

London Assembly Police and Crime Committee - Wednesday 6 July 2022**Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Question and Answer Session with the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Service**

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We now move on to our main item of business, the question and answer session with the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). I would like to welcome our guests, Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, although I have been informed that you can only stay until 12; is that correct? Obviously, the panel are not happy about that. Louisa Rolfe OBE, Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, MPS; and Laurence Taylor, Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing at the MPS. Welcome to you all.

I am going to start the questions today addressed primarily to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. Sophie, were you and the MPS shocked by the Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) decision to place the MPS under special measures?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): When we were informed by HMICFRS through a letter around the MPS being put into the Engage process, as it is called, we were disappointed but not surprised. No, we were not surprised because many, if not all, of the issues that have been outlined in the letter to us are ones of which we are already aware of and we already had oversight of and scrutiny of, and also ones in which we have also been driving actions within the MPS.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Therefore, you were not surprised?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, as I said, we were disappointed but not surprised and we welcome the report and we welcome the MPS being put into Engage, because with that comes additional oversight and scrutiny, but also additional support through what is called the Policing Performance Oversight Group (PPOG) that myself and the Acting Commissioner will be attending next week, which is chaired by Andy Cooke [QPM DL], who is the Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

The process is we have had the letter, we have not yet had the draft report, therefore we have not yet seen the real detail behind the headlines. I do not mean headlines in media terms, but behind the headlines in the letter. The process is in the early stages, but it will be a supportive and challenging process. It is about Engage, it is about where there are significant concerns about performance within the MPS and about supporting the MPS to make the improvements that are necessary.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): When would you say that you first became concerned about issues with the MPS?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If we take one of the issues that has been flagged up in the HMICFRS letter and has been widely reported, because it was leaked, and that is why I can talk about it. One of the big issues is around victim support and victim care. We know that the Mayor, in terms of when he came in, knew that victims were an incredibly important part of the MPS as well as the Criminal Justice Service and appointed Claire Waxman [OBE] as Victims’ Commissioner. Since she has been in, MOPAC, myself and her have been working with the MPS around victim care.

You have asked me about victim satisfaction on a number of occasions and we have been seeing that decrease over the years. It has been a few years that we have had problems with victim satisfaction and we have published deep-dives into, for example, rape, the *Rape Review* in 2019, with recommendations for improvement and good practice. Also, recently I have had discussions with Louisa Rolfe [OBE] as well as Barbara Gray [QPM, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service] around the Witness Care Units. There has been a review of the Witness Care Units instigated by the MPS off the back of the concerns of Claire Waxman and myself and the discussions that we have had. Therefore, if you take that as one of the examples, we have been aware for a while around falling victim satisfaction and we have been taking action. But clearly more action needs to be taken and improvements need to speed up.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. You said at some point during that that it is a few years. So, for a few years you have been concerned about just one area or several different areas?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, I gave you that as an example of one of the areas that was highlighted by HMICFRS as an area that it was concerned about. That is an example of it. We have been publishing quarterly performance reports, which is a new thing, which were not published in terms of the performance of the MPS for a number of years. Through that process of quarterly performance reports we do deep dives, I and MOPAC officers do deep dives and challenge the MPS.

For example, another example given within the HMICFRS letter was around emergency response not meeting national standards. This is not a surprise to MOPAC, not a surprise to me. I, and the Oversight Board I chair, went through the figures around emergency response in January and challenged the MPS and there were actions flowing from that. HMICFRS is quite right to pick up on that and quite right to see that as an area for improvement, as indeed I think is an area for improvement as well.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Really there are areas, quite a few different areas, that you have been concerned about for quite some time?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): There are a number of areas that we have picked up through the new performance regime that was not in place when I came into office in 2016, and the reports are published quarterly, and are reports that you see as the Police and Crime Committee. Therefore, there are a number of areas there, yes. Another area that was picked up by HMICFRS is around stop and search. You know, we have had many discussions at Police and Crime Committee meetings where you have been concerned about stop and search. It has been a major part of the Mayor's action plan for trust and confidence, particularly in the Black community; that oversight and drive to improve practice and also to look at the disproportionality within stop and search as well.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): How many officers are there in MOPAC?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): There is about 170-180 officers, but they are not all on oversight, as you know, because MOPAC has a significant arm around commissioning. We commission all the victims' services for London, therefore these are not all officers that are on oversight of the MPS, they are officers delivering programmes and services for Londoners.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, I accept that. The other ones have been looking at this, therefore it does sound as if you have been quite concerned for the last six years then.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I have said, with the examples, and I could go through other examples as well, there are areas where we have challenged and have delivered oversight for the MPS. Therefore, the issues within the HMICFRS letter are not ones that surprise me or are not new to me.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): So, I think it is fair then from the comments you have made that you have been concerned about quite a few areas for quite some time. Is that a fair assessment of what you have just said?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am not sure I can say anything else. I have really clearly said the quarterly performance regime has picked up issues, we as oversight have picked up issues, on victims we have done deep dives and used our oversight and the research that we do to challenge the MPS. We are going to move on as part of the agenda into the Telephone Digital Investigation Unit (TDIU). We know what the figures are from that because we, in MOPAC, instigated a victim satisfaction survey specifically for people who are channelled through the TDIU and through that - and we are going to come on to it therefore I do not want to pre-empt your questions - we have had challenge, oversight and a real view of what is happening within the TDIU. The MPS has responded, first of all, by putting in a pilot around phoning people back. That has already proven to be successful and improve the victim satisfaction for those who were a part of the pilot. That is now practice within the MPS. I really do think that is because of the oversight and the research and the survey that we have done into victim satisfaction. That is what oversight can do and we will continue to do.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, and it is a shame you are leaving early, because I do not know that you will still be here for that. But going back, it does sound to me as if you have been picking up major issues for six years.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We have always been looking at issues. That is what oversight is about. For a number of years we have had concerns. However, I would like to say that these concerns have not all been there since 2016. For example, one of the things that has been picked up by HMICFRS is around recording of anti-social behaviour (ASB). In 2018/2019, HMICFRS gave the MPS a clean bill of health on its crime data integrity. Their inspection into that put them at a good, and not just a good, a good-good if you like, in the higher rankings of good. Therefore, that has been one of the areas where, in terms of prioritisation of our resources, we have relied on HMICFRS.

Now they have come back and things have changed around ASB, therefore we will pick that up and we will make sure that we have proper oversight in terms of the recording of that. Therefore, it is not only myself and MOPAC that have had that oversight of the MPS, we have also relied on HMICFRS and the police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections. This is the most recent PEEL inspection that has put the MPS into Engage and we have also relied on the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and its view into the MPS as well so that the oversight is part of that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I hear what you say. But then of course the question that has to be posed is, given all that you have just said, why on earth did you ask for Cressida Dick's [DBE QPM, former Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] contract to be extended? If all of those things were going wrong, and you have told us about quite a few already, and the fact that they have gone back for quite some time, that was really what I wanted to get to the bottom of, if you know there have been all these problems in various different areas, and I assume you had sight of [Operation] Hotton before and we could all name all these various things, why then did you ask the Home Secretary to extend her contract?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We have been around the block on this before at Police and Crime Committee meetings around the extension of the previous Commissioner's contract. HMICFRS has been clear in the letter that it is not just the performance issues that have put the MPS into Engage, but also some of the high-profile incidents that came to light post the extension of the [former] Commissioner's contract. Operation Hotton came to light and came to the notice of MOPAC and the Mayor and myself, and those WhatsApp messages that were so appalling came to light far after the extension of the previous Commissioner's contract. The extension of the contract was one that the Home Secretary made. As we know these are Home Secretary decisions, and ones that are obviously discussed with us.

Now there have been a number of things that have come to light since that and one of the reasons, especially around Operation Hotton, the Mayor lost confidence in her plan to regain the trust and confidence of Londoners.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): But that does not add up because, if all these issues were happening, going back quite some time, which you have sat there and said, given that the direction of travel was not good in many different areas, surely then you would have wanted to have changed the person at the top and the ideal time for that would have been before the contract was renewed.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I said, the HMICFRS letter to us, not only picks up on the performance issues, but also picks up on the high-profile cases that have really undermined and damaged the trust and confidence of Londoners in the MPS. That is the reason the Mayor in February -- we have been through this on a number of occasions, we went through it at a Police and Crime Committee meeting quite soon after the resignation of Cressida Dick, why the Mayor lost confidence in her ability and her plan to re-engage with Londoners and improve the trust and confidence of Londoners.

The Mayor has been really clear for a long time of the need for change and the need for the MPS to put right some of the bread-and-butter policing issues. He has been very clear about that and that is why in February he lost confidence in the Commissioner, in her ability to transform the trust and confidence of Londoners.

But I would say that this is not just about one person. The Mayor was very clear about this. This is about the leadership of the MPS, but it is also about the ability to bring in a reforming Commissioner and the ability of that Commissioner to take expertise, advice, support, and capacity, from outside to come into the MPS to improve it and transform it in the way that is needed and to work alongside HMICFRS in doing that.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, I hear what you say, but it does not add up quite frankly. Just because there are suddenly some high-profile cases, he has got scared, if you like, and then thinks he should act. If things were going so wrong for six years, I would have thought that he would not have had faith in the Commissioner earlier.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have answered your question about the six years. There have been a number of issues, not all of which - as I have been very clear - have been there since 2016. Let us remind ourselves what has happened since 2016. We have had a number of terrorist incidents. The MPS has done extremely well on bringing down violence and in terms of teen homicides as well. This is not complacency. Therefore, in terms of violence and the proactivity of the MPS there have been some extremely good advances made in that.

In the recent years, the issues within the MPS, in my view, and clearly in HMICFRS's view, have got to the point where we the MPS was put into the Engage process. This inspection is long after the resignation of Cressida Dick, but also long after the extension of the contract of the previous Commissioner as well.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): I hear the Mayor saying that he welcomes the report and everything else. Are you not somewhat embarrassed about the report? You are the ones who are responsible for overseeing the MPS. It is in your job description. Are you not embarrassed that you are in this position?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I said very clearly, I welcome this report because it very clearly sets out the issues and the challenges that MOPAC has already had oversight of within the MPS. I welcome the MPS being put into the Engage process because, not only does it come with challenge, it comes with support. The MPS, yes, needs a reforming Commissioner, but also I welcome the support. We will find out next week exactly what that support is and we will continue to have discussions with HMICFRS. I welcome that support because the MPS has significant challenges. We have had that oversight. The issues within it are not a surprise but it has got to the point where the force needs to go into Engage.

I would be really clear also, and I am sure you are well aware of these statistics, there are six forces in the Engage process. One in seven of the forces in England and Wales are in this Engage process. This is not just an issue for the MPS. There are real significant problems and issues with national policing as well.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): If we can just concentrate - as you are supposed to - on the MPS. That is what we are here to talk about today. I am surprised you are not mortified. I certainly would be if I was overseeing something. It is like saying to a head teacher who has had an Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) report, "You are as low as it can be, it is really bad," and for that head teacher to be saying, "That is great. I welcome that". You should be mortified. It is your job to be overseeing this, but you will just give me the same answer and therefore I will ask a different question. Of the 14 fresh significant failings identified by HMICFRS, what are you most concerned about and how will you work with the MPS to address this?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am pausing because that is a difficult question, because all of them are important and I am pausing to think about it. I am always most concerned about emergency response because the fundamental contract - and this is why I picked it up in the January Oversight Board - of the police to the public, the number one contract is emergency response and the ability of the police to be there at that moment when 999 is called, and to have the calls answered and to be there quickly. That really does concern me and, when we talk about the basics, that is the number one issue for me. It is one of the most important issues because it is that fundamental contract. It also very much feeds into trust and confidence because, if Londoners do not feel that their calls are being answered or the police are responding quickly enough, that does also undermine trust and confidence in the police. As I said, I pause because victim support and victim care is incredibly important as well. A number of the issues are all important and add up to a whole.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): The MPS has never ever been put under special measures before. Do you or the Mayor think you should consider your position because you are the ones overseeing what they are supposed to be doing? This is a damning report.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I said, I welcome the report. Just to go back to your previous question about the analogy with Ofsted, of course I am disappointed that the MPS is in this position, I am disappointed on behalf of Londoners because they are not getting the service from the MPS that

they deserve. If you go back to your analogy of the head teacher, one of the things that I would say, if Ofsted came into a school or HMICFRS came, as they do, as they have come into a force and come into the MPS, and the report and their findings are a complete surprise, that is where I would be incredibly worried and it is at that point I would be thinking, "What has happened?"

As I have already said, we have had significant oversight and challenge on many of the issues, if not all of the issues, within the HMICFRS report. That for me shows the oversight that we have been putting in and the scrutiny has been in the right places. What we need is better action and we need quicker improvement from the MPS.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Well I have a number of colleagues waiting to come in. I will just first ask Louisa, what have you said to senior leaders in the MPS about the MPS being placed in special measures?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you, Chairman. We have acknowledged with our senior leaders the cumulative impact of events and challenges that have led the MPS to be in this position and appreciate the impact this has on our communities and their disappointment. We share that disappointment. Our conversation with senior leaders has been about recognising the work that we are doing and have been doing for some time to address the challenges identified by HMICFRS. The Engage phase relates to a cumulative impact of a number of issues as set out in the letter, many of which are at the forefront of our senior leaders' minds, because they are issues. The way HMICFRS works, it often meets with our people to identify concerns and identify the priority activity, its own assessment of challenges, risks, threats, within the organisation. Therefore, the HMICFRS report will often be a report back to us about the things that most concern us and what we are really focused on.

HMICFRS did recognise that there were many things the MPS does well, but this is no time for complacency. There has been significant progress on some of the issues mentioned and we have not yet received the draft report from HMICFRS, therefore we are basing this on the letter. We look forward to receiving their report and working through it with them in detail. We take very seriously the opportunity to work with the College of Policing, with HMICFRS, and with MOPAC, in ensuring that we take this work forward in a very positive way. We are determined to be a police service that Londoners can be proud of, but also fundamentally that the officers and staff, who work incredibly hard every day to keep Londoners safe, can feel proud to work in the MPS.

Of course we are disappointed, of course we want to be much, much better at this, but we must be positive about the opportunity to take this forward and improve and recognise that this is a cumulative impact. HMICFRS itself is very clear about the PEEL inspection process. It brings in a number of inspections that have taken place over the last few years. Therefore, we are not complacent, when we receive a report that addresses and identifies a recommendation, an area for improvement, we get on and strive to improve that. This process will bring additional scrutiny and additional support in ensuring that we do improve in the way that we set out to do. We welcome that additional support, but our conversation with senior leaders is about us really positively taking this forward, striving to improve, and being confident of those improvements.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, thank you.

Len Duvall AM: The headline figures and individual investigations of events, I understand that, I understand what the MPS stance is, I understand what the Mayor's stance is. But arising from this HMICFRS intervention is the basics, the performance issues, and particularly the deterioration in performance over a period of time,

some of it a short period of time. You, Sophie, mentioned ASB, we got a sign-off from HMICFRS saying all was well and then since then something has gone terribly wrong with one aspect of ASB and recording of ASB.

So, in that sense, what is the thinking of why, on some of the issues, from the PEEL report, why have those issues identified by HMICFRS - this is the new Assistant Commissioner - of that deterioration over the short period of time? Not all of them I realise, there is a long period of time, some are short. What is your initial thinking of that and where is the MPS on that?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Of course we really do want to understand. When we receive the detailed report from HMICFRS we can fully get to the detail as to how they formed their assessment and understand. We want to bring in external scrutiny as well to assist us in ensuring that we do not assume we know how to do that, we can fix it.

Talking about ASB and crime recording, crime data integrity, it is absolutely fundamentally important that Londoners have confidence that we record crime accurately. To reassure you about ASB incidents, what HMICFRS has identified here is not every incident of ASB reported to us results in an appropriate classification of crime being recorded. Every one of those incidents is captured on our system. Every one of those incidents influences our tasking of officers, our assessment of ASB, and ensuring that our neighbourhood teams are focusing on addressing those problems with problem-solving activity.

But clearly that is not good enough because also victims of crime should be confident that we understand and we record crime. Crime pattern analysis will then help us understand the threats we face as an organisation. So, I do not wish to give an excuse here, but to reassure you that we want to seek to understand and that we are already taking steps, on the basis of the information we have to date, we are taking steps to go further to understand. We are looking at our approach to date on these issues, is there more we can do, can we bring in additional external scrutiny. But of course we want to have the full report from HMICFRS to look at it in detail.

Len Duvall AM: The Chairman mentions 14 fresh issues. Is that one of the 14 fresh issues that maybe was not on the radar of the MPS or on MOPAC's radar because the PEEL report said, "We think this is all right, it is going in the right direction", in 2019 you had that report. What has happened? Is that one of the areas that has caught you unaware or is that one of the areas that you were aware of the non-recording of ASB?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): When I receive the full report, I would need to come back to you on that particular issue. Because of course we do monitor our performance around crime recording, therefore whether this was a complete surprise in terms of that particular issue or not, it is certainly very different from the last inspection, and therefore it is a more recent deterioration of performance. But I would need to come back to you on at what point we ourselves have identified that.

Len Duvall AM: OK, right. Let us go back to basics then. The letter that you have that you are now putting to one side because you are going to get a different report or a tweaked report from the HMICFRS to work on. That is what you are waiting to receive, correct?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): The letter is a letter that sets out a very high-level brief summary of issues. The report is the full report that sits beneath that. It is not a different report. We are awaiting the full report so that we do not rush off to action without fully understanding all of the issues HMICFRS has identified.

Len Duvall AM: When do you think you are going to get that full report? When has HMICFRS said that you are going to receive that revised report or a report that helps you understand what the issues are?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): It is imminent. I have been monitoring my emails before coming here, anticipating it may arrive. We have not to date received it, but I am hoping it is within days.

Len Duvall AM: You would be happy, the MPS and MOPAC, to share your response to HMICFRS, to its letter? Because there are some problems, I am not sure if you are aware of it, HMICFRS does not want to share its letter at this stage with this Committee because it wants to go back into what it has written to you. I do not know whether it is double checking facts, who knows how that process works. We are very keen to see the letter rather than rely on leaks to the press, to be honest, because we do not want to be forced to make judgements about your performance based on leaks. We want to see the hard facts and the evidence that backed it up. We also want to see your response. Are you, in terms of the MPS, in a position to say, regardless whether HMICFRS wants to share its response to us when it finally gets around to doing one, which is imminent you tell me, are you going to share your response back to HMICFRS with this Committee?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I imagine that our response would be a matter of public record. There is a process through which HMICFRS goes through and of course the leak is somewhat outside of that process. But the process as it stands would be that what we are anticipating is HMICFRS's draft report that it would share, as it would with any force, for checking for factual accuracy, because of course you will appreciate an inspection process involves speaking with many people, looking at many things, and there may be things that are factually inaccurate.

We would have an opportunity and we have a matter of weeks within which to check the fine detail in that report. We would then respond to HMICFRS, which might be about, "You have counted a number here and we think it is this and here is the evidence to show that it is this, not that". It is unlikely to change fundamental findings, but it might be something it would want to take into consideration, because there are principles it adheres to in its reports around objectivity, around focusing on efficiency and effectiveness of policing services, and we would seek to support it in that endeavour.

At that point, once it has received our factual accuracy report, it would seek to publish its report and we would have a number of days within which we must provide a response to areas for improvement and recommendations and causes for concern. It is the cumulative impact of causes for concern.

Within the letter, and as you have seen, it refers to the cumulative impact of a number of causes for concern that are in reports already published. Therefore, some of these things are already in the public domain and we are well aware of them and we are working to address them. But of course this offers us an opportunity to ourselves look at these things as a whole across the MPS and ensure that our responses that we already have in train, the cumulative impact of those responses add up to the effect we want to achieve of being the best we can be, of addressing the matters of confidence.

Len Duvall AM: One of the accusations against you in terms of the leaking of it is the MPS is in denial of the problems that it faces, it does not respond quickly enough or change practices quickly enough in terms of when those practices have been identified that need changing. That there is an arrogance of the MPS, a London arrogance you could say, us politicians are not immune from that in terms of that, but an arrogance in the MPS towards change or suggestions from outside the organisation.

Is that a part of some of your thinking in terms of responding to this or you just do not deal with that? Because it is hard to say what the evidence is. I am not an inspector, I would be sitting in a room and maybe saying these things to you, and you may be not listening or counteracting those arguments. How does the MPS think about challenging those issues or accepting those issues?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): From our perspective, this is a time for us to be humble, for us to listen, for us to grasp the opportunity of that external scrutiny and the offers of help, the very positive opportunity that comes with the Engage process is the offer of help from the National Police Chiefs' Council, from the College of Policing, from MOPAC and others. Policing people are incredibly hard-working and incredibly proud of what they do. We all need to check ourselves and criticism hurts, whatever job you do. We need to ensure that our personal reaction in responding to that is to do it with our eyes and ears open and to listen to those who want to help us and to ensure that we take forward the opportunity.

So, of course we are alive to those issues you raise, of course. We have seen headlines in the media that suggest we are defensive; that we are arrogant. It is something that cuts at the core and we do not want to respond in that way, and we are determined that will not be a characteristic of our response here. This is a wonderful opportunity to work more closely with our communities in London to provide the policing service they deserve and for our officers and staff, who work so hard every day, and are so proud of what they do, for them to hold their heads up high and to know that their activity makes a difference and they are supported by their leaders and when they get things right they are defended for what they do well. But that we support them in addressing our requirement to learn and improve.

Len Duvall AM: Let us go back to one of the characteristics I said about responding in real time rather than in not Greenwich mean time or anything like that in terms of some of the issues that have been raised. Clearly you do not stand still. If there is a problem, you move in and correct it. Of course there is a deliberation process, you may change what you did in the short term or whatever. Is that the plan on some of these issues? Are you going to try to deal with them? There is a lot of work that you have said that has gone into some of these issues already. What is the thinking about dealing with the time issue that it takes so long to get things done and to change some of these practices or get the action required to bring it back into the real world in some ways? The real world of tackling crime.

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Some of these issues are complex and wicked problems that affect - as Sophie said - policing nationally. For example, while 101 call demand across policing nationally, has remained relatively static, what we do know is that some of the improvement activity policing has put in place to ensure that we better understand the risk faced by vulnerable people, we respond more effectively to missing people, particularly children. We use the THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement) plus risk assessment process to ensure that we manage investigative opportunities. We know that has added a lot of time to each call. Therefore, while the 101 calls have not gone up, the demands in our call centres have gone up dramatically, for good reason, and our people are facing pressure.

999 demand has gone up nationally too and is on a trajectory of continuing to increase. To improve that and ensure that we have the most efficient, effective processes and to ensure that we work hard. Because I recognise, as Sophie said, that many, many Londoners speak to our 101 call centre every day and every interaction is an opportunity for us to improve confidence, to improve people's satisfaction with the service they receive from the MPS, to do the right thing, to grasp opportunities to investigate, to support and safeguard the vulnerable. We must get that right.

But we have to understand the issues that enable us to get that right as well and do that in a way that takes our people with us. That we provide the effective support. Some of that will be about the right infrastructure, the right data, improving technology, and these things are not always quick fixes. Therefore, what we are seeking to is identify what must we do immediately and what might take longer? What might require investment? But also look across the MPS as a whole, because, as Sir Tom Winsor [former Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary] said in his *State of Policing Report* in March of this year [2022], the demands upon policing far outstrip the capacity and capability policing has to deliver. So, we have some tough choices about what policing stops doing.

Because, if you look at the requirements upon policing over the years, they have grown and grown and grown. There has never been a "do less of that". While of course the growth in investment in policing is incredibly welcome, the 20,000 officer uplift nationally, what HMICFRS will identify is that also presents challenges of a less-experienced workforce. A lot of our effort at the moment is around increasing, as quickly as we can, the skills, knowledge, capability, of new people coming in, supporting them to be the best they can be. These are not things that are easy to do overnight, but we are really determined to do it and to do it in a thoughtful way.

You talked about action not being quick enough. We know in policing often our instinct is to respond incredibly quickly. We have to have a balance here of understanding those issues that require immediate remedial action and those that require a more thoughtful response.

Len Duvall AM: OK. Therefore, in your response back to HMICFRS, will you be outlining that approach in terms of saying, "Right, that is going to take a little bit longer, that is there, this is what we have done immediately now, but we will review it in light of how you come back to us or how the policing family comes in to support." Will that be very clear in terms of what the product - if I can call it - of the intervention that you are going to push back - not push back as in against what is being said - but in terms of the action that you are going to be taking in the future and what you are taking now? Is that going to be part of that framework of response?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I am sure it will be, yes.

Len Duvall AM: OK, therefore let us go for one of the longer-term issues that has been difficult. This Committee and Members of this Committee were around at the time, some will be new, but Child Abuse Command was not the MPS's finest hour, interventions there, the role of the HMICFRS working with your good selves in identifying problems to probably the most vulnerable in our society. People that have not got a voice in that sense. Some of the stories and some of the practices were pretty horrendous and that influenced people's lives as they become victims and continue to become victims sadly in terms of circumstances. OK, that was going from about 2016/2017, let us say, right.

The MPS instituted measures, we are going to come to MOPAC because MOPAC played a very important role, there was a willingness and understanding of what the problems were. You almost had monthly meetings at one stage with HMICFRS in overseeing it and everyone played a role in dealing with that. That is cited in the HMICFRS's letter to a degree of one of the reasons for intervention, among many others, but this was one of those issues. Has something materially gone wrong in recent times then, because HMICFRS pulled back some of those monthly meetings, six-monthly meetings, yearly, they went off the radar, which for a layperson would presume that everything is back on track, we are delivering the service that we can be proud of and we are on top of these issues, protecting the most vulnerable in our society. Why is that in the letter, do you think?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): My understanding, but of course when we get the full report I will have a more detailed understanding, but my understanding is this relates to a specific issue of online child sexual abuse images.

Len Duvall AM: Oh, images, yes.

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): That is one of those issues that we have been working on and taken some immediate action. The inspection report that identified persistent backlogs is some months ago. We are now very confident we have reduced those dramatically and sustained a much smaller number, but we cannot be complacent here. I want to understand with HMICFRS whether there is more we must do in that area. I do not think they are suggesting that we have gone back on any of those hard-won improvements that have been put in place since 2016. This is a really critical, high-risk, area of business that we must get right, and we must continue to get right. My understanding is that we have made significant improvements and we must now sustain those, but also not assume that we have resolved the problem.

Len Duvall AM: OK. Thank you for that. Back to you, Deputy Mayor, in terms of MOPAC's role. We understand what the police process is. Clearly people are raising questions about MOPAC. What did you do? It was on your watch? We have this letter going back or this response going back to HMICFRS because of its process that it is in. Are you thinking of either adding to that process that the letter that goes back to HMICFRS talks about MOPAC's role in all those issues? Because we are quite clear on MOPAC's role on the headline figures of what you have done. You have rightly said this is unacceptable, we cannot go on these individual events, investigations, practices that have been called out, you have rightly been there.

What we need to understand is the bits behind the scenes where you may have been working or may not have been working, we need to understand what you have been doing. Therefore, on the child abuse issue, I am quite clear about it because I sat as a member of the Police and Crime Committee and followed that debate in terms of you answering questions about actions you were taking to right those issues. Therefore, presumably we have an audit trail of MOPAC's involvement of all those issues about where you can. There may well be some new ones we did not quite know, but you picked up the ones recently, I think you referred to your contribution of where you saw something in the quarterly data monitoring, but you intervened and said, "Right, we have to do something about that. Let us move those actions". Is that a separate letter to us or is that something jointly that you put into HMICFRS? Because it is not necessarily you being asked to account for your actions, it is the MPS in terms of those actions. How do you see that in terms of going forward about the role of MOPAC and the role of yourselves in that sense? You are not defensive and you are not shying away from the problem, I get that, in terms of the way that you are engaging with us. What is your thinking about trying to put the factual information in the public domain?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am just trying to think through that question. Louisa Rolfe has already outlined the process. I do not want to sound flippant about this, but clearly HMICFRS has inspected the MPS, it is not an inspection of MOPAC, and it is clear they have no locus in any way to inspect MOPAC. However, it is perfectly reasonable for you all to be asking - more than reasonable - the question and to have the information as to what has MOPAC done on these things.

A lot of it should already be - and I will go back and check - on the website because our Oversight Board minutes are on the website, therefore you will have had them, and our performance reports are there and there is a narrative around the quarterly performance reports. I will go back and think about what we should be

putting in the public domain in terms of the scrutiny and oversight that we have had over these issues, but also going forward what scrutiny and oversight we will have. I do not know the answer to this in terms of the HMICFRS process in terms of PPOG. I am going to the meeting next week, but I go with the Acting Commissioner and the other five forces' Police and Crime Commissioners also go to that process. Therefore I will go back and think because it is a very fair challenge and one that we need to be transparent and open to Londoners about, about how this is being picked up, oversight that has happened as well as the oversight that will happen.

Len Duvall AM: Chair, as a matter for us, it is really a question for you at this moment, much that we need to, this is a wakeup call for the MPS and MOPAC in some ways, and we share those concerns. We all want and we know that you have been working hard in tackling crime. We all want to resolve these issues quickly and appropriately where we can. But we need to think, as a Committee, what the implications of this is about how we do our business and about how we monitor performance, whether it is MOPAC and the grey area of policing performance, which this Committee, we have grappled with, and I know you have shared that concern. Therefore we need to think, on our side, what does this mean for our future business and how we do it. If we can pick that up in the future, because we are going to return to this subject, I would be grateful.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, we will, and we will discuss that at length no doubt.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you very much. I have been listening very carefully to the discussion this morning. But the MPS effectively has been on notice since 2016, since the damning child safeguarding report that came out then, you have been effectively on notice, bordering going into special measures since then. Therefore, Deputy Mayor, as well as this being about serious failings in the MPS, do you accept that you, the Mayor, and MOPAC, have been failing to ensure the quality police service that Londoners deserve? Do you take a bit of responsibility in your oversight, perhaps there was more you could have done?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Forgive me, but you are conflating a specific issue, a very large, important, and really priority issue around child protection, when you say on notice since 2016, that report was on child protection. Let me be really clear, it was a specific part of the MPS. I have chaired a child protection improvement oversight group since then and, while we have had these discussions many times here, while progress has been slow, there has been progress to the extent that HMICFRS at the last inspection told the MPS and myself that they would no longer be doing the - I cannot remember if it is quarterly or annual - but they would be no longer doing such regular inspections and it would go into the PEEL inspection.

This is the PEEL inspection that this Engage process has been kicked off on. But, as Louisa Rolfe said, and I have not yet seen the full report, there may well be more things about child protection within that, and clearly I will be looking for that. But the specific issue around child protection is online images --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, yes, yes, yes, but that is not my question.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Therefore the --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: But my question was saying that because that report was so damning, it could have been about any topic, you were effectively on notice. My understanding is that, because of that, you have been bordering being on notice whether the MPS would go into special measures or not. Now we can argue about the detail of that, but I want to understand whether you, as Deputy Mayor of oversight, take any responsibility for failing to hold to account the MPS to improve the services they are delivering for Londoners.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): On the issue of child protection, which is the one that you started off on, from 2016 --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, no, no, my question was about various failings in the MPS. You are picking what you want to answer today.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, I am not, I genuinely --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, you are.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am genuinely not. You started off saying the MPS has been on notice since 2016. The issue in 2016 that you have picked on - that you have picked on and focused on - is child protection. I am answering your question on that. I will come on to the rest of the MPS. Specifically on child protection that report was published in 2016, as we all know. We have had many discussions here in relation to the oversight and the work that has happened since 2016 to the extent that the last time HMICFRS specifically looked at child protection it came off that on-notice and into the normal PEEL inspection.

Now I have not seen, as I have said, the draft report, therefore I do not know what else it says about child protection. What I do know from the letter is it picks up on online child abuse. I am not excusing it in terms of the backlog and the numbers, but there is an issue about demand and capacity within the MPS and that is also picked up that the number of online child abuse images that are being referred into the MPS and referred nationally, this is a national issue around online child images, the volume - and the volume is shocking when you think about what it is about - it is very hard to meet the demand. But the MPS, as Louisa Rolfe has said, has been bringing down the backlog around that.

When you say the MPS as a force has been on notice since 2016, I would beg to differ on that. The PEEL inspection in 2018/2019, the last PEEL inspection, put the MPS in the "good" category. From that, we have looked, in terms of prioritising our oversight, we have looked at about what else, what was within that that required improvement. We have had discussions here about the vetting process. That was one of the issues in 2018/2019 - I might be getting my years slightly mixed up - that was picked up from HMICFRS that vetting was not good enough and needed to improve. Getting through the vetting, never mind the quality, which is a different issue, a different area of focus now, and that has improved and the backlog came down. That was specifically out of that HMICFRS PEEL inspection from 2018/2019. There were a number of issues that were brought forward.

During COVID those inspections were not carried out. HMICFRS has come back in and has picked up and that is where the Engage process has come from. That is why I beg to differ in terms of the MPS has been on notice as a force on going into Engage. It was on notice around child protection and was taken off notice through the efforts of oversight, but also through the efforts of the MPS.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Let us pause what you have just said, if I just shorten the question, do you accept that you, the Mayor, and MOPAC, have failed to ensure the delivery of the quality police service that Londoners deserve?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The MPS is in Engage, therefore Londoners are not getting the service that they deserve. Our oversight has been picking up those issues. We have picked up

the issues that are in the HMICFRS report, or in the letter that we have, we have picked those up. If we had not picked those up, as I have already said to the Chairman, there would be a problem with our oversight. But we have. That is why I feel that the Engage process, I welcome it, because we get the extra support and scrutiny. I genuinely welcome it. If we had not picked up those issues, if the Mayor and myself had not been very clear about the changes that needed to happen within the MPS, I would think that we would have to think very carefully and scrutinise what we had been doing. But we had. So, we knew what was happening, we were taking action. HMICFRS has come in, it has found, putting it all together, that the process should be that the MPS as a force goes into Engage.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Let us move on then. In response to the latest report, the Mayor said, as I have been saying for some time, Londoners deserve better. There are others, "I have long been clear wide-ranging reforms are urgently needed", and so on. July last year, less than a year ago, the Mayor publicly claimed, and let me quote, "I say loudly and clearly the police have my full confidence and full support", but clearly you have said for some time you have been identifying these problems that we just said several times to us and some of these things are deep-rooted and long-running. Therefore, why has the Mayor so suddenly changed his view?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): There is no sudden change. I do not think the two things that you have cited are incompatible. As has been said by Louisa Rolfe, and also is clear from my discussion with the Inspector, but also I infer from the letter, is that this is a cumulative impact of what has happened, the performance issues that we have picked up, cumulative impact also of the high-profile matters in the letter of the high-profile cases. Things have been mounting. There has been a steady mounting of issues. So, I do not think what you are talking about, putting those two issues together, are incompatible. What has happened is the Mayor has been clear he has had confidence in the MPS and we should be clear about it, the MPS has done very well on tackling violence, it really has. A priority issue, quite rightly a priority issue, not just for the Mayor and the MPS, but for Londoners. But the cumulative impact of what has happened, the performance issues, Operation Hotton, the murder of Sarah Everard, has meant that the MPS has gone over the line and into Engage.

Underneath, and in terms of the discussions that we have been having with the MPS and the oversight that we have been having with the MPS, we have not been sitting there saying, "It is all fine." We have been really clear where the issues are. One of the other issues in the letter has been on Release Under Investigation (RUI) and bail. We have had discussions here at Committee meetings on RUI and bail. We have had progress in terms of the management of RUI and decreasing the number of times that RUI is used, particularly in domestic abuse cases. But clearly it has not gone far enough and that is why the MPS has been put into Engage.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It has been very noticeable though from this side of the table and just listening to the narrative that there almost was a switch and the Mayor's tone very much changed, and yours to some extent at some point. But let us park that there. I have heard your answer. You have mentioned twice now you have this special board or meeting, I do not know if the meeting next week is going to be this new kind of board or something that will meet two to three times a year to review the MPS's progress in implementing improvements. Is that right? You said there is a meeting next week.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That is the meeting that we are invited to by HMICFRS. It is called PPOG and chaired by Andy Cooke, the Chief Inspector, and it is a standing meeting, a standing board that any force in Engage is invited to. It is not a new board for MOPAC or --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, that is the one, no, no, no, but that is what I was thinking. OK, so I called it a special board, PPOG, whatever it is called, let us not call it that; that sounds terrible. But there is a meeting that will happen two to three times a year, is that your understanding of it?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I believe it is quarterly.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Quarterly, quarterly, OK. Who will be attending that? Is that the one that I understand the Minister for Policing might attend, somebody from National Police Chiefs' Council, who will be going from MOPAC and the Mayor's Office?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I will be going to that next week with the Acting Commissioner of the MPS, Sir Stephen House, and --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will the Mayor of London be attending?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That is to be determined.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. My understanding is for other forces the Police and Crime Commissioner, not the Deputy, attends. Therefore, one would have thought, given this is the first time the MPS has been placed in special measures, that the Mayor would want to attend.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As it stands, it is to be determined whether he will attend. I will definitely be attending. That is what has been the inference from the HMICFRS, however that is to be determined. It is not our meeting.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, I understand. One of the reasons behind the decision for the MPS to be placed on special measures was its failure to record, I think it was 69,000 crimes. I have read that the former MPS Commissioner, Lord Stevens [of Kirkwhelpington, KStJ, QPM, DL, FRSA], suggested the figures could have been massaged by the MPS. Do you agree this is a possibility and are you reviewing this as a result?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The figures that are in the letter that we have received from HMICFRS are the 69,000 ASB incidents that were not then transferred into the recorded crimes. Therefore, no, I do not agree with the inference in terms of the article that was in the *Times* that the whole of the MPS crime recording is being massaged. No, I do not. Of course we need to have a look at the report - again I am sorry we keep saying this - we need to look at the report because that is where the detail is. That is genuine; that is not trying to avoid the issue. But from the previous specific inspection on crime data integrity, the MPS was put in "good". Clearly something has happened around ASB. I have looked, if you take violent crime, which was also one of the inferences around perhaps there is an issue with recording there, if you take violent crime, I have looked at the Accident and Emergency (A&E) data, which absolutely accords with the fall in violent crime, in terms of that decrease in the trend, when you look at the A&E data, which is one of the things that we have often said gives you a truer picture of what is happening rather than the reported incidences, there is that trend and that decline.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: But will you be doing, once you get this detailed report, which of course we all would like to see, will you be doing some dip-sampling, some analysis, to assure yourself that this is not more widespread in terms of data?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We will have to make sure that, once we have the detailed report, yes, we will have to take specific actions. We have not yet decided which of those actions, it is early days, but of course, if the detailed report has anything wider than ASB, we would have to have a look at that. But also in terms of ASB, yes, it has previously been the locus of HMICFRS to be looking at this. Therefore, again, it is that discussion at the meeting next week with HMICFRS to understand exactly who does what, but clearly there needs to be good oversight across all the areas that have particular issues.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. It would be interesting for us to be able to, once you have this report, to look at how you are going to measure progress, the metrics you are using, and within the MPS as well, to help us develop our own. Therefore that would be really helpful going forward.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, absolutely. But what I am very keen to do is make sure that we are not duplicating and running parallel actions and parallel tracking to the ones that HMICFRS will do through the Police Improvements Group. We have to look at how we do this and how we make sure that we do not set off a whole plethora of activities and oversights where you spend more time doing that than actually delivering the actions that will make the improvements.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: But transparency around all of that will help us because we have a role to play.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I agree with that. I am not at all shying away from that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes. I know and I understand what you are saying as well.

Finally, for the Assistant Commissioner, you have said lots of things like the MPS is not complacent, but at the start you talked about events and challenges. You did not talk about the culture in the MPS, which is at the heart of a lot of this, and it does feel, as Assembly Member Duvall has said, that the MPS is in denial. It felt like that when the [Daniel] Morgan [Independent Panel] report came out and the performance before our Committee and subsequently. I find it really shocking actually, and then ultimately there was your response. What are you going to do to change that culture and that attitude? Yes, of course, it is difficult to receive criticism and I can tell you that in politics we get an awful lot of that; that goes with the day job. How do you ensure that you are always striving for the best, rather than just tolerating quite low standards?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you for your question and I hope I have not given you the impression that in not mentioning culture it is not a fundamental issue for us. I know you have heard before about the work that we are doing with Baroness Casey [of Blackstock DBE CB], who is taking a fundamental root and branch look at culture in the MPS. We take incredibly seriously the report and the letter from HMICFRS and we await its report to look at our actions. Of course, anything in there that alludes to, as you describe, a complacency or a defensiveness must be addressed and we must be really clear about the requirement to improve and also understand.

One of the key things we will absolutely be looking at when we look at all of these - and when I describe challenges and issues, is we want to understand whether culture is a driver of those issues. We must understand that and we take incredibly seriously the feedback we have had so far. I am sorry if it sounded like the response was at all ignorant of that; it is very much not. It is a clear part of our response and we must understand; there is balance. Sir Tom Winsor [former Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary] set this out very clearly in his *State of Policing [The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2021]* report. There are many people who work incredibly hard in policing every day, who want to do the right thing to

safeguard the vulnerable, to respond effectively and to secure justice for victims. There are some strengths in our culture.

A really good example of our work around culture and understanding what might be at the heart of it is the work that we are doing around our response to rape and the work we have done through Operation Soteria with academics, who have looked in detail at thousands of incidents. They have spoken to more than 1,400 of our dedicated investigators and our Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques Officers, who support victims every day, and they have given us some very clear feedback. It is a consistent issue nationally as well; that the overwhelming caseloads that officers deal with has an impact on them. It has an impact in a way that might desensitise them to the issues they are dealing with. We are thinking very hard to ensure that we can address that, working with the National Lead for Rape and Sexual Offences, the College of Policing, the wider National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and [Deputy Chief Constable] Maggie Blyth's [National Police Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls] team.

I know colleagues at NPCC have been talking an awful lot as well about what has changed in policing nationally and our workforce and their exposure to trauma. A significant proportion of our workforce is exposed to trauma. I think it is something like 35% of policing workforce nationally, who are exposed to significant trauma every year, and if that is a repeated thing then that has an impact on people and it might desensitise them. We know those things can reduce empathy and it is really important we address that. One of the things I have talked about us wanting to understand in questions here is around how we respond to calls. We have to understand the impact of increasing demand. We do not want our people to revert to an approach that does not have victims or our communities at the heart of what we do.

If we take a step back from these cumulative issues, I think there is a significant consensus across the MPS that a lot of our answers are about building stronger, trusting relationships with the communities we serve and increasingly being open to feedback and more scrutiny of the action we take and more openness. I am not suggesting we do not have that openness and scrutiny at the moment, but it is more to build greater trust. We know that one of the best ways to address culture is increasing openness and for our people repeatedly to be talking with communities. Also, thinking about the impact of COVID and the pandemic, for a large proportion of our workforce for nearly 18 months/two years their interactions with the public were limited to victims of crime, offenders or people protesting about COVID restrictions. We have worked incredibly hard as restrictions have been lifted to really ensure our officers are out there daily, interacting with communities, when it is not always a pressurised situation. Policing is about personal relationships and communication with the public and our people often do that incredibly well.

Whilst there is a need to be very introspective about what we might have got wrong, we cannot be a closed shop. We have to be very open in our approach to getting this right and addressing culture and the challenges. When I say "challenges", I mean that in a very broad sense. Policing culture is something that has many strengths of teamwork ethos, incredibly hardworking, wanting to secure justice and fairness, but of course we have to be alive to the downsides of that as well. When criticised, we cannot be defensive, we have to be open, we have to recognise that others might do things better and be open to that feedback.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is understanding what "good" looks like for every level of your service and I do not think you are there yet. Thank you very much.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Colleagues, this section is running over and I am happy for it to. It is far more important than anything else we are discussing so I will adjust other parts of the agenda when we have come to the end of this discussion.

Neil Garratt AM: I would like to ask the Deputy Mayor about the process around the Mayor's actions in ending the previous Commissioner's [of Police of the Metropolis] tenure, putting aside whether that was the correct thing to do. I wonder whether you recognise in the way that he went about it and the actions that he took, the damage it did to relations between the MPS and the Mayor's Office and what you are doing to repair that?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am not sure I am going to -- well, I am not going to give you a running commentary in terms of the process. It has been very clear and we had very clear conversations, as the Mayor and I did, with the previous Commissioner as to what the problem was. We have discussed this at Police and Crime Committee meetings in terms of why the Mayor lost confidence in her plan to improve the trust and confidence of Londoners and that there was not enough around cultural change, but also around the engagement with Londoners. Clearly, it did have an impact on the MPS; of course it did. As with any organisation that loses their leader, it will have an impact on it.

In terms of moving on from that moment, moving on and ensuring that we have good relations with the MPS, I genuinely think that that has happened. I have chaired Oversight Boards so I still have my regular bilats and officers of MOPAC still have their regular meetings with the MPS. That is not just about oversight. That is also about all the other areas of MOPAC and MPS interactions. For example, the Chief Executive of MOPAC chairs a regular meeting to look at how we decrease the number of teenage homicides, the number of children and young people in London who have been murdered. That is attended by all partners, including the MPS, and that partnership work has continued throughout this process. There has been no fracturing of that relationship in terms of the delivery of the services to London.

Neil Garratt AM: You must have heard some of the comments, including in this Chamber, from the Acting Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis] and a number of others elsewhere in the media about the abrupt way that that was done, the abrupt way the Mayor acted. You do not recognise that those actions did damage that relationship?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I said, any organisation that loses its leader, there will be an impact on that organisation --

Neil Garratt AM: Sorry. To be clear, it did not lose its leader like down the back of the sofa or something.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, the previous Commissioner resigned.

Neil Garratt AM: Its leader was removed by the actions of the Mayor *de facto*.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The previous Commissioner resigned because the Mayor made it clear that he no longer had confidence in her, we discussed that, of course, the Acting Commissioner and I were here at the Police and Crime Committee and that was a very difficult meeting. However, the relationship between ourselves and the MPS is a good working relationship and we will continue to do that because we have the same priorities and we have the same vision for London. That is (1) to deliver the Police and Crime Plan around the priorities of the Mayor and (2) to make London safer. There is no fracture there at all and we are working very closely, not just in terms of oversight and scrutiny, but also in terms of some of the services that we deliver together. For example, we have talked about stalking previously --

Neil Garratt AM: Apologies. I am conscious that we are very --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): -- the Stalking Assessment Centre. There is a lot of delivery --

Neil Garratt AM: -- tight on time. I know you want to talk about other things. The way that it looks often from where we sit here and, I think, where the public see it - and we heard the allegations this morning repeated again - is that the police do not hear criticism, do not respond to criticism and are, say, arrogant in their response. My judgement is that this morning in actual fact Assistant Commissioner Rolfe has been quite humble in her response in acknowledging. Now we will see whether the talk turns into action, but I think the tone in this meeting has been quite positive whereas the Mayor's Office never seems to accept that anything is wrong or that you have done anything wrong or that anything is your responsibility. Do you understand why you could create that perception?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am not sure there is a really specific question in that, a different question from the one that I have already answered.

Neil Garratt AM: Do you understand why --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): In terms of --

Neil Garratt AM: -- when we sit here, you give the impression that you have done nothing wrong?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No. What I have sought to do is to ensure that you are aware in answer to your questions. Your basic questions are: did you know that these things were going wrong within the MPS and what have you been doing on oversight? I have sought to answer those --

Neil Garratt AM: Sorry, they were not my questions. Those were other people's questions.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, but you have just -- this is a little unfair, is it not? You have just talked about my answers to questions that have given the impression. The questions that have been asked are: what has happened and why has MOPAC not known this has been going on in the MPS? My answer to that has been we were aware of nearly all the issues that are in the letter from HMICFRS and we have had significant oversight on many of them, so we were aware. Those are my answers and it is not in any way to try to shirk the duties and responsibilities of MOPAC. What I have tried to outline is how we have actually delivered those. Have they had the impact? Has it made the changes and all the changes that we would have wanted to make? Clearly, it has not because we are in the Engage process. I am clear about that and that is why I welcome the support that HMICFRS, the College of Policing and others yet to be determined can bring so that we can deliver changes more quickly for Londoners.

Tony Devenish AM: I have two very quick questions, firstly for the Deputy Mayor and then one of them for the Assistant Commissioner. Deputy Mayor, did you see Sir Hugh Orde's [OBE QPM] comments last week?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am afraid I did not, or I cannot remember what they were. I am sure you have them there in front of you.

Tony Devenish AM: I will remind you, thank you. He was talking - quite an interesting point - more about the organisational design of the MPS. What he was basically saying is that in his view it has become "too big

and too complex” and he is recommending you bring it back to what it was 20 years ago when it was apparently “five areas”, to quote Sir Hugh. Do you have any comment on that; that just simply it has too many moving parts and perhaps a simplified structure would make it easier for everybody to do their job?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am not entirely sure what structure he would have had in mind. One of the major issues - and we have not talked about it today - is a context. It is not an excuse, but it is the context. For me, the issue around structure of the MPS can go in various ways. That can go in terms of the actual structure internally as the way that it is organised in terms of Operational Command Units (OCU) and the Basic Command Units (BCUs) and clearly there has been a reorganisation of that. I am not sure what Sir Hugh Orde was talking about here. Or it could also be about the overall responsibilities and duties of the MPS.

I do not think it would be appropriate or right to be, for example, hiving off the counter terrorism functions of the MPS. A really significant review of policing nationally had looked at this, alongside lots of other issues, in the Police Foundation review and *The Strategic Review of Policing [in England and Wales]*. It made it really clear in the report and said, “To be clear, we do not think that there should be a change in the structure of the Metropolitan Police because many of the responsibilities that are often talked about being taken away from the MPS are those that are working extremely well”. The *Strategic Review of Policing* makes it very clear. Why would you start to dismantle it and try to change it when it is a part of the MPS that is working well?

I would say -- and Claire Waxman [OBE, Victims’ Commissioner] was on the *Today* programme talking about this. These are discussions that we are having with Louisa [Rolfe OBE] at the moment and there is a very good case around victim care and victim support and we are exploring this within MOPAC. It was a manifesto commitment of Sadiq’s to explore this and setting up a Victims’ Care Hub. One of the issues in the letter from HMICFRS - and we have talked about this already - is the MPS not reaching sufficient standards in relation to victim care. As I have discussed already, we have been picking up on this. One of the proposals and what we are exploring at the moment is how you set up an independent Victims’ Care Hub that will ensure that that support and the information that is not consistently given to victims across the MPS is provided. Claire Waxman has been calling for this, it was in the manifesto of Sadiq Khan and we are really actively exploring that at the moment.

Tony Devenish AM: OK, so no organisational change from your point of view. Assistant Commissioner, what do you think of Sir Hugh’s comments?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I do not recall Sir Hugh’s comments specifically, but I have seen a number of media commentaries from former Commissioners and others with an opinion on this and a few thoughts spring to mind for me. I had in mind the Police Foundation’s *Strategic Review of Policing* that the Deputy Mayor has mentioned but also Lord Toby Harris’ review of counter terrorism [*London Prepared: A City-Wide Endeavour*]. A number of those comments were about a separation and the very considered response about recommending against that.

Another thought I would immediately have is that a new Commissioner may wish to reconfigure structures within the MPS, but we must ensure that any reconfiguration of structures would provide the environment that would enable the improvements we are talking about and not actively interfere with that. With my 30-plus years in policing now, my experience is that often we might leap to a structural solution to a problem when the problem may be much more complex than structures. Certainly, from the HMICFRS letter, some of the feedback is about supervision and leadership, capacity and capability and infrastructure and we must ensure that we can effectively address those things. Structures may be part of the solution, but if you are going to do

it you have to consider it incredibly carefully and to be very confident that it is something that would make the difference. I would not leap into a structural solution if it were not a structural problem. Of course, everything is on the table here and we want to understand how we can effectively address the issues.

Tony Devenish AM: Very briefly for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for London about your response to AM [Neil] Garratt's comment about accountability. Do you really think we need a Police and Crime Commissioner in London when basically the MPS or the Home Office seem to pretty much have to do everything?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do not think that is a really very serious question, is it, in terms of the Home Office doing everything? Of course, the democratic accountability is very important. Because since Sadiq [Khan] has been Mayor, there has been a significant difference in terms of policing in London, not least the additional resources that the Mayor has been able to put in and put in far before the Home Office and the Government change their minds about austerity. There are 1,300 additional police officers in London because the Mayor of London as Police and Crime Commissioner, as we all know, switched business rates into the MPS.

What the Home Office has done for the MPS and for policing nationally is cut. It was only recently that it has reversed this, we are nationally getting 20,000 officers and it is only just about getting to 2010 levels. I would say actually the Home Office has been a detrimental impact on the MPS, and the Mayor of London has led the way and driven some of the changes. We will continue to have oversight on changes, but he has put considerable additional resource into the MPS as well as convened and stood up the partnerships that the MPS needs. For example, to tackle violence we set up the Violence Reduction Unit, which led the way nationally.

Tony Devenish AM: Chairman, I will leave it there. I was hoping the Deputy Mayor would talk about accountability and partly her and Mr Khan's responsibility, but clearly I am wasting my time. Thank you.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: This is a question for the Deputy Mayor. You spoke about you not being surprised but disappointed about what happened. That you knew something was going wrong and you had picked it up. Were you monitoring the progress that the MPS was making in response to your concerns?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Of course, yes, we have been monitoring progress. I have regular bilats and the quarterly Oversight Board and we also publicly publish the Quarterly Performance Report. It is public anyway, but it comes to Police and Crime Committee. Yes, we track progress.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: So progress was being made?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): In some areas, there has been progress and I do not know whether we will get time to get on to it, for example, as I said earlier, the TDIU. Because of the [Online] Victim Satisfaction Surveys that we publish as part of our oversight mechanisms, we know what was happening and we could pinpoint that there were specific, significant issues within the TDIU. We worked in partnership with the MPS and it implemented a pilot around call-backs for specific victims, I think of -- was it vehicle crime?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, vehicle crime and that improved victim satisfaction. It is now embedded within the TDIU and I understand that the MPS is going to increase the number of crimes that that will be a person for. That is an example of where oversight and tracking of progress has had an impact and a significant difference.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: OK. I am bringing my question from the background of the health service. The other thing you said is you welcome the involvement of HMICFRS and you are hoping it can do something to the MPS and bring about a change process, which you as MOPAC could not do. Have I understood that right?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I welcome HMICFRS, it has always been part of the evidence that we use for oversight of the MPS, as it is for all Police and Crime Commissioners. It is a bit of a crowded field within policing --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: OK. Let me just get to that. Could you have called in HMICFRS sooner than the regular inspection time once you had picked up these problems?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): There has always been a regular pattern of PEEL inspections. We had the last PEEL inspection pre-COVID, they stopped because of COVID and the first one after COVID is this one, so we knew they were coming. We have called in HMICFRS twice, but recently I have requested HMICFRS and it has started looking at the response of the MPS to unexpected deaths. Yes, we have, but this --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Sorry, was this inspection that took place a planned one or was it something which you had instigated yourself?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, we did not instigate it. It is the normal process of inspections.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: OK.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The PEEL inspection is an annual inspection, which did not happen during COVID because of COVID. It has been a really important inspection report for MOPAC and for the public to understand what is happening in real depth in terms of the way HMICFRS -- MOPAC is not an inspectorate. We are an oversight body. It is a different --

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: The example I am coming from is that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in the healthcare service regularly inspects hospitals and general practitioner practices. It does it regularly. When a hospital realises that a particular team in the hospital is not working effectively, it will bring some measures in to remedy the situation. When it has failed to do that or it is not making the progress it should be making, it will call in the CQC sooner, earlier, for measures. You knew that something was wrong there, you were monitoring it and progress was not being made. The question I am trying to ask for members of the public is: did it ever occur to you that you should call HMICFRS in sooner than when the regular inspection was due, as would happen in the healthcare service?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Apologies because I have clearly not been clear enough. The PEEL inspection was coming back and it did not come back because of COVID, not because we did not call it in or the HMICFRS was putting it out. I am genuinely not being critical; COVID stopped the regular PEEL inspections. As soon as it could, it has come back into the MPS. However, the principle of your

question is not just about PEEL. It is: what else should we have been doing? In terms of the culture of the MPS and the really significant issues around that, the Mayor agreed and ensured that there was a review, a really significant review, with Baroness Louise Casey, undertaken of the MPS. That is happening, a really, really robust review of the MPS.

Another example, which I gave earlier, is that knowing that victim satisfaction and the rates around victim satisfaction were not good enough, we have worked with the MPS and there is a review happening around the Witness Care Units. Louisa Rolfe has talked about Operation Soteria. That has happened because of MOPAC, because of the deep dive of rape cases in 2019 and, coming out of that, the work that MOPAC instigated and the work that MOPAC undertook and that has gone national. We have taken specific steps in specific areas, but the PEEL is a regular inspection. We did not need to call them in because they were coming.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: That is the point I am making; that maybe we should have called it earlier because the CQC does examine hospitals regularly. When something is going wrong with a hospital, we say, "We need your help". Anyway, we will come back to this.

The other point I just want to make is that when things go wrong in any way, it is not the fault of any one individual. It is a system failure and we need to look at the system that exists to monitor the situation. I will leave it there.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Very good comments from my colleagues. I am just going to go back to it because it is of concern. You have quite clearly pointed out that you knew there were issues. I know MOPAC is not an inspection body, but it is an oversight body of which you are in charge. You have a lot of staff in MOPAC and I know there are 180 of them, not all of them looking at this specifically. If the oversight body was picking up issues and you are noticing the problems - as you say, you have been "for quite some time" and I quote you there - did you have conversations with the Mayor about your concerns?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have regular conversations and discussions with the Mayor about what is happening within the MPS. I do feel that we are going over ground. You have asked me these questions --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): That is fine. If we are happy to go over ground, then you have to.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We can go over ground again. In terms of the issues, I have been very clear that some of the issues are new and have emerged since the last PEEL inspection or since the last inspection around crime data integrity where the MPS was given a "Good". We have seen since 2019, for example, on the rape review and on the number of prosecutions it is not just one timeline; that since 2016 there have been all these issues and then now HMICFRS has come in and we are in Engage. There is a number of different areas, which all taken together, we are now in Engage.

Yes, of course I have had discussions with the Mayor and that is why he has been clear in terms of what is needed. That is why he instigated the [Baroness] Louise Casey review, because we were very clear that there was a significant problem, significant issues around culture. That review is ongoing and will be very robust. Of course, those discussions have happened and of course I have those discussions with the Mayor and the Mayoral Directors in terms of performance on a quarterly basis, because we do those quarterly reports, which were not there before.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, you were very concerned for quite some time, you have discussed it with the Mayor and we have established that. Did you go back with all of those concerns to the Commissioner?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have had regular meetings with the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners, and MOPAC officials have had regular meetings with various boards and various meetings within the MPS. Some of the issues that we have been concerned about are newer than others and victim satisfaction and trust and confidence have been ongoing for a while. We have looked at emergency response regularly. In an Oversight Board I chaired in January [2022], I picked up on the issues of emergency response because I could see that it was not meeting not just the national standards, but actually Londoners were not getting the emergency response that they needed.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK. If you discussed these worries constantly with the Commissioner, which you have just indicated you did, did you give her timelines by which you wanted certain things/certain indicators to improve? Just discussing with her, did you set targets that you thought needed to be met in order to protect the public, if you like? What did you say to her? "We're concerned about X, Y, Z. How are you going to fix that?" Is that the sort of conversation you had?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That type of conversation does happen, of course it does, but it is not for me to set those timelines. My questions to the MPS have always been "What is your timeline, how do you assure yourself on performance and what do you do to intervene when the performance is not good enough?" On emergency response, my questions to [Sir] Steve House [QPM, Acting Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] and the [former] Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis] on that were "How are you going to intervene and do you think this is good enough?" and to ask for actions to be taken. We have had many discussions here and many discussions with the MPS about that line of accountability, oversight and management.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): My role is around accountability and oversight. It is not the management of the MPS. That is an important distinction to be made, and also an important distinction to be made in relation to operational policing. The line of accountability goes to the Commissioner and the Management Board, who then have operational control.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, we all understand that, Sophie.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): But that operational control is around the performance as well.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): People are supposed to be overseeing what is going on with a staff of 180, a Deputy Mayor for Policing [and Crime] and a Police and Crime Commissioner in the Mayor. What the public needs is confidence, and you would hope that the people that are watching what is going on will actually be able to bring it to the attention of the person that is in control, ie, the Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis]. Now you have already said that your worries have gone back a very long time. None of this then works through. If you were pointing these things out to the Commissioner and nothing was happening or various things were still going wrong, why did you exclaim that you were quite happy? In actual fact, it was confirmed in the Houses of Parliament that Sadiq Khan, the Police and Crime Commissioner, wanted [Dame] Cressida Dick [DBE QPM] to carry on as the Commissioner [of Police of the Metropolis]. What assurances did she give him that were suddenly out of place? Assembly Member Pidgeon has put it absolutely perfectly. It

was like a switch was turned off, he had gone from having every faith in her to suddenly not, and it does appear that when the media turned, that is what then changed his mind. Policing is far too important to go on a whim of the media --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am sorry. You are repeating questions that I have answered and answered. You are not repeating once; you are repeating the same question over and over again.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I thought you wanted to get on to other issues. I absolutely accept that this is a very important question --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Let me just put -- no --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): -- but you are asking the same question over and over again --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Deputy Mayor, if we sit here until you walk out early, if we sit here asking you the same questions, if this is what this panel wants this is what we will do. We are trying to establish why you were absolutely up for the Commissioner --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): And I have answered that question.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Please let me finish.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): And I have answered, but I am sorry. I do think that continuing to ask me the same question, which I will give you the same answer to -- really genuinely, we are going over the same ground and --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We are looking --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): -- I have answered these questions.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Deputy Mayor, we are looking for answers that will give the public confidence that they have people overseeing what the police are doing, without having to have an inspection in place that will keep things as we would want them to be going forward. It is a great pity that it has taken an inspection to come in to point out that numerous things are going wrong. Since you do not want --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): But that is not --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): -- to carry on answering questions --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): But, Chairman, you know that that is not --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): -- we will move on, but I --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): But, Chairman, you know that is not what happened, that the Inspectorate has come in and revealed issues that we were not aware of. You know that because you have asked me questions about some of the areas --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): If you knew about all of the --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): -- and I have answered them.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Yes, and I say to you: if you knew about all these things going wrong, why were you absolutely supporting the Commissioner to stay in place only months before the Mayor put her under notice? I am going to finish this here --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As I have answered, none of these --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): -- but I will warn you now we will be coming back to this and you will answer the questions that we put before you.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): And I have.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Colleagues, I will go on now to the second item, which is strip search of children and we will start with Assembly Member Ahmad.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chairman. Good morning, panel. Strip searches carried out on children are an intrusive practice and 5,279 cases were carried out between 2019 and 2021. The MPS has suggested that this practice is only being used when absolutely necessary, that it is carried out with respect, dignity and empathy and that it is effective. Is that the case and are they being used too often? Assistant Commissioner, if you would like to start, please?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I agree that strip search is an incredibly intrusive process and the debate about this reflects some of the dilemmas that officers face. Faced with suspicion that somebody may be a significant risk to themselves or others, that they may be concealing a weapon or that they may seek to harm themselves, often officers have to make very difficult decisions. Also, we must be absolutely cognisant of the impact, the traumatic impact, of a search, we must be satisfied that we are recognising children as children, our approach must be informed and we must have the right scrutiny around that approach.

Laurence Taylor, Deputy Assistant Commissioner [for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service] has been leading a group, looking in great detail at this work to satisfy ourselves around the appropriateness of those searches. When I was last here, we talked about Child Q and our huge sadness, regret and concern about that particular case. We are very concerned and we absolutely want to get this right. We want to be satisfied that where officers are in a position, facing difficult decisions and making these decisions, there is the right support, training, scrutiny and oversight, and understanding of the impact and that children are at the heart of this. If I may, I would invite Laurence to talk about the work that he has been doing.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you very much. There are a couple of distinctions, if I could, just to start with. You have two types of strip search. You have a More Thorough Intimate Parts (MTIP) search, which is conducted prior to arrest. The figure you quoted is in-custody strip searches, which are done for evidential purposes or to safeguard the

individual. I support Louisa; we do too many in-custody strip searches, no question. It is absolutely essential, as Louisa has said, that the child is at the forefront of what we do. It is one of the reasons that we are saying it would be wrong to remove this as a tactic because we genuinely believe that children would be exploited. They would be used to mule drugs and other weapons because there is no chance of them being found potentially. But we have to get our rationale and the proportionality of those searches right and we are really committed to that.

We have put in a significant amount of work to understand what the issues are. There are a number of process issues such as appropriate adults not being present, which is wrong, it is against the policy and that needs to stop, but we have put in a number of safeguards. From 1 April [2022], we are now checking every single MTIP search that a child is subjected to. We are also now, as of two days ago, checking every single strip search of a child in custody to satisfy ourselves that the rationale was appropriate, that it was done in the appropriate way and that it was necessary. The very clear direction we have given is we do not expect those sorts of numbers to continue. Already this year, with MTIP we have seen a reduction and we are at about a third of where we have been in previous years, so those numbers have reduced. They are not stopping, which is appropriate. We have introduced Inspectors' authorities so you cannot do an MTIP search and now you cannot do a strip search in custody without the authority of an Inspector.

Alongside that, there are the safeguarding measures, ensuring that we complete a Merlin form, which is a child coming to notice form, on every single search that is conducted on a child, as well as those referrals to partners and independent scrutiny of these as well. There are other things we are exploring. Clearly, we cannot use body-worn video - that would be wholly inappropriate - but we are looking at audio recordings so we can get independent scrutiny around where these searches are done. You will have also seen - and it has been covered here previously with Child Q - some of the safeguarding report measures around adultification training and awareness for our staff of the impact on the child. We have introduced that adultification training to all our [Safer] Schools Officers in [the London Borough of] Hackney and it is being rolled out across frontline policing in Hackney. We are now looking at how we can replicate that across the MPS more broadly so that that, as an issue, as well as those broad safeguarding issues are really understood, the impact on the child is understood and we can absolutely assure ourselves we are doing them for the right reason.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. If I could now focus on a little bit more of what you have said and let us do a deep dive into that. There is an understanding that sometimes these intimate searches are necessary for the reasons that you have stated, and you have also stated that safeguarding is paramount and has always been paramount. However, we have these cases and I will refer to the other eight that have now been referred to the IOPC. What went wrong? Why was safeguarding not paramount in those cases?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): With the additional eight, we have made a decision that we will refer to the IOPC all of the complaints that we were currently reviewing in relation to either MTIP or strip search in custody. We are waiting to hear back from it as to whether it will take those as independent investigations or not. There is, as you can imagine, a spectrum of things that have gone wrong. From Child Q where no appropriate adults were present and the circumstances in which that search was conducted to some others where the circumstances may have been appropriate, we have referred it for transparency to ensure that our thinking is correct.

To answer your question specifically, there are a number of challenges. Some are around culture that we have talked about previously where we have processes that we use and we stick to the process, without sometimes considering the impact of that process. That is a big piece of this work, to understand the impact of what we do and the effect it has on people, rather than just ticking boxes and following a process. We have had

occasions where appropriate adults have not been present. Again, sometimes there are legitimate reasons why an appropriate adult is not present and it is a challenging area. I will give you an example. If we were to strip-search a 16-year-old girl and the appropriate adult was her stepfather, she may well not want that appropriate adult there. We have set some very clear direction that in those situations we should seek an alternative appropriate adult and, again, unless there is an immediate risk to safety, those searches will not take place without that appropriate adult being present.

It is a combination of issues and there is no one single thing. There is a large part around the demand and the volume of policing in London that has affected the way we are using these processes that we are determined to change. There are some process bits that we have just not complied with and that is really easy to fix.

Marina Ahmad AM: I am looking at monitoring and evidence for this. Are you clear that there is a clear understanding across the MPS of how strip searches of children should be carried out?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): We have put an awful lot of effort into reviewing and informing officers of what the expectations are, both from that impact perspective and the policy they should follow. We have introduced videos and we have redone training. We have introduced a ten-point checklist for when MTIP searches should take place and it is on the strip search forms so they have it with them. We are having those conversations with our staff. To answer your question on whether I am confident that absolutely everybody in the MPS gets it, no. That is why the numbers are higher than we would expect them to be and that is why we are putting these measures in place to address that, to bring those down, because we do recognise that impact. Where it is appropriate, we must and should do it and we should do it properly, and where it is not, we need to stop and understand the reasons why that child may be where they are.

Marina Ahmad AM: Assistant Commissioner, the last time you appeared before the Committee - and you have just referred to this - you told us that the MPS takes the adultification of Black children very seriously. Can you tell us how this is now being actioned and how, particularly about the adultification of Black children, officers are being made aware of this?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Thank you. There is the work that Laurence described in terms of working in [the London Borough of] Hackney, initially with our [Safer] Schools Officers across the MPS but also all officers in Hackney. We have been working with training for officers to ensure that they have training. Now I am not sure of the provider - Laurence, you might be able to confirm for me - but I am aware we have been working with independent organisations, who can provide that awareness and training to our officers to ensure that they have a greater understanding. We will evaluate the impact of that training and then look at rolling it out more widely across the MPS, also putting in place the checks and balances. For example, MPS Detention is part of Met Operations, my bit of the MPS. I am really clear as to the scrutiny I expect of any strip searches, particularly involving children, working with the leadership team in MPS Detention to ensure that we have the right scrutiny in place and that we involve our Independent Custody Visitors in that scrutiny. Also, with the independent community-led scrutiny we already have for use of force and strip search, I know that Laurence has been looking at how we might incorporate strip search within that scrutiny as well. Also, I know that Laurence has been meeting with a number of organisations from health and others to help us understand the trauma and the impact of a search.

Laurence mentioned culture and one of the tensions we have been working on with people is that since the very sad death of [Sergeant] Matt Ratana in one of our custody suites, our Custody Sergeants have become

incredibly aware of the dangers they face at work and that their colleagues face. We need to ensure that that does not mean that they are tipping towards more of an inclination to search to reassure. As I said, safeguarding children is at the heart of this because we are talking about children here. We want to ensure the balance is right, ensuring that in some circumstances where we feel they may present a danger to themselves or to others we are conducting searches appropriately, ethically and that we have the right scrutiny.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. At this Committee on 26 May this year [2022], I asked the Acting Commissioner whether he was expecting any other child strip search referrals to be made to the IOPC and he said that he was aware of one. Sadly, since that meeting eight new cases of child strip searches, which we have just referred to, have been referred to the IOPC and, as we said, between 2019 and 2021 5,279 strip searches of children were made. 75% of those were of children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Assistant Commissioner, what are the ethnicities of the children in the eight new cases being investigated by the IOPC?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I am afraid I do not have that information to hand, but I am very happy to write to you and provide that information. We have it.

Marina Ahmad AM: If you could, thank you very much.

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Of course. It is really important that our scrutiny does look at any issues of disproportionality and I know that in the past, not in relation to this work and children, we did with our Strategic Insight Unit. Our analysts, who often look at our issues and concerns in the MPS, conducted some work on strip search in custody, I think in 2020/2021, where they looked at disproportionality. What we identified was that there was not disproportionate strip search occurrence within custody at that time. When you looked at the drivers of search, it was more related to location of arrest or location of detention or arrest team appeared to be the driving factors influencing and the subject you were arrested for, whether it was a weapon or drugs, as opposed to arrest for a theft. Now of course we have to look at this and of course we have to be cognisant, as I have mentioned in the past, of things like our awareness of adultification. It is ensuring that we are informed, that we are aware, that we have the right scrutiny and that we have the right data to monitor issues around proportionality of searches.

Marina Ahmad AM: It is quite a high figure, is it not, that out of 5,279 strip searches 75% of those were of children from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities? Why do you think that is? Why is that figure so high?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I do not have an answer as to why, but I am incredibly concerned by it because, as Laurence said, our sense is that we are conducting too many of these searches. We know from the actions we have put in place already they are dropping significantly, and we want to ensure that when they are conducted they are conducted appropriately. We know that any strip search has an impact, we know it has a traumatic impact and we must take that into account. If that traumatic impact for a young person is their experience of policing and something that has a lasting impact, then it will have an impact on their trust and confidence in us. We want to work with all our communities across London, particularly those that we know might already have less trust. This, of course, is of huge concern to us and something that we must be aware of and we must address.

Tony Devenish AM: Deputy Mayor, the Mayor's *Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing Action Plan* says it "will produce a quarterly race equality audit, reporting on the MPS' use of its powers", including strip searches. When can we expect this data to be published, please?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The data is already published and should be already on the MOPAC website in terms of the disproportionality figures. Sorry, I would have to check because there were issues around getting the strip search data up, but if it is not up already it should be up shortly. A lot of the race equality statistics are already on the website for MOPAC. There was an issue in terms of the strip-searching and it has taken longer than it should have to get that information and to be publishing it.

Sorry, Chairman, I was on my phone - unusually because I do not like to be on my phone in the Committee - to see if I can stay a bit longer. I am happy to stay a bit longer, but I do need to leave by 12.30pm because I have this meeting you know about that we agreed with the clerks and --

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): We did not agree. You told us you were leaving early so I had to accept that.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We gave a good explanation. I was on my phone to see if we could push it back, but I am afraid I really do need to leave by 12.30pm. If my day slips any further, at the end of the day I have a family victim's meeting, which I really do not want to be late for.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Well, we will continue on then with Assembly Member Moema, thank you.

Sem Moema AM: My questions are primarily to the MPS, but obviously the Deputy Mayor may have some thoughts about some of this. In the conversations around strip search, I welcome the fact that the MPS has accepted adultification as an issue, particularly around black children. I continue to be concerned that we are not able to join those two things because there still is a bit of a reticence around accepting that race may have been a factor in the case of Child Q, obviously subject to the IOPC report being published. That is a fundamental issue in addressing the trust and confidence and I do not think that needs academic study; the numbers speak for themselves.

As Assembly Member Ahmad has said, 75% of the children that you strip-search are Black and minority ethnic and I am sure the numbers are very similar when we move on to questions about strip search. I just think that it is staring us in the face, it probably has been staring people in the face for a long, long time and we cannot address those issues until we accept that as a whole. Black people, Black Londoners want to be policed fairly and equitably, just the same as their white counterparts, and that does not happen. They are arrested rather than treated as victims of crime.

My question is around what system do you have in place to make sure that appropriate records of strip search are kept so that senior officers can review them, considering that the Deputy Mayor has said that it was a struggle to get that data up?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Of course, thank you. Other than the MTIP searches, so if we focus on strip searches in custody, any search in custody must be recorded in the custody record. Our custody suites are subject to CCTV recording. Of course, a strip search would not take place under cameras, but we have talked about the audio recording to capture that. We are looking at how we audit to ensure that we are confident that there is nothing slipping beneath the radar here.

Going back to your point on reticence, I hope we have not come across as reticent to wanting to understand and address the very serious concerns you raise. For us, our job is preventing crime fundamentally and to do that we know that at the heart of that is building a trusting relationship with the communities we serve. We must do that and hopefully you can help us with this through your scrutiny. If I may hand over to Laurence to talk about the work that he has been leading that is very focused on ensuring that we have effective supervision and leadership, and also scrutiny and audit of these occurrences.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

Thank you and I will be fairly brief. Louisa has described the capture of the information through the National Strategy for Police Information System, which is our custody recording system. All of those strip searches on children are now effectively taken from that system and reviewed by a central team and all of that data comes through my oversight group, so I am sighted on all of those and any discrepancies or concerns that we may have. Similarly, with the MTIP searches, they are recorded on our Crime Reporting Information System, our intelligence system, and they similarly are now reviewed since April [2022]. That goes through a monthly stop and search review that looks at MTIP and also stop and search more broadly; and results from that are also analysed through my oversight group.

In terms of that data scrutiny, there are a number of internal mechanisms that we are using to assure ourselves. We are also taking that data to some of our Community Monitoring Groups and others so we have more independent scrutiny around that, and we are looking at how we can build in additional groups. As Louisa mentioned, the Acting Commissioner and I met with a group, Black Female Doctors [UK], the other day. It was a really positive meeting with some really brilliant ideas from the medical world around how we might deal with or address some of the challenges we have. I am looking to engage as broadly as we can.

Sem Moema AM: When you say “challenges”, what do you mean by “challenges”?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

Well, the challenges that we have alluded to. We are doing too many --

Sem Moema AM: What have you alluded to?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

There are too many strip searches in custody, there is disproportionality in those searches and we need to understand why there is disproportionality and what we can do about that.

Sem Moema AM: But it would be obvious to those doctors that came to see you why you have problems. I guess that is my point. We are just kind of circling around something. Sorry. I am not suggesting that you are not open to a conversation as an institution, as the MPS, but I think we need a bit of clarity and focus about what it is that you are trying to address. I do not know these people that you met, but the issue is that 75% of the children that you strip search are Black or ethnic minority. How to fix that is the problem to be fixed, rather than wider community engagement.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

I totally agree. Absolutely, that is what we need to be addressing and actually it is for all children because it has the same impact on all children. As you rightly point out, there is a much greater proportion of Black and minority ethnic children, who are subject to a strip search in custody and MTIP actually. MTIP appears to be far more focused. The outcome rate on an MTIP search is around 61%, which is far higher than a normal stop-search. In custody, that is much lower and that is the issue as to why those decisions are being made.

There are a number of factors, some of which will be adultification, some of which will be safety concerns following Matt's [Ratana] murder, some of which will be ongoing cultural issues and some will be process issues. That is what we are working to try to understand and hear as many voices in that conversation. It came up earlier around who else we look to. I am engaged with the College of Policing, I am engaged with the National Stop and Search Lead, the National Safeguarding Leads and the National Children and Young Person Lead to try to understand nationally whether MPS is the outlier here, whether there are unique problems that we are facing, where can we learn from and how we resolve the situations that I think we are all accepting exist and need to change.

Sem Moema AM: I had wanted to ask the IOPC, when they came to see us a couple of weeks ago, about their implementation. I want to ask you the same, the MPS has accepted the recommendations in full, but the final report has not been published, when are you going to be implementing the full recommendations of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership and what are you implementing?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): There were forty recommendations. There were a number that were multiagency recommendations, a number that were MPS specific and some national recommendations. As I say, I am engaged with the National Stop and Search Lead and the College of Policing to look at the national recommendations, because they are not wholly within our gift to change. All of the recommendations that were specific to the MPS we are implementing. We are doing those locally. It is important that Hackney and the Local Command Teams are involved in that, but that oversight is seen through my board that I chair with that more holistic view. The adultification training has already begun. We have rolled that out to our Safer Schools Officers.

We have a further 120 places for our frontline officers in Hackney. I am looking at how we might procure that training and evaluate that training. It is important that it does what we want it to do, to roll that out more broadly across the MPS. All of the other recommendations are either now in place or close to being in place. We have had some challenges around one, which was with a specific group locally to engage, but that is unlocking now as well. I am confident that we have accepted the recommendations, that we have worked hard to implement those recommendations, and we are taking that learning and spreading that more broadly across the MPS.

Sem Moema AM: What lessons do you feel the MPS has learned following the high profile cases around strip search? I know when you were here last, Louisa, you had committed to meeting some local young people's organisations and obviously I have followed that up with them. What I would say is that there is a lot of reticence among 15-16 year-olds, which is desperately sad to see, to meet with the police, because they are either very cynical of you and the way that they and their peers have been treated, or they are just plain scared of you, because they do not know what will happen to them or they have seen things happen to their friends. I am struggling with this line of questioning, because I feel like there is a lesson that I really want you to learn. I do not know what it is that you have learned from what has happened so far, but from that learning, what meaningful changes are going to come about?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): In terms of lessons learned, the primary lesson is the one you allude to in terms of the experience of young people with the MPS, particularly young Black people. If their experience is traumatising, if it transpires that it was wholly wrong, like with Child Q, then that has huge ramifications for us and a large hill for us to climb to build trust with young people. For us to, effectively, ensure the safety of Londoners, to prevent crime, to secure justice for victims, we have to build and focus on building strong trusting relationships with our communities.

Also, with the wonderful charities and community groups, who might often provide a voice for those who may struggle to articulate their concerns, because they just generally do not trust us, too frightened of us, do not want to engage with us. Brilliant organisations like Sistah Space and others who have come forward and said, "We can help. We are going to be really brutal about what we think is wrong, but we can help and we want to help". We really welcome that. Involving organisations like that and young people in scrutiny of what we do is a huge lesson for us. That has to be, not just a short-lived lesson about Child Q, which is why I am so pleased with the work that Laurence is doing to ensure that we take the learning from that and ensure that we do everything we can to ensure it does not happen again.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

If I could add two things as well, on a very practical level there are a number of issues we have identified and it has come up earlier with the HMICFRS conversation around supervision. We need our supervisors to be intrusive, objective and supportive. We want to learn. We want to change. That is really important. We are building those mechanisms. We have learned about risk and risk appetite, and do we understand risk in custody to the individual or us and our staff, and also balance that with the impact a strip search will have. We are changing the conversation, changing the approach. We have learned that sometimes we can be too quick to react and just taking a pause will give you time to make those considerations.

We have discussed adultification. I have no doubt that that training will assist with raising awareness for officers, changing some of their views. Not all, immediately. There is much more work to be done. Also, some of the systemic issues here, because often the impact of policing is as a result of much broader systemic issues that often we are unable to influence. That goes across the multiagency. That is why the adultification training we are doing, which is multiagency training, is so important, because we understand all of those different perspectives and where we can have the greatest impact within the system to try and prevent some of this happening.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you for that. It is welcome that you are addressing and identifying adultification. The next conversation we need to have, in a measured calm way, is about race. In specific cases in the Lambeth and Southwick constituency, and the North-East constituency. Like you said for the benefit of all Londoners, it is something that does need to be tackled head-on. It is really sad that we are sat here having that conversation, because the MPS is huge and it has agency. I want to have confidence that that will happen. My next question is around how you engage with parents and carers when strip searches are undertaken on children. You mentioned that in 61% of cases there is additional action, but I do not know whether that is additional evidence or what that leads to.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

The 61% is -- when we look at the effectiveness of stop search, we look at the positive outcome rate, ie something is found, whether that is drugs, weapons, or something else. In stop search that is around 25-28%. For MTIP searches, that is 61%, which would suggest we are more focused on the reasons for doing an MTIP. Bearing in mind often they are done to prevent somebody from being arrested or ensuring that we have the appropriate evidence to arrest at that stage, whereas that is much lower in custody. That is because of the safeguarding aspect that almost reduce the bar for doing that. Apologies, I forgot the second part of your question.

Sem Moema AM: In parallel to the work that you are doing around adultification to focus on and tackle -- have a conversation about race, specifically within the MPS, because you do have agency; there are 44,000 of you.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

Yes, and the other part was around parents and what are we doing when --

Sem Moema AM: Around how you are engaging parents in strip search.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

That is right. We have now said that for every strip search, whether that is in custody or an MTIP search, we must submit that Child Coming to Notice form. We have run that successfully in Central East and that is now in Hackney. We have also introduced in Hackney, for all stop searches, that if a child is strip searched we will write to the parents so they are aware that that has taken place. There is further work on-going around appropriate adults and how we get the appropriate adult. As I say, it is not as straightforward as it perhaps would be nice to be. It is challenging.

We are looking at how we bring the parents into the conversation. I have a lot of examples where these have been conducted and the parents have been at custody and they have been very supportive, because they recognise that while it is a very unpleasant experience, no question, we are then able to refer to appropriate agencies with that evidence and the parents understand and are able to intervene. That broader question, obviously there are many conversations we need to have. I am sure as a new Commissioner comes in they will be very much on top of their agenda.

Sem Moema AM: Very finally, for my, and others, information potentially, should a child be in the care of the local authority, if they do not have a parent they might have a guardian who is not available or in care, how do you engage Social Services in the absence of a parent or a carer?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

We have an Appropriate Adult Service that we would go to if a child is in custody, for looked-after children. Looked-after children is another issue where there are on-going challenges. I have been working in that arena for many years, where thresholds of behaviour are lower and often more likely to be criminalised. That is a broader challenge than just strip search. We would engage the appropriate adult service and then how we engage with Social Services is through that Child Coming to Notice form. They are now completed every time, so they will go into children's services and each case then will be cited and that will form part of, where appropriate, a wider multiagency response to that child.

Tony Devenish AM: Assistant Commissioner, following the case of Child Q, the MPS said it would pilot a scheme where strip search involving children will need approval from an inspector. When is this pilot due to commence, please?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

That started on 1 April. From 1 April we introduced it across every single BCU in London, that every MTIP search had to be authorised. You have a conversation with your sergeant, then it must be authorised by an inspector. As of 4 July, that is now also the process in custody. No strip search will be authorised without first being reviewed and authorised by an inspector. That is now in place across all of the MPS.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: To the Assistant Commissioner, robbery, theft and vehicle offences have all risen in the past year, including a 42% increase in theft in Inner London. What action is the MPS taking in response to this, please?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): There is a huge amount of action, which I will go through, but it is important as well to say that while we are, and of course we track closely patterns of crime, robbery, theft, burglary, and vehicle offences have been going up this year, but remain below the 2019 pre-COVID-19 baseline. Many of those are on a longer term reducing trajectory. We are particularly focused on a number of areas. We have a Robbery Improvement Plan, which looks at how the whole organisation responds effectively, from calls coming in, to the appropriate response rapidly to those cases that have just occurred, and also running a number of operations.

The Violent Crime Task Force has been tackling street robbery as a top priority. We have been doing an awful lot of work around schools and working with young people to ensure awareness, understanding our hot spots and Operation Venice, which you may have heard of, around moped-enabled robbery, and snatch-theft with perpetrators on mopeds working with our Roads Policing Team as well, tackling that with local BCUs. We are seeing some improvements, but we are obviously concerned. Whilst things reduced through the COVID-19 period and they remain below that pre-COVID-19 period level, we are concerned about any increase. Of course, every victim of crime deserves justice, so we want to work incredibly hard and we would like to prevent these offences where we can.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Do you look at some of the other forces, other comparable forces, to see if it is a trend they are seeing and how you compare or whether this is something that stands out particularly in the MPS?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, we do look at other forces, particularly around violent crime, but also offences like robbery, particularly weapon-enabled robbery. We do see similar patterns in seasonal variations as well, with lighter evenings and busier night-time economy. We certainly look at what might be unique about London, particularly the concentration of our retail areas and night-time economy areas. We know the number of tourists, those people who come in and who might not necessarily be familiar with the area, we are really focused on what we might do.

Also, on some of our broader work, we have ensured that in our plans to tackle robbery we have particularly looked at how we ensure women as victims of robbery, and our work on violence against women and girls tracks across effectively our use of things like the Street Safe App to ensure people are reporting where they might not feel so safe and how we tackle that effectively. Laurence, as lead on this in frontline policing, is there anything you would want to add?

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): There is the corporate view around those volume figures, but then there is the local perspective. Every BCU runs local performance meetings, monitoring their own local challenges. Clearly our objective is to prevent crime increasing. That is what we are here for. We monitor closely our detection rate, because an important part of reducing crime is ensuring that offenders are brought to justice, particularly for burglaries and robberies, where we know that a small number of people commit a large volume of crime; that problem-solving activity, that working with partners, working with business improvement districts to have a broad response to volume crime. We have talked a lot about demand. We have to prioritise where great harm sits. There are alternative ways to deal with some of the other volume crimes, which includes working with our partners. It is very much a local focus within the BCUs. They are very conscious of volume crime, alongside wider MPS priorities and a lot of activity done to monitor and put local initiatives in place.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, thank you. This is the bread and butter of policing. This is often perhaps the only interaction they have with the police, so having the right response and a good response is important. Deputy Mayor, in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan he committed to improvements to tracking and tackling volume crimes, such as burglary, theft and vehicle offences. As I say, they all have a huge impact on communities. Can you provide any more detail and timescale for this work?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We have been clear in the Police and Crime Plan it is tackling of what we call neighbourhood crimes. Volume crimes are an important aspect of the work of the MPS and also in terms of the oversight and scrutiny that we have in MOPAC. It is within the trust and confidence chapter priority, because it really does feed into trust and confidence. I have talked previously about the service that Londoners get. If you take robbery, for example, the Mayor has invested significant amounts of money, in terms of some of the preventative measures around robbery.

We have a new fund which we are going out to schools with, to work with schoolchildren to help them be safer, but also try to do some prevention work about those -- Louisa has talked about the night-time economy. Westminster is a particular robbery hot spot. We also know that there are particular problems with peer-on-peer robbery. The Mayor has invested in that. I do not know if you also mean anti-social behaviour, but in terms of anti-social behaviour we committed within the Police and Crime Plan to, not just around the recording -- and all this is obviously tracked and recorded via the performance reports, but also committed to convening a Pan-London Forum for Anti-Social Behaviour across London with the heads of Community Safety and the MPS.

That met for the first time recently, in the last couple of weeks, and that will be a regular convening of the organisations who can tackle anti-social behaviour at a local level. It really is local neighbourhood crime. I do not disagree with you at all that these crimes: burglary, robbery, vehicle theft, and anti-social behaviour really impact on the day-to-day lives of Londoners. Somebody the other day stole my neighbour's catalytic converter. It had real impact on them; of course it does.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Of course it does, absolutely. Thank you for that. We will come into more detail on anti-social behaviour in a minute. Can I just ask the Assistant Commissioner, data from the Home office shows that over 94% of bicycle theft cases in London were unsolved by the MPS in 2021. This is the second worst record of any police service in the country. Given the focus from the Mayor, from City Hall in encouraging active travel, making London this welcoming place for cyclists, how are you working with TfL, boroughs, and others to tackle this issue? Will you look at what other police services, such as Lancashire and Hampshire, when they use things like bait bikes as a tool to try to catch people who are stealing bikes in the capital?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes. If you rely on your bicycle to get to work and your bicycle disappears, it has a huge impact. Often quite high value, often very difficult to solve for policing in terms of if it is taken where there is very little opportunity in terms of CCTV. We do an awful lot in terms of prevention activity, particularly with TfL, universities, and common places where people will use their bikes. Our neighbourhood teams are out across London. I see on Twitter regularly they are running bike-marking events, which we advertise jointly with partners. That can help us trace it when we stop somebody on a stolen bicycle. We work with those who deal in second-hand bicycles. In terms of specific operational activity, I do not have that information. Laurence may, but if he does not, we can write to you with details.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: If you could write, given the time, we could get more detail. Given that, worse of any police service in the country and the focus, it might be an area of work. Perhaps give us some more detail in writing on that.

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Of course.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Also, looking at that Home Office data, quite staggeringly the MPS closed 89% of car theft cases in 2021, without even identifying a suspect, again, worse record of any service in the country. What urgent work are you doing in that area for those who have their car stolen in the capital?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): We have been doing a number of things on vehicle crime. While it remains just below pre-pandemic levels, we are very concerned about this. Having your vehicle stolen is a hugely impactful issue. We know that it will affect more Londoners than violent crime. While it may not hit the headlines in the way that violent crime does, if your car is stolen it is hugely impactful on you and your family. Often a car is one of the highest value things that you may own, so huge issue for people. We have been working with the Behavioural Insights Team, commissioned by the Home Office, looking at behavioural strategies to prevent vehicle crime. Four hundred streets in London have been focused on to design out motor vehicle crime.

We have been running a number of proactive operations that have been very successful around catalytic converter theft. We have been quite successful in that and identified a number of gangs who have been targeting that particular crime. We have been working with vehicle manufacturers and security companies to design out crime and improve antitheft capabilities for owners. An example is Toyota, who have moved catalytic converters to be part of the engine. The majority of manufacturers now have started to etch vehicle identification numbers on to converters to ensure that they are identifiable. Of course, if you recover this there are things that you and others can do to help us as well.

From my work in the West Midlands, and this is an issue in the MPS as well, I know there is something about the way that the insurance industry operates in its write-off of vehicles. Many years ago, you will all recall, the insurance companies, if your car was written off, it had to be scrapped for parts. That rarely happens these days and cars are often sold again through auction. They will have a categorisation as a car that is repairable or not. Often they have significant issues with them, like non-operable airbags. We know that inscrutable people, criminals, will buy them for cash at auction and will then ensure that parts or other cars are stolen for parts to rebuild them.

These are often high value, Audi, BMW, Range Rover. It will drive vehicle crime and theft of vehicles. It will drive the phenomenon of chop-shops and it will mean that cars that are then unsafe are rebuilt and put on the road. They will switch off the things in the engine management system that say the airbags are not there or not working. Somebody innocent may buy that for several thousand pounds. These things are incredibly difficult to solve. We do lots of things to prevent keyless theft. Policing nationally, through the NPCC, has worked with sites like eBay and Amazon to ensure that people cannot readily buy kit to clone keys or to get access to vehicles.

There is a huge amount of work going on to prevent this, but there is definitely more that can be done around ensuring that people cannot buy cars for cash at auction, ensuring the insurance industry, if a car should be scrapped, it is broken up for parts and cannot be sold on and rebuilt when it is unsafe. Within this there will be exploitation of young people. I have seen in other forces young people who are desperately paid pennies or

who are paid in food to steal cars to order, to fuel this kind of crime. It is a horrific issue that has a huge impact on people.

In terms of the MPS working with other forces, at the end of June 2022 we hosted the National Motor Vehicle Crime Conference. All national leads and manufacturers were there sharing learning, providing training, with particular emphasis on keyless theft and catalytic converters. There is a lot going on. Also, through our work with the TDIU, looking at how we ensure that victims of vehicle theft, you know if your car is stolen -- that while many want their crime reference number, being really clear about why there is little to be gained from us attending an empty street or empty driveway from which your car has been taken, but we are reassuring people that their car details will appear on the police national computer.

That if it is seen anywhere in the UK. If it travels through an automatic number-plate recognition camera it will ping. If it tries to leave the country it will ping. Of course, we know that some people will put on cloned plates, but there are many things we do that our crime pattern analysis looks at, for example the identification of those 400 streets that we could focus on. There is lots of work going on. We are working with manufacturers through to local initiatives and operations to tackle this.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It would be interesting if you could write with the details of the streets that you were talking about, how you were trying to design that out on streets. I would be interested in looking at that. Finally, I will move on to the top of anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour calls to the MPS decreased by 38% in the year to the end of May 2022. Why do you think that is?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): We are still working to understand that. We do know that there can be a connection between anti-social behaviour and other forms of crime, particularly drug dealing and drug use. When we identify our hot spots of anti-social behaviour we often find a significant overlay with other criminality. Going back to my point earlier about crime recording, it is really important we have accurate crime recording here, so that we can understand what is going on, so we can work effectively to problem-solve. If you are a victim of anti-social behaviour it can be horrible and you want to be reassured that the police are responding effectively.

Also, we know that parts of London have been less busy through the pandemic and they are not quite back up to full capacity. We do know some of that has had an impact. There are bits of the night-time economy where this may be focused, not quite as busy as they were pre-pandemic. There may be some, but of course we are still working to understand why that is reducing. We know that the HMICFRS finding was about the conversion of incidents, which we are confident are recorded into crime. We know we are catching the incidents, so we do not think this is about us, any massaging of figures, or inaccuracy in our recording. This is about not having the report coming in. We are seeking to understand why.

Tony Devenish AM: Deputy Mayor, last question for the morning. What does the Mayor's vision to develop a more co-ordinated Pan-London perspective on anti-social behaviour actually involve, please? How does it relate to the MPS's anti-social behaviour early intervention scheme?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Practically what will happen in terms of delivering that commitment is the Pan-London Forum, which I have spoken about, which has already met and had a well-attended meeting with over 50 people at it, with the heads of community safety co-ordinators and the MPS. That is what the Pan-London approach looks like. We are looking at what we need to put on the dashboards. We already published the police recorded data. We will have a look, in terms of locally at borough level, what would be good to ensure we have an understanding of. Also, through the London Crime

Prevention Fund, we fund a number of initiatives that are tackling anti-social behaviour. Croydon, Havering, and Waltham Forest are three examples of really good projects and programmes. One of which is around working with Year 6 pupils around prevention and gives them an understanding of the impact of anti-social behaviour. Through the London Crime Prevention Plan as well, we are delivering and investing in services through the boroughs to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Tony Devenish AM: Thank you very much. To the MPS, what impact has the Anti-Social Behaviour Early Intervention Scheme had on both communities and victims? Can I make a personal constituency plea? Particularly in Earls Court I am getting more and more and more visible blatant drug dealing on the street, literally every day. To quote one resident: there is no visible policing of what the MPS call low-level crime, but it is really painful for the community.

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): I will start, but I know Laurence will have things to say on this as well. That is really disappointing to hear, because our focus around the growth in officer numbers coming into the MPS so far has been very geared towards local policing, investment in neighbourhoods and town centre teams. We absolutely believe in the value of building stronger relationships with our communities, visible policing and ensuring that we tackle and problem solve the things that affect Londoners and affect quality of life, but also securing justice for victims. This is something that is really disappointing to hear. I will want to go away and look at that. Laurence, is there something you want to add.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): I was going to comment on the first part of your question around the effectiveness of early intervention. Where it works well it is incredibly effective. Communities see action being taken. The use of criminal behaviour orders, community protection, and warnings are different approaches to address behaviour and where that behaviour is addressed it is definitely having an impact on trust and confidence. Where you align that with positive action initiatives, with volunteers, and increasing that visibility, where we do those surveys at the beginning and at the end, we see a really clear increase in trust and confidence. We need to work harder. There is more we need to do around that visible presence on the street.

Clearly we can look at specific examples. I have many examples where the different approach to tackling anti-social behaviour and that use of early intervention has had an impact both on the anti-social behaviour itself and the trust and confidence in those local communities. There are some real positives there and something we can expand further.

Tony Devenish AM: I will leave it there because of time. Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Sophie, before you go, we have got other questions for you in here. We will put those in writing to you. Also, can I ask you for more information on the Pan-London Anti-Social Behaviour Forum: who is leading it and how often it meets, its priorities and who is on it, etc? Can you send us details of all of that?

Marina Ahmad AM: I go into more detail with my questions, I wonder whether it would be helpful for the MPS to define what you mean by anti-social behaviour.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, I agree. It would. There is something else we have been looking at recently as well is around reporting. Whether a member of the public says it is anti-social behaviour or a crime it is for us to determine whether a

crime has been committed. What is important is we are told. People need to have confidence to report anti-social behaviour in whatever form that might be. Then we demonstrate that we do something with it. We have talked about that early intervention and other activity that we do locally. It has a huge impact on communities. There is a definition of anti-social behaviour. I do not know it off the top of my head, I am afraid, but we can certainly provide what we work to. There is a difference between how we then describe our actions to the public. I am not sure the public should be overly concerned whether it is anti-social behaviour, whether it is crime, or whether it is something that is bothering them. They need to tell us and then we deal with that.

Marina Ahmad AM: Perhaps you could give some examples of what you would regard as anti-social behaviour rather than the definition in its own right.

Laurence Taylor (Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Local Policing, Metropolitan Police Service):

It can be anything from noise, nuisance neighbours, rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour, vehicle nuisance, scooters driving up and down the road making noise. It is things that impact on quality of life, that can be a combination of behaviours and or crimes that collectively have an impact on an individual or a community.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. To both the Deputy Mayor and to the MPS, do you think it is the case that given the complaints made by the HMICFRS around the non-recording of anti-social behaviour that Londoners do not report anti-social behaviour, because they think it is a waste of time. Deputy Mayor, would you like to start?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am not trying to dodge that question, because over COVID-19 we saw a really significant increase in anti-social behaviour calls into the MPS. One of the answers for why it has decreased is because we have come out of the pandemic and a lot of the calls were around non-compliance of the regulations and they were being looked at as anti-social behaviour. Genuinely, I am not trying to dodge the question, but I think we need to do some work around whether there is under-reporting of anti-social behaviour. The instances of anti-social behaviour at a local level are much stronger. There are far more incidents.

We will look at some of this through our Public Attitude Survey. We will look at this through some of the hyper-local surveys that we will undertake, especially in relation to the anti-social behaviour that Assembly Member Devenish mentioned that is associated with drug dealing, because it has such a huge impact on families and individuals.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you. Assistant Commissioner, did you want to add to that?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): It is really important we get that right. Recording those incidents has driven activity, it has driven analysis. We do audit this ourselves at the moment. It is something that we take very seriously. We have a central team, who look at our call handling of anti-social behaviour calls and also our recording standards. We have a monthly performance pack that goes to each of our borough superintendents, who lead on anti-social behaviour locally. As the Deputy Mayor has said, we are very focused on the connection between -- often we do know that many people do not want to bother statutory agencies, whether it the National Health Service or the MPS about something that they themselves might consider minor.

However, we would encourage people to report, because it helps us understand a pattern. We have some great examples of how we have, for example, used the Early Intervention Scheme, where anti-social behaviour

reports were made numerously that related to drug dealing. It was one person severely impacting the quality of lives of people across a number of areas of London. We identified through our analysis the connection between these anti-social behaviour calls. We started the Early Intervention Scheme. The person received a Community Protection Warning and then a Community Protection Notice. When they breached that we got a Criminal Behavioural Order and it led to considerable reduction in anti-social behaviour.

This has positive impacts for people. It is really important that we are very focused on this. We will be addressing the issues around crime recording, but also, for me, leading on violence against women and girls, I want to understand how this overlays with street harassment or women feeling unsafe in parts of London too. It is really important we look at this as a big picture of crime and behaviour.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Chairman, I am really sorry, but I really do need to go. I will explain to you privately what I need to go and do. It is the first time I have ever left the PCC early. I hope you will allow me to go.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Deputy Mayor, very often the Commissioner insists on leaving early as well, so it is not the first time.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do apologise.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): If there is a good reason it is a great pity you did not explain to me before the meeting. OK, do you want to continue?

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you, Chairman. Tackling anti-social behaviour often requires a collaborative approach between not only the police, but also the fire service, local authorities, and community groups. How are you working effectively with other organisations to not only address and stop anti-social behaviour, but to prevent it as well?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): We do have some examples of really good partnership working. One from our Central East BCU, where teams worked alongside the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Drugs Intervention Programme and Turning Point to provide a more holistic approach to support those involved in anti-social behaviour, particularly tackling the misuse of drugs and vulnerability through addiction. It has gone now further into a diversion scheme strategy with our drug intervention programmes, with charities supporting young people and adults on the periphery of drug misuse and violent crime. That is a piece of work, focused initially on anti-social behaviour, which has become very focused on preventing crime and early intervention supporting vulnerable people. There will be numerous examples of that across London. Of course, there is always more we can do.

Marina Ahmad AM: As an Assembly Member, and previously as a councillor, one of the biggest issues in my inbox is about nuisance neighbours. You identified that as anti-social behaviour and something that you would look at as anti-social behaviour. There seems to be real confusion about what is the police's role and what is the local authority's role. There is a process where perhaps the police might attend. At what point does it become the local authority's responsibility and how then is the police still keeping an eye on the situation?

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): This can be very complex. If matters are, for example, purely a matter of noise nuisance, where you have a noisy neighbour, this would be something that is within the remit of the local authority. We would seek to work with partners. We would always want to ensure we investigate if there are issues behind this of somebody being particularly vulnerable? Is there something more going on? Is there crime? We would look to work in partnership with others. If people are housed by the local authority or by a housing association or it might be that they are in supported accommodation, we would want to ensure and we would expect our local neighbourhood team to work effectively with partners to address what might be a matter of minor nuisance or could be people who are particularly vulnerable or feeling particularly threatened.

Where this becomes a crime or a persistent matter of anti-social behaviour then policing would be involved. There are grey areas here. This is not something that is very straightforward. Police officers are very good at applying their discretion and we trust our officers, they are great problem solvers. Often there is not a simplistic approach, we require our officers to go out to use their discretion, to work effectively with others, to seek to problem solve. One of the bits of learning from the pandemic, where our officers were driving London ambulances, when they were facing particular pressures, is our officers came back and reported to me that they spent an awful lot of time visiting the same people that we were called to, who were very vulnerable.

The solution was not an emergency ambulance, it was not a police officer; these people often required a much more complex solution through joint working with many agencies. This is why our analysis of repeat calls, particularly anti-social behaviour, can be so important.

Marina Ahmad AM: Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): OK, Assembly Member Prince, your next question was to the Deputy Mayor. Is there anything else you want to ask? If not, I will make sure that goes in in writing. I am so sorry. We have Assembly Member Garratt and then Assembly Member Moema. Colleagues, I intend to drop Section 60 Stop and Search and the TDIU, because we have other work to do after these questions. Are you all happy that that is the case?

All: Agreed.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): None of us are happy, but it is the only thing we can do. We will go straight on to Assembly Member Garratt.

Neil Garratt AM: It is quite a short question. I wanted to reprise the point that Assembly Member Pidgeon brought up about bike theft and the impact that that has on people thinking about switching from a car to a bike. One of the biggest single deterrents, particularly for people who are thinking about using an e-bike as a way to get into cycling, is the value of those bikes means that people who often have them are then very unwilling to park them in the town centre. So, journeys where they might replace cars are not happening because of the fear of theft. There is a sense that bike thieves operate with impunity and once your bike is gone that is the last you see of it, farewell.

I was quite intrigued to see a report from *The Times* in March 2022 comparing how different police areas had compared. It would be fair to say that across the board it was not great, except for Avon and Somerset, who seem to be prosecuting three times more than the second best authority and ten times more than the MPS, who unfortunately are the wooden spoon authority on this. I do not want to go over the ground that Assembly Member Pidgeon did, but my question to you, and perhaps you can write to us, is: can you look at

what they are doing? It seems to be fundamentally different from what any other force is doing. They are catching bike thieves. Only 24% of bike thefts in Avon and Somerset have no suspect identified. It is around 70% in the second best and in the MPS it is virtually never. In Avon and Somerset, they are clearly doing something different and right. I would really be intrigued to know whether we can make some significant strides to be more like them in this area.

Louisa Rolfe OBE (Assistant Commissioner for Met Operations, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, thank you for that suggestion. Having spent most of my policing service in Avon and Somerset I have plenty of contacts there. I will speak with them to find out the secret to their success. That is incredibly impressive. There may be many reasons why our success is different, but that is impressive and we will want to learn from it. Thank you.

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): Thank you. As briefly as you can, Assembly Member Moema, and brief response, please, because of the time.

Sem Moema AM: Thank you. My question is possibly for Laurence [Taylor]. In the broad, working definition or understanding to a member of the public of what anti-social behaviour is, cycling through the logic of your response, which seems reasonable, but it does seem like if you are somebody who your landlord is a social landlord the police will not attend. Your response was that if you are a council or housing association tenant then you would have some involvement from them. I wonder what the knock-on effect of that approach might be to somebody who, again going back to the original starting point of this conversation, that the police need to attend when things happen, I do think a bit of a focus on and clarity around what is your role and what is the role of local authorities or what is the role of a private landlord, if we are talking about things that happen in or around the home?

Because those are the things which undermine that trust and confidence, the police are absent from those issues. I just also wanted to ask you: at what point does a member of the public know when to escalate something? As a force, you ask members of the public to continue to record and report to you issues, I can think of cases where people have been recording and reporting for years and they still suffer from the impact of drug dealing and so on. At what point do you take action and resolve that?

Susan Hall AM (Chairman): It is going to be a long answer to this, because it was a very long question. Can I ask for the answer to that in writing? If not, you will speed through an answer and it does not give it justification. I am mindful of the time. Sorry about that. I do think we need a proper answer to that and I am sure you would rather give it. That brings this part of the proceedings to a close. I would like to thank our guests for attending the meeting today and for participating in the discussion. Can I point out that we are mindful that the MPS is 43,000 people strong? The acts of bravery we see every day do not hit the newspapers. The amounts of good work you do do not get featured often in these reports, but I do not want you to think they go unnoticed by us.

Our job is to look at where things go wrong, but I do absolutely congratulate the officers 99% of the time, because they work very, very hard and with all of this going on at the moment must be very disheartening for them. I thank you for answering our questions.