

London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – Wednesday 5 September 2018

Transcript of Item 6 - Question and Answer Session with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Service

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We can move to the main item of business and, again, I very much thank our guests for coming along and taking the time to meet us this morning.

We have a list of questions. I will take the first question, if I may, and introduce that question on counterterrorism, which is a subject which is very much alive in the minds of Londoners. Most recently, we had on 14 August [2018] another incident which was described by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) as a case of terrorism and the individual has been charged with two counts of attempted murder.

Commissioner, welcome again. Could you kindly update us on that incident and also how you may be working to reassure communities following that incident, please?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Thank you, Chairman. As you say, in relation to that matter, one man has been charged with two counts of attempted murder, firstly in relation to members of the public and secondly in relation to police officers. Obviously, I need to be careful what I say about a matter that is *sub judice* but, to reiterate, throughout, we were careful to say that we were treating it as though it was a terrorist incident and you will have noted the comments of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) at the point of charge and their use of Section 30 of the Counterterrorism Act 2008.

I would want, of course, to pay tribute again to the officers who responded brilliantly at the time with great courage and massive professionalism and, indeed, the operation that flowed afterwards, which of course involved Parliament and many other stakeholders, ran as well as one could expect in such shocking circumstances. I do not have anything more to say about that matter.

Of course, as a result of that, we have, as we always do with any terrorist incident or indeed investigation, been looking at any learning that may come from it, in particular in relation to the Protect strand of Contest in terms of terrorism.

We are working very hard still and you will have heard the comments of the Director General not so very long ago about the tempo of terrorism investigations, the number of current operations, and the fact that the last financial year was, sadly, a record year for arrests with 441. The teams are working as hard as they ever have been.

In terms of reassurance, we continue with very wide communications through a variety of communities, the business community in particular, but of course faith communities and other communities; *Run, Hide, Tell*, Action Counters Terrorism; explaining again and again how people can best protect themselves and advising on specific protection measures. We have our Operation Servator running, which, as you know, is designed to detect people who are intent on either terrorism or indeed criminal activity and provides high-profile reassurance at the same time.

I could go on. It is a huge part of our work. We encourage the public to support us and 99.9% of the time we get great support, more and more information coming in, and very good use of our hotlines and other methods of reporting.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That was helpful and reassuring. Thank you very much. Going back to the incident in Parliament Square, you talked about prevention and part of the prevention there was the physicality of the prevention with the car and the further action. There has been narrative or dialogue elsewhere about the potential pedestrianisation of Parliament Square. I have no view, personally. Do you have any thoughts around that?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Clearly, our job as the police is to advise. We do not make the final decisions on this sort of matter and, as you know, in somewhere like that, there are a number of parties that need to work out what is for the best in the broadest terms. That includes Parliament; it includes the Mayor, of course; it includes the two local authorities and Transport for London. As with any protective security, one is trying to balance reasonable security measures with cost and inconvenience, if you like, to normal people wanting to go about their daily business, including of course people who might be wishing to drive.

'Pedestrianisation' is a word which -- if anywhere is pedestrianised, it does not of itself protect from a vehicle attack. It needs some barriers as well and it also, by definition, does not protect from another form of attack; for example, the pedestrian who happens to be carrying a knife, the lone attacker with a knife, which is something we have faced at Parliament in the last several months.

I commented on the day and I say it again: Parliament itself is very well protected and has become even more well protected since the ghastly events of last year. I should note that we have the inquest starting next week into those who lost their lives in that dreadful attack last spring. The parliamentary estate is well and ever better protected.

The question that you are pointing out is: what should happen outside? There is an expert group looking at that and I am sure sensible decisions will be made in due course as a result of that.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes. I remember when I was in Parliament this came up before. The real problem was access through the Carriage Gates for Members of Parliament (MPs) and Ministers driving from Whitehall to get to a vote. The only other way vehicles could get in would have been through Black Rod's Garden, which is just not practical given all the delivery vans and everything that goes that way.

Is another way of access for MPs and Ministers by car being considered as part of the pedestrianisation and, if so, would that provide a weak spot in the proposal?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The challenge, of course, of proper access to Parliament remains a challenge in whatever plan anybody may come up with. We are founded on the notion of an open Parliament and something that people can visit and, secondly, parliamentarians need to have quick and ready access should the bell sound, so to speak. That is something that everybody is trying to take into their calculations. I am not going to talk about what is happening at particular gates and things at the moment, Andrew, I am afraid.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Taking away from that physicality of that place, you have been quoted as saying that the MPS "is in as good a place as people would expect us to be" regarding prevention more generally. Is that a fair reflection?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. On reflection, it is an odd way of putting it, but I stand by the comment. What I meant was that it is a ghastly phenomenon, terrorism inspired by whatever cause. We cannot reduce the risks to zero. I was asked to compare this with other types of threat and crime that we have to deal with. We have invested very heavily. We have very good people, very good leaders, lots of support from others including the Government, and relatively speaking I believe we are in good shape and in a good place. The teams are in very good heart and they are doing great work. Just last week we saw Mr Raman sentenced to life with a minimum of 30 years for undertaking a plot to kill the Prime Minister and others, a fantastic piece of police work supported by the agencies. This sort of thing, in terms of the quality of the work, is happening all day long.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you for that. We have some questions now relating to forms of extremism more generally. I will bring Unmesh in in a minute, but this is a question really for the Deputy Mayor. You have the Mayor's Countering Violent Extremism programme. I have trouble getting that out. What is that, if you can, relatively briefly? What is that doing to ensure it incorporates all forms of extremism across the spectrum in that particular programme, Deputy Mayor?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Just towards the end of last year, we announced that we were setting up a programme around countering violent extremism. That is ongoing. It is up and running. There has been a number of meetings, consultations, discussions and engagements with professionals, stakeholders and also with communities. I have participated in some of them; the Deputy Mayor for Social Inclusion, Matthew Ryder, is also working with the Mayor on this because we see this not just as a police and crime issue but actually [an issue] around community cohesion and social inclusion.

We were really clear when we set this up and the Mayor was incredibly clear about this: this was about violent extremism in all its forms and we were very clear in its terms of reference and its programme of work that, yes, of course, it takes in so-called Islamist extremism but, absolutely, it has to look at right-wing extremism and violence. That has been very clear in the work we are doing. I expect when it comes to its conclusions that it will have looked at all forms of extremism and have some recommendations around all forms. It was absolutely part of the programme of work and the principles that this is all encompassing; it is not just about one particular type of violent extremism.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): It is time-limited to the degree that it comes to conclusions? That is the nature of it?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): When will that be worked towards?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The programme is running for the whole of this calendar year and so we would expect it to come to its conclusions towards the beginning of next year and that we would publish something. It is running for the whole of this calendar year.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We will be looking forward to that. Unmesh, you wanted to come in?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, Chairman. Can I just carry on, just to follow on from where you left off? Deputy Mayor, as I understand [in relation to] the Countering Violent Extremism programme, the Mayor went on record as saying that the funding would be aimed at groups working at the grassroots level and in particular he stressed the role of women's groups. I am not aware of the Anti-Tribalism Movement but I am aware of the Faith Forum for London, but these are London-wide bodies. Are you actually aiming to get the money out to groups that, as I say, work at the borough level and at what I would call, to repeat, the grassroots community level?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The programme is taking place and engaging on a number of different levels. Some of the pan-London groups such as the Faith Forum it is engaging with, but it is looking and working and going out and engaging very locally at the grassroots level. I chaired a session with only women [in attendance] with Councillor Claire Kober, [former Councillor, London Borough of Haringey], which took in all forms of violent extremism to talk to them about their views and their experiences. We are not just doing that from City Hall because I am very aware that City Hall can only get so far and only has a certain reach, and so we have put a grant out and we have two organisations that are very good at getting right through to the grassroots and to those individuals who would not necessarily normally interact with City Hall. That is a part of the programme that we are very keen on and have put some money behind to make sure that we get into those local communities.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): What is the Anti-Tribalism Movement?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The Anti-Tribalism Movement is one of the two organisations that have been granted this money. It is predominantly with the Somali community, but in order to get the grant we have made sure as part of their work that they are much wider than that and that they will be engaging with different communities and doing so at a local level and including specifically hearing the voices of women in the work that they do and that they can feed back to us.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): You also talk about this programme reaching out to groups that cannot counter all forms of extremism and so have you considered or are you in the process of funding groups that monitor and combat hate coming from the extreme right wing?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): In terms of the engagement that we are undertaking, we are engaging with all the organisations that we can engage with around right-wing extremist violence and we are we are doing that. We are in touch with those organisations and discussing and engaging with them as well. As part of this, we have a regular meeting reviewing the work to make sure that we are touching all the different elements and so, if there are any gaps, which I do not think there are at the moment, we will seek to fill them.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): I will just say this. I am not going to be an advocate here for particular groups that I am aware of, but it would help certainly me and the Committee if you could tell us the groups that you have been engaged with in terms of countering far right-wing extremism.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, absolutely. I have no problem with doing that.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Coming to my main question, if I can ask you, Commissioner, your former colleague Assistant Commissioner [Sir] Mark Rowley QPM went on record as saying that the United

Kingdom (UK) has not woken up to the threat from the extreme right wing. Do you agree with those comments and what more is needed to respond to that particular threat?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You will remember that this is something that Mark - now Sir Mark - has talked about in his final speeches before he left, and he has merely reiterated in retirement what he was saying before he left. To speak for the police in the first instance, we absolutely take the threat from the extreme right wing very seriously indeed and you will be aware that of the 17 plots that have been disrupted since March/April last year, four of those were lethal plots which emanated from extreme right-wing ideology. As I understand it, 15% of Prevent referrals are extreme right wing and 30% of Channel referrals.

You will also be aware that the Anderson Review¹ that the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary commissioned to provide assurance around the operational reviews that we were doing together with the security service, MI5, that was very clear about the need to make sure across the board that we had the same capabilities and methods of working against extreme right wing as we did against so-called Islamist inspired or international terrorism. We and the security service have been getting that better and better in the last several months.

We have also been raising awareness everywhere we go. In all our briefings that we do, whether that is in a school, in a faith institution or in a Government meeting, we are busy raising awareness of the nature of the extreme right-wing threat and the changes that we have collectively seen in the last few months.

This is very important for the UK. Of course, it is. We are more than playing our part in raising awareness and making sure that everybody understands that the terrorist threat can come from all sorts of different angles, most particularly in this instance the extreme right wing.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): I welcome those comments, Commissioner, and, understandably, you have been very general in your answers. Could I be a bit more specific? We now know that many people convicted as involved in terrorist offences have proven links with groups like Al-Muhajireen. Are there any particular groups on the far right that you have similar concerns about, very specifically groups like the English Defence League (EDL), with their proven international links? Sir Mark Rowley QPM did talk about the international links of the far right here. National Action has been proscribed. What do we need to do to combat the activities of groups like the EDL and similar outfits?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): As you say, the big shift, if you like, is the proscription of National Action and two further proscriptions afterwards, making it very clear that these are, as Mark said, organised terrorist groups which have all the most worrying aspects of organised terrorism. The people who end up in those groups, yes, come from all sorts of backgrounds and all sorts of, as far as we can understand, different places in which they have often on the internet started to get their ideas about their political cause that has taken them into a terrorist group.

I am not going to say that we think this one, this one or this one is better, worse or more worrying than the others. Of course, we are always interested to see the background of anybody operating in National Action and, of course, we keep a close interest in those groups which are on the periphery between the far right and the extreme right. You would expect us to do that, but always lawfully and in a way that is legitimate in our society.

¹ David Anderson QC's Report on The Terrorist Attacks of March-June 2017, Independent Assessment of MI5 and Police Internal Reviews.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you for that. I may even pre-empt Peter [Whittle AM], unusually. The point is, clearly, that some groups are either proscribed and illegal and/or have indicated or proven illegal acts. Others may just have views and comments that are distasteful and thoroughly unpleasant, but it does not always necessarily make them illegal. Peter, did you want to embellish that, briefly?

Peter Whittle AM: I just want to make this point, whether you agree with them or not - and I do not - if you start talking about people like the EDL in terms of terrorism, you are on to a real problem, actually. The fact is that - and I do not know whether you agree with this, Commissioner - we might not agree with those groups or whatever, but you have to be careful when you start saying people are terrorists. Can I just ask one question?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Go on.

Peter Whittle AM: You were talking about right-wing groups. I totally understand that and you seemed very clear on that, Commissioner. Why then, as you have just said, do you have to say, "Extreme right wing"? You had no problem saying that, but then you go on to say, "So-called Islamist inspired". Why are you so mealy-mouthed? You just said, "So-called Islamist inspired". The guy who, for example, last year ran into Westminster and killed five people with his car was very clear: he was waging *jihad*. Most of these people have been very clear. Why do you have to say, "So-called Islamist"?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The first point: it is very important not to call people terrorists who do not show the signs of terrorism and I absolutely, as the Commissioner of the MPS, will defend till my dying day - literally - the best aspects of our country in terms of people being able to express their opinions within the law. I say the phrase "so-called Islamist" sometimes, not always. I am sorry if it offends you. I say it because -

Peter Whittle AM: It is not a question of offending me, Commissioner --

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): -- as a senior police officer, it is important for me not to be mealy-mouthed but, equally, not to randomly upset people who might get upset. I try to put my words. I have upset you in the way I have described it, but some of --

Peter Whittle AM: No, we are talking about counterterrorism.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes, some --

Peter Whittle AM: Are you actually saying, Commissioner --

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Can we not speak across each other, please?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Sorry.

Peter Whittle AM: The majority of people carrying out terrorist attacks - 90% - are Islam inspired. We might not like it and you might not like to say that, but it is the case. Why do you say things like "so-called Islamist"? You are the Commissioner.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Chairman, we should not get into a long conversation about this, not least because you want to push on.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): No, I would rather we did not.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): However, 'in the name of Islam' is very different from 'Islamist', for a start. We could get into a really long semantic conversation here, Peter. I do not want to be annoying --

Peter Whittle AM: I agree, Commissioner, but why can we not take them at their word? Why is it so difficult to take them at their word?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Obviously, there are terrorists who have said they are doing this to take forward what they would describe and other people would describe as 'Islamist' causes. There are other people whom some people might call 'Islamist' who have not said that and do not appear to be doing exactly that. It is quite a complicated area.

Peter Whittle AM: I agree with you but I want to make this point because this is deceptive. The fact is the vast bulk of terrorist attacks, whether it was 7/7, whether it was in Westminster, whether it was in Manchester, whether it was in Borough [Market], are Islam-inspired, Commissioner. The fact is you have to face up to this. You are quite clear about what it is with right-wing extremism. I wish you would be as explicit about this.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): All right. That is enough. You have said your piece. I have some sympathy with your analysis and I am glad you had that opportunity. Len, do you want to say something briefly and then we will move on?

Len Duvall AM: Fine, briefly. Chairman, can I ask for a bit more of an in-depth report about the work that MOPAC is undertaking on the counter extremist violence programme and can we have that shared amongst the Committee, a bit more about who we are talking to, when, timescales and everything else? We should have a formal report back on your briefing, if we can. I am conscious of the time. If I can move --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Can I just say I am really happy to do that but it might be easier just to organise a briefing for you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We have in hand a briefing to be diarised.

Len Duvall AM: OK. Commissioner, first of all, we cannot say this enough and we do not say it clearly enough: thank you for your officers' work in protecting the communities of London and the wider parts of the country. Thank you for that in this particularly unique piece of work that the MPS carries out and long may it do so because I believe that is in the interests of not just London but the UK.

In terms of the pressures that you are facing, I want to just think it through because people generalise too often about some of the issues that you are facing: it is straightforward, this is it, these are the target communities. I was very much taken by what you said and we really do need to thank people coming forward with information because of the nature of the prevention work that you have done. Even though we have not had successes, we have had lots of successes. We cannot eliminate the threat completely. There will always be some that will get through, but the many that have not have been down to the work of your officers, the work of other agencies and the work of people coming forward. We should recognise that.

Then, just understanding the pressures that you face and realising where you are in a whole range of agencies working, we face the pressures from Al-Qaeda, Daesh and Islamic State (IS), which are different, and we need to understand there are different forms of threat that we face there; far-right neo-Nazis, not just domestic but those international links that pose a further pressure in the way that we investigate those crimes; and, of course, there will always be a watching brief about extreme Irish republicanism; we have seen rising tensions in Northern Ireland at this moment in time for all sorts of reasons and of course that could always come on to the mainland UK; and then what we all seem to forget but what really must be taking up a load of time: state-sponsored terrorism [in] Salisbury [by] Russia, which the evidence points to around that in terms of some of the times and calls.

If we look over the horizon and into the future - this is more for other agencies but may well come up here - about the nature of some of the tensions within the Middle East between different blocs, I am thinking of the Saudi bloc versus the Iranian bloc. Can you foresee or are agencies prepared for the issues that may overspill from the European continent onto the UK mainland? Therefore, is a major piece of the work of counterterrorism trying to keep ahead of that game?

I should also say that there is of course other domestic extremism and threat to life as we have seen in the past and to infrastructure that counterterrorism needs to be mindful of and that is domestic in some ways.

Do I have that about right of where those pressures are on the services? Have I missed anything in about how you are juggling all these balls and the resources that go with it?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You have it absolutely right, Len. At any one time, amongst the things you have mentioned, some of them are taking up more or less proportion of the time. Labels are awkward and sometimes unhelpful. A large proportion of what we were just talking about and indeed you have just mentioned might be put under the label of 'international counterterrorism', but of course we know that a lot of the people who carry it out are individuals here who have just been inspired by something they have seen on the internet and are not directed. These are very difficult people to deal with. The label is hard and the amount of effort we have to put into different things goes up and down. Yes, we have to do a lot of forward scanning. There are other groups and I am not going to name them all, but you would expect that both so-called domestically and in the international sphere that have challenges or potential threats or fundraising in London. We are constantly scanning across the whole and constantly looking forward.

The good thing about the way we are constructed in the UK, as you know, is that we do have excellent relationships with the intelligence agencies and the wider Government. Neil Basu [Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC), Senior National Co-ordinator for Counterterrorism Policing, MPS] and I know everything they know. There is no challenge there whatsoever. The integration is getting better and better every day, but it is a very strong position that we have come from. We have the Joint Terrorist Analysis Centre, which looks across the spectrum and does not apply labels that might be unhelpful. It just looks across the spectrum and tells us short, medium and long term - it is harder as you look further out - what the emerging threats are and what the current threats are and how we should think about those. That is an agreed position that we can all influence but it is agreed right across the UK counterterrorism community including the police. I believe that is a very strong framework for us to work in.

Yes, there are pressures from all directions. You mentioned the hostile state one and of course that has never gone away but is something that is very much on the UK Government's radar.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you for that. We will move on to the next subject, which is the Notting Hill Carnival. Over August we had Carnival. The early conclusions are that the number of arrests was similar [to those in 2017] but, pleasingly, there were far fewer life-threatening incidents. Commander Musker [Gold Commander for Notting Hill Carnival, MPS], whom I have the utmost respect for, said that he had seen one of the smoothest and most efficient Carnivals that he had experienced. However, of course there were, regrettably, 30 police officers injured of a complement of something like 7,000 officers over that weekend. Those injuries are unacceptable.

We have some questions around Notting Hill. Unmesh, you are going to lead?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Yes, Chairman. Thank you. Commissioner, I attended the early morning briefing on Saturday morning, which was impressive, just like the last two years, and I also attended for the first time another briefing in the operation room where the Events Liaison Team was based. Again, it was impressive to see how well the different agencies were working together: the fire service, the police and the local councils.

Can I ask you, Commissioner, first of all, what is your assessment of the success of Carnival this year from a policy perspective, putting that in the context of the policing needs of London as a whole? How did you prepare for the impact on ongoing investigations and general policing throughout London with the 7,000 officers who were allocated to Carnival? Can I in particular also ask you to comment on the role that the community stewards played this year? There are three parts: the specific assessment of Carnival itself, the London-wide implications and the role of community stewards. I will come later on to you, Sophie and Craig, about your opinion of the role of community stewards.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Thank you. My assessment is that this Carnival was safer and more secure than last year's and it was, indeed, very much safer than the year before. I am pleased by that.

I should point out, Chairman, as always happens with crime figures and other figures, we will run them again probably definitively and for the last time in about a week's time, but the number of officers who were injured that we have had injury reports of is higher than the early reports of 30. It is 45. Thirty was unacceptable; 45 is very unacceptable. These are, I am relieved to say, minor, if I can put it that way, all horrid but minor in the scheme of things, as I understand it, but some very unpleasant. You will remember that two years ago we had officers really under significant life-threatening attack, which is completely unacceptable.

I pay tribute, as Dave Musker has, to the new organisers, who did take on board a huge amount of what we were concerned about in terms of both safety and security. The policing operation itself was a very great success. There were proactive operations before Carnival under the auspices of our Violent Crime Task Force. I think I am right in saying that in the six weeks before we arrested over 1,000 people for violence-related offences. I am sure that had a good effect on Carnival.

We had the Section 60 [of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994] Order in place, which was Commander Musker's operational decision on Saturday but very much supported by the event organisers, which was very useful for us. We took 36 weapons off the streets and arrested another 70-odd people with offensive weapons, and so over 100 weapons were taken away from the Carnival footprint. There were

373 arrests, as you say, for a variety of different things. There was excellent planning and excellent hard work with MOPAC and the event organisers and, indeed, the stewards in the preparation time.

A particular positive move forward, if you like, was the use of the Section 60 [Order], which has to be case specific and time specific. Against the backdrop of the intelligence that [Commander] David [Musker] had and the London summer, if you like, or London's 2018, it was I am sure the right decision. It is not for me to second-guess it, but I am not saying we will have one next year. It was a very helpful thing to have. The knife arches were useful.

The atmosphere was very good. I was out for eight hours on the Monday and the vast majority of people were in good humour and good spirits and were very positive about the policing. Every few yards I was stopped and somebody thanked me for the police presence and the way they were doing their work.

The areas which were harder were [harder] despite more stewards and really good stewards. Thanks to the stewards. We probably need even more and even better in the future. Otherwise, police officers end up doing stewards' jobs, which is not good. Despite their best efforts, the event organisers had a problem with getting movement of the floats sufficiently around the Carnival footprint. This meant that at the time the sound systems were closing, at about five o'clock, before the closure point, 30 of the floats had not got past the judging point. Monday was a very busy day at Carnival. The fact, though, that we had floats arriving late onto the footprint and getting stuck meant, sadly, that when these sound systems were closed down - and most of the sound systems were managed very well, some with ticketed areas and sponsorship, which I regard as a good, positive move forward as well - people moved from the sound system areas back onto the main Carnival route and all around the floats. It was getting dark and was very crowded. That is frightening and worrying for some people and is a crime generator potentially and a safety issue. Therefore, in the context of better than last year, that is the area that we are most concerned about and that I know is the area that the organisers will be most concerned about for the future.

It remains an expensive and very big operation for the MPS. Your point: two million people come and enjoy it, which is wonderful, or something like that, but fewer this Sunday because it was, sadly, so wet, and many more on the Monday. There were 7,000-odd officers on the Monday and a few thousand on the Sunday as well. It adds up to a big number of people taken away from policing London. It is not a surprise. We know it is going to happen. We plan for it. We schedule everybody's leave around it. I pay tribute to the officers. It is a quite a difficult atmosphere to work in, despite being very positive. It is very noisy, it is very crowded, and sometimes it is very hot. I spoke to officers who were with those floats for 10, 12 or 13 hours on Sunday, some of them longer, in the heat of the footprint, then coming after a few hours' sleep back in, expecting and doing a 12, 14 or 16-hour day the next day, on their feet in that noisy, crowded atmosphere. We ask a lot of people physically. They give a lot. They remain extraordinarily positive and good humoured. They did a very good job this year and I am very proud of them.

One thing we did do was to try to use what we would have as reserves in case of difficulties more flexibly across the rest of London for the Violent Crime Task Force work. That worked very well this year because Carnival was, mostly, very calm and we were able to release some of the 7,000 for some of the time to help out with the rest of London. The rest of London had, as it turned out, a good - relatively speaking - August Bank Holiday weekend. It can be a very challenging weekend.

Sorry, I have gone on longer than you would want, Chairman, but that is my summary.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, thank you, Commissioner. I have to say that 45 police officers injured is an absolute disgrace. Something, in my view, needs to be done. Can I ask you how many of those police officers were spat at or bitten?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have had varying reports on this. Let me just double-check my definitive note here. We ended up with three. Three officers were spat upon. I can tell you a bit more about the circumstances, if you would like.

Susan Hall AM: I have heard it was more than that. Are you talking about the ones that were then hospitalised?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Three officers were spat upon in two separate incidents. In the first one, the officer - this happened, if you like, spontaneously - was spat at and bitten. That was absolutely disgraceful and, obviously, resulted in arrest. In the second incident, this was somebody who had a behavioural disorder and started to spit, again spontaneously. However, in the first incident, the person went on to spit later over other officers.

Susan Hall AM: How many officers were had to go to hospital because they were either spat at or bitten?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I will come back to you if this is wrong, Susan, sorry, because it would be wrong for me to say a wrong number, but my briefing note here --

Susan Hall AM: No, I have a figure. I am wondering whether you have the same one.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): My briefing note here tells me that three went to hospital for the preventative checking, testing and any possible treatment.

Susan Hall AM: All right. I was told four but, even if it was three.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes.

Susan Hall AM: You said that, for the 45 officers who were injured, they were minor injuries. Do you regard being spat at or bitten as a minor situation?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I said minor, relatively speaking. Compared with being within an inch of your life or kicked and punched, I think most people would regard a spit in and of itself as a more minor incident, yes. It is a disgusting thing to do. It is awful to be on the receiving end of it and it can be very frightening.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, but, also, we are talking about biting. In London alone, 40,000 people have hepatitis C and, as you know, this is how it can be transferred.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Horrible.

Susan Hall AM: When these officers are spat at and bitten, they have to go to hospital. That is absolutely right. Then the treatment that they have to go through so that they do not get infected is absolutely dreadful. I do not know if either of you have had that misfortune.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have been spat at, absolutely, and I have been bitten, but before the days of this particular treatment and so I have not had the treatment. Just to be clear, they do have to go for the screening and then it is a very much smaller number who have the treatment because of the way the screening works and the decisions that the officers make.

Susan Hall AM: I accept that, but the treatment itself is absolutely terrible.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Horrible.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes.

Susan Hall AM: It is surely our duty to look after these officers as best we can. In fact, it is part of - I have even looked it up - their personal protective equipment at work. The provision for personal protective equipment says that every employer shall ensure that suitable personal protective equipment is provided and it goes on.

I cannot understand it. I find it so perverse that we will not issue spit guards to our officers on the street. The frontline officers do want it. The number of them that I have spoken to do want it. The public needs to know that only if somebody spits at them or bites them first will it be put on. You would have so much support from the public because we need to give our police officers, in my view and in many other people's views, as many tools as they can to keep themselves safe.

The thing is, when these officers have to go through these ghastly treatments, it may only be a few. I do not care. Even if it is a few, their families and their loved ones go through absolute hell wondering if they have contracted hepatitis C. As I say, given that we have 40,000 people in London alone with hepatitis C, very often from the groups of people who will be in problems with the police, I cannot understand why we do not supply spit guards to the frontline officers.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The spit guard has been something that has been authorised by the Home Office to be used potentially in policing for a very long time, since about 2006 or 2007. The MPS did not have spit guards at all until just after I became Commissioner and, as you are aware, we have introduced them after a careful trial in very well scrutinised conditions into all our custody offices, where they are used, I believe, well and rarely. On every occasion when they are used, there is a supervisor present and checking that it has gone well because, as you are also aware, I am sure, Susan, there is concern in the wider public, amongst some at least, about the use of these guards.

All officer safety I take incredibly seriously. Since I have been Commissioner - in fact, before I became Commissioner and Craig is my witness - the one thing I asked for before I became Commissioner was an uplift in Taser, which we have delivered.

Susan Hall AM: Good.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have a lot more Taser and a lot more to come and it is better taser, more accurate, better to use and so forth.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, I know. Well done.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have been very clear about that. We are introducing a better baton. We are reviewing and introducing what we hope will be a lighter weight and just as, if not better, protective vest. We are reviewing the use of CS [gas]. We are reviewing PAVA [Spray]. We have of course uplifted firearms. I have set out that I want my officers to feel as safe as they reasonably can and I take their safety extraordinarily seriously.

However, what I would say is that, of all of those issues, you get a wide spectrum of opinion. You get a wide spectrum from the public; you get a wide spectrum amongst officers. When I go and talk to my officers, I am quite likely to be asked about taser. Some of them think we need more and some would say, "I would not let half of my colleagues anywhere near it", and likewise for firearms.

I do not want to get ridiculous, but obviously the safest thing is if all officers were riding around in armoured vehicles. That would not be the British police. That would not be effective policing. It would, in fact, lead in the long run to worse, not better, for them, I am convinced. Everybody has a range of opinions, which is why it remains an operational decision. In fact, there are some decisions that although my board will always be consulted on and will give a view and usually agree, it is one that I must make myself and do.

I am very content. Not everybody is. Some people think we should not have had spit guards in our custody suites. I am very content that we have them there and I am very interested to hear more from the [Metropolitan Police] Federation and my officers about the prevalence of the occasions when a spit guard would have helped and to examine those to see whether it would in fact have helped.

Susan, I am really open to this, but my concern about it is that, firstly, most of the time when somebody is spat out, however awful it is, it is spontaneous, unexpected and just happens. A spit guard is not going to help with that at all. That is the huge majority of cases, I believe. Secondly, there are cases when somebody is spitting and/or biting and the very action of trying to get something onto them would of itself, short-term possibly and longer-term almost certainly, make the officer more at risk, not less. You can say to me that they should be able to judge that, but in the heat of things it could be really difficult. You have seen some of the violent incidents that our officers were dealing with recently.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, I have.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Imagine being one of them, trying to struggle to put a spit guard on at the same time.

Finally, there is some concern, which I have listened to, from people, for example, who have talked about inquests in which the use of the spit guard has been called into question. Although it did not result in the death, it has been part of a scenario after police contact which has been very difficult for the officers to explain. They have been investigated for years and years and they have ended up in an inquest.

It looks an easy decision. I am open to it. I know Ken Marsh MBE [Chairman, Metropolitan Police Federation] is here today and I am talking to him about it. However, I would say to you, Susan, that in 18 months as Commissioner my officers have asked me about all kinds of officer safety issues and in 18 months, until Ken asked the question of the Home Secretary, not one of them had spoken to me about that or to Sir Craig [Mackey QPM] about it or to [Assistant Commissioner] Martin Hewitt QPM or to [Assistant Commissioner Sir] Stephen House, but they do talk to us about Taser, vests, ASP [batons], CS and all sorts of other things. It is not the highest priority, but I do not want to sound blithe about this. I am not.

Susan Hall AM: No, but if I can just say, I applaud the fact that they are in custody suites. I believe they were used 150 times last year. Now with body cams it will help --

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Absolutely. Good point, yes.

Susan Hall AM: -- because, if they are put on, then the safety of the person and the police officer is also there. However, I would say, to cut the time down, there are 32 forces in the country that do use them, including the British Transport Police, who are on the streets of London, and perhaps we could cut the time down if they have good reasons or good examples. Even if it saves one officer from getting hepatitis C or something else, in my personal view it would be worth it.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Sure. My lead for this is [DAC] Matt Twist. He is also the national lead and he is talking to all the other forces on my behalf as we speak, and I am talking to Ken [Marsh MBE] to discover what their experience is. I think, if you had Matt sitting here, he would say, on balance, if he were the Commissioner, he would not be introducing this in London at the moment. I probably should not speak for him, but he would not for the reasons I have outlined, which is that it might make things very much worse, not better. That is his concern: that it may bring more violence and difficulties for officers when trying to put it on.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): You have said that earlier, Commissioner. I would like to try to drag this back to the subject in hand. I hope it is the subject in hand, Notting Hill, Tony?

Tony Arbour AM: This really is to the Deputy Mayor and it relates to stop-and-search. You have just heard the Commissioner say in relation to the Carnival that the Section 60 [Order] was supported by the community and, clearly, the Commissioner thinks that that was effective in keeping down possession of weapons and other things. She suggested the knife arches also were helpful.

You will know that on this side of the Chamber we have always supported the extension of the use of stop-and-search. I see reported in today's *Times* that the Commissioner has said that she is in agreement with the Home Secretary's proposals for extending stop-and-search. Again, we on this side unequivocally support that.

I am asking you, Deputy Mayor, whether or not you, MOPAC and the Mayor also unequivocally support this use of stop-and-search.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I will answer that question absolutely straight, but can I just talk about Carnival? The Commissioner has talked about the success of Carnival and that it was a lot safer. I have been to Carnival three times now and have walked the streets of Carnival and looked at the operation. I was incredibly impressed by what I thought was a step change in terms of the partnership working. I congratulate the new event management organisation, the Notting Hill Carnival Trust, and I absolutely congratulate the MPS for the policing operation in Carnival. Let us not also forget the partnership work from [The Royal Borough of] Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster [City Council], Arts Council [England] and the London Ambulance Service because it was a lot safer Carnival. There are more issues to be looked at, as the Commissioner has pointed out, and as usual the Strategic Partnership Group, which is chaired by MOPAC, will be doing detailed debriefs in order to learn any lessons that need to be learned around crowding or the way the floats went around so that next year's Carnival can be even safer.

On stop-and-search and the proposals that were floated yesterday from the Home Secretary, the Commissioner said yesterday that her understanding -- because I have read *The Times* and I heard what the Home Secretary said yesterday. From what I understand about those proposals, I would support them as well. I have not seen the detail, but, absolutely, if it enables police officers to make the streets of London safer and if it is done in an efficient, professional, intelligence-led way, I would support those powers.

Tony Arbour AM: Thank you.

Andrew Dismore AM: Not to detract from anything you have said, Cressida, can I just say from the residents' point of view - because I live in the area - that most people go away if they possibly can these days and a lot of people spend a lot of money trying to put up hoarding, which is prohibitively expensive for most people. I cannot say that I have seen any difference in the low-level vandalism and theft to property over the last I do not know how many years including this year. I came home to a stolen dustbin and excrement in my front basement, which is what we usually have every year. Therefore, whilst it may well have been successful from a wider policing point of view, I hope you will take into account the impact more generally because our experience is no difference to anybody else's.

I would also say that there has been a huge upsurge of graffiti in the area, which may or may not be linked to Carnival. I do not know if people are putting their tags as sort of adverts before it happens or afterwards, but this is the sort of thing that seems to be linked to Carnival all the time in residents' experience.

I do not want to see Carnival banned. It is a great event. I am just giving a bit of a reality check from the residents' point of view as well in relation to the policing operation.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The comments I made yesterday are that it is relative. I still said yesterday that I feel it is an unacceptable crime generator and it still has risks of safety and security that I am not at all comfortable with.

In terms of antisocial behaviour, one of the times we were really clear - and I saw the briefing with the officers - was, "If you do not like the look of it, do something about it". Clearly, they have to focus, particularly at the busiest times, on the most serious things and their particular tasking, but they were asked to not walk by and to keep searching for knives, which they were doing when they were not busy with other things, and to keep challenging people if there was antisocial behaviour. There were more, I could not help but notice, Portaloos facilities than there have ever been. There were lots of places people could use toilet facilities. Yet, as you say, partly through too many people having too much to drink and/or being under the influence of other things and just general antisocial behaviour, there is a huge impact, I do understand, on the people who live in that area. There really is.

I cannot speak for the graffiti. I will go away and have a think about that one.

Sian Berry AM: I just wanted to go back to pre-Carnival activity and communications. You mentioned that 1,000 people were arrested during the six weeks before. We had been out with the Violent Crime Task Force who are, in a much more routine way now, targeting with intelligence-led raids on people who might commit violent crime, who have weapons and that sort of thing.

Last year, we were concerned and many members of the public and some people on social media were concerned about the communication of activity before Carnival as 'pre-Carnival raids', ie linking things to Carnival that may not have been specifically to do with Carnival. This year, though - and we asked about this

before the Carnival as well and we looked at it very closely to see what communication was like - it was much more positive. Everything I saw from the police was much more like this was a routine thing. It was not, in my view, bringing any sense of alarm around Carnival that people should be worried or be deterred from going. I thought that was much better.

I wanted to ask. Was there a plan for that? Did you listen to the feedback last year? How do you feel the communication side of things went from a police point of view?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We had lots of positive feedback on the communication tools and the communication plan all around. The public information and the various different ways that you could get it was praised. The tone that was set throughout it was praised. The clarity around the Section 60 and the stakeholder communication and the fact that the event organisers supported it. I would agree and pay tribute to those who were involved in the communications plan.

Of course, we are always communicating to a very wide range of audiences. The most important people who need to hear that we are doing everything we can to stop violence at Carnival are the people who are intent on violence at Carnival.

One way that we have sought both to reassure the public and to reach them in the past has been to talk about it very overtly beforehand. This time, it was a change. We did decide that our very high levels of operational activity -- higher than ever, Sian, and very clearly linked to Carnival. Nevertheless, we would not be screaming and shouting and saying, "Here is another Carnival-related arrest". We would simply go and do it and talk to those people and get messages out through the criminal community and through our sources to those whom we know are violent and might be thinking of coming to a Carnival or are thinking according to intelligence coming to Carnival and telling them either, "You are you are arrested now", in old-fashioned parlance, "You are nicked. Get your trousers on", or, more to the point, "We are going to be there. It will be very hard to get into Carnival. We will be doing lots of high-profile operations. There are lots of clever ways in which we will spot you if you are coming to Carnival", all of which appears to have worked.

Yes, it was a change. I am glad you liked it. I do not know whether everybody will have done.

Sian Berry AM: OK. Thank you very much. You have touched on it there. The other thing I want to ask about was facial recognition technology. I expressed my concerns about its use last year and we came along to see what was going on there. It is still officially in a trial situation and so you need to be - and you have said you will be - trying it out in different kinds of situations or different kinds of events. I was very pleased that you decided not to use it again this year. If you were continually targeting Carnival with this, it would be a worry.

Can I ask? In the spirit of it being a trial, what difference did the absence of facial recognition make? Did you miss it and was it any use last year, in the spirit of the fact that you are trying this technology and testing its effectiveness?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Could you answer that and then I am going to take it along a little bit further.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We are constantly trying out new things and this year we had several new bits of technology of various different sorts that we used. I was very

pleased with the way they worked. You are right that we are continuing the trial but we chose not to do it at Carnival this year.

I cannot really prove a negative. I do not know what would have happened if we had had it there, but you will be aware that given the very narrow nature of the trial that we are doing, I would not have expected if we had had it there large numbers of people to have been arrested as a result, but I cannot say what would have happened if we had had it there.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): It is wonderful that Notting Hill can lead to all sorts of streams of different conversations. The comment earlier by Sian [Berry AM] and the feedback around the communications last year is very much the view of Sian herself and not the central view of the Committee and the concerns that you responded to. Len, you wanted to come in?

Len Duvall AM: Thank you very much. I thought that the work that you did pre-Carnival last year was good in terms of that. It was even better this year. It seems that you are getting on top of it and you are doing that and that does all help to a safer Carnival for those who want to enjoy it.

Chairman, I will take your guidance. I want to turn back to spit guards, but I am happy for you to say, "Carry it over to the violent crime one", or, "Continue here". I have a couple of quick questions to the Commissioner about it, but it is up to you. What do you want me to do?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): The subject has been introduced, so if you want, yes, but try to be as brief as is appropriate.

Len Duvall AM: I will be very brief on some of the issues. I do not question your commitment to the safety of your officers and, from our perception, we know that police are put in a dangerous environment in carrying out their jobs. As public-sector workers, we need to do everything and make sure that we are satisfied with it. It is an operational decision for you, but we should be asking some of these questions about these circumstances.

Would your position be stronger if the pilot had extended to response teams rather than just in the controlled environment of custody suites? You said in your submission earlier on to us that it is a different environment. I listened very carefully to what you said yesterday during the radio interview. I was waiting for [Nick] Ferrari [talkback radio host, Leading Britain's Conversation] to come back at you and say, "If it is potentially unsafe or potentially makes life more dangerous for our people on the front line in response to have spit guards, what does that say for custody officers, then?" Is that controlled environment what the premise is?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Absolutely. That is --

Len Duvall AM: Do the cameras and the body issues make that potentially better if it is about issues of how it is used and when it is used? Really, one of the issues you said yesterday was that, even if we did do it, it would not be used that often. For those judgement problems which officers have to make, I would rather have a guard on me than be Tasered, to be honest, if there was a choice in the matter. If you were a criminal, I suspect you might say that, or being hit with a baton. Nevertheless, some of that thinking in that strand of your arguments I do not quite fully understand. I understand that in the custody suites the number of times these guards have been used is running at about three a week. I get the view that this crime, which is assault, spitting and biting is --

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Absolutely, unlawful.

Len Duvall AM: Even though it is unlawful and might be at the lower end of some of the violence our officers face, it is still assault in court. Tell me how you have arrived at the judgement, which I have some difficulty with?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Chairman, I can see that this interests lots of people. I would be very happy to talk to people outside as well. I will just say that the issue in custody, Len, is exactly the one you say, and Craig may want to come in here. There are several officers present in custody at any one time. There are always custody officers, plural, and there are always supervisors, plural, and there are always dedicated detention officers, plural. Therefore, the environment in which the decision is being made that this person has spat or bitten and is in such a state they are likely to do this again and pose a threat to us is a decision which is made in the relatively calm environment of the custody office with several people around to look at the different possibilities and tactics and to be able to apply it safely and carefully by definition.

What we have been doing in the early stages of the pilot and since is dip-sampling and looking at the way in which it is being used. We have not had a single complaint about its usage at all and so it is being used sparingly and it is being used professionally but in a very, relatively speaking, contained environment. That is the point.

Those who have real concerns about the guard would say that when you put it on somebody's head it is potentially highly frightening and makes somebody feel very claustrophobic and, on top of being restrained in other ways, whether that is handcuffs or other physical restraint by the officers and leg restraints sometimes, very rarely again, that this could lead to an excited delirium reaction. The medical evidence does not suggest that it is a dangerous thing to do, but it does create in that those who are looking at it being applied a sense that this is an - for want of a better word - oppressive thing to do. When you look at some of those violent videos that you have seen, as I say, if you imagine the officers struggling also to put the spit guard on the head whilst trying to restrain somebody, it would be: (a) probably impossible; and (b) more likely to get them a good kicking than otherwise. These are fine decisions on the street but they are also fine decisions for me.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I am only going to intercede and what we are going to also ask for, Len, is a separate briefing for the Committee on the pilot evaluation.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): In one of these sessions, we will get you to the officer safety training, see the guard and see how it works. I will just pick up on your point because it is a really good point you made about whether you could learn. Matt Twist, as some of you will know, one of our DACs, is the national lead on this. There are 32 forces to learn from with their environments of how they are using it and also some of the things that are working well outside London and some of those areas where it does not. There is some learning from the operational environment already.

Len Duvall AM: I agree that in terms of the learning environment, but in terms of that should we not commit ourselves to doing an evaluated pilot from response to see if those issues are borne out? Commissioner, you are right. You have a judgement call to make, but people that are in those situations have a judgement call. If I am a police officer, I have a range of tools to use and decide when it is appropriate to use them. I may decide, if someone starts to, that I am in that situation where I do not want to use a spit guard for all sorts of reasons. There may be a totally different situation where I do. Should that choice not be left to the officer to decide once they have done the evaluation? That is really where I am coming from with trying to understand.

If we allow it in one part of the organisation, why is it not -- because all those tools of defence or offence, depending on the situation that police officers find themselves in, are things that they do not automatically use. They do not automatically go for the baton. They do not automatically go for other issues. They have to make those judgement calls. The question we have always asked and we have applied as you have applied - when I say "we", those who are on the side of wanting to put bad people [away] and to stop them causing violence - is the choice is for that officer to decide on that situation. In that sense, are we not denying it? I just quickly want to go to --

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I would like to move this on, Len, if I may.

Len Duvall AM: Just one issue. In 2014, the MPS settled a civil claim outside of the court because someone was spat at and did not feel they could defend the issue. The claim was that they were not officially there. Are we not opening up ourselves to these issues of legal actions, never mind collective legal actions but individual actions, from our employees to you about these circumstances now this debate has started in this way? Commissioner, you were trying to say yesterday that you are open to these discussions and you are open to listen to it, but would it not be better if we did that with moving towards a pilot to get to the bottom of those very issues that concern you but also in terms of just making sure we have the facts before we take these final decisions?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It may well be, Len. When I brought it in in the custody suites, that was my decision. Not everybody agreed with it. Not everyone was happy with it. I pushed it on. I pushed it through. We have done it. It has gone well. As I said, I am not saying never but I need to be convinced that it is the right thing to do. Yes, we make balanced decisions about the operational implications of things long term and short term, but, yes, we make balanced decisions about the legal implications. For every officer - I hope not - who might feel that they have been put at risk from something or other, there will be another member of the public who will feel exactly the opposite, if you like, and I am open to a legal challenge in that way. That is the nature of the world I work in. I am often open to legal challenges, but I have a duty to protect my officers and I completely understand that. At the moment, my view is that that duty does not say obviously and immediately that I need to issue spit guards on the street. I am waiting for the evidence about what is happening in other forces and the evidence from the Federation and others about the prevalence of instances in which it would actually have helped. In the vast majority of instances, it would not have helped at all because you do not know it is going to happen when you get spat at. I am open to it.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I am going to stop you if I may, Commissioner. I am now going to make an unusual ruling: that is the end of spit guards for the moment. We do need to move on. We will no doubt move on to it at another time. We are going to ask DAC Matt Twist to come and brief us more fully on the pilot and the evaluation. We can bring up the subjects that others have raised and to return to the subject. Good.

We are now going to move on, if we may. I would like to make the point on the record to thank officers for what they did on those three days and how they protect the public. I am going to move on because we do not have a great deal of time. We have all had our opportunity on spit guards, for today anyway.

Tackling violence is the next subject, which is a subject we always make sure we return to about the level of violent crime and a comment to the Commissioner particularly around stabilisation and potential reductions. Caroline, you are going to lead on that?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you very much indeed. Looking at the latest report we have had from the Mayor's office, it shows that knife crime offences have risen by 12% and gun crime discharges by 18% compared to the previous year, although some areas may have slightly decreased.

Commissioner, you have recently stressed again that you think violence levels are beginning to stabilise. What reassurance is that really for Londoners? The public rightly worried about this. People are worried. Children are back at school this week. People are very worried about people in their community. Do you have the latest figures that really confirm your line that they are stabilising? Can you perhaps give us a bit more context around this worrying trend?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes, I can. I would still use the word 'stabilisation', although I appreciate that that is not of itself the most reassuring of words. I also fully recognise that people are concerned. Many people are very concerned and many people are concerned who actually will never come across a violent incident but, because they are seeing all this media attention and conversations about some of the ghastly things that have been happening, they feel quite fearful but it could happen to them. I totally understand that.

I used the word in the context of month-on-month, almost continuously since 2014 in almost every violent crime category, increases. We are now seeing a plateau or in some categories the beginnings of a reduction, which I am determined will go right down again and again.

If I talk about just four quick categories for you, the one that we are always most concerned about is the knife injury victims under 25. These are people who have been stabbed and who are young. You understand why we are so concerned about that. The volumes have been very high in London and they have been increasing for several years. They have been decreasing, broadly speaking, continuously since May [2018]. In even a 12-month rolling period now, we are seeing a reduction and so the last 12 months was better than the previous 12 months. That is quite the beginnings of a coming down, which I am determined will go further and further. Thanks to the Violent Crime Task Force and others for that.

Total gun crime is also down. As you are aware, one of the very high-profile issues is moped-enabled crime. If I compare the last four months' figures with the same time in 2017, that is down very nearly 50%. That is a huge reduction.

There are other crime categories within violence, as you know, and when I take it as a whole, I would describe a chart that has gone up like that for more than a year and in most cases since 2014 and is now beginning to either plateau like that or go down like that.

It is still too high. I said when I became Commissioner that it was too high. I want it to be driven right down and we are determined to do that. You have been out with the Violent Crime Task Force and you have seen the efforts that they are putting into this and the volumes of arrests and seizures, over 4,000 arrests since April [2018], 1,500 knives taken off the streets and nearly 200 firearms. This is not one big seizure of lots of firearms; these are guns taken off very violent people, often at the time they are thinking of either carrying it or about to use it. There were 600 other weapons. We are very busy on knife and gun violence on the streets and we are having lots of successes, lots of people being locked up and lots of the most violent criminals feeling either that they are likely to get arrested any minute or at least that it is not wise to carry a weapon out there.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Your analysis says that you have reached the peak and it is now starting to tail off?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I recall back in 2014 and 2015 raising this with the former Commissioner and I was told that it was a seasonal blip. When I said that it looks to me like knife crime is going up, I was told it was a seasonal blip. Actually, it clearly has --

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It depends which category you are talking about, I guess, Caroline. I cannot speak for that, but many of them started in 2014 and some of them started later in 2015 to go up.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It has been going up, but you feel it has reached a peak and --

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do and I do also of course always say, as I know Sophie would, that the rises that you are seeing in London are percentage-wise less than in much of the rest of the country and many other cities and indeed per head of population. I have not done the detailed analysis of this, but I understand that in many of the violent crime categories per head of population, even when you do not allow for all our visitors, London is actually suffering less violent crime per head of population than some cities.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, but for the ordinary person on the street, seeing the papers, seeing the news, knowing people who have been affected, knowing that that was just down the street from them, they are really worried.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Exactly. Horrible, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You have the Violent Crime Task Force, which obviously we have met with. Are they still operating at full capacity? Do you see the need to put more resources in them? How sustainable is this going forward given the pressures right across the force?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): They are operating at full capacity. They are very busy. They are highly motivated they are doing a great job and they are supported by the firearms teams, by Trident, by the organised crime teams, by the National Crime Agency and the borough police in all sorts of ways. Everybody is really focused on street violence together.

They will carry on. We are constantly reviewing the tactics and those are developing all the time. We are getting better and better at lots of things. As we go into the autumn, the crime profiles tend to change a little bit. People will be concerned about earlier darkness and the potential for robbery. We will be changing some of the ways in which they work and where they work. I will be looking hard at whether we need to bring any more into any aspect of that from other areas of my resource.

Of course, at the same time we are trying to recruit a lot of people because we have more money this year than we expected and very welcome it is, too, and so we are busy recruiting and recruiting.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is across the wider force and general recruitment?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Absolutely, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Do you see that you may need to look at expanding this team going forward?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I would certainly not rule out expanding the team, absolutely.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Is it sustainable, given you have had to take those officers from elsewhere to focus on this bit of work and you have to backfill those? Is this sustainable?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Do you want to have a go at that, Craig?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes, it is absolutely sustainable. Part of the work that goes along with this, as Cressida touched on, is very much about getting the recruitment plan going. As you know, at the moment we are in that position with finance where we can increase our recruitment profile and so that is one of the big things at the moment. You can help us with that. We want people to come and join the MPS. It is a great place to be. Come and join it and be part of it. Growing those numbers will help in terms of that sustainability.

It is also about using some of those resources, as Cressida touched on, that are taskable and are in the MPS most of the time. As you may well know, I chair the Performance Group and the main focus and number one item is always violence. It is looking at what is going on, what lies behind it, what can we see around the trends in terms of what is going on, where those things are blips, what is seasonality in some of these things and where they are real.

As Cressida touched on, we know that as we approach October and the change in the hour and those sorts of things, the autumn nights effect is a real effect. We see that every year in crime patterns. We see that particularly in street robbery. It changes as you go up to that. Street robbery involving knives is one of the things where we are using that focus about. You will see that momentum continue. We always look at whether we can reprioritise resources from one part of the organisation to elsewhere and that is what we will continue to do as part of this work.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely. Can I come to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime now? You have an Evidence and Insight Unit that is dedicated to analysing violence. We want to understand what type of analysis it is carrying out. How are you really getting behind some of these issues that can then help with the officers and the tasking?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We do have a very good Evidence and Insight Team that works very closely with the analysts in the MPS as well. One of the things it has done - it is now on the website, I hope you have seen it - is the knife crime dashboard [Weapon-enabled Crime Dashboard] that has up-to-date information on the prevalence of violent crime in London. As with all the dashboards you can click down to ward level to see what is happening. That is of use to the general public but also is of use to practitioners and stakeholders. It is being used all the time for information that is available in terms of prioritisation. It is certainly something we worked on with the MPS and it is used jointly. It is about the prevalence, which helps in terms of prioritisation and the work that needs to take place.

Of course, there is also the work we do through the Public Attitude Survey to understand the perceptions and experiences of the public and young people in London. A specific piece of work carried out in the run up to the Knife Crime Strategy was talking to young people about their experiences of knife crime and violence in the most difficult areas of London, it was a very-focused piece of work. The Evidence and Insight Unit is continually analysing what is happening and sharing that with the MPS to ensure it goes into operational decision making.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is knife crime, there are lots of other forms of violence.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, and the dashboard has gun crime and other forms of violence. It is on the website.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: How are you using accident and emergency (A&E) data? You have been criticised, quite rightly, because not every A&E department is sharing anonymised data. That is so important. There is a proven model from Cardiff that using data and really targeting it can help bring down violent crime. How are you using that to help with the work of the MPS in this area?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): You will know - because I wrote to the Committee and I certainly did write to you - about the A&E units. 28 of the 29 A&E units in London are routinely sharing that data. It is being used by the partnership as well the police in terms of actual operational decision making. I have said before in front of this Committee how that data sharing has helped with the acid attacks in east London, as well as looking at where violence was taking place that was not being reported to the police. We know there is violence that is not reported and the data that is collected at the A&E units can be used. It is 28 out of the 29. For the A&E unit that is not yet routinely sharing, it is a technical issue around data sharing that is being worked through. I do not totally accept the criticism around the use of data. It is used. It is being shared properly and systematically. There is just that one A&E unit that is getting on board and we are working through those details.

I said last time I was here that I opened a conference in London's Living Room at City Hall on information sharing to tackle violence. The leading medical practitioner in A&E medicine - I am sure that is not the right phrase but you know what I mean - said London was leading the way on this in terms of the number of hospitals that were data sharing, and we are working to expand that into some of the other units in London as well.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I just find it frustrating that when I was a member of the Metropolitan Police Authority I would have meetings about this, trying to get them all on board. Now, 10 years later, with all this violence on the streets, not every --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is just one, 28 out of the 29 A&E units in London are routinely sharing this data and that one will be ready soon. It is not because of lack of will, it is technical issues around the programmes and things.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: As Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, are you satisfied that your office, MOPAC, is adequately addressing violence as a wider issue than knife crime and the involvement of young people? There are all sorts of aspects, from domestic violence to others, and we touched on gun crime as well. Are you really assured that every aspect is being covered?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If you spoke to officers in MOPAC probably the first thing they would say is that I am never satisfied. There is always more to be done. The Commissioner has talked about the figures and what looks like stabilisation at the moment. It is still not enough. It is still too high. When you are the family of a murder victim or a stab victim you are never going to be satisfied that enough has been done so we are constantly pushing that and constantly working with the local authorities, the National Health Service (NHS), our partners and communities to make sure more is being done.

Am I satisfied we have the right strategy, principles and framework? Yes, I am. It is very much around enforcement, prevention and early intervention. However, more needs to be done and we all have to continue to drive it because otherwise what looks like the early signs of stabilisation will not be early signs of stabilisation. Everybody has to be absolutely on this and on this all the time because it really matters, it matters to Londoners. As you said, people are feeling unsafe and worried; rightly so, because what is happening is very worrying and concerning.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely, thank you very much.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you. The Committee is continuing its work on that. You will all be aware we have a day out on Friday - we are visiting Birmingham - to continue our work on violent crime. We are hopefully working toward publishing a report around October or the autumn, shall we say.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If I was you I would be going, "Go on, give us a date".

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Exactly, quite right.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Moving on to the next subject, European Union (EU) exit security and policing. Unusually, this will be Andrew.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you, Chairman. We have discussed this before. About this time last year, the Government published a position paper saying it wanted a new security treaty, I am not sure how far that has got. In November last year, Sophie, you said if we did not have a clear understanding by the first quarter of 2018 you were going to be seriously concerned about what it would mean for individual police enquiries and individual police operations. We are not any clearer.

There are three main forms of co-operation. They have said we cannot remain members of Europol after leaving the EU. Michel Barnier [European Chief Negotiator for the UK Exiting the EU] has said we will not be part of the European Arrest Warrant. The only time parallel negotiations have taken place, it took 13 years to negotiate for Norway and Iceland. Information sharing is going to be an issue in relation to data protection and so forth. We also have the Mayor's six red lines. The question is to you, Cressida: are you now planning for a no-deal scenario?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The short answer is yes. I am going to ask Craig to talk a little bit about the measures you have mentioned and then I will come back in on other contingencies.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes, we are planning for that. DAC Richard Martin [National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for the International Criminality Portfolio] is the national lead for

policing. He is working with the National Crime Agency. They are looking at what the loss of effectively what we call 40 instruments will be.

You described a number of things. There are some real practical examples. If there is no deal on security a patrolling officer will not get alerts from international networks, which they currently get. We will know less about people from this country travelling abroad committing criminality than we would do in the current arrangements. What we have been doing with the National Crime Agency - when I say "we" I mean UK policing - is looking at what we would need to put in place to do that. It will not surprise you that to replicate the speed we currently have is almost impossible to do. However, what we will have are some workarounds and some - we call them 'clumsy'; they are cumbersome - methods and systems that will allow us to go basically through a central referral scheme that we will have to set up to go in and access data in that way. A lot of the things we currently get real time we will not get. That work is ongoing. It is a real strand of planning that national policing and the National Crime Agency are doing in terms of being able to address those issues and to be realistic with people, "These are the capabilities you currently have. If there is no deal in this particular area this is what it means and this is what these things look like".

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): On the wider issues - not policing and security specifically - you will be aware the Government is looking at all the possible impacts were there to be a so-called 'no-deal' scenario. We in policing - led by Chief Constable Charlie Hall QPM [Hertfordshire Constabulary] - have a small team working alongside government departments. Of course, we the MPS, have put some resource into that team and are in very close touch with that team. In essence, they will be working through potential impacts in terms of, first of all, our public order work: Are there likely to be planned protests? Of what sort? How will they be policed? What are the issues at the borders? If there are - hypothetically - queues, what will that mean in terms of policing? As well as any other disorder-type issues. We are working alongside the Government to see what it thinks are the impacts on different sectors. We have heard talk about pharmaceuticals, for example, and food. In a very sensible and sober way we are looking at that, alongside the government departments. Of course, the London Resilience Forum will be an important part of this thinking as well.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you for that. This is a question for Craig. Looking at the cost - in the widest sense of a no-deal Brexit - in terms of officer time and financial costs, have you done some work on what all that adds up to?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I talked about how effectively losing access to systems will require us to put people at the centre. We have been asked to develop a position as to what that will be and that work is ongoing as we speak. In the scheme of things that will be a relatively small cost. Sadly, the cost will fall out in various parts of policing around the country where it will take longer to do enquiries and it will take longer to conduct investigations without access to the things we currently have. I suspect the reality is that some investigations will not progress. It will be far more difficult to progress some investigations when you go back to either bilateral agreements or some of the restrictions we used to have on doing investigations across borders.

Andrew Dismore AM: Presumably that includes counterterrorism as well?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Potentially yes. You cannot assume counterterrorism is different from this. One of the great advantages we have always had is that ability to share police-to-police intelligence and those sorts of things. A lot of that can disappear without some of these mechanisms and particularly the automatic way it is done. Many of you have been out with officers across

London. You will know they get alerts and get things. What you probably do not know is that some of those have come from European systems; they will not get those.

Andrew Dismore AM: Potentially we are going to be less secure.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): There is absolutely that potential, and it will certainly be slower to achieve that level of security.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I genuinely do not think you can underestimate the impact of crashing out of the EU without proper frameworks and a proper deal on security, never mind the rest of the stuff on security. Craig and the Commissioner have talked about things being clunkier and more difficult. As an example, before the European Arrest Warrant was introduced there were 60 individuals a year extradited from the UK. Because we have the European Arrest Warrant the UK surrenders over 10,000 individuals accused or convicted of a criminal offence. That is just a step change. There will be a step change backwards if we crash out of the EU without a proper deal on this. Then there is the Schengen Information System II (SIS II). In June 2017 there were 93,832 UK hits on that system from non-UK alerts. I was concerned in November. I am really worried that if we do not get a proper deal on security, London and the country is going to be less safe.

Andrew Dismore AM: Following up from that, Sophie, we know the Mayor has the six red lines. I will not list them for want of time. Have you or the Mayor made any progress with the Government and/or the EU on those six red lines? I saw the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners called for contingency plans at least to be in place by March next year. Has any progress been made on contingency plans by March next year as it has asked for?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Commissioner Cressida and Craig have talked about how contingency plans are being put in place. There is a small amount of comfort in that because those contingency plans mostly will involve an officer ringing up and asking. In the old days, it would have been faxing or whatever.

Have we made progress on the six red lines? No, we have not made progress. Myself and the MPS did go and have a meeting with David Davis [MP, former Secretary of State for Exiting the EU] before he resigned. We are waiting to get a meeting with Dominic Raab [Secretary of State for Exiting the EU] on a number of issues. Obviously, for me the most important issue that I need to be really concerned about is security. You can see from what is happening with the Brexit negotiations that there is very little progress and there is very little comfort in what is happening.

Andrew Dismore AM: Going back to something Cressida raised - something I had not really thought about - which is the potential public order implications not from a security no deal but from the wider issues. We have heard stories - I do not know if they are scare stories or genuine risk - of food shortages, pharmaceutical shortages and huge queues at the borders potentially creating other pressures.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Stick to the subject.

Andrew Dismore AM: This is part of it because it comes down to the policing demands of that and, in fact, the Commissioner raised this in her wider analysis. It is a new aspect we had not really thought about. I do not know if you can say any more about that, Cressida?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have said that we are involved in planning and we are working with the Government. You would expect us to be looking ahead and making contingency plans.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I have managed to write Andrew's speech for tomorrow by the sounds of it, which is first class! Tony, you wanted to come in?

Tony Arbour AM: I was struck by what Craig had to say about the large number of hits that we had from using their resources. Tell me, how frequently do European police forces make use of your facilities and your intelligence facilities?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I do not have the reciprocal figure, it will be an awful lot.

Tony Arbour AM: Indeed, it would. Is it not a fact that there is a kind of *esprit d'accord* among police forces, not just across Europe but really across the world, where they seek to co-operate and cut red tape?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Absolutely, but they need a legal framework to do that.

Tony Arbour AM: Indeed. Do you think it is realistic? This would have to be a question for the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime --

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I was going to say, I am not a politician.

Tony Arbour AM: It cannot possibly be a question for you. How have you and the Mayor's Office tested the gloomy hypothesis - the Mayor's red lines and the stuff we have just had from Assembly Member Dismore about people queuing in the streets, riots and all this sort of stuff. How have you and the Mayors Office tested that gloomy hypotheses? - to say these things will happen, set against the point I have just made that in policing, security and all of these matters there has always been a supranational co-operation that will continue to remain?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is some question.

Tony Arbour AM: No, it is not for you.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is reassuring.

Tony Arbour AM: It is for the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. I want to know what testing the Mayor has done, instead of him going around, posturing and saying, "It is the end of the world as we know it" when it patently is not.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): *Esprit d'accord* is one thing; the will and goodwill to co-operate is another thing. I completely agree with you, the police forces in Europe will absolutely want to co-operate in the interests of their own national security and international security as well. The discussion at the beginning of this Committee hearing was around extremism and international terrorism, we are all absolutely linked.

However, police forces have to act within legal frameworks. If those legal frameworks fall, whatever the *esprit d'accord* you cannot do that data sharing on the level it is now. We know that because of the legal frameworks that need to be in place. I agree with you, it should be absolutely incomprehensible and unrealistic to think we might get to that place. However, the juggernaut is rolling. We do not have those legal frameworks in place at the moment. My concern is that time is running out. We know what will happen if those legal frameworks are not in place because we have the figures, the data and the examples where it has made such a difference to able to use those legal frameworks.

Tony Arbour AM: I am pleased that you accept that. You talk how manifestly there has to be some kind of legal framework. No matter how obstinate - clearly from my point of view - the Europeans are in this matter, is it not really inconceivable that in this area of co-operation there will not be a separate agreement relating to security? I understand you have to make plans for it. However, it is not conceivable in the 21st century that it will actually happen. For people to go around saying that it is possible it is going to happen and that it is going to lead to some kind of Armageddon really is fearmongering of the most terrible sort. I will end there, Chairman.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you. As ever, a wise intervention by Assembly Member Arbour. We are going to move directly to Andrew's question around professional standards.

Andrew Dismore AM: In July 2018 it was reported that the Director of Professional Standards was being investigated by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) following claims of, "serious corruption and malpractice". We understand one officer is under criminal investigation, two are under disciplinary investigation for gross misconduct and the IOPC is looking at 10 other officers.

Commissioner, you said you have confidence in the department and you object to the investigation being labelled as one of corruption. Perhaps you could tell us a bit more about the investigation and the likely timescales for progress on it.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): This is an investigation that is being run by the IOPC, as you say. Obviously if anybody makes allegations about people within the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS), then it is not appropriate for that department to be investigating itself. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the IOPC is investigating. I make the point that they generally make; the fact notices have been served is just that, it is putting people on notice in order that they can, if you like, gather their arms to answer the accusations. It is no more than that. However, as you say, we have confirmed that notices have been served on a very small number of people.

The point I have made more widely is that it is easy to bandy around the word "corruption". It means a lot of different things to different people but in law it is fairly clear and is a fairly narrow set of circumstances. Of course, in the history of law enforcement, not excluding the MPS, there have been occasions of corruption, including historically - 20 and 40 years ago - large numbers of officers in particular areas. What I objected to in the coverage was the suggestion that this investigation was about corrupt officers covering up corrupt officers. I simply, on the basis of what I know, do not accept that is what it is. I continue to say I have confidence in my DPS and the people in there who do important and difficult work and they do it very well.

We will see, of course, what happens with these allegations that are still at an early stage. They need to be fully investigated no doubt by the IOPC and, of course, I fully respect its process and wherever it ends up. It is an investigation that could have caused alarm for people and I wanted, and still want to, put some context on it. Allegations have been made. They are being investigated. We are at very early stages. I will be

continuously urging the IOPC, because of the importance of it in terms of reputation, to be as fast as possible, to be proportionate and to keep reviewing where it is getting to. I cannot say how long it will take but it will be months, not weeks, quite clearly.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you for that. No one would question that it is right for the IOPC to do this, bearing in mind that we are looking at the DPS itself.

It is very worrying this is taking place in relation to the DPS. To put it in context, how many officers do you have in this Directorate?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): In terms of the entire Directorate - I cannot remember the headcount off the top of my head - about 800, split into various teams from counter-corruption all the way through. We do get complaints and concerns raised about Professional Standards, which is the nature of the type of investigation they get involved in. It is not always welcome when Professional Standards turn up and people do complain about it. It is not completely abnormal; these things do happen. That is why, in this case, it is with the IOPC.

Andrew Dismore AM: That puts in context that we are talking about a relatively small number of officers. It is not like what happened Sir Robert Mark's [GBE, QPM, former Commissioner, MPS] day. Let us put like that.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is my point, Andrew. It could not be further from those scenarios and that is why I found some of the coverage offensive on behalf of that department. I will, of course, stand by whatever is found but we are not dealing, in any sense at all, with something that should remind us of historic corruption scandals in the MPS; we are not.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is reassuring. Len, you want to come in?

Len Duvall AM: Not to second-guess what is going and not to imply anything, but on outcomes and judgement calls on investigations that take place, I presume there are always going to be parameters and choices made on cases.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes.

Len Duvall AM: Who checks the checkers around those outcomes to see if anyone is pulling any punches about judgement calls and whether there is a consistency about them, so they are not doing favours for mates or there are networks within networks? What is the process that is in place?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): There are a number of things in place, not least of which is that over the last two years we strengthened senior management oversight in that area quite considerably. I think you know we have an Assistant Commissioner, Helen Ball, who sits in Professionalism. We have a DAC, a Commander and a Chief Superintendent actually in charge of the DPS. Therefore, there is a management structure for oversight of outcomes as part of the monitoring of the business that goes on in the DPS, that is absolutely standard. The IOPC also has ongoing relationships with the DPS. Part of what it raises is what is going on with consistency - for example, not enough cases resolved through local resolution as opposed to other processes - and that is quite normal. At various times cases get highlighted and raised, then others across the organisation, including myself, will go in and have a look.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you. The next question - indeed, the last question from colleagues until we return to the front counters - is on the recent issues around Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Len, do you want to take this one? We have time for it.

Len Duvall AM: I am aware that changes took place within the organisation and you did some consultation about this particular change. It is important for this Committee to understand the management of the risk. Remind us why the change took place.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It might help if I do a bit of the national context and then, quite quickly, get into what we are talking about. For Members who are not aware, across the country the DBS gets about 4.2 million applications for people to be checked. There are a variety of tiers of check, it might be as simple as an employment check, all the way through to what they call 'homeworking'. About 2.8 million of those then get passed to forces. The 43 forces across England and Wales will all have a unit similar to ours where they will then run the checks against systems. It is really simple. If I have a great big record of convictions on the Police National Computer (PNC) they will come up and those are available. The more complex ones are where there are intelligence hits. From that great big funnel at the top about 9,500 of what are called 'disclosures' of information are actually made nationally. It is a huge funnel that comes to a very small number. We disclose in just under 1% of cases - 0.88% was our last figure - and so it is a really small number you get to.

What has happened with DBS checks is that they have gone up gradually. They are rising at about 12% a year. A lot of national policy initiatives put more people into the pot to be checked. What that does - and what it did for us certainly through 2015 and 2016 - is put huge backlogs in the system. If you are an employer those backlogs in some ways are as challenging as not getting the checks back because you really do not know whether you should take a chance, "Shall I take Craig on anyway because I am short of people?" The issue of addressing the backlog was as important for us as getting through the checks.

We therefore set up what we call a Gold Group - basically an oversight group for a Management Board - with colleagues from the DBS, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Home Office who lead on policy on this to look at the decision making we had. In some cases we were over checking. We also had some challenges with our information technology (IT) not being as joined up as it should be, but we were over checking and over managing some of the risk. We looked at where we could take some risk-based decisions to try to work our way through the backlog, which was particularly around those checks from people who were outside our area - what we call non-homebased working - where they just got traces. We decided to make decisions in some of those cases about moving them through the system more quickly, dip-sampling to check the risk around it, and then bringing in national colleagues to dip-sample what we have done. That is what we did as part of working through the backlog.

At no point have we changed the risk to people in terms of what we are doing. We comply with the national standards around checks. We have not compromised anyone's safety. We will always face the challenge that if you put more people into that DBS system you will create a backlog again. I hasten to add that is not a criticism of the DBS. Policing gets funded for this but it is about a 12-month delay. If you say to someone, "Your work will rise by 12% on 1 January but your resources will join you on 31 December", that is always going to be a challenging year. Therefore, it is one of those things we work through.

Our relationship with the DBS is very good. We are working with them nationally and the National Police Chiefs' lead to see if there is a better national solution to this process because effectively what we experienced

in 2016 other forces are experiencing now. If you can imagine that you are a small force, you might only have four or five people doing this work. If two of them retire you half your workforce in this space and your backlog goes up. Therefore, we are looking at whether there is the potential to create a national solution and part of that is an IT product.

Len Duvall AM: When this was in the public domain, the figure of 20,000 was talked about as passing through the system unchecked.

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Everyone who goes through gets checked. There is no unchecking. Again, it might be one of those things you want to come and have a look at it because, frankly, the devil is in the detail in this one. Most members of the public observing this understand when someone has a criminal record. It is really clear how you do it. The contentious and difficult areas around decisions are when there are intelligence traces and whether that intelligence trace is relevant to what people are doing. Some of the things people wrestle with are that for some of these checks we need five years of your address history. What happens if I have just come to the country and previously lived elsewhere and do not have five years of address history? Can I be checked? Can I not be checked? Do I automatically get excluded? Am I barred from homeworking? There is a huge level of complexity behind this that is worth having a look at.

To reassure, people get checked and go through the system. The other thing you will want to look at is that this is a huge funnel going into a very, very few people that we nationally and locally make disclosures about.

Len Duvall AM: I have just been reminded by a colleague. Will Brexit have an impact on this?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): There is a theme emerging here!

Len Duvall AM: According to some of my colleagues, it will only have a minor impact. Could you explain it a little bit more so that we understand that?

Sir Craig Mackey QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It could do. However, in deference to other colleagues in the room, it will entirely depend on access to information. This is truly something that relies on information and data to try to allow people to make informed decisions. Absolutely it is conceivable. However, this is an area where everyone understands they are working to keep people safe, that is what they are doing.

Len Duvall AM: No further questions, Chairman.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We are in the process of blaming Brexit for everything. I blame Brexit for faults in my football team and Len's football team, while we are getting around there.

We have one more question that we will take with Sophie. Cressida and Craig, would you care to leave? I thank you now.

Susan Hall AM: Can I just ask a very quick question?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): With my permission, of course.

Susan Hall AM: With your permission, obviously, Mr Chairman. This is going back to the Carnival and nothing to do with [spit] guards, I promise. I am assuming that this family event is the biggest in the calendar for policing.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes.

Susan Hall AM: What is the nearest to it? I know you have riots or whatever.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): As you know, we sometimes have weeks where all sorts of events happen and overlap and cause a lot of pressure on the system. We had a very obvious one earlier in the year when we had Wimbledon, football, RAF100, the Western Balkans Summit, multiple protests of all different sorts and the visit of the United States President. That was a very large set of operations all linked in various ways and often in the same space. For single events, the nearest thing in any sense at all in London would be New Year's Eve, which is probably the closest, or Pride, which is quite big.

Susan Hall AM: Take New Year's Eve. Did we have 45 officers hurt on New Year's Eve?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I would have to check the last figures. I do not know. Central London New Year's Eve, of course, is highly regulated and very well controlled in all sorts of ways. It is a ticketed event and is very safe and secure. Wider New Year's Eve celebrations that go on do result, I am sorry to say, in all sorts of arrests for drunken offences, assaults and disorder. I am sure we have had officers injured on New Year's Eve.

Susan Hall AM: The point I am trying to make is that I find it absolutely horrific that we have one event a year where we know we are going to get police officers injured. People who go there choose to go there. Our police officers are ordered to go there. It absolutely astounds me that this happens every single year. It gets more and more difficult. The cost implications are sky high when you are so short of funding, which we understand. To send our police officers to an event where we know that some of their colleagues are going to get injured I find absolutely extraordinary. I will leave it at that. Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We are going to leave it at that now, Andrew, sorry.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I follow up with one short question?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Why is no one taking notice of the Chairman anymore? Chaos reigns!

Andrew Dismore AM: We have had the number of injuries. Are all the injuries you report the result of assaults or are some accidents?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): There are some slips and trips but most of them are during the course of a detention or an arrest. It is when people are struggling and everybody falls on the floor and somebody hurts their finger. Some of them - spits and bites - are more direct assaults. The vast majority are in the course of carrying out a function. A couple of years ago there certainly were some where utterly uninvolved people wanted to carry out utterly unprovoked attacks on police, which is even more unacceptable than what happens during the course of -- I do not know why I keep trying to arrest Craig, but you know what I mean.

Susan Hall AM: Put a spit guard on him!

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): All right. Have colleagues exhausted their trains of thought on that? Not really, but for the moment. Before you go, Cressida, anything else you want to add?

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do want to say one very quick thing, Chairman. First, I apologise for looking at my phone a little bit in the last hour. I have seen some colleagues here also looking at their phones and I imagine some of you will have seen something of the news conference that [Assistant Commissioner] Neil Basu did that was broadcast after 11 o'clock this morning. Neil Basu was accompanied - you will see it afterwards - by Sue Hemming [Director of Legal Services, CPS] and also the Chief Medical Officer. He was able to tell people that we have reached a very significant point today in the investigation in relation to the attempted murders of Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury. The CPS said there is sufficient evidence to charge two Russian nationals.

We released images of two suspects this morning. Both are Russian nationals and about 40 years old. We are appealing for witnesses. The two suspects were in London between 2 and 4 March [2018] at various points and hence the appeal is also to people who may have been in London at the same time. I did not hear the Chief Medical Officer's precise words but I know she was to say that people who were travelling on the transports these people may have used and people who were present at the station these suspects used are safe. She has provided a reassuring message about the safety of Londoners and people who were visiting London between 2 and 4 March.

I want to pay tribute to the investigators. They have been doing a very detailed, very diligent and very difficult job and they have done a great piece of work so far. I pay tribute to the resilience of the people of Salisbury and Wiltshire over the past six months. They have been extremely supportive to the counterterrorism investigators and other police services. Of course, our thoughts are with the family of Dawn Sturgess, who lost her life, and all the victims from the attacks. We remain absolutely determined to identify and bring about a prosecution in the UK courts of those persons responsible for these attacks. We will do all we can to get justice for the victims and their families.

To finish by repeating the Chief Medical Officer's advice that people who were in London between 2 and 4 March [2018] are safe. Secondly, if anybody does know or recognises the suspects in the images that have been shown across our screens in the last hour - and will no doubt be shown in the coming hours - then they should contact us, the police, on 0800 789 321. Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you, Cressida and Craig. We are going to have one more question but you are free to go. Thank you for your attendance this morning.

Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Thank you very much indeed.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We have one more question to Sophie, which Caroline is going to lead on, around the recent decision on the judicial review on Wimbledon Police Station.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: We have expressed our concern before about the consultation around your Public Access Document and your closure of police front counters and stations across the capital. Led by Councillor Paul Kohler [Merton Council], there has been a judicial review and the High Court Judge held that Wimbledon Police Station should remain open whilst you further evaluate the impact of things like new technology and so on pending further consultation. What are your next steps regarding Wimbledon Police Station?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The judicial review did come to an end at the end of July of this year. The High Court Judge did rule that I should look again at the decision around Wimbledon Police Station, but he also ruled that every other front counter closure in London was lawful and could remain. Councillor Kohler did bring that judicial review for the whole of London but only the element around Wimbledon Police Station was upheld in that sense.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Where there was the most evidence. It was also critical of your consultation and held the structure of the document is incoherent and unhelpful, which is strongly put from the High Court. It reflects our own concerns as a Committee and also those of the Consultation Institute, which was highly critical as well.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The High Court judge was very critical of the consultation, as you and other members of the Committee have been. I accept those criticisms. I absolutely accept that the consultation was not as good as it should be. However, it was lawful and the vast majority of the front counter closures remain and stand. We are looking at what lessons need to be learnt to make sure, as I said to you before, any other consultation like this are done in a much better way. However, it still stands that this had the most responses to any consultation. It had nearly 4,000 responses. There were public meetings in every borough. I accept those criticisms and we need to learn the lessons.

In terms of Wimbledon Police Station, the judge ruled that I, as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, need to review that decision because of the single point in Councillor Kohler's submission around the web-based ability to report. I am doing that, will continue to do that and will make a decision in due course.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: When will "in due course" be, as you would expect us to ask?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That is fair enough. We are now going back through all the responses we had specifically for Wimbledon. In terms of the numbers, we had around 290 written responses in relation to Merton and Wimbledon Police Station itself. We are going back through all those responses. That is right because that is what the judge has asked us to do. Once we have concluded that and reviewed the information we have around the other forms of reporting, I will look at all that detail and make a decision. "In due course", I am not going to rush this. We need to get it right. It important we get it right.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Are you expecting by the end of the calendar year you will have made a decision?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I said, I am not going to rush this. We are looking through all the responses, making sure we have the right evidence and we have done a review of internet-based and other forms of reporting. I am not going to put a date on that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Not a date at all?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I will be taking that decision, as I said, as soon as I can. I am not rushing it. I take seriously the ruling of the court.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: All the other front counter closures and building closures are going ahead. Has this had any impact on your savings projections?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, it has not in terms of long-term savings projections. During the course of the judicial review we put the disposals on hold. However, those disposals were not all going to happen in this financial year, it is a rolling programme so that any impact is minimal. We are now moving through the disposals that were going to happen this year. Wimbledon Police Station was not in line to be sold or disposed of this year, so it is not having an impact at this stage.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Of course, you may consider keeping it open as part of your consideration.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have to look at the responses.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Lovely. Thank you very much.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Following on from Assembly Member Pidgeon on that in terms of the savings impact, widely reported by the BBC - this week, I think - were some of the figures from sales and the police station closures. You mentioned the disposals will still be going ahead. Do you have any figures on how much you are looking to make on the disposals that will happen for this year?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do not have in front of me, in terms of year by year, the money we would get in from selling the buildings. Overall, we were looking to raise in the region - it depends on the market and what happens - around £165 million. That is capital receipts that would go straight back into the capital budget, to make sure we have the up-to-date technology that is needed for modern policing in the capital, and also is there to ensure the buildings we do still have are fit for purpose for modern policing.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you. Clearly, there are lessons to be learnt by MOPAC around consultation, which is patently obvious. Can I again thank the remaining guest for her contribution today?

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