confirming that the MPS has been taken out of the Engage status. The progress we have made over the last two and a half years would not have been possible without the unwavering passion, sense of duty, courage and hard work of our officers and staff in the face of some incredibly challenging circumstances, and also some unique operational demands that we have spoken about in this Committee before.

We have made significant improvements to a whole range of areas, including core handling, child exploitation, public protection, culture, and counter-corruption. Our officers and staff have worked tirelessly to address more than 100 recommendations, several causes for concern, and improve our service to the public of London. They have done so in the face of significant budget challenge, the sustained demand of public order and protest across the capital, and increased scrutiny and accountability, all while continuing their day jobs to keep Londoners safe. We of course know there is more to do, but we do want to take a moment to pause and ensure that we recognise the determination of our officers and staff who have delivered this enormous progress and enabled us to reach this very, very important milestone.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Lovely, as I say, congratulations. Just before we start our questioning, a little birdie told me that - and you were involved, that is all I am asking you, Matt - that the Royal Parks Police is going to be cut. Can you just confirm or deny that?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): So, I could do neither. What I can say is, as the Committee will be aware, there are some significant budget challenges that we are facing as we go into next year, which is going to involve us taking some tough choices. The headcount within the MPS is going to reduce by over 1,000 people, even with the additional money that the Home Office has been able to provide. We do not yet know what the final budget settlement is, but we have outlined a series of tough choices that may need to be made in order to balance the books.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, we know that, I just had wind of the fact that there was a meeting this week and I wondered whether you would be able to update us. If you cannot, fair enough. We understand and know the situation. Thank you for that. The first section on today's agenda is grooming gangs and group-based child sexual exploitation. If I can start the questioning, I will start with you, Kaya, what work has the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the MPS undertaken to understand the nature of grooming gangs in London?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you very much, Chairman. We know that this is obviously an issue that we are all deeply concerned and passionate about. Exploitation and sexual exploitation of children is a heinous crime and it is something that I know the Mayor [of London] has been passionate about completely over his whole term, he has invested millions in violence against women and girls (VAWG), supported organisations like --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Kaya, forgive me for interrupting, we have such a long agenda today, if you could home in on the question. The question was, what work has been undertaken to understand the nature of grooming gangs in London?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, Chairman, I am referring to the work that MOPAC has done in commissioning --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, no, no, just grooming gangs, let us just talk about grooming gangs. We have got a whole section on VAWG later, so grooming gangs.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): OK, well, through the work we do on exploitation, moreover violence and exploitation, the new violence and exploitation support service we have set up. The commissioning work we do to support organisations like Exit [Foundation], and Rescue and Response, and The Lighthouse, who work primarily with victims of sexual exploitation. That is the kind of work we have been doing especially, and also working with the MPS to set up specialist units that look into this. Last week I visited Holborn [Police Station] where they have a dedicated team to look at child abuse. I know that Matt wants to come in to give the Committee an update on the current picture.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): No, OK, I will definitely go to you, Matt, because if we can home in just on this section on grooming gangs, what do you know and understand of them in London, or do we not have any? None of us know and we would really like an answer.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): One of the challenges is, when we talk about grooming gangs, lots of people are talking about different things and there is lots of discourse on social media and other places, meaning it is one thing or another. I am going to talk about child exploitation, which includes child sexual abuse, which we know has come into sharp focus in recent weeks. Officers are clearly committed to safeguarding children and young people who are at risk of child exploitation and child sexual abuse, and this includes children and young people we see at risk of recruitment into gangs. The largest prevalence of this within London is children being recruited into county lines gangs, to support gangs in either transiting drugs, controlled substances, moving illegal weapons and other things around.

We also know, as the Committee will, that the Home Secretary has announced a rapid audit of grooming gangs and has set up five new local inquiries and we will look at the findings of that. It is important to note, and there is something again that is sometimes misrepresented, I want to be clear, the MPS will always follow the evidence where it takes us, no matter how uncomfortable the conclusions might be or how it might impact on communities. We police without fear or favour, and we will go where the evidence takes us.

In terms of the action that we talk about and to be focusing on child exploitation, there are a number of things, whether we are talking about cuckooing, trafficking, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, all of these are appalling crimes. We do take it extremely seriously and there has already been significant action to better respond. We significantly increased the number of child exploitation cases identified

and flagged by officers, which was previously raised by HMICFRS. The number of child criminal exploitation reports has increased from 65 to 2,799, of which 887 are under current investigation. This has been done by improving the way we grade risk in missing people investigations and through additional training that we have provided to frontline staff.

Our action also includes launching the [MPS] Children's Strategy in September 2024, which is a significant milestone in helping us adopt a child-first approach. More than 8,000 frontline officers have received training to improve identification of child exploitation and we have uplifted our Public Protection Command by 565 people, 465 officers and 94 staff, specifically intended to spot some of this. Over 50 Detective Sergeants from central teams have been transferred to improve local boroughs' oversight of investigations such as this.

Finally, the learning we have taken from Operation Soteria is that we have trained all of our Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) investigators, and we will soon be training first responders in the need for a victim-centred suspect-focused and context-led investigation when it comes to sexual abuse cases. This will include all forms of child sexual exploitation and, to paraphrase, grooming. This will help make sure that vulnerable victims who need the most understanding and care are supported by specially trained officers.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good, that is all good and we commend you for that. When, in this particular instance, the public do not know that all this work goes on and it is good that we can let the public know that you are doing so much around children, but the public see grooming gangs at the moment as the same as in Oldham when a group of men literally coerced young children to have sex with them. That is what the public are regarding as grooming gangs at the moment. If we look at that specifically, and I know it is a much wider issue, but if we look at that specifically, do you think we have got any of those types of gangs in London?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): At the moment, the biggest threat to young people is criminal exploitation centred around county lines, as opposed to the types of grooming gangs that we have seen in other parts of the country. I am not going to say it has never happened or cannot happen, and I know that separately, Chairman, you have been offered a private briefing on some of the intelligence that we are looking at and some of the large jobs --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I was offered that yesterday, and absolutely.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): -- that we are looking at, which will enable us to give more detail on some of the intelligence and live work that we are doing. I would say, in general terms, we are not seeing the characterisation of what has been seen in places like Rotherham and Oldham and other places in the north of England, it is not the picture that we are seeing here. Our picture is much more nuanced, it is much more diverse, and involves a much wider spectrum of exploitation than solely a group of men from one particular ethnicity targeting a group of young girls from a different ethnicity. That is not the picture that we are seeing.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, but we also saw the Scottish situation [the conviction of members of a child sex abuse gang based in Glasgow in January 2025] just recently, I am not saying it is from a specific group, I have never said that, it is just the whole way it is dealt with. Are you saying that, as far as you know, there are none, are you saying we do not want to discuss it because of security? If you are saying that, that is fine, but I just would like an answer of some description, do we have any of these in London?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not going to go into numbers because, whether it is two people or 15, I mean how do we define the thing? There are definitely cases where more than one person might be involved in exploitation. As I have touched on, there

are countless gangs. I am not going to go into numbers as to what we have got and what we have not got. I am happy, separately, to brief you or Members of this Committee in private on intelligence and the work that we are currently doing around exploitation, but the important thing for this Committee is that, in London, it is a much wider problem, as in it is not just focused on sexual exploitation, it is focused on other things. It is focused on criminal exploitation, focused on trafficking, as well as the obvious threat of sexual exploitation. I have outlined how the MPS has responded very well, and it is important to note that part of the reason we got out of HMICFRS Engage is as a result of sharpening our response to this type of criminality significantly.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, I hear what you say. I am pleased about the work, but I wish we could have had that answered in a clearer way. Can I just ask you, Kaya, as a former council leader, you will be aware of some of the child protection failings in London boroughs, in the likes of Lambeth and Lewisham, how confident are you that, had child grooming gangs in the way that we know them from Oldham, etc, been operating in a borough, it would have been identified by the local authority? Obviously local authorities play a big part in this, we cannot always just look to the police to deal with these things, we have got 32 boroughs. What is your answer to that?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I completely recognise that, through the legislation, safeguarding of children is a statutory role for all statutory partners. That is why it is organised across the partnerships of the health, local authorities, and the MPS, and they regularly need to work together to do all they can to safeguard children. It is really important that duty, as regularly inspected in local authorities through the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), is really important and the learning we find in any of those cases are acted upon. It is also important to recognise that the Government has now said that there will be a national investigation into this topic and, as part of that, any no further action (NFA) cases will be reviewed and taken forward. We need to be really clear that safeguarding children has to be our number one priority and any failings in that, any less than child-focused approaches, have to be tackled head on because it has to be our top priority, keeping children safe.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. Would you be happy if a specific investigation was made into the whole of London and funded separately? I am more than aware of the constraints the MPS has. We have called for a national look at this, a national investigation. What about a London-wide one funded by the Mayor?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The national investigation, obviously, will cover London and we will do all we can to feed into that together as the partnership. It is really important that it is done nationally because if legislation needs updating, needs changing, we must learn together as a country about that. As you have just remarked, the latest gang was in Scotland. It is a whole national approach that is needed. We are very happy to work with the Home Office to feed into that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. I will go over to Assembly Member Lord Bailey.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning to both of our panel members. I am going to start with the police. I want to be very clear, for me this is not a posture defensive from the police. In the past, the MPS has had very significant problems with child protection. That is one of the main reasons you went into special measures, as it were. You have improved that. The question I want to ask is this, the failings nationally have been around people's reluctance to report. You have people who are afraid of what it will do for their career and their personal life. Do you think that culture exists in the MPS? You made a comment earlier on that with no fear or favour, but other police forces would have said the same.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, Lord Bailey. Thank you. We have moved significantly, and over time we have seen how the MPS has become much

more responsive to this type of threat. We have seen the investment both in terms of people, specialist skills, and training that means that I am much more confident than I have ever been that now we would spot this and we would take action. We have seen how the numbers of flags that have been identified or missing person reports, specifically linked to children, has increased, so that these can be better investigated.

We also know that some of the victimology that we see, victims are often vulnerable in these cases. Victims are less likely to report, therefore we need to be even more alert to try to identify this. Again, in some cases, particularly linked to wider exploitation, reports suggest that some of the children do not often recognise themselves as victims because they are being treated in a certain way by their exploiters, and they are drawn into this. Again, being sure that in terms of our investigations, in terms of our investigations particularly into missing children, which is often the first flag that you get, that we are spotting these risks.

The evidence would suggest that we are doing much better. The treatment of missing people and how we do it has significantly changed. The number of children that are missing that are graded as high risk has significantly increased. Our investigations to find those children and be curious, and this is about the investigative curiosity as to what is going on, has improved significantly in recent years. I do, as you say, think this is a core plank about how we have moved from a position where we were in Engage and not doing as well as we should have been, to a position where now, with the additional 565 people in Public Protection, we are doing really well.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: I happen to agree. No way is perfect, but I happen to agree it is one of the areas that you have moved forward quite well. The failings with investigating this grooming gang situation elsewhere really rotated around culture, people's fear, not wanting to appear to be racist, not being able to make the link. Are you confident that you have the mechanisms to make that link, and the specific question is how are you interfacing with local authorities, because your end of it, missing children, etc, the first flag, do you have the link to go to a local authority to try to build up a pattern of what is going on?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, very much so. Again, this links to Public Protection investment, through the statutory bodies, working with local authorities and in our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs), and the strategy meetings that we have around the management of vulnerable children that come to police notice. These links are being made and are being joined up. Again, where we have particularly young people that are repeat missing, often these are the most vulnerable in society. These are people that are either from children's homes or getting additional support through Children's Services across a wide range of needs. Through the strategy meetings, through the MASHs, we are very active in looking to spot those risks and trying to join the dots. The key thing is, are we joining the dots? My assessment is that we are doing so now, while nothing is ever going to be perfect and I will not pretend that it is, we are doing this much better now than we ever have done.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK. Agree. Deputy Mayor, let us try one more time. What is MOPAC doing to help the police and local councils navigate that relationship piece so that patterns can be identified? Do you feel that MOPAC has any stake in that, is there anything you are doing to help?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you, Lord Bailey. It is really important to recognise that MOPAC's new London Violence and Exploitation Support Service is key in this, as well as the London Child Exploitation Operating Protocol, while led by the MPS, is definitely supported by MOPAC and other safeguarding partners that recognise and try to reduce harms and threats posed to children through exploitation. We continue to make sure that we are monitoring and evaluating those partnerships through our governance arrangements. We are definitely key to that and, as mentioned before, as well as making sure that, as Matt mentioned, one of the reasons the MPS was in Engage was exploitation of children, and that is something that MOPAC's evidence sadly had to raise with HMICFRS and then has followed up with

investment in support for the MPS that has seen the turnaround that we have seen, which has been significant and important. I know that MOPAC has been intrinsic in working on the Children's Strategy that we have discussed before here in this Committee. It is definitely a partnership approach, and we continue to do all we can to support local authorities and the MPS to make sure that children are our number one priority when it comes to safeguarding.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Very last question to AC Twist. How is the MPS managing the tension between a child-centred approach and enforcement? In the Black community we suffered for years with Black children being treated as adults solely because they were Black. If you look at the failings in this grooming gang situation, it has been young white girls being treated a particular way because they are from a working-class background. How do you deal with that? As police officers, your focus is enforcement, correct, but you are now given a new focus, how are you dealing with that tension?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): It is a challenge, and the adultification of young Black boys is something that we were again very alert to and came out through a lot of the work that we have done in terms of how we deal with things like stop and search, custody procedures and other things. We are very alert to that. Of course, this is a much wider challenge for the whole of society, for social services, for education, for others. The police role, as you say, is first and foremost about dealing with the criminal aspect, but we do need to be careful. We have seen some awful examples nationally where children were dealt with as suspects as opposed to dealt with as victims. We are very much trying to turn that on its head.

The key thing here for us is the Children's Strategy, which we have just launched, which sets out a child-first approach, which is a significant milestone and is something that we are training over 8,000 frontline officers in to ensure that we can better recognise and more quickly recognise signs of child exploitation. It will always be a tension because policing ultimately is around the law enforcement and preventing and detecting crime, but we know that we are doing so much more around spotting the signs, around trying to avoid risks like adultification, and the experiences that we have had over recent years just point to the changes that we needed to make and have made.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Garbett.

Zoë Garbett AM: Morning. Just two quick questions probably for Matt. I was interested in what you were just saying about first responders being trained in a victim-first approach. I was quite shocked to know that they are not already, but I just wondered if you could say when you think first responders will be fully equipped to take that victim-first approach? Then my other question was just that the 2022 *Report [of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse*] from [Professor] Alexis Jay [OBE, Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in 2015] said that the widespread failure in the case study areas was not recording the ethnicity of perpetrators and victims of child sexual exploitation. I just wondered if that is something that has been taken on by the MPS?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. Officers are trained as part of all basic training and investigation in terms of a victim-first approach. I was talking specifically around training to improve officers' ability to identify child exploitation, which is something that links to Lord Bailey's question around do we focus too much on the enforcement of what is right in front of you as opposed to thinking more widely as to why we might be there, why the person might have gone missing. That is what the 8,000 frontline officers that have been trained have been trained in. In terms of the

Alexis Jay report, recording of ethnicity, our data is not perfect, but it is improving. It is something that we need to record in terms of both the suspect, because it helps us detect them and arrest them, but also in terms of the victim, both the victim's ethnicity as we see it, but also their self-defined ethnicity. That is something that through the new crime recording system we are improving. It is not 100 per cent yet. There are still gaps, but it is significantly better than what it once was.

Zoë Garbett AM: Great. Thank you. Back to you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Ahmad.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning, Deputy Mayor. Good morning, Assistant Commissioner. My question is about the issues around the national audit that we are now going to have. You quite rightly have identified the issues around exploitation of children per se, and it is really important that we are very clear that there is an issue about exploitation of children, and it is good to see that is your first priority and that is making sure that we can deal with that. You quite rightly have said, as the service on the ground, you have spoken about criminal exploitation, trafficking, county lines being major issues. Could I ask you, what impact do you think that the national audit [of child sexual exploitation by gangs] will have on the MPS, including any challenges and opportunities for London?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. The first thing to say is that, while we are aware of the Home Secretary's announcement, Baroness Casey [of Blackstock DBE CB]'s work is not yet underway. We have yet to see the terms of reference and, of course, the MPS will play a full part once the audit is underway and help in any way we can. The benefits nationally and in London is that it continues the focus on this issue, it will identify any opportunities where we could further improve, notwithstanding significant changes have been made already. Additionally, for things like at times where, as we know, and we may touch on later, budgets are incredibly difficult. One of our very early decisions when looking at where we would take reductions is that we would not roll back on the significant investment that we have made in these areas, particularly in Public Protection and specifically in child abuse investigation teams, which are now fully staffed across all of our Basic Command Units (BCUs).

On the point around potential victims, our recent reporting would suggest that 71 per cent of potential victims of child criminal exploitation are those that are being exploited into drugs and county line activity. That is the vast bulk of the exploitation that we are seeing. That is something that we continue to robustly address through our Operation Yamata and Operation Orochi teams that are dealing with this daily. Almost daily, I am getting reports of how we have effectively rescued young missing children, often missing boys, teenagers in different parts of the country, as a result of the work that our Orochi and Yamata specialist crime teams are doing.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. We have had referenced this morning to the Professor Alexis Jay report. I would like to be asking you questions about how those recommendations were taken forward by the MPS. Unfortunately, the previous Government chose not to take those recommendations forward. What I will ask you about instead is the HMICFRS report about the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies. What is the MPS doing with regard to this in response to group-based child sexual exploitation? Have you had a chance to take any of that forward?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not going to add anything beyond what I have said already on this, in terms of a lot of focus was placed on this during our progress through the Engage process and the improvements that we have made and the investments that we have made are pointing significantly towards improved, both processes, recognition of

risk, assessment of risk, and also dealing with perpetrators in this space. I have not got line by line in front of me the recommendations, therefore I am not going to touch on that now, but other than to say, through the Engage process, all of this would have been considered.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Assistant Commissioner.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you very much. Assembly Member Lord Bailey.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Because we keep talking about a national inquiry, and of course there is none because the current Government utterly refuses to do that, although this is a national problem. It strikes me that London has been quite successful in improving its child protection outcomes. Do you think that it would have been useful for other police forces to understand the process that you have been through to improve?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Lord Bailey, thank you. There is always learning we can take from other forces and we have done this regularly and I am not going to pretend that we have yet got this perfect. That is not the case. There is more we can do, and we are constantly working with national bodies, including the College of Policing and HMICFRS, to identify if there are areas where we can improve. There are national leads on these subjects who set guidance and develop the policy nationally. Of course, if anybody is interested in seeing how the MPS has done things, we are always very, very open and welcome visitors, but I would not yet profess to be the beacon of good practice. That is for others to judge. All we can do is get on with the work, deal with the training, deal with the perpetrators, and work with partners to ensure that more children are safeguarded. That is our priority and if others are interested in what we are doing and if others judge that we are being successful, then of course we would welcome any interest in that, but at the moment I am still focused on seeing what we can do better.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Assembly Member Cooper.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you very much, Chairman. I was really interested in your comments at the beginning, Assistant Commissioner, about nuance and a diverse situation that we have in London, because I have worked nationally and it is very different in London as a metropolis than many of the smaller towns where we have seen these situations that we talked about in terms of child sexual exploitation and groups of people being involved in that. One of the things that I noticed, you also talked about the BCUs and being fully staffed, when we moved to the BCUs, I was very struck, I represent [the London boroughs of] Merton and Wandsworth, which are part of the four-borough BCU, several people said, "That is terrible, you should have a two-borough BCU". One of the issues there was that three of the boroughs had very, very small child sexual exploitation teams and bringing them together in the four-borough BCU allowed that to be strengthened. Obviously, we did that reorganisation some time ago. You were talking about bringing in more staff. Do you think in some ways that reorganisation has helped us to then build stronger teams? That was one of the things that I thought might be a benefit from the BCU reorganisation, although obviously we had lots of issues about it when it went through.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): It definitely has. Replicating a set of services 32 times is going to be much more difficult and complex than it is 12 times. There are economies you can achieve with scale, and also better specialisms, better experience that you can bring to bear if you are doing it at a larger scale. That is right. It is also right that two years ago we had not invested enough in our Public Protection teams and one of the core issues that people reported to us all

and to HMICFRS was the unreasonably high workloads that some of our detectives were faced with because they did not have enough staff to deal with, firstly, the complexity, which is growing, every case now takes longer to investigate, every case has more risk, every case has a digital footprint that once it might not have done; but also the volume.

Now the investment of the 565 extra people into Public Protection is to rebalance those workloads to make them manageable. We are already seeing some of the successes as a result of that in terms of our detection rates for rape and sexual assault are significantly up, we are nearly top quartile in the country, we are certainly the best of our most similar forces. Our investigation and detection rates into child sexual abuse, into indecent images, into other sexual offending are also significantly up. We are seeing the benefits now of the investment that we have made over the last two years.

My challenge now is ensuring that success continues to grow, to make sure that we do even better with the investment that we have made. As those people gain more experience, as they start working together over a longer period of time, and the signs that visiting certainly Bethnal Green and Holborn last week and their Public Protection teams, one of them with Kaya, we saw some incredibly enthusiastic and passionate detectives who were just determined to bring perpetrators to justice and to safeguard the exploited children. I was really very encouraged by what I saw.

Léonie Cooper AM: Just on that point of bringing people together in the teams and strengthening them, but also the increasing complexity of the situations, what support are we offering to the staff who are looking at some of these images, having to deal with some of the things that child sexual exploitation involves, are we supporting our staff through this? This is a question I quite often ask my Borough Commander, because we put a lot on to the police, but are we supporting officers who are going through this kind of thing?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): We are trying, and there is more available now in terms of formalised support through our Trauma Risk Incident Management process, which is officers responding to trauma through our occupational health process and through our psychological screening in some roles. We do have officers whose job almost full time is dealing with the most appalling cases of child abuse and other officers whose job full time is dealing with indecent images online. For those really specialist roles there is of course additional screening and additional support, including psychological support and screening that means we can (1) check that they are OK, and (2) check that they are suited in the first place to be doing that really difficult work. It is the really, really challenging end of what policing does and some of the descriptions of the cases that I was talking to detectives about last week were just absolutely appalling and you just --

Léonie Cooper AM: For most of us it is completely unimaginable.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Exactly. The public do not understand just how heinous some of this stuff is. We are working to support officers. I also think, by adding strength and adding numbers, that also brings a level of support to the officers in the field. While they are still incredibly busy, let us not pretend that suddenly everyone has got lots of time on their hands and there are not many cases, they all remain incredibly busy, but having bigger teams, having lower caseloads per officer, is certainly helping with that as well.

Léonie Cooper AM: Also having colleagues who have gone through the same experiences you can get more support from. Coming back from the officers, back to the victims, which is really what we are talking about, I was very struck yesterday by a piece of investigative reporting and working with officers who were going out to hotels. I do not know, you will probably have heard it because it was fairly widely reported, and they were

talking about budget hotels, some of which have this system where you can just walk in and plug in a number and pick up a key from a box, and you do not even have to speak to somebody. Obviously, I will not mention budget chains of hotels, but we do have hotels of that nature in London. The way that the news piece was set out, it implied that it was outside of London and near major roads and not here. Are we aware that hotels are being used by people who want to exploit children in this way in London?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I saw that piece yesterday. What happens elsewhere in the country is likely to happen in London as well. I have not got specific details on specific cases that we can point to. I am also aware of those hotels. Some of them do exist in London. That clearly is a risk and it is clearly something we will need to be alert to.

Léonie Cooper AM: Maybe that is something you could come back to us privately on then after the meeting, which brings me on to my final point, which is about the --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Very briefly, Assembly Member.

Léonie Cooper AM: Yes, very briefly. What further action do you think is necessary to understand the full scale and nature of group-based child sexual exploitation in London? What more can we do basically?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): My initial reaction to that is let us wait and see what the outcome of the national review is. That is going to be really important. I do not want to jump ahead of that or pre-judge that. We need to continue to embed the progress that we have made and the work that we have done to make sure that we are delivering better outcomes for victims. My next step is to make sure we have implemented the recommendations that currently exist, that we continue to build on the progress we have made to get out of Engage, and then to see what the national review recommends.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Briefly from Assembly Member Moema.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you, very briefly. My question is to you, Assistant Commissioner. I have been to see your officers at Bethnal Green, the Predatory Offender Unit, and the great work that they do to identify those who put people at risk. With the upcoming Government review, I do not know what view the police have around sentencing of those who are accused of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation. Many of us think that some of those sentences that are handed down are woefully inadequate, and I do not know what view the MPS and other forces may express to the Government about strengthening some of that.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. Sentencing is a matter for His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service and the independent judiciary. I am loathe to comment on it. What is clear, though, is that you see recidivist offending. You see people that are put in, particularly if they have shorter jail terms, then come out and can offend again, which means - as you have mentioned and as you saw - we end up managing these people in the community and there is only so much of that we can do. Some of the risks have been highlighted and some of our good work has been through initiatives like using Live Facial Recognition (LFR), where through deployment of that we are spotting and stopping significant numbers of registered sex offenders, making some inquiries, and then finding that some of them are in breach of their conditions. In one particularly concerning example in the last couple of weeks we stopped one registered sex offender who was escorting the child of somebody else who did not realise that there was a risk. LFR is one of those initiatives that really helps us in terms of managing that. The

more that the policing and partners are managing this in the community, there is a risk. It is a matter for Parliament, it is a matter for Government, and a matter for the courts as to where the sentencing lines are drawn. Our job - and we will continue to focus on our job - is to put these criminals in front of the court and let the court decide.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you. Deputy Mayor.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. I just wanted to add and reassure you, Assembly Member Moema, that the Government just put out a call for evidence on the [Independent] Sentencing Review [2024-2025] and we submitted evidence through MOPAC on exploitation in particular, and why we feel that child exploitation should definitely have stronger and clearer sentencing, especially in relation to things like the National Referral Mechanism. At the moment, I feel that is a significant loophole that needs closing and that it needs to be extremely clear that the exploitation of children should result in the sentences that it deserves, which should be strong.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. First, Matt, I would like to say LFR, fantastic, a fabulous thing for you to be able to use to get these villains behind bars. Excellent. The only other couple of quick questions, do you keep ethnicity data now on all these perpetrators?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, it is one of our mandatory recording areas in terms of suspects and victims, both in terms of victims' self-defined ethnicity and officer defined. Additionally, we would always record the ethnicity of the suspect because that is critical in terms of identifying them.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, absolutely. It was mentioned in the [Baroness] Casey [independent] Review [*into the standards of behaviour and the internal culture of the Metropolitan Police* Service] that it needed to be done more, hence the question. Thank you for the explanation about the number of children in exploitation into county lines and I get that. I do think, though, that the public appreciate that there is nine million people in London and they see all these gangs elsewhere and inevitably people think there must be some in London, which is why we have been posing the questions. I look forward to the private briefing, but I do think the public need to know because they need to be more aware, because not only should councils be part of this, part of helping the police, but so should the public. We will see how that goes. We are now moving on to the draft [Mayor's] Police and Crime Plan [2025-2029] (PCP) and my colleague Assembly Member Best is going to start the questions.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. Good morning, both. Assistant Commissioner, it was - as the Chairman says - great to hear you talking about the benefits of LFR and I hope you have passed that on to the Deputy Mayor, who has been somewhat sceptical and opposed in previous times. Just looking at the draft PCP, it does not look much different from the previous iteration, and in fact when we heard from our guests at our last meeting, that was pretty much the broad analysis that these plans across the country are much of a muchness. In order to get away from that much of a muchness evaluation, what would both of you pick out as the key differences and change of direction in this plan?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am happy to start. Thank you, Assembly Member Best. It is really important that we reflect that this is almost an evolution of the Mayor's previous PCP. Obviously, we all know the challenges of London, it rightly focuses on reducing violence and criminal exploitation, as we have just discussed, a priority for us all. Increasing trust and confidence in the MPS, which, as we all know on the back of the Casey Review, has to be a continued focus, and improving the criminal justice system and supporting victims, as we have discussed before in this Committee. We need to start

from the first report right through back into probation to make sure that the whole system is working to keep London safe. Those priorities, it would be strange if they were not continued priorities and the evidence --

Emma Best AM: But across the entire plan, what is new and what is different that is pulling out, telling us what is the same, we can see that as a Committee. What should we be looking at that is new and different in this plan?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We have got the opportunity of working with a different national Government and that allowing a greater focus, it is something that I know I have discussed here before, but a real strength is a focus from the MPS, MOPAC, and the Home Office to really work on neighbourhood policing, getting that back into the forefront. I know a real priority of this Committee, really tacking that high volume crime, anti-social behaviour, that community link and partnership into policing is something that I definitely have pushed to be at the forefront of this plan. That is a real opportunity. It would be wrong for us, we need to be evidence led, we need to be following what the data says, and the data says we need to continue to focus on these areas that we have outlined as well as it would be really remiss of us to take our focus off improving trust and confidence in the safety of London.

Emma Best AM: You do not think neighbourhood policing was a priority before? What do you think has changed in that?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): A greater investment obviously from the Government now that we have in this area, the neighbourhood policing plans. The Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis]'s work so far on being really clear on fixing the foundations and bringing back a greater prioritisation on neighbourhood policing. That is something that, I have heard working with local authorities, has been a real gap and we are seeing a greater prioritisation through that. I know we might discuss this later on as well, working through the robbery partnerships to really invest and enable that and it is starting to bear fruit, but I do not know, Matt, if you wanted to --

Emma Best AM: I am just going to come quickly, because I am struggling to link what you are saying to the Plan and what is new and different in the Plan, and you are talking a lot about a focus, an investment from Government. The last Government - let us be real - the Mayor handed millions and millions and millions of pounds back to that Government because he did not recruit the officers. Then again, we are looking at a Plan which at the moment sees us losing 1,300 officers. I was not even getting into that bit. I was just trying to ask about what is new and different about the Plan and then there seems to be a strange kind of connection to why this Government is great, but we are not talking about that right now. We are talking about this Plan. We are not talking about how this Government and the Mayor are taking the officers out and not investing in the police.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Was there a question in there?

Emma Best AM: I am trying again to get to the Plan, I mean I do not know, Assistant Commissioner, if you can speak directly to the Plan and what is new and different in the Plan?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, I am happy to. The Plan is out for consultation and, to be really clear, it is the Mayor's Plan and the MPS is operationally independent, but we must obviously have due regard for the Mayor's Plan. Additionally, we welcome the opportunity in advance to consult and be consulted on what was in the plan to make sure that we are aligned. Not having it radically different is not a bad thing. If we are looking at long-term strategy, part of

the challenge in setting priorities and investment over years is that, if plans radically change one way or another, it often unpicks some of the work that has been done before.

For us, it is also important, there are two key things that come out of the PCP, or three that I would draw out. One we welcome as the MPS that it is clear that MOPAC plays a role in both supporting the MPS while also holding us to account, and that is really important. It is also important to remember that the draft PCP's remit goes beyond policing and sets the Mayor's ambition for the wider criminal justice system as well. That is something that we have already touched on in terms of sentencing, but some of the constraints within which we operate are driven by some of the criminal justice system and how other partners such as councils play their key roles in reducing crime.

In terms of the PCP, one of the things that we are pleased about is that it aligns in many areas with our *A New Met for London* plan, specifically a significant focus on violent crime, focus on reducing robbery, commitment to tackling VAWG, commitment to tackling exploitation, and commitment to a child-first approach, which follows on from our Children's Strategy launched in September [2024]. There is quite a lot of alignment between what the MPS is trying to do to improve through our *A New Met for London* delivery and what is now set out in the PCP. Had the PCP been wildly different, that would have been more difficult for us.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. Deputy Mayor, just to come back to you quickly, you obviously are saying, the one thing I picked out that you said as a change perhaps from your predecessor is you have a higher focus or you were focused more on neighbourhood policing. Is that what your main focus was? Was that what you changed and put forward in this PCP?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, I was saying that it is an evolution of that. We have been able to enable a greater focus on that because of the focus across from national to local, but I would also add that it is the prioritisation but also the new things we have been able to enable underneath that. The Mayor's Exploitation Support Service is a new thing that we are rolling out and testing at the moment, as well as taking on the duty around appropriate adults as MOPAC, is a new area which will help to strengthen and support victims and the criminal justice system.

Emma Best AM: From a personal perspective, coming into the role late last year, what were the changes that you drove, what was in the PCP that perhaps you wanted amended or that you wanted focused on? What changes have you made?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I feel like obviously when I came in a lot of the work had been done to draft the PCP already and a lot of the consultation had started. I know greater consultation is happening now, but for me what really struck me about the PCP is, as a relative outsider at that stage, it was the importance for us to have a clear vision of what we wanted for London, the safety of London, clear articulation across the priorities of what that might look like and how we were going to go about doing that. That was my focus to make sure that we had a PCP that, when we went out to consultation, and that is something that the consultation meetings that I have been doing so far has really struck upon, is that need for ordinary Londoners to be able to see their safety within the PCP and be able to see that the Mayor's priorities and their priorities align. That is why the consultation at the moment is so important and that we need to keep on refining that, but that was definitely my driving emphasis.

Emma Best AM: OK, thanks. We have spoken previously about when we talked about this draft PCP last time about the lack of emphasis of stop and search in here and how it should be done and talk about it in general. When we had guests come previously [15 January 2025] to talk to the Committee about the draft PCP, we had

a guest from [the] Runnymede [Trust] who was in favour of scrapping stop and search, is that a position that you would take as Deputy Mayor, or do you see the importance of it?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, that is not the position I would take. Obviously, stop and search is a tactical tool that the MPS has used for a long time that has led to significant and important arrests, especially in the area of violence. I would say what we need to be is data-led, ethical, and it is something that it has been really interesting to work with the police on so far, as the MPS is currently working on its Stop and Search Charter. The ethos that it has been doing that in, being really community-led, really listening to the concerns of communities about the tactics. I have heard through that and the work that MOPAC is doing through the Disproportionality Board, doing a lot of research in top areas, top spot areas of using stop and search, that we need to make sure that what is being done is fair, proportionate, right, but is a tactic that continues to be able to be used in reducing criminality in London.

Emma Best AM: Yes, and good to end on some agreement between both of us on that. One thing I would come back to is that I really do hope in the final iteration of the PCP it does take a bit more prominence because it is a necessary and useful tool for the police, but not without the difficulties of (a) the perception by some communities in London about the way it is used or people in general, and (b) with the police themselves, officers I know are concerned about implementing stop and search when they probably should, because they are concerned about the retribution or the criticisms that could come on them. I do think it is something that perhaps there should be a bit more backing in there, in the PCP, and a bit more explanation about why it is important, but also how it should be used. You do not have to come back, that is just a plea, I suppose. Assistant Commissioner, what is the biggest challenge for the MPS in terms of the expectations set out in the draft PCP?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): That is a good question. For us, our priority at the moment is around delivering *A New Met for London [2023-2025]*, which is about community crime fighting, changing our culture and fixing our foundations. The priorities are there to enable us to deliver the mission of more trust, less crime, and higher standards. The points I raised in my previous answer, where there is alignment in the PCP between *A New Met for London* are really, really helpful. Already, through *A New Met for London*, we have delivered over 150 commitments. I do not propose to go through all of those, but it is things like working with communities to deliver new community crime plans, growing the Public Protection Command, launching the V100 to target our most dangerous VAWG offenders, launching the Culture Plan and the [London] Race Action Plan (LRAP) and investing in new training.

The budget is the thing that is going to exercise a lot of our focus in the coming months. If you ask me what the biggest challenge at the moment is, our budgetary position is going to be significantly challenging and we can touch on that later. We have already taken decisions around deferring investment in the new physical home for learning and development, deferring investment in refurbishment of [the MPS Specialist Training Centre in] Gravesend, and there are tough choices to come and we cannot escape those even with the additional money that has been provided by the Home Office and maybe City Hall.

For us at the moment, *A New Met for London* priorities, we remain committed to building the Strongest Ever Neighbourhood Policing. We remain committed to improving our outcomes for victims of rape and serious sexual offences and child abuse and exploitation. We remain committed to changing our culture and continue to deliver more leadership training, improved vetting processes, and deal with misconduct and complaints. We remain committed to fixing our foundations, re-examining how we deal with Command and Control, improved uniform and body armour, and we know that ensuring swift criminal justice outcomes for victims relies on

having a strong case, therefore we remain committed to improving how we present that. Some of the biggest challenges we face at the moment are within the wider criminal justice system and are budgetary.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. You have answered my next question, which is does the MPS have the resources to deliver the PCP? I can read between the lines; you might not want say it.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Well, no, we have to prioritise. One of the challenges that we have is that every unit of demand that the MPS deals with, over the last decade, has become more complicated. Everything that we do takes longer than it once did, and we are yet to see - and we are investing in - but the future of automation, artificial intelligence (AI), is on the horizon that may reset some of that. At the moment, burdens placed on us from elsewhere in the system mean that everything is more complicated and takes longer for officers. We are fixing our foundations. We have just implemented a new computer system just over a year ago now, bringing together four legacy systems. We are in the process of replacing our Command and Control system, the origins of which date back to the early 1980s, pre-the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, which is in significant need of upgrade.

Emma Best AM: Assistant Commissioner, just with a view to time, I will ask again, does the MPS have the resources to deliver the PCP?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): We have the resources to deliver the priorities within the PCP.

Emma Best AM: Do you have the resources to deliver the PCP?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Again, I do not want to dance on the head of a pin on it, in that firstly the budget is not yet finally set for this year and we await the final settlement with MOPAC, and secondly the PCP is still in draft. At the moment, I have outlined the areas that we are going to prioritise: neighbourhoods, outcomes, culture, fixing the foundations, and things like exhibits and criminal justice. Those are our priorities. I am confident that the investments we have made, we can deliver those, but there will be other things that we will have to do less of and that links to the tough choices that we are looking at in terms of budget.

Emma Best AM: OK. Obviously at the moment what we are looking at is 1,300 fewer officers. What is the effect of that?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): The direct effect will be in things like the tough choices we have got to make, we are going to have to reduce, at the moment no decisions have been made, but as the Chairman or Assembly Member Roberts mentioned we have got discussions around whether we can still continue with specific Royal Parks [Police]. We have got areas we are looking at around support services, including horses and dogs. We are looking at some of our serious organised crime work. We are looking at a range of choices that we have got to make to be affordable. The reason they are called tough choices is because they are tough. There is nothing that we are going to reduce that we are going to think we did not need that anyway. These are things where we are going to have to reduce and then find a different way to either address the demand or in reality, in some things, we are going to have to stop doing stuff. That goes back to the point around everything becoming more complex in an environment where things take longer and everything is more complex, reducing budget and reducing headcount means that you have to do less.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. Just finally, Chairman. Kaya, what representations are you making to the Government and Mayor around that funding?

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Briefly please.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you. Absolutely. One of the things that I was really conscious of in the draft of the PCP was to have regular consultations with the MPS so that we could talk openly about the affordability of the PCP. It is something we have been conscious of throughout and obviously, going through the budget process together, we are really aware of the current situation with the MPS and I continue to make representations. At the Engage meeting, one of the key risks that were identified by the Mayor and myself was the continued budget constraints and --

Emma Best AM: Sorry, just with the Government and the Mayor, have you been there making that representation?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. The Home Office was in the room at the Engage meetings. That was an opportunity to raise it there. We will continue to lobby in terms of the [Comprehensive] Spending Review (CSR). Obviously, we are having discussions now about these tough choices internally and a real focus on how to do the very best for London in that.

Emma Best AM: OK, thank you. I suppose those 1,300 extra officers the Mayor promised in his manifesto, we will not be seeing those this year for sure.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That was a manifesto promise that we are all really keen to deliver on. We want to work together with the Home Office to make that happen. Having a quarter of our budget, having the Mayor invest 25 per cent of the MPS's budget is an important and significant --

Emma Best AM: We are not seeing the officers. That is the answer. The Chairman wants to move on.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have been clear that it is a key priority for us. We are trying to make that work, but the CSR is a key part of that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): If it is a key priority, it needs to be funded, and personally far more money needs to go into the MPS. At a time where the streets are far more dangerous, this is when we should be putting more money into the MPS. Now, we have been joined today by politics students from the Thomas Tallis School in Greenwich. Welcome, everybody, it is really good to see you. Today, we have been talking about grooming gangs and now we are talking about the draft PCP. You are very welcome.

Deputy Mayor, you must forgive me. I just recalled that in a previous meeting you asked to be called Madam Deputy Mayor. Assembly Member Georgiou asked you. Do you still want to be referred to as Madam Deputy Mayor or are you quite relaxed at being called Kaya?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Chairman, I always think that I would refer to you as Chairman to give you the honour of the role of your title. I am happy for you to refer to me however you like.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, you specifically asked for Madam Deputy Mayor. That was why I was asking. We are now moving on to Assembly Member Roberts.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you, and good morning to you both. Assistant Commissioner, you mentioned earlier very specifically that the mayoral plan [PCP] is the mayoral plan. Some might say that some are born with mayoral plans, some achieved mayoral plans, and some have mayoral plans thrust upon them. What involvement did the MPS have with the development of the PCP, or has it been imposed upon you?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): No, we have been very involved, and we have been grateful to MOPAC and have welcomed the opportunity to shape the draft PCP and ensure that the *A New Met for London* plan that we are working with, there is synergy between the two. If I gave the impression in any way this has been thrust upon us, that was not my intent. This is something that we have been very much consulted upon and had the opportunity to provide feedback on in advance before it went out to wider consultation in draft.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Excellent. Thank you very much.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Clarke.

Anne Clarke AM: Yes, thank you, Chairman. This has been touched upon, but just for completeness, Assistant Commissioner, what specific actions will the MPS take to ensure the priorities and commitments in the draft PCP are embedded across the MPS, including in frontline policing.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): My answer to that is I need to wait until it becomes the PCP because then our statutory responsibility is to have regard to it. I am really pleased in the work that we have done that there is alignment between the *A New Met for London* plan and the draft PCP, which means that having regard to it should be much easier. Once it is in final format and it is the Mayor's PCP, then of course I will be able to better comment on that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Garbett.

Zoë Garbett AM: Thank you. This Committee is really interested in public order policing. It is something that we have spoken about, but it is completely absent from the PCP. As we develop our responses, I just wanted to give you some time to reflect on the policing of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign protest on 18 January [2025], because I have heard from over 150 people who attended, they report violence from the police against children, pregnant women, and older people. People who have been arrested have told me that they were not given any warnings. They were just on the wrong part of the pavement or they were asking to leave Trafalgar Square, but then they were arrested for not leaving. They felt like the police had misled them, letting them through the lines, and then we have heard the narrative that people were forced through but there is no evidence of that. A kettling tactic was used, which is a containment tactic that is supposed to be a last resort. I do not feel that was proportionate to the threat and I do have questions about Section 12 and 14 [of the Public Order Act 1936]. I just wondered within this discussion about the PCP, what your reflections are on that operation and how it can inform parts of trust and confidence, but also just the fact that public order policing is not mentioned in the plan.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I have been at this Committee before talking about public order policing and the unique challenges that the MPS has faced since October 2022, when we saw the significant rise in environmental based protest and direct action through Just Stop Oil (JSO) and other groups. That then paled into insignificance compared to the challenge we faced following the terrorist attack in Israel in October of 2023, which has led without question to this

being the busiest and the most operationally challenging period of policing public order I have ever known in my service, and I have been policing public order since the late 1990s in every role that there is from Police Constable to Assistant Commissioner. It is a significant challenge.

World events, what happens around the world resonates loudly on the streets of London and representations we made to Government around the National and International Capital City (NICC) grant in terms of ensuring that there is enough money to deal with the additional demands that are placed on the MPS as a result of it being the capital city and having all of the embassies and having the seat of Government and everything else, some of that has been met, but the gap has not been filled in any way. If this is a money question, then in terms of the NICC, we have got more money from the Home Office and we are very grateful for that; it does not fill the demand. We know that every weekend for a long period of time we were seeing hundreds, sometimes thousands, of officers needing to deal with public order issues and, in addition to that, also midweek.

Zoë Garbett AM: Do you feel like you got it right for this one? Do you feel like it was a proportionate response given the fact there was not one from the end of November [2024]? They had been majority peaceful, this scale of arrests, the kettling and people being arrested for just being on the wrong part of the pavement?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not sure I recognise some of the characterisation of that. What I can say is that the Command Team worked extensively with the organisers to try to get to a route and get to a protest that did not impact significantly and cause serious disruption to other parts of the community. The challenge with public order policing, as the Committee will know, is that it is a balance of rights. It is a balance of people's right to protest and exercise their rights under articles 9, 10, and 11 of the Human Rights Act, equally weighed against the balance of rights to go about your normal business and in this case specifically the right to go to worship unhindered and unintimidated.

Zoë Garbett AM: Yes, but the arrests mainly happened in Whitehall and Trafalgar Square. They were nowhere near the BBC, which is the place that they were told that they could not go near. It was more about how the specific operation on that Saturday --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We are really talking about the PCP, Assembly Member Garbett.

Zoë Garbett AM: OK.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I can answer briefly. The arrests were made for breaches of the Public Order Act in conditions that were imposed, and once conditions are imposed, and we can talk about the rights and the wrongs of whether or not they were the right conditions and whether or not those conditions are proportionate and necessary, is something that anyone can challenge by means of judicial review or otherwise. There was no such challenge. If people then breach those conditions, they are breaking the law. I do not know, if there is a suggestion that officers have acted too hastily, have approached people who were given no warning whatsoever, then that clearly will be something we would look at. I do not believe that is the case.

Zoë Garbett AM: OK, I have got some evidence and I am going to write to the Commissioner. Just quickly, I just ask --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): As long as it is to do with the PCP, which is what we are talking about today.

Zoë Garbett AM: It is, yes, do you think that public order policing should be in the PCP and do you think that this specific operation should have an investigation?

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Just answer very, very, very briefly please, because this is out of this remit.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Public order policing is a key area of what the MPS does operationally and therefore this is a strategic plan for the priorities of London across the next five years. We are not going to cover every part of the operations of the police in it. I am conscious that you are going to submit your reflections to the draft PCP and let us take it forward that way.

Zoë Garbett AM: Great. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. The problem is the police are between a rock and a hard place. If Assembly Member Garbett was the rock, I would be the hard place, going completely in the opposite direction. Now we are going on to the next section, which is reducing violence and criminal exploitation and questioning is started by Assembly Member Lord Bailey.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: I am going to start with AC Twist. What progress has the MPS made over the past three years to identify and pursue the most dangerous offenders to prevent reoffending? What has worked well and what needs more work? Of course, we have a significant gang problem in London, a lot of reoffending there, and we have sexual reoffenders as well, which you mentioned earlier. Can you give us a flavour of the specific pieces of work around specific crime types?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you, Lord Bailey. I will. I will start with some statistics on how our performance has changed and then touch on some of the technology that we are using to assist with that. At the moment, as things stand today, personal robbery is down 13 per cent compared to the same period last year. Residential robberies down four per cent. Vehicle crime volumes on a downward trajectory compared to the quarter three of last year. Pleasingly, in 2024, we saw the fewest number of homicides recorded since 2014, which is of course still too many because each one is a tragedy, but the homicide rate is definitely going in the right direction.

The MPS performs very well against England and Wales in our most similar forces group, specifically for violence with injury, we are positioned tenth nationally, which given we are the capital city and all of the challenges we face, that is really impressive. We have also seen a greater rate of increase in our positive outcomes compared to England and Wales and our most similar group for violence with injury. We have gone from 34th highest in the positive outcomes to 22nd out of 43 in the period between April and September 2024. We are 14th nationally out of 43 in England and Wales for rape offences with positive outcomes, at a higher rate than the England and Wales average, and our most similar forces, which again for the capital city and all our complexity is something we should be very proud of.

In terms moving to VAWG, the College [of Policing] and the National Police Chiefs' Council now estimate that there are over 3,000 VAWG offences recorded each day, which is at least one in 12 women victims each year. Over a million VAWG related crimes recorded during 2022/23, accounting for 20 per cent of all of the work that we do. Things that we have done in relation to that are things like our V100, which is a really innovative tactic that has just proven to be enormously successful. This is a data-led approach that identifies those posing the greatest risk to women and girls in London. It is something that we have created. The data in the tool comes from named suspects of crime rather than police intelligence, therefore we eliminate a lot of the issues around in data integrity or disproportionality in that, to get on there, you need to be a named suspect

identified by either the victim or a witness. That is then factored against the Cambridge Crime Harm Index and used to measure the seriousness of harm based on how recently the offences have occurred and how frequently the offender has been named.

To give some idea of the statistics, we think of the V100, as at the end of December [2024], since implementation, we had 93 suspects who were convicted since becoming a V100 nominal and 39 of those were for VAWG offences. We have had 112 charged with a total of 530 offences, 58 of the suspects were charged with VAWG offences, including 31 rapes, 11 grievous bodily harms (GBHs), 19 non-fatal strangulations, and one attempted murder. We have had 133 suspects arrested for a total of 1,162 offences, 87 suspects were arrested for VAWG, 38 of which were rape, 17 for GBH and 13 for non-fatal strangulation. That gives an idea as to how our precise targeting of those offenders who are the most dangerous to women and girls in London is having a really excellent impact. While there is always more to do, it is something that goes back to resources, but where you have finite resources and almost infinite demand, you have to be precise, and this is a really good way that we are doing that.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Thank you. Let me just quickly focus your mind on a different type of crime, street-based crime, violent crime. What are your tactics around that? The boys who mainly suffer from that crime, I am referring to Black boys such as myself, we are not in vogue, we are not the flavour of the month. We are not what people seem to care about, but we are the ones who are most certainly murdered, for instance. What particular tactics are you focusing on there to cut down that type of crime?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, the Commissioner mentioned this in a piece recently. It shames us all, the level of stabbing and homicides among young Black boys in London. That is not something that is OK and it is something that we need to do more about and we need to talk more about openly. There are a number of drivers for this. We have touched on county lines, but also mobile phone offences, we are seeing significant challenges with a number of gangs that are stealing mobile phones in London. It is something that I know the public are worried about.

Last week, we spent some time really focusing on that, looking at wanted offenders, exercising search warrants and targeting premises buying, selling and handling stolen smartphones. Gathering intelligence through the use of International Mobile Equipment Identity checks, checking at second-hand retailers, searching for stolen phones and working in partnership with other agencies, including the National Crime Agency (NCA), City of London [Police], British Transport Police. The results there, preliminary data, we executed 23 search warrants, made 230 arrests for 539 offences, and recovered over 1,000 stolen smartphones. Some really good results in one week of activity, which then leads us to other avenues of investigation, including those groups that are handling these phones and then shipping them on at quite an industrial scale.

You talk about street-based violence. This is one of the things, robbery and knife enabled robbery is something that forms part of the plan. It is something that is in *A New Met for London*. It is something we are focused on, and dealing with mobile phone theft is really very important. The sad thing with it, in terms of mobile phone theft, is that I very much think this is something where designing out the crime would be much more effective.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Yes, I was about to ask about that.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): The students in the room certainly will not remember this, but those of us that are old enough to remember how vehicle manufacturers designed out the ability to steal car radios in the late 1980s and early 1990s by making them integrated. Mobile phone providers could design out this crime by removing the second-hand market for mobile phones by not allowing them to be reactivated on to the network again. Our initial evidence shows,

based on a small snapshot of phones that are stolen, the majority get reactivated often in other countries, and if that was not able to happen, the market will fall out of it.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Yes, it would affect the business model and that is what drives the crime. Let me quickly thank you for those answers, AC Twist. Let me quickly ask the Deputy Mayor two questions. Firstly, there is a feeling among some of our partner organisations that some of the initiatives around VAWG are flavour of the month and lack consistency. Is that a characterisation you would recognise?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, to answer. Sorry, could you clarify what you mean by lack consistency?

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Some of the organisations feel that pieces of work in VAWG are funded because they are the latest thing. They are new, nobody is evaluating them. Nobody has seen if they are effective and if you come up with something that is the new flavour of the month that is far more likely to be funded and supported than something that has been going along for a while and works. Before you answer that, I would point out that one of the ongoing problems for MOPAC has been key performance indicators evaluating work and the two things sometimes feel linked to me.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do not recognise that characterisation at all. I know that MOPAC has commissioned VAWG services significantly and consistently for a long period of time. We just did a review with the sector to hear how we could commission better for the sector and have got some really important data from that, which will be reflected in the upcoming VAWG Strategy. Only this week was I told that the evaluation - I was at a meeting about harmful practices around girls - that the evaluation is fair, robust, important for the work that they do to evidence work to other funders. I really do not recognise that characterisation.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: OK, thank you. Last question. Has MOPAC, has the Mayor been involved in the conversation about designing out the crime around mobile phones?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Absolutely. He has already held a roundtable with phone providers. It is something he is really deeply passionate about. We have been to two Home Office meetings about knife-enabled robbery where the Mayor was very clear that he feels that phone providers have a real role to play in this. I have been approached this week by a phone provider saying they want to do more in this space and that is something that we are actively taking up.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Thank you. Through you, Chairman, we would like to get some more visibility on that because, if we could remove the phone thing, it destroys the business model and that would reduce street crime.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We strongly agree, therefore happy to do that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Absolutely. We can work together on that.

Lord Bailey of Paddington AM: Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Just for clarity on something Lord Bailey said, the quote was from Professor Jyoti Belur [Professor of Policing, Department of Security and Crime Science, University College London], she said some of the things in the area of VAWG have been quite a bit of flavour of the month. That

is her quote. She says, "Today this is important. A lot of resources are put into it and something that seems to be working well, yet tomorrow somebody else comes in and it is not that important anymore". In other words, she was saying that something, as my colleague said, is the flavour of the month, resource and everything is put into it, and then suddenly something else comes along and that resource is removed. Just for clarity, Jyoti Belur, a Professor. Just so you know where it came from. Bearing in mind we are looking at the PCP, in some of the meetings we have had, Madam Deputy Mayor, might be worth you looking at because it is people from lots of different areas giving their views on how the PCP should go. Assembly Member Garbett, did you still want to come in?

Zoë Garbett AM: Just a brief one. The PCP takes a public health approach. That is a theme that runs through the whole Plan. AC, I just wondered what that meant to you and the MPS and what steps are being taken for a public health approach to be taken across policing?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): That is probably not a question for policing. The public health approach is a question for partners. It is a question for groups like the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), and the public health approach in Scotland was based on their VRU, not on the police. Often in cases where you are dealing with serious crime, where you are dealing with knife crime, often involving children, the police are picking up the pieces, it is the system, it is the education, housing, social, employment, all of the other agencies, all of those that are involved in that person's life. If it gets to policing, it is already a little bit too late. In terms of a public health approach, that is not something that the police would lead on. That is something that partners would lead on and we would very much lean in and support in any way that was appropriate.

Zoë Garbett AM: Would you describe Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) as a public health approach?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I would describe RCRP as absolutely critical in terms of ensuring that, for health emergencies, it is the right agency that is taking the lead. We may have discussed this here before, but happy to at a future occasion around how the police have stepped into, at a macro and industrial level, areas where others had stepped back from, which meant that the police were doing less police work and doing more work around dealing with someone's health. It is not sensible and appropriate that the police are first responders to a health emergency. Obviously, in cases where people have been stabbed or seriously injured, of course police will turn up. What we have found was over a period of time, police officers were spending more and more time dealing with mental health emergencies, which meant that they had less and less time to deal with our core responsibilities, which are the prevention and detection of crime.

Zoë Garbett AM: Yes, that is what I am getting to. How can we make sure that we are taking that approach across police activity, things like in schools, drug policing, just thinking about if the police are the right agency to be responding. That is what the RCRP approach and the public health approach takes.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): That is something increasingly we are going to need to look at and we are looking at, where else are officers stepping into areas where they are probably not the right people to be leading, whether that is in schools or in healthcare settings, and where else do we need others to step in to discharge their core responsibilities, so that in a smaller organisation we can focus more precisely on those things that only we can do.

Zoë Garbett AM: Great. That is good to hear.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I would just like to say RCRP was absolutely the right thing to do.

Zoë Garbett AM: Agreed. Totally agree.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I have witnessed so many police officers, their entire shifts being spent in hospitals, waiting for somebody to take over from them. Absolutely applaud that. Madam Deputy Mayor, will MOPAC conduct a public consultation on the refreshed VAWG Strategy, what will this involve and what is the specific timeframe for this?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): On time frames, Chairman, we would like to take the next few months. We have already started the work to really review what we are doing in VAWG. I am hoping that the strategy will be published by the end of summer [2025]. It is really important that we make sure that in all areas of VAWG we are getting the right mix, the right approach, the right frameworks to support this really important sector. We know that VAWG is at epidemic levels globally and it is something that we cannot take our foot off the ground. For me it is a real mix of prevention around investing in perpetrator work, support for victims, supporting the partnership approach that we have with the MPS and the work that they have been doing to tackle this issue straight on, and also making sure that the criminal justice system is improving to support victims.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Absolutely, but we have missed out the main bit I was really asking, it must have been my fault. Are you going to conduct a public consultation on that strategy?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): You definitely are?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Good. Any idea when that will go out?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We want to conclude the work from summer, and I know that we have already started the work with organisations that we commission. It is all in train. The team is focusing right now on the consultation for the PCP and as soon as that is closed and settled, then we will move on to working on the VAWG Strategy.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. Matt, how is the MPS working to build trust and confidence among victims and survivors of VAWG and what has been the impact of this work and what are the next steps? I would like to say there has been an incredible amount of good work going on here. I did not realise it was as much as 20 per cent of the work that you do. I did not realise that.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): The MPS is dedicated to putting victim survivors of rape at the heart of everything we do and to eradicate sexual violence largely caused by predatory men, and to support those who are impacted. We have transformed the way we investigate rape and serious sexual offences, more than doubling our number of rape charges since 2001. There is more to do, and we have gone beyond that already this year as a result of the investment. One of the key things was becoming a pilot site for Operation Soteria, the national project aimed at transforming the way that police respond to and investigate rape and serious sexual offences. During that time, we have helped inform the national operating model, provided recommendations on how other police forces could better deal with these offences, and bring more predatory men to justice and improve outcomes for victims and survivors.

The lessons that we have learned, the things that I would draw out here, are we have specialist rape and serious sexual offences teams which are part of our public protection strand on every BCU. Through the roll out of specialist training and central governance, we are ensuring that all other units that investigate rape and serious sexual offences, including specialist crime, where we do see some offences cropping up, are also included in the implementation of the Operation Soteria approach. We are demonstrating our commitment to public protection, the uplift that we have seen and I have touched on already has been significant and has assisted officers in creating manageable workloads. I have mentioned the V100. I will not touch on that again. Ensuring there is a victim-centred approach with zero tolerance of victim-blaming language, which was something that HMICFRS commented specifically on how we had improved from previous inspection to when we had the mini-inspection just before Christmas [2024]. It was really important and embedding the core [Operation] Soteria principle of procedural justice to ensure victims are treated with fairness and respect.

[There is] ongoing work to work with partners to ensure victims and survivors are supported throughout the whole process and are signposted to specialist services, including Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), and additional MOPAC Surge Funding to improve the timeliness of investigations and traditional outcomes. We have invested an additional £11 million in digital forensics to improve the way we handle digital evidence from devices such as phones and laptops from victims. We continue to work with multi-agency scrutiny panels and others to check that decisions we take where we have got to NFA are right and ensure the focus is on actions with respect to the offenders rather than the victims themselves.

We have transformed our approach in the recent past as a result of the [Operation] Soteria principles and it is good to see that all forces in England and Wales are now committed to implementing the National Operating Model during this year.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Excellent. Can I pick up on a couple of things? Information on phones. When I went to see a team working - granted, it must have been about four or five years ago - they said that one of the problems they had was getting information off the phones. It took weeks and weeks and weeks. What is the timeframe around getting that digital information?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): There are a number of variables to it. We have introduced kiosks, which enable very quick triage of phones, and also technology that enables us to be much more precise. Maybe five or six years ago, we were trying to download the whole thing and --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): That is exactly what you were doing.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): -- that was something that clearly victims felt was overly intrusive and was something that, at the time, maybe that is what we had to do. Now we have got much more precise about narrowing down exactly what might be needed if it formed part of a defence but not doing this as a matter of course; doing it when needed. Phones and technology is one of the points I made earlier in terms of every offence now has a digital footprint, almost. Offences of burglary or robbery as well as much more complex offences like sexual violence have a digital footprint and so this generates a huge demand. We are constantly battling to keep up with the technology, but there are tools that are coming that assist with that. How quickly the digital download takes depends on a range of factors, some of which are operationally sensitive, some of which not, but clearly if we have access to the phone at the start point that makes things a lot easier.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, thank you. I was talking to a Detective recently and he said that the caseloads are horrific. How many caseloads would each Detective approximately have. It is very approximately, I understand.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): It depends. A couple of years ago, we were looking at 30 to 50 for rape investigators and that is now down below 20 on average so we have made significant differences. That is one of the first questions I ask whenever I go into a Public Protection Unit and a RASSO Team, "How big is your caseload?" The number itself is not the only thing to consider. It depends on the status of the --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): The complexity. I get that.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, complexity and also stage of the process because now one of the challenges that we have and one of the things I was going to mention is that in order to improve VAWG performance, this needs to be a whole-system approach. At the moment, looking at the wider criminal justice system, it takes about 45 days from receiving an offence to getting a charge and court backlogs mean that we are currently seeing cases slated for 2028.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I know. I know.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Therefore, if you have a victim that you are trying to keep on side for four years, that is a huge amount of effort and a huge amount of work and also points to some of the reason why we have an attrition rate in this area.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, I understand, and I was going to bring that up. Can you confirm to me that these RASSO officers are not constantly being taken away so that somebody else has to keep picking up?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): That is the vibe I was getting. You are telling me that is not right?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): No, if that was the case, my understanding is that it is not now. Our RASSO officers are specially trained and we have them in the teams. We are not abstracting them for, I do not know, aid in central London or something like that, aside from perhaps officers may end up on supporting crime investigations for our largest events. I am thinking Notting Hill Carnival, but that would be about it.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, thank you very much for that. We are now going over to Assembly Member Moema.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you very much, Chairman, and my first question is to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. How will the PCP tackle the online dimension of hate crime and extremism?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you and that is a really important question. We all know that the online space is something that we should be greatly concerned about, similarly to what we were talking about phone crimes. I do believe social media companies really need to be held to account in this area. The Government is working on the Online Harm Bill at the moment, and the Prime Minister has strongly reinforced the need to get, especially, children and young people safe from the amount

of harm and violence being spread on the internet. We need to do all we can in this space. AC Twist will be able to correct me if I am wrong, but I do not think that there is a type of crime at the moment not enabled by some sort of online issue. It is something that I know we are talking to the national Association of Police and Crime [Commissioners] about and we will be putting in a significant submission to the Online Harm Bill, but it is something we need to be conscious of in every element of the PCP.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Online offending is really, really concerning. There are a number of facets to it, whether it is driving polarisation in society or driving misinformation or whether it is enabling offences that have always happened - whether that is fraud, theft or deception - at a truly industrial scale. In the example specifically around, say, child abuse, the online space enables those who previously would never have been connected with each other to connect with each other more quickly on the dark web and exchange horrific, indecent images and other things. We work significantly in both the overt and covert space to seek to disrupt that.

There is more we can do, but this is not something police can solve on our own because, as Kaya has mentioned and as I touched on earlier, there almost is no criminal footprint now that does not have some sort of online space. Even if you think about an assault in a pub on a Friday night, how could that have an online space? Well, until the evidence has been posted by somebody on social media. Everything we do now is into this sort of area, but there is a huge amount of volume, particularly in fraud and particularly in sexual offences, indecent images and extortion, that is now enabled online that once previously would have been much harder for the suspects to undertake.

Sem Moema AM: OK. Thank you, both, for that. The really horrific incidence of the Southport murders that took place [in July 2024] and the loss of life of three young girls is lost on nobody in this country right now. There is a lot that will come out of a review of what happened or did not happen in relation to police, Prevent and other partners. I wanted to ask you, maybe starting with AC Twist. Under the previous Commissioner, I had questions about the role of - you may not like the word - incel extremism and those boys and men that are self-radicalised by online content. Do you feel that the MPS is equipped to deal with some of that pre-emptive work before a crime is committed? It is good that police are able to show up and address a situation as a crime is being committed, but we are potentially facing, as I say, boys and young men self-radicalising and I think there is a large element of misogyny in that.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes. Thank you and this touches on a number of areas. What we are talking about here is extremist material that falls short of terrorist or falls short of, itself, being a criminal offence. We know that the Government has announced a [Prevent Learning] Review, looking at this following the most awful tragedy in Southport and the most awful offending, which you have mentioned. This also goes back to the globalised nature of some of the online offending and, as I said in my previous answer, people's ability to connect with each other across the world who may either share those views or where we do see others deliberately seeking to radicalise the vulnerable and to target the vulnerable. That is whether it may be in other states or whether that is people who are mentally unwell who are looking to target people in this country. It is a really massive challenge for the whole of society and the international community.

This is not something that the MPS can deal with on its own. On the specific case of Southport, we know just how awful that is. There has been a lot of commentary and the Home Secretary has made statements about it. I am not going to dwell on that here, other than to say that we support as much as we possibly can in any sort of measures or any review that is being undertaken.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you. AC Twist, a former colleague of yours, Neil Basu [QPM], the former head of Counter Terrorism [Policing and former Assistant Commissioner, MPS], suggested an equivalent scheme to tackling those people obsessed with extreme violence, equivalent to Prevent or running alongside it. If anything good can come out of this situation it is that Prevent does prevent those people that do not already have a label attached to them. What are your views on that? You have talked about budgetary constraints and the upcoming Budget, but in principle, is that something that policing as a whole but also the MPS here in London would consider in light of these really awful incidents?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Again, Neil is extremely well placed to have a view on this, having been AC of Specialist Operations for a number of years. This is something that needs to be considered as a national response and also if we are going to go down that path with national funding to underpin it. It is deeply concerning. We have seen how incel motivation led to attacks in the south of England. We have seen how violence has become almost radicalising of itself and people are taking action because they are radicalised to be violent without any traditional terrorist ideology or something that we would recognise and that is deeply concerning. This is a national issue and we will wait to see the outcome of the review. If it is something that we are going to do, we need to be really clear; it needs to come with funding or we need to be doing less of something else. That is important as well, but it is definitely an important issue and it is definitely one we want to help address.

Sem Moema AM: OK and my final question, Chairman. Noting that the PCP in its draft does not mention incels, how will the PCP seek to deal with boys and men radicalised by online materials?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, it is really important and the discussion is timely. I want to put on record my condolences to the families of the little girls murdered in Southport. You are right that what we are seeing is a really important issue, especially if we think about the post-pandemic generation of young people, more isolated, more on their phones than ever, on their devices more than ever. It is really important that we do think about it in the round around young people especially.

The Mayor has done an amazing job in funding the Shared Endeavour Fund that has funded over 100 projects on counter-extremism and counterterrorism. He has also done a hell of a lot of positive work in males' roles in VAWG through the Have a Word campaign and others, and making sure schools have toolkits to tackle these important issues around misogynistic issues. I know it is a priority as well for the MPS on the back of the Casey Review, but we must continue to do that. The work around mentorships, around positive role models and around connection and communities is really, really important in this space. The more positive interventions we have around young men in particular is important. It is right that the work has been prioritised, especially in relation to women and girls in VAWG and the counter-extremism work we are doing.

As you said, I hope that through this horrible tragedy the review work that is happening around Prevent and around counter-extremism holds this issue around incel a bit more in focus and we get legislation, support and, as AC Twist has said, funding to do more around this particular issue of incel and misogyny.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. I know it is very exciting for us to have somebody from the MPS here, but we must keep our questions to the PCP. Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. The former Home Secretary curtailed the use of non-crime hate incidents and we have all seen the dossier leaked yesterday that the Home Secretary is considering revitalising this measure. Deputy Mayor, is this something that you would be interested in integrating into the PCP?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Sorry, can you be specific on what you are suggesting we integrate?

Emma Best AM: I am asking your opinion on non-crime hate incidents. When you look, a lot of those are registered against things that have happened online and I am asking, is that something that you would be looking to put into the PCP? Is it something you are supportive of?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is important that we allow the Government to review and do the work necessary to get this right and I do not think it is right that we speculate on leaks. It is right that the Home Office has the time to conclude all of the evidence and we will take forward the recommendations of that when it is through and legislated for.

Emma Best AM: Do you have a view?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Once that has come through, we need to review that and make sure that the work we have done is in line with that and, if it is not, how we prioritise that going forward.

Emma Best AM: OK. Obviously, if this is something that was integrated into the PCP in the way in which the MPS wants to tackle online dimensions of hate crime, obviously there has been a lot of concern about how it has been used previously. In the dossier that has been leaked from the Home Office, it refers to that concern as an "extreme right-wing narrative". Is that something you recognise or do you see the legitimate concerns people have had?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is really important that we centre the victims of abuse in this and we do all we can to support them. I do not want to leap on leaks and baseless things at the moment. As I said, it is really important that that work goes through in its fullness and that we have a mature conversation about how best to prevent harm, violence and abuse in this space because it is important.

Emma Best AM: That was not the question I asked you. The thing is if the work is going to go forward, it is going to have to include recognising people's very serious concerns with how non-crime hate incidents were recorded previously and the damage that could do to people's reputations. Do you recognise that there are concerns with this or do you dismiss them as extreme far-right narratives?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Assembly Member Best, I do not think that an adult of all good conscience would ever dismiss a concern, especially in this space. However, as someone from a minoritised community, it is really important that I also recognise the microaggressions, the damage, things that you can see as minor things that might not be seen as a criminal act and what we have seen in the misogyny space of how men leer. It is all important. What is really important is that we have that review, take back the evidence, make sure that those concerns are not dismissed either way and get a balanced approach to taking it forward.

Emma Best AM: OK. This refers as well to that "two-tier" policing. This is what was in the dossier; that it has been suggested the non-crime hate incidents relate to "two-tier" policing, but you yourself picked up on it earlier and it is something I have said; that "two-tier" policing is sometimes misleading because what people are angry about is the sentencing. When it comes to something like Tweets, people going to prison for Tweets and people comparing that to the sentences people receive for extreme sexual violence, that is why people are angry. I am really glad that earlier you were talking about the evidence that you sent off that references

sentencing. I really just hope in terms of looking at non-crime hate incidents and in the broad not dismissing people's genuine concerns as extreme far-right is a plea that I would make.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. I think you heard that. The plea I would make is if you are going to start making non-crime hate crimes a thing, you had better make sure you put enough money into the MPS to deal with it because it has to deal with real crime, in my view.

We are now going on to increasing trust and confidence and I am going back to Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: The draft PCP states that it will "Build trust through greater transparency and accountability … Contributing to a fairer, more transparent accountability system". What does "a fairer, more transparent accountability system" look like and how will it increase trust and confidence?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you, Assembly Member Best. Yes, through the work we are doing in partnership with communities and the work that we are doing with the police at every level it is really important that trust and confidence is something that is a live conversation. MOPAC has been doing a lot of work in this area. The crime survey work we do to understand current levels of trust and confidence within the police is nuanced around different characteristic types but also how the police are responding to that. There is the work that the police have been doing out in communities and the pilots we have been doing in places like Hackney to have Community Scrutiny Review Panels. There is the work that we do here in terms of oversight and also the legislation that is coming forward on accountability. As the PCP lays out, it is really important that we at all levels are focused on making sure that trust and confidence is at the forefront of what we are doing.

Emma Best AM: Again, slightly similar to my earlier question, Deputy Mayor, what is different in the approach to trust and confidence in this PCP to the previous iteration?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do not think it is wrong that it is not wildly different because the work that we are seeing is working and the stats hold up to that. We know as well that trust and confidence in the police is stabilising, which is significant given where we were. We know that in some communities before Christmas [2024] with the LGBTQ+ representative committee there is a lot of work further to be done in that area. The [Independent] Victims' Commissioner [for London] is here now and I know that she will be talking about the important work that we are doing to improve victims' trust and confidence in the police and that is reiterated in the PCP as well. What we are doing is working. The approach that we are devising in this specific area, the work we have done on the LRAP and the work we have done on children are significant areas. Given where we were, we can see through the HMICFRS report that those are taking hold and improving and we need to continue on that path.

Emma Best AM: Do you characterise the MPS's work and the previous PCP's work on trust and confidence as a success?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is important that the Plans that we have, the Plans that have been shown to be working and the level of concern we have are why we do this work. That is why it is independently reviewed and it is why we are evidence-led. Those statistics show that there are green shoots of improvement and that is why we want to build on it and continue, but I do not think it is right to have an either way at this stage because there is more work to be done.

Emma Best AM: Sorry, I think it is an either way. Would you characterise the previous PCP's approach to trust and confidence as a success?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It laid very strong foundations that are proving to work. I am conscious that Matt wants to come in on this as well, but we need to recognise, especially given where we were and the levels of harm that certain communities feel, that there is more work to do.

Emma Best AM: You would characterise it as a success because you think it has successfully built strong foundations?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes.

Emma Best AM: Yes, I think people would disagree with you. Assistant Commissioner?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. What I would like to say is there are three elements to this around building trust and confidence in a context where trust and confidence in the entirety of the State and State institutions is eroding. As the Deputy Mayor said, we have stabilised, but it was from a concerning position. I understand the jeopardy that we were in and that is why the Commissioner, when coming into post, made it very clear that we needed to deliver *A New Met for London* to really safeguard the whole concept of policing by consent. Without that and without urgent action, that whole concept was in jeopardy.

For me, there are three things: standards, culture and accountability system, in terms of building trust and confidence. In terms of standards, we have been in the last two and a half years absolutely rigorous in removing those who are corrupt and abusive. We have taken significant forward steps ahead of other national police forces in things like Operation Onyx and Operation Assure and also made it easier for officers, staff and the public to report wrongdoing through things like Crimestoppers' hotline and internal measures. Operation Assure is really important because we all know when people will say, "Well, you must have seen. You must have joined up the dots. You must have known this person should not have been an officer", but with the regulatory system that we have and the regulations it made it very hard. Going through Operation Assure with prioritised vetting reviews for serving officers and staff, where we hold adverse information it means that in 107 cases we have withdrawn people's vetting. While the Operation Assure process was underway, 86 officers exited the MPS either through dismissals, retirement or resignations. Nineteen of them resigned before their gross incompetence hearing, 19 officers and staff have been dismissed through gross incompetence hearings and 82 have had their vetting retained, which is important because it shows some balance.

We all have seen the catastrophic cases where we are often accused of failing to join the dots regarding an officer's conduct, the signs, the signals and the reports that ended up being NFA'd but taken together we really worried. For me, Operation Assure is what joining the dots looks like. It is worth this Committee knowing though that at the moment we are in a process of being judicially reviewed on this. If we lose the Judicial Review, we could be in the most horrific situation where we, as the MPS, are being forced to employ people who we do not think are suitable to serve in the office and that is deeply concerning.

The final point I will make is on culture. You do not fix culture in the short term in a matter of days or weeks; this is something that takes years. However, we have made some strong steps in terms of being a reforming MPS, creating a culture that tackles discrimination, is open and diverse and upholds the standards and values we would all expect. To give you a sense of it, we have invested in staff development through two and a half dedicated days of training for 32,000 colleagues on *A New Met for London*, much of which focuses on culture, diversity and inclusion and our values. We have invested in more trauma support training and peer-based training, which is both peer-based and professional, because policing is a tough job. If you see and deal with

some of the stuff that people deal with on a day-to-day basis, you can get desensitised and that can impact culture. Also, our values and guiding principles are being embedded across our promotion and lateral development selection procedures and it is also just in how we approach things, things like big events and how we resource stuff. The principles are driving that.

We are making a difference. Again, I would never say that "We are perfect. We are there. It is done", but in the last two and a half years we have taken some steps towards --

Emma Best AM: Assistant Commissioner, I am really sorry. A lot of what you were saying in that answer was correct. However, the simplest reason why trust and confidence has fallen in the police is because people think, "If I get robbed, nobody is going to turn up. If someone burgles me, no one is going to turn up. If someone breaks into my car, no one is going to turn up. If I get mugged, nobody is going to come and help me. If my shop gets robbed, no one is going to come and arrest who that was. If I suffer an even worse, horrific, sexual crime, I am not going to get the support and nobody is going to get arrested". The sanction detection rate is terrible. I regret that we do not have time, but that is, I think, the predominant reason why the public in London do not trust the police.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Do I have time to [reply]?

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Briefly.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Our performance in volume crime needs to be better. I have made the case already that in terms of serious sexual offending and others we are doing significantly better. We know that people are concerned. We now attend over 93 per cent of burglaries, our intention is to attend 100 per cent and in terms of our response we are getting better at dealing with robberies. We do have the Strongest Ever Neighbourhood Policing offer, but that is in the early stages and we will not see the success of that yet. The designs that we are doing from April [2025] will really focus on how we can do better and how we can focus on the solvable crime because that is really important and we should really try to focus on solving the solvable crime. There are lots of examples where we have not done that, and we need to be better at that and that is absolutely what I intend to do.

Emma Best AM: Could I suggest maybe in future that is what we should focus on in the first answer because solving crime - being there when people need them - is the predominant reason people would have trust and confidence in the police.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Happy to. I was addressing some of the issues that had come out of [Baroness] Casey [Review] and various HMICFRS reports, but I agree core performance is the thing that will give people trust that we can do our core job.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, and we must have trust and confidence in our police. Colleagues, we are running behind, and guests, so if we can keep things a lot sharper. Assembly Member Moema.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman. To both of you, what specific steps will MOPAC and the MPS take to work jointly with communities to co-design and build a new model for police scrutiny? You have touched on the pilot in Hackney, which is welcome, but others as well, and just really to touch on what it means in practice and when these plans will be in place.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you. Yes, I know that in November 2020, MOPAC commissioned an overhaul of the existing community scrutiny mechanisms to make it more representative of communities and make it more transparent. We have worked in depth with particular communities, so Black Londoners, to provide recommendations on taking issues forward in regard to their concerns. Over 1,400 Londoners participated in that, so it is an illustration of taking that work forward, but we need to continue to do that.

You mentioned the Hackney community pilot, but there is also work we are commissioning to have better online tools for people to support that on the back of the Online Watch Link (OWL) app that was previously out in communities. We are now devising a better system to improve that community and then obviously through the Neighbourhood Policing Plans, making sure that there are regular ways for communities to know who their local police are - that has been a consistent challenge - but also be clear on that local accountability. It is definitely something that we are looking for the evaluation through the Hackney pilot and looking at ways that we can expand on that community transparency.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I agree with that. I mean clearly the Government has been very clear in the importance of local officers and neighbourhood policing, which is the sort of bedrock of how we will do this. At the moment, community scrutiny is a slightly mixed approach across different parts of London. Some of it is done through Safer Neighbourhood Boards, some of it is done through Police Encounter Panels and some through Community Monitoring Groups. We are looking at ways in which we can bring that together into a more consistent form of scrutiny, but we are doing more of this now than we previously have done, is where I think I would finish on that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Garbett.

Zoë Garbett AM: Thanks. At our last Committee, we heard that there are no opportunities for deaf and disabled Londoners to input into the London Policing Board (LPB) or the Disproportionality Board. We were talking quite a lot about intersectionality, so we had someone from Inclusion London speaking. Just to the Deputy Mayor, I wondered how MOPAC was thinking of addressing that concern?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you. Absolutely. I visited the Victims' Forum last week and there was a representative from the disability community there, so it is a really important - obviously - part of our work in London. Also, one of the first groups that we consulted through the PCP were disabled and deaf Londoners, so it is definitely a priority and a priority that I know, working with Deputy Mayor [Dr Debbie] Weekes-Bernard [Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice], we continue to focus on through Disproportionality Board and other spaces. However, we know that 73 per cent of victims that lack confidence in reporting crime are from the disabled community and we need to make sure we are doing better for them and with them. It will continue to be a real priority for us, and we need to find ways to more actively engage with them.

Zoë Garbett AM: Great, do you think that could be through the LPB or the Disproportionality Board in some way to have a stronger link with disabled Londoners?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, in short.

Zoë Garbett AM: Great.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I think that we can think about how we take that forward in our future plan, like the work we have done on the LRAP is important, but we need to make sure that we are getting that right for all communities. The Casey Review did not talk about just one area of concern. It talked about misogyny, disability, hate crimes, LGBTQ+ communities, so we need to make sure we are getting it right in the round for all Londoners.

Zoë Garbett AM: Great. I know we are short on time so I will go back to you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you very much, and you mentioned the OWL system. I do hope the replacement for that comes quickly because there are so many very, very disappointed Londoners out there that were volunteering and are very, very cross.

We are now going to talk about neighbourhood policing, Assembly Member Roberts.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you, Chairman. The question is for the Assistant Commissioner. In what ways is the Mayor working with the MPS to build partnerships and make neighbourhoods safer, including efforts to reduce neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. Well, if I start, our new Neighbourhood Model has been bolstered by an additional 500 staff. We now have a Superintendent on every borough, additional officers and Police Community Support Officer (PCSOs) working closer than ever with communities to understand their concerns. We have instigated bespoke community crimefighting plans for each area. We have audited BCUs and 93 per cent of them now have active problem-solving plans supported by local crime fighting priorities. We have successfully piloted volume crime teams across two BCUs to roll those out and taking a multi-agency approach to fighting crime in communities through Clear, Hold, Build has been enormously important.

The Clear, Hold, Build results I can touch more on if there is time, but we have achieved 645 disruptions, seized £112,000 of cash, 157 instances of class A drugs being seized and 13 firearms. Also, audits are showing we are better at recording anti-social behaviour. Audit panels are taking place bi-monthly and the latest indicated that 87 per cent audited over the last 12 months had correctly recorded personal anti-social behaviour, which is a significant improvement from where we were. However, I think Clear, Hold, Build is the biggest thing that we are doing and potentially the most significant difference that we can make.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you. The Chairman, touched on this earlier with the Royal Parks police but do you think that a reduction in Dog [Support] Units, Mounted Branch, Forensics, Flying Squads, armed response and the Royal Parks police will make the job of community policing easier or harder?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I have been very clear. We are calling these tough choices because they are tough. These are things we would prefer not to do but we have to live within our means and so are having to make these tough choices. Which ones we have to implement will be determined in the final budget settlement, which we will not know until, I think, the start of March [2025]. Of course, this is going to make it harder when our ambition would be to grow in order to meet the demand, not to reduce, but that is the budgetary position we are faced with.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. The Royal Parks, in particular, take up 5,000 acres of the capital, 3,600 [acres] for Bushey and Richmond alone. Are you concerned that there is potential for an increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in these neighbourhoods if the Royal Parks [police] are removed?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Again, the decision is yet to be made and, as the Chairman mentioned, I have a meeting with the Chair of the Royal Parks later this week. It is one of the tough choices we are considering and if we do have to remove those posts then the local neighbourhood teams will need to step more into the space of policing that geography. The Royal Parks do sit within ward boundaries. They do sit within geography of London where we have neighbourhood provision. Of course, these choices are tough and when weighed against other things we might have to reduce, it could be that it is felt that Royal Parks, for example, is something that we can no longer afford.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, the one concern I have is that whilst it is quite easy for neighbourhood police, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, to recognise an individual road, an individual avenue or an individual cul-de-sac within their patch, the topography of the Royal Parks is quite distinct and relies on specialist knowledge of the geography, would you agree with that?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): One of the distinctions is also the number of events that goes on in different parts of the Royal Parks. It is something that we would have to consider and if we do need to make this tough choice, we will need to look at how we can best mitigate those risks.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you. That is very clear. Question for the Deputy Mayor: top of the shop of the Mayor's policing manifesto was delivery of a further 1,300 neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs during the PCP; will they be delivered?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I previously mentioned, it is definitely a priority for us because we are so passionate about making sure that neighbourhood policing, community policing and visible policing is something we want to do and so working through the Budget with the MPS and the Home Office, we have made that clear. The numbers of police officers, as I have discussed previously in this Committee, is something we are conscious of. I know we were talking passionately about the flexibility in funding and civilianisation so that we can move more officers into the frontline. I think we are all clear that we want more officers in neighbourhoods, and we are working as hard as we can to get there. I know that the Mayor has invested personally out of the Budget to make sure that PCSOs and officers are prioritised in that and we continue to work through the CSR to make sure that - hopefully - we can get to a positive place on numbers.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): You will forgive me if I note that you did not answer the question. The manifesto commitment was very clear that there will be 1,300 additional officers both at officer level, PCSO and Special Constable. Now, I am confident that they are a priority, and I do not deny that that is a firmly held belief. My question was: will they be delivered during this PCP? When it ends in five years' time, will we see an extra 1,300 officers on the streets?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I mean my answer is that that is the ambition of the manifesto. That is something that we are all charged to deliver, and we are working through how we can.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): It was not an ambition; it was a manifesto commitment, "We will have a further 1,300 officers." Now, I am fine if a manifesto wants to say it is an ambition to deliver, it is a priority to deliver or it is a hope that we will deliver. That was not the case, "We will deliver." It is there in black and white. It is there in white on orange, but will they be delivered?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The commitments are there. As I said, we are really working through how we are going to deliver on that. We are working through the delivery. That is why the prioritisation is there in terms of neighbourhood policing. That is why we are talking to the Home Office repeatedly about the importance of those numbers. It is something that is also in the national manifesto and relates to the missions that the Government has so we are making sure that we are making that case to them.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. Thank you. Police stations play an important role in neighbourhood policing. I understand that the MPS has drawn its conclusions regarding the Estates Strategy. Have you seen the Estates Strategy and will we get a chance to see it at any time soon?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I think this is something that we discussed at the budgetary meeting. The MPS has submitted its Estates Strategy and the issue we are having is that currently it is a rightly ambitious plan. The Commissioner talked passionately about fixing the foundations and that being aligned with the Estates Strategy. However, currently in fiscal terms we cannot accept the strategy because it is unaffordable, so what we are working through currently -- and I know that Members of the Assembly are frustrated on this issue because it has been going on for so long and there have been different iterations on different Commissioners. I recognise that, but I also think that it is important that in good conscience with public money, we cannot take something that is unaffordable. We need to work through the interim ambitions and what needs to be done in line with the workforce and we have been doing that through the LPB and the Culture Board.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. If I may, the [Estates] Strategy is there. I accept that you cannot accept the Strategy because it is unaffordable in your view at the moment. However, we are the elected representatives of Londoners here on this Committee. Even if it is unaffordable, can we see the draft now? Even if you are not going to accept it and even if it is in confidence, will you allow us sight of the current draft?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I think that would be a question for the Commissioner.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): It is a question for you, Deputy Mayor.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I cannot --

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Would you recommend that we are allowed to see the draft?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Well, not really because it is not accepted, so we are not going to take it forward. I mean I think in terms of transparency we need to make sure that public money is safeguarded, and it is affordable and --

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): That is why we are here, to ensure that and so that we can scrutinise it properly, and we would like to see it. Do you agree that we should see it?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I cannot agree to that in its current iteration.

Gareth Roberts AM (Deputy Chairman): Still a draft. OK. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): The reason this is being asked is we have been asking on this Committee for years and years and years about this and really, Madam Deputy Mayor, please can you answer these questions - the actual questions, not go all around the houses - because we are running out of time and we are all very, very disappointed that yet again, we are not seeing this Strategy. It is really not good enough. Now, we are running short of time. Last question on this section from Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: Thank you, Chairman, and just quickly both, I had to go back and check after you kept saying that the trust and confidence was stabilising to see that it is still falling in five out of the six metrics in the last 12 months, but the final question from me is: do you think the draft PCP goes far enough to address online and tech-enabled crime?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As previously discussed, I think that this is an area that we need national legislation on. That is why the Online Safety Act [2023] is coming forward. It is something that, as previously said, is a space that is characteristic in all crime areas. We have discussed it in counter-extremism terms today, but it is something we are prevalent on. It is something that I am conscious of, and we need to work forward on, but we cannot prioritise everything in the PCP so I want us to also recognise that national legislation will enable some of this as well.

Emma Best AM: It sounds to me slightly a recognition that it does not take pride of place in the PCP but something that you think should be prioritised through national legislation. Was that the answer?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): National legislation is coming forward in this area and I think that is important and significant, but what I was saying in all areas of the priorities that there is an online element and therefore it will be something that we need to look at in every area.

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I have touched on it already; I will not repeat. This is a national challenge. This is driving crime at an industrial scale; it is driving polarisation of society, and it is a real concern for us. This is something that needs to be addressed nationally. It cannot be done through one PCP or 43 plans and 43 forces. This needs to be worked across all of the agencies, NCA and partners, to see how we can address on these threats.

Emma Best AM: Yes, Assistant Commissioner, I think you touched on it earlier. You said something about hoping to have more support from AI in doing your work. I could not help but think at that moment that for the help that AI will support you with, that creates the new base of crime that you have to fight. Obviously, we have seen - especially with deepfakes, the Mayor himself was a target of that - a really polarising use of that technology. There has been a really good documentary recently from Vicky Pattison [television personality] on Channel 4 talking about that in relation to sex crimes. Will you be feeding all this back into national Government? Kaya, is that more a job for you? Are you having those conversations about the need to accelerate legislation in this area?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The short answer is yes. Andrea Simons [Executive Director, End VAWG Coalition Limited and Co-Chair of the Mayor's VAWG Board] who sits on the LPB was in that documentary as an expert in that area. She is really helping and supporting us, through the VAWG work as well, to make sure that we are illustrating and evidencing the work that we need to do with the Home Office to get this national legislation right.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. Thank you. We are now moving on to improving the criminal justice system and supporting victims. I am very, very pleased to welcome to the meeting Claire Waxman [OBE], who is, of

course, our Victims' Commissioner for London. Welcome, and thank you for coming. Assembly Member Ahmad is starting these questions.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you very much. Assistant Commissioner, you spoke earlier about Operation Soteria, or Bluestone Soteria as it used to be known, and I have said before and I will say again, this is an example of exemplary work by the MPS. It is something that we really should be singing from the rooftops. It is wonderful that nationally this has now been taken up. Could I ask you, how could the successes of Operation Soteria in providing a more victim-focused approach be applied to improve victim experience in other areas?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I will touch on a few things that we are doing, but I am sure Claire will have her views as the Victims' Commissioner. We have just put in a new lead responsible officer for victims. Our new My Met Service is helping equip officers with the bespoke power app that enables them to give digital versions of the Victim Information Leaflet, which is a mandatory requirement in the Victims' Code, and also links to a survey so they can provide feedback so that we can get more real-time feedback from all victims as opposed to just a subset of victims that go through us on telephone reporting. Victims Forums: this year the Victim Care Improvement Team will be engaging with a further five Victims' Forums to ensure we hear from groups of people we do not hear from as frequently, for example victims from Black communities, young people and VAWG, LGBTQ+.

We are investing in new training for our workforce to help foster better culture in how we engage with the public. Eleven thousand officers and staff have completed this training as of December 2024. Enhanced training for all officers to new training packages are currently in development which cover trauma-informed practice and the Victims' Code, which will launch in late February 2025. Answering emergency calls, I mentioned at the start around Engage, how we have got better at that, which is a good thing. Finally, I will mention the Victim Focus Desk, where we have a dedicated number that victims can call for updates around crime, arrests or referrals and by late last year, we were handling about 30,000 calls a month, which is something that we did not have 18 months ago.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. Assembly Member Clarke.

Anne Clarke AM: Thank you, Chairman, and welcome to the meeting, Claire. It is great to have you here. My question is for you: do you think the MPS is on the right track to improve the service it provides to victims?

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): Thank you. As we have just heard, there is a huge amount of work underway with the MPS and we have really seen some great progress, I would say, over the last 18 months. Obviously, you are all aware I have been in the role since 2017, and I do not think I have seen this level of commitment previously, so I really do welcome that we are now finally focused on how to improve the service to victims.

As we have heard, we have the Victim Focus Desk. There has been investment put into that to ensure that we have the right number of people on those Desks. They do need to undergo training, so once that training has taken place and embedded then I hope to see a consistent response to victims, which we are not quite there yet. When victims report a crime, the frustrations that we hear repeatedly are they are not getting regular updates and information on what is happening with their case. We know that officers have different shifts and can go on nightshifts so that Victim Focus Desk should be providing that consistent level of support and response to victims. It is great to have the [Victim Focus] Desks but, yes, they need to be trained to ensure that they are providing that right level of service, so we are definitely in the right direction.

We have had the Victim Information Leaflet around for quite a few years. We know when that gets into the hands of victims, we see an increase in victim satisfaction. The issue that we are very aware of that we struggle with is ensuring that all victims get that information and that is something that the MPS is still working really hard to tackle. We had the Victims and Prisoners Act [2024] that has come in and obviously the big commencement there is a duty now on the MPS and other statutory partners to promote victims' rights to victims, so that leaflet is absolutely paramount.

You have heard about the Victim Voice Forums, which I am really pleased have been expanded. This is absolutely fundamental because if the MPS want to improve its service to victims it really needs to be listening to victims, extracting from their experiences and understanding how to improve the service. It is really positive that we have had one Victim Voice Forum and that it is being expanded to capture from Black victims, disabled victims etc to really understand their unique experiences when they are trying to report to the police. In answer to your question, there is a lot more focus and commitment and a lot of work underway, but we still have some way to go.

Anne Clarke AM: Yes, thank you for that. I mean one thing that I think all in this room probably struggle with is we will have constituents saying to us, "There is no point in reporting" or "I do not want to report", or there is hesitation that somehow the report that somebody would make is a waste of police time and it is that hesitancy. I am always encouraging people to report because it is very important, and it is important for police statistics, but it is also important to get their issue resolved and justice enacted. Given that and our hesitancy - I think it is not just a London issue, it is a national issue around this hesitancy of reporting and a culture of under-reporting - what would your suggestion be?

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): It is a really difficult one because we still have a situation of quite low trust and confidence. It is not just in the MPS. You are absolutely right; it is a national issue and not just in policing but our wider criminal justice system. In order to instil that confidence and get victims to really come forward and report, yes, we have to really focus on the work that we are doing with the MPS to improve its response and improve its service but there is something about communicating the good news stories.

I talk to the MPS a lot about this because it is not - sorry - very good at communicating the good stories and I see the good stories as well. I think we need to be amplifying that much more because that will then help with public confidence and victim confidence to see the MPS is doing a good job. I mean you talked about Operation Soteria. That is a huge success story. We cannot underestimate the amount of work -- and I do not say it that often, but I am incredibly proud of the MPS and the work that we have led on in London - and we led on this and then it has been done nationally - to really change that trajectory of what I saw when I came into this role in 2017. It is thanks to the London Rape Reviews and MOPAC supporting and doing that research that we now have a much better way of investigating and prosecuting rape, and that suspect-focused approach.

The question that you raise is a good one. It is about taking the fundamentals of Operation Soteria and now ensuring it is embedded across the MPS in relation to other VAWG offences so that it is very much suspect-focused. We are not looking at victim credibility, we are looking at the suspect and we are making sure that the investigation is properly moving forward. So, there is something in that about getting some of these positive stories -- and there are many because the Commissioner will share with the Mayor on a weekly basis and I see that and I think, "Gosh, some of the great work that is happening is just not getting out into the public domain".

Anne Clarke AM: Yes, I absolutely agree. I mean the Operation described an incredible police profile. As you are very familiar with, we had Clear, Hold, Build on the Grahame Park Estate which has been transformative and indeed Operation Terminus along the A5 which has touched the lives of people across Kilburn, Cricklewood and up into Burnt Oak as well. It is those stories, and it is only possible because people have been engaging and reporting, and collaborative work between councils and the MPS, and it has just been incredible. It is getting those stories out that I think is really important. What specific actions will you take to increase victim confidence and satisfaction in the wider criminal justice system?

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): It is incredibly difficult at the moment. We are constantly trying to do that work but we have to realise that the reality is that the criminal justice system, which is obviously wider than policing, has been chronically underfunded for many years and mismanaged. The reality of that is victims are waiting even longer from reporting to getting into court and that does not help with victim confidence in the system.

My office and I are supporting the Government in the reform work that it is doing, obviously looking at the sentencing reform, looking at the court reform as well. All this work needs to take place quite urgently and they need to be really bold reforms if we hope to address that ever-increasing backlog. We can focus on the MPS and we can focus on policing and really try to improve the response to victims, as we are doing in rape, double that charge rate. That is great, but the issue I have is that I have more victims coming into a system that is absolutely log-jammed, and they cannot get into court. That just impacts victim trust and confidence and causes a lot of issues around them wanting to withdraw from the process. It is very challenging, but we are trying to support central Government a lot on that work that needs to take place to tackle those issues.

Anne Clarke AM: Yes, that is really helpful. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you, and getting good news out, Assistant Commissioner, is why it is so helpful that you are here or that somebody from the MPS can come and tell us all the good things that are being done because if you do not tell us, we do not necessarily know. Thank you. Did you want to very briefly add anything to that or not?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Three very quick points. The communication, I think, we are trying harder on social media and elsewhere on good news, but candidly mainstream media does not report good news as often as it reports bad. So, anything this Committee, other politicians or other leaders can do to amplify those messages would be really welcome. In terms of the victims' piece, there are two key things that we are going to be doing from April. Volume crime teams with more manageable workloads will mean that we will be able to better focus our investigative assault resource on solvable crime which means that the officers will be able to update the victims because they will not be completely snowed under with 50 or 60 crimes, and the Crime Management Unit providing quality assurance and quicker updates. Also, in cases where it is not solvable, just being honest about that and closing a crime so we do not keep on updating the victim in something where we know it cannot be solved, and we keep updating them for weeks on end and then saying it is closed down. So, two really tangible things that I think will assist in our shared endeavour to improve victim service.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Lovely. Thank you. Finally, we are going over to Assembly Member Cooper.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you. I was just listening to what the Victims' Commissioner was saying about the wider criminal justice system. Some years ago, I did jury service at the Old Bailey. It all worked perfectly. It was smooth. I participated in two cases, outcomes, all the rest of it. I did jury service just before Christmas [2024], not at the Old Bailey at another Crown Court in London; completely broken. You could not even get in and out

of the building, and this is the jurors let alone members of the public - I think the barristers probably had a bit of a fast track - because they did not have electronic scanners. There were hand searches. It took you hours to get in and out. It was absolutely disgraceful and then completely broken after that, totally a mess. So, for victims of crime who are going through that experience, appalling.

That is not what I wanted to ask you about. I wanted to ask you about the Victim Care Hub, which is part of the current PCP 2022-2025, that is just coming to an end. That was a commitment in that Plan. What progress have we made towards that Victim Care Hub?

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): Thank you. As you are aware, the Mayor and the previous Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] were very supportive of this longstanding vision that I have had around an independent Victim Care Hub. They undertook a comprehensive business case and so they assessed the options for delivering this Victim Care Hub. They recognised the positive changes it would bring but it did highlight some complexities in trying to deliver it. There is a need for investment into something like this and possibly some changes to the Victims' Code or primary legislation through a victim legislation as well because a lot of the responsibilities around the Victims' Code informing victims sits with the police so there will be some difficulties in the police trying to discharge their duties and give that to a different body or entity to deliver that.

We have made some headway and what MOPAC is now doing is working really closely with the MPS and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) looking at how they embed some of these sorts of principles of the Victim Care Hub into their ways of working. What I would say is that is great. I still believe in this Victim Care Hub, but it goes beyond policing, so it is one that I am taking to Government when we are looking at the court reform work.

I think we need to be looking at what investment is being put into the criminal justice system for victims, not just in policing and in our Victim Care Units, but CPS. It now has Victim Liaison Officers and spend £X amount of million a year. [The] Probation [Service] has its Victim Liaison Officers. Everyone works in silo, and this is the issue for victims. We want that single point of contact because that victim travels that entire journey, not just with the police but all the way through. I think there is a call on Government here really to look at how much we are investing in victim support through the criminal justice system, and can we take that - what we have already got that we are investing - and put it into something that is more effective? That is what I would like to look at.

Léonie Cooper AM: I am picking up that there is an issue here for the Government to be looking at, from what you are saying, but also talking about the liaison issue between yourself and anybody who is supporting victims and the overall police. I wondered if both yourself and Matt Twist could comment on how you are working together to stop victim attrition rates of people just saying, "I have had enough of this. I am not prepared to go to court"? What areas do you think need to be prioritised over the next four years as we look at the new PCP coming in? What do we need to focus on?

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): I do not know if you are aware, I commissioned a piece of research around victim attrition and that came out of the previous London Rape Reviews and there was a piece of work done around domestic abuse that showed really high attrition rates. I really wanted to understand. I have an idea working with victims what is driving that attrition, but I thought it was really important to do that piece of research. MOPAC has been doing that research, and we hope we will publish in the next few months so what I will say to you is when that is published, I will be making quite strong recommendations for the MPS, but other partners as well, about how we tackle the victim attrition, so that is a big focus of work.

Léonie Cooper AM: The research should show us in more detail --

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): It will show us much more detail --

Léonie Cooper AM: Because we allude to the length of time or the brokenness of the journey and all of those things, but this is going to drill down.

Claire Waxman OBE (Independent Victims' Commissioner for London): Yes, very much so. MOPAC is doing its research. Alongside that, we are meeting with victims and doing victim focus groups as well so that will be a comprehensive piece of research like we have done previously. I think it will be an excellent piece of work, and all the partners are waiting for it, but I think that is going to give us great insight into why and when victims are withdrawing and what we need to do to reduce that withdrawal.

Léonie Cooper AM: OK. Thanks. That is very helpful. Do you want to come in on that, Matt, or do you want to wait until we get that piece of research, or do you have any thoughts about what causes this issue?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I think the piece of research is going to be really important because who am I to say what it is? I mean our instinct is timeliness and confidence in outcome and the adversarial nature of the thing are key factors. If you are dealing with a 16-year-old victim of robbery, the suspect may not get to court until that young person is 20 or 21 years old, four or five years on potentially now. Certainly, we have got court schedules listing in 2028, so I think timeliness for me is critical.

Also, for me, confidence in what might happen, and I give an example I wanted to mention. We have discussed phone theft and robbery already linking to confidence in terms of doing the basics. Well, our Westminster Proactive Team did a really good job. They arrested a suspect who was 16 years old for robbery in Westminster stealing a phone. The suspect had four stolen phones wrapped in tin foil on them already, as well as the one we got them for, and a substantial history of violent crimes, theft and robberies. The week before that incident – only six days before – that same suspect had been sentenced at court for 20 robberies, thefts, actual bodily harms and handling stolen goods and had been given a 12-month supervision order. With 43 impending prosecutions, we kept the person in custody and asked the court to remand. They did not remand, so there is something around confidence in that you have got a one-person crimewave here that there is only so much the police can do.

As Claire has rightly said, in terms of we are in the very front-end of it, we can put the people into the system but if the system – because of shortages of placements for young people or shortages of remand cells or shortages of other things or capacity – is not able to deal with what we put in the top of the hopper, then it becomes incredibly challenging and I can see why victims might lose confidence in that.

Léonie Cooper AM: Thank you. That is very helpful and just on a personal note, one of the things which I think I mentioned last time I saw you here, Claire, having undergone stalking myself, the one thing that I found incredibly difficult is I live in one place and reported it to my local police force. The stalker lived somewhere else. I had to go through exactly the same discussion and then the events that were referred to by the stalker had taken place in another police force. Having to repeat the story is quite re-traumatising and I think a victim-centred approach should try to avoid that wherever possible because that is the kind of thing that I personally think leads to attrition of cases. Thank you, Chairman.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you, and how frustrating for police officers to do the job really, really well only to find that they are back on the streets again. Incredibly frustrating. Really exciting to wait for that report of yours and I am sure we will all be interested to read it. Thank you so much for coming to the meeting.

We are onto our very last section which we will speed through, colleagues, delivery and performance. Assembly Member Ahmad is taking the lead on this.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chairman. Deputy Mayor, we heard previously suggestions that the draft PCP lacks details. Now, I have gone through it and I have found details about funding for youth workers and mentors through the VRU for youth violent crime; young people caught with knives receiving a mandatory plan to prevent reoffending; with drugs, tough enforcement action against individuals and street gangs through Operation Yamata - forgive me if I cannot pronounce that correctly - and safeguarding, setting up an appropriate adult service for vulnerable adults in London. I could go on and, of course, the Assistant Commissioner talked about the work that has been done in terms of mobile phone thefts designing out thefts, basically, working with manufacturers. I wonder, could you give us any more detail around how the PCP will be achieved and how MOPAC is going to address any concerns about lack of detail?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): First of all, Assembly Member Ahmad, thank you for recognising the detail because it was really important for me that we showed the priorities, but also how we were going to go about reaching our aims. However, I think it is also really important to recognise that it is still in draft. The feedback that we are hearing from Londoners rightly should shape what we are doing. When that is concluded, we want to make sure that through that theory of change that we are coming up with a dashboard that looks at -- I am very passionate about taking an outcomes approach so what we should be able to expect in terms of outcomes and having a dashboard, as well as our internal oversight and through the oversight bodies like yourself and others, that those are regularly checked in on.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Deputy Mayor.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Just to come back on that, just to clarify, some of these questions come from what we have heard already and at a meeting on 15 January [2025], the Committee heard that the draft PCP was missing information on how its aims were going to be achieved. For example, Nahar Choudhury, Chief Executive Officer of Solace Women's Aid, said that it was very difficult to comment on this plan because of its lack of detail. In addition, Professor Jyoti Belur [Professor of Policing, Department of Security and Crime Science, University College London] said that you talk about public health approaches, but what does that involve? So, these questions are coming from points that were brought forward from our guests, so that you know that they have not been just thought up. Madam Deputy Mayor, how will MOPAC ensure robust evaluation of the commitments in the PCP?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If I may, Chair, I think it is also important to recognise that this is an overarching Plan and that it is important that every area, like the comments made by the representative from Solace, are really important because that needs to feed into the VAWG Strategy and illustrate that through the detail underneath. You know that MOPAC's Evidence and Insight Team conducts evaluations on all the site's services that come under the Plan, and we make sure that that evidence is published, transparent and contributes to our future policy making. This is most evident of the work extensively done, as an example through the VRU, and the evaluation and the funded interventions we have taken forward through that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Well, no doubt we will be scrutinising more as we go along on that, as you would expect. When will MOPAC start its trial approach to - and I am quoting - "using big data modelling to produce annual forecasts of crime in London" and what does this involve?

Kaya Comer-Schwartz (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I know this is something that the Data and Insight Team is really passionate about taking forward. Big data modelling involves using all the data available to us including things like historic crime figures, social economic factors and population trends to identify the patterns and forecasts of crime for future years. I think AC Twist will recognise the importance of being able to do that in terms of forward and strategic planning.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Do you want to comment on that, Matt?

Matt Twist KPM (Assistant Commissioner, Frontline Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, very much so. I mean we can already track data back over the last seven or eight years. Looking at seasonality and month by month can predict where different offences will peak but using bigger amounts of data and larger computing power, we will be able to get much more precise around that. I think that is the key in terms of taking all of the factors, not just reported crime, and amalgamating that into something that can be more useful for us in terms of tasking and deployment.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, very important. OK. Fine. Thank you. We have come to the end now and I know I keep labouring this, but it is so good to be able to ask the MPS what is going on and to get answers from somebody who does have the detail. If not, we cannot do our job properly; to scrutinise, we have to ask the MPS. I know the Commissioner is coming to our next meeting for which we are also very grateful, but we would be delighted to see you at any point for the question-and-answer sessions because you then can put forward all the good work that you are doing. Thank you. I will officially thank our guests for attending this morning and for your answers to our questions.

This page is intentionally left blank