

Police and Crime Committee – 9 June 2016**Transcript of Agenda Item 4 – Confirmation Hearing in Respect of the Appointment to the Office of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime**

Steve O’Connell AM (Chairman): I would like to move into the actual meat of the business, which is the question-and-answer (Q&A) session. If I may, I will do some lead-off questions and then the group will take the questions on. [Sophie Linden] Feel free to answer in any way you wish. We will come back with supplementary questions, back and forth. We will try to do it in a liquid, organic way where you get your points over and we are able to pursue points and questions, if you are happy - kindly - with that.

Can you briefly outline for us the experience that you have that makes you the ideal candidate for this particular role?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Thank you very much. If I could just say at the beginning that I, like some of you, am new to this Chamber and new to this role, but I am not new to public scrutiny and I really do look forward to working with you, if you are to confirm me today, working with you in the Committee to improve the safety of Londoners through effective policing. I absolutely recognise the role of this Committee in holding the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the police service to account and I recognise the important job that you do as Assembly Members in ensuring that the police service is held to account, as well as the Deputy Mayor for Policing.

You will have had a short outline of my CV and I hope that answers one of the questions that you have just posed and was posed in the letter from you about whether I am qualified and suitable for this job. I hope that ten years in a very busy inner London council, the London Borough of Hackney, six years as the lead on crime and anti-social behaviour working with the police service and partners across the borough, and three years as Deputy Mayor [of Hackney], as well as my experience in working in central Government with the Home Secretary on police and crime and anti-social behaviour, will give you some confidence in my suitability, my experience and my skills.

What is not on my CV and laid out in career terms is why I want to do this job and what drives me to do this job. For me, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour is at the heart of delivering on the Mayor’s manifesto of providing opportunities for everybody, opportunities to take up the great opportunities in this capital city. If people do not feel safe in their home or on their street, they cannot take part, their families will not thrive, the communities will not be strong and individuals will not be able to reach their aspirations. For me, that is an incredibly important driving force. It is about pursuing justice for victims but it is also about pursuing social justice and trying to deal with some of the inequalities in victimisation and the inequalities in offending rates.

It is also personal for me because from the age of 16, I have lived in Hackney. I understand and I have seen the effect of crime. I have been the mother who has taken the phone call from Territorial Policing to say that her son has been mugged at knifepoint and I have waited for him to come home to see how he is, but I have also, in the course of my job in Hackney and my work in Hackney, met mothers who have had their sons murdered and many years on, you can still see the grief and the impact that that terrible event has had on them and their families. I have been into refuges and talked to victims of domestic violence, women who have had to leave their own home and take the really difficult decision to take children out of their own home to ensure their safety. I have also been into communities where murders have just taken place.

I feel very strongly and passionately that tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, yes, is about ensuring police effectiveness, police accountability and transparency, but at the heart of it, it is about ensuring that families are safe and individuals thrive.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you, Sophie. Clearly you feel passionate about the subject, as does everyone around this horseshoe and many, many Londoners. What we are trying to drill down into is your experience and aptitude for the job. I will have to put this out now: we were deeply disappointed at the paucity and the shortness of your CV. The Assembly has two more confirmation hearings - I certainly have - this afternoon and they have lengthy, detailed documents that do justice to the applicant.

We were very disappointed with your initial CV. It was ill-advised. Then when we came back to you to ask for further information - bear in mind we are trying to understand your abilities and what you do to support your application - the information that then came back equally was short. That has disconcerted us. I wanted to put that out there early on. That is why we are probably going to be probing quite a lot about your suitability for the role. If those questions had been answered in the CV, we would not necessarily need to. I make that point.

Cllr Sophie Linden: Can I just apologise for that? I am very happy to put on the record a fuller CV. It is a difficult thing to judge what level of information you are after. I am very happy to provide that and that can go on the public record.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): OK. That is good. It is likely something that we will be requesting. What we wanted to pursue is the experience that you have. This is an oversight role. I have some experience working in the last four years relatively closely with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. It is a significant oversight role and what we want to learn this morning is about your experience in that sort of oversight role with the police. Is there anything you can add to what you have just said around oversight and holding the police to account?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Absolutely. As a lead member and Deputy Mayor of Hackney I have chaired a community resilience partnership, which is about holding the police to account and ensuring that the priorities that are set are delivered. That is incredibly important on behalf of the communities and on behalf of the Council and the police service. That is the formal role of chairing and sitting on a partnership body to ensure that happens, but the informal role that I have undertaken with the police service in Hackney has been one in which there have been regular meetings, regular updates and regular engagement with the police service and with partners to ensure that there is accountability, to ensure that priorities are being met and to ensure that value for money is also being met.

I have also been a member of the Local Government Association (LGA) Safer and Stronger Communities Board and as part of that role I have sat on the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy programme) inspection and advisory board, which was absolutely about - on the larger, national scale - setting the standards and setting the priorities for the PEEL inspections going into forces. Of course the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has had its PEEL inspection.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): When you said you chaired, was that the Safer Neighbourhood Board you chaired?

Cllr Sophie Linden: No, I did not chair the Safer Neighbourhood Board. That was chaired by a young man. We did discuss that and we felt that it was important that the community had a representative from it. No, it

was a partnership board called the Community Resilience Partnership Board, which was part of the Safer Communities Partnership Board of Hackney.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Did you attend and support the Safer Neighbourhood Board?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Yes, I did go to the Safer Neighbourhood Board and had regular engagement with members of the Safer Neighbourhood Board.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): At the moment you are Deputy Mayor of Hackney with cabinet member responsibilities, which, clearly, if successful, you will be stepping away from. Aside from that, what other professional commitments do you have and will you have going forward over the next four years?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have no other professional commitments. My full time role was as Deputy Mayor of Hackney and if you do confirm me today, I will be resigning today as well.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): This will become your full time role?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Absolutely. I do not think you could fulfil this role as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime in such an important capital city without it being a full time role, and not just being in a full time role but being fully committed to ensure that you fulfil all the roles and the priorities within it, absolutely. I have no other professional commitments and I will be resigning if you do confirm me today.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Good morning, Sophie. You talked about the LGA and you talked about Hackney and your role within Hackney in general terms. Can you be a bit more specific? You talk about structures but I want to ask you about what you have actually done to make Hackney a safer place. Can you give us some concrete examples, not through structures and through committees, of what exactly you have done in the past to make Hackney residents feel safer and make Hackney generally a safer place?

Cllr Sophie Linden: One of the things that I am - and Hackney is - proudest of is our work on tackling gangs, which was innovative at the time. We set up one of the first gangs units in London, which has been spread out across the MPS now. In order to do that, we brought together a partnership of the police and our own community safety officers, but also the Department for Work and Pensions, Probation [Service], and Safer London [Foundation], which were working with young women and girls who are associated or connected with gangs. Through that, we have radically reduced the number of gang incidents and gang violence.

What is really interesting for me about the gangs unit was not just the partnership working, which was incredibly important, but the fact that on the gangs matrix that was set up to look at the risk of violence, of those members that were on the gang matrix at the beginning with a very high risk of violence, the gangs unit and the work we have done has not only managed to reduce gang-related crime but also brought down the risk of violence for all the people who are on the gangs matrix. It has had some success in exiting some young people out of gangs and into apprenticeships and training.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Talking in terms of the London-wide stage and the role of Deputy Mayor, some of the questions inevitably will overlap, but what do you see as the biggest personal challenges in taking up the role of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The biggest personal challenge?

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Yes. How will you go about approaching the job?

Cllr Sophie Linden: One of the things I am very aware of is that I have been deeply rooted in Hackney. Hackney will always have a special place in my heart but I know that as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime I have to make sure that I deliver for the whole of London. I am very aware of that. I have to make sure that I get out and I talk to leaders, Borough Commanders and community representatives in the whole of London so that I get to understand much better what the police service and what partner agencies need to do for everybody in London. As the Mayor has said, this is an administration that is for all Londoners. That is a personal challenge I am relishing the thought of undertaking.

The other challenge for anybody in this position is to make sure that I do not get rooted in City Hall or only rooted on the strategic levels, but that I actually get out and understand what is happening on the front line. That is what I bring to the role at the moment because I have had such a long experience of what is happening on the front line and engagement with individuals, voluntary groups and families within the community. That is a challenge for somebody in a role like this, to make sure that they do not lose touch and to make sure that they do understand what is happening.

The other challenge is to make sure that the police service understand that - while I absolutely respect and admire the work that they do because they deal with some of the worst bits of our society, and they would have my backing where they have to take difficult decisions - one of the challenges is to hold the police service to account, to make it more transparent and more accountable, and to ensure that that happens not just at a strategic level at City Hall - through yourselves as well, as the Police and Crime Committee - but also at a local level, and to empower local communities and local partners to be able to do that.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): You have pre-empted one of my questions. You used the words "police service", not "police force". Can you talk a bit about your view and experience in the balance between prevention and enforcement? As I say, in some ways you have already started answering that question by using the words "police service" as opposed to a "police force".

Cllr Sophie Linden: Going back to your question about challenges, one of the challenges of going forward, reducing crime and reducing reoffending is the complexities and vulnerabilities of some of the people that we will have to deal with, that the police service engage with and also that partner agencies engage with. I talk about those complexities and vulnerabilities because that is about how you try to prevent and enable people not to go down the path of criminality or to make the right choices. Those preventative measures around education and good mental health services, which will help people and support people through some of the issues they are experiencing that may cause them to go down that route into criminality or anti-social behaviour, are incredibly important.

In ensuring that happens the police service has a vital role to play, but there does have to be a point - and I do believe this - at which a line is drawn. You can help and support individuals as much as you can to make the right choices but if their behaviour continues to impact upon the community or continues down the road of criminality, there is a role for enforcement. It is that balance, making sure that you can get that balance right and ensure that it is right for every individual, but it also has to be right for the community. The community often feels the worst impacts of behaviour. You do have to say, "There is a line. We will help you not cross it but if you do cross it, there will have to be some form of enforcement."

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Before I get others in, you talked about keeping Londoners safe, which is clearly a role, but linked to that is your responsibility around the police budget. A clear duty of yours is to scrutinise, have executive control and indeed set the police's budget, which is around £3.5 billion. It would be

a Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) 100 company if it was listed. Tell us all about your experience in controlling large budgets.

Cllr Sophie Linden: As Deputy Mayor of Hackney, I have taken a strategic role in setting budgets across the Council and also I have had responsibilities within my portfolio for the budget for community safety, as well as the other aspects of my role. My portfolio had within it crime and anti-social behaviour but I was also in charge of legal and democratic services, human resources and organisational development.

Setting the budget is one thing and then ensuring they are controlled is another, making sure that spending is in line, budgets are not being overspent, nor drastically underspent, and that spending is in line with predictions. I have experience of doing that. Yes, the budget is much larger in the MPS but I have the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). The officials within MOPAC will be experienced and I will be able to lead them in that role of setting budgets and ensuring that the budgets are kept to. There is some flexibility, yes, for when emergencies arise, but we do have to make sure that that happens.

Just to set budgets in context, it was not just a case of setting budgets. It was also a case of ensuring that millions of pounds of savings were brought out of the budget in Hackney. Along with my colleagues and led by Mayor Jules Pipe, we managed not only to ensure that we produced those savings within the services, mostly from back office savings, but we made sure that there was no significant impact on frontline services. It is about the setting of budgets but it is also about how you structure your budgets and how you transform services to ensure that you can get the savings out with minimal impact on frontline services.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): The dynamic will be different. Clearly this was you as the Council with your own budget. You will be dealing with and negotiating with some very senior people who will be quite protective over their budgets. You have aspirations about cutting and savings in certain parts. What experience have you had with quite hard-nosed negotiating with very high-level people around the figures?

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of negotiations, absolutely, there is no question that this role means that you will have to negotiate with very high-level officers, such as the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM]. However, I would say that officers - they may be not so high-ranking in Hackney Council - are just as protective of their services and just as protective of their budgets. It may be of a different order but it does not mean it is less difficult.

Also, in the Home Office I did spend time negotiating with the [then] Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, who was there, and the Assistant Commissioner and across what was then called the Association of Chief Police Officers with chief constables and assistant chief constables around difficult decisions and difficult policies. I have that experience, I have those skills and I have the knowledge to do that. I also believe that the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and the police service on both sides will wish to reach agreement and want the best outcomes for the people of London and the police service of London. Through negotiations, we will manage to do that.

Peter Whittle AM: Looking at your CV here, it is very impressive but I am finding it hard to get a sense of your experience outside the immediate political or elected world. When you go back to 1992 and being an adviser to David Blunkett [former Home Secretary] all the way through the campaigns, they are all essentially in the political environment. I wondered what other work - apart from Bell Pottinger for two years - you have done outside of that sphere or indeed what you do now outside that sphere.

Cllr Sophie Linden: For this role, having experience within the political environment is incredibly helpful because the service you are delivering is absolutely apolitical and is an impartial service; it is a political - with a

small “p”- world. To have the skills that I have learned over the years in negotiating with highly skilful people is an important experience and an important skill. I would say that qualifies me for the job. I understand your question about what else I have done but what I have done has given me the experience and the skills to be able to undertake this role in a good manner.

If you are asking about what else there is outside of politics, I have been a school governor for a number of years, I have sat on the Groundwork London board and I used to help run a playgroup when my children were little. This role is about the political skills and the understanding of policy and the outcomes that you are trying to achieve. I do have experience in doing that. In terms of other things, life is short. I have dedicated myself to public service through the political sphere and that has given me the skills. I do believe that they are important for this role.

Peter Whittle AM: Yes. It was not meant to be a facetious question.

Cllr Sophie Linden: No, I did not think it was.

Peter Whittle AM: It is very important because there is a sense, increasingly, with our public appointments that they grow out of a kind of political culture. That is all. One has to get a more rounded sense.

Just one purely factual thing. You were a researcher to David Blunkett. Was that your first job straight from university?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Yes, it was. Yes.

Peter Whittle AM: Thank you.

Sian Berry AM: If I could go back to the comments and experience you were talking about earlier on, about partnerships, balance and where you draw the line between help and enforcement on people, I know that Hackney and a number of other councils across the country are starting to introduce Public Space Protection Order measures. I know that Hackney last year had quite a controversial process of introducing those where initially it seemed there was no active engagement with the community about the measures. If there had been, it might have picked up problems that there were with including rough sleeping in the measures. I wanted to ask what you learned from that process about community engagement and consultation and how it affects your approach now to these measures maybe being more widespread and used across London.

Cllr Sophie Linden: That is a very fair question I am sure a lot of people have in their minds. In relation to the Public Space Protection Order that we introduced and then we did withdraw, just to set the context, what we were trying to do was to tackle some quite deep-seated anti-social behaviour that was in a specific area of Hackney and did involve street drinkers, some rough sleepers and some beggars. It was not an attempt to criminalise or outlaw rough sleeping, it was an attempt - and in fact the order was drawn in that way, set up in that way - to deal with anti-social behaviour. When I talk about anti-social behaviour, it was a case of defecation, urination in public spaces, people being spat at and being shouted at. It was causing a lot of problems for residents and businesses in that area.

In terms of what I learned through that difficult and bruising encounter on the Public Space Protection Order, it was new legislation and was untested at that time. Obviously the city was also going through a difficult period for the same reasons. What I have definitely learned - and I knew it in the back of my head as well - is the absolute importance of much wider public consultation, not just statutory consultation, because we did undertake consultation within the small area of the Public Space Protection Order. What we did not realise or

we did not factor in enough was the much wider interest in that. That would have come about if we had undertaken - in the way that we have in other things that I have led - softer consultation, more discussion with the community and wider consultation around that. That is certainly something I have learned and something that I would wish to bring to this role.

In drawing up, for example, the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan, I would want to ensure that not only does the public statutory consultation take place but that there is a lot of discussion with the lead authorities, lead partner agencies and the MPS before we published it to ensure that what was in it had already been consulted on to a certain extent. Then you have the wider public consultation.

Andrew Dismore AM I just wanted to come back to the things you were talking about, prevention and enforcement. Obviously one of the big challenges is going to be gangs, knife crime, youth violence and so forth. What are your views on mandatory sentencing?

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of knife crime, we will have to wait and see what the impact of the new sentencing guidelines have been. It is a difficult one, is it not? Mandatory sentencing can lay down a very clear signal as to the importance, the significance or the impact of a crime. On the mandatory sentencing for knife crime, we will have to see what the impact is.

It was worth a try because knife crime is such a damaging and difficult crime but it should not be the only thing that we are doing with young people or with anybody carrying a knife or found to be carrying a knife. What is important is that we make sure that when they are first caught, they are given the right information and the right tools to make changes to their lifestyles and changes to what they do so that they can make the right decisions and stop carrying a knife.

Andrew Dismore AM: Obviously, we want to see that. One of the concerns I have about mandatory sentencing, for example, is that it removes a judge's discretion. If the judge has a genuine hard luck case before him or her and wants to try to do the sort of things you are talking about in terms of reform, he or she has no option but to send someone to jail when that might not be the best option and might give a young person a criminal record that will blight the rest of their lives. I have real concerns about mandatory sentencing and I wondered if you shared those. You seem to be saying that you think it is a good thing.

Cllr Sophie Linden: The mandatory sentencing on knife crime is something that was worth trying. There are difficulties - I understand what you are saying - around making it more difficult for a judge to be more flexible and to have more discretion on the day, but the mandatory sentencing for knife crime is on the second time somebody is caught. What is important for me is to make sure that on the first time they are caught, it is not just a ticking off but there is proper intervention at that time. Of course it is not just young people who are carrying knives; it is adults and other people. It is not just young people who are carrying knives. I do think on this that it was worth having a try at mandatory sentencing to see what impact it has.

Andrew Dismore AM: The other thing you said about it was that it was an important signal. Do you think it is the role of the criminal justice system to send signals or to try and deal with the problem by reforming people and making their lives worthwhile?

Cllr Sophie Linden: It has to do both. At the moment it is difficult because of the criminal justice system and the way that prison is working, with the overcrowding and the lack of rehabilitative work for prisoners. It is very difficult at the moment for offenders to be rehabilitated. We know the very high reoffending rates for young people and adults who are going into prison and are coming out of prison more likely to offend and go back to their life of crime.

Andrew Dismore AM: Does that not militate against mandatory sentencing?

Cllr Sophie Linden: We will have to see what the mandatory sentencing does. I would hope that what happens in prison is reformed and is improved so that those who do end up in prison because of the crimes that they have committed get the right support and the right interventions in prison to enable them, when they do leave, not to go back to their life of crime.

It is not just what happens in prison, it is what happens through the prison door as well, to make sure that the new community rehabilitation companies and the probation services - it is right and it is a good thing that they are now picking up offenders for sentences of less than 12 months. What we have to wait and see is if they really are able to support and engage with people who are coming out of prison, to help them ensure that they do not carry on offending.

Keith Prince AM: I have to say that in my many years of employing people and seeing people for interviews, this has to be the worst CV that I have ever seen in my entire life. I just wondered why you did not feel that we needed to know more about you and why you felt contemptuous enough to think that this would be sufficient for anybody to employ anyone, frankly. That having been said, I notice you have also made some significant omissions on your CV. I believe that you have held at least two or three other directorships that you have failed to mention. I wondered why you chose to withhold that information.

Cllr Sophie Linden: Again, can I just apologise for not submitting a fuller CV? As I said, I am very happy to submit a fuller CV. I suppose it was a difficult decision as to how much to put on a CV because it was going on the public record. I can only apologise and I will produce a fuller CV. I am not quite sure what other directorships you are thinking about; I am sorry.

Keith Prince AM: You are not aware of other companies?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have no other directorships.

Keith Prince AM: You have had no other directorships in the past?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have been a director at Bell Pottinger Public Affairs.

Keith Prince AM: And Groundwork.

Cllr Sophie Linden: As I said at the beginning, I sat on the board for Groundwork East London.

Keith Prince AM: Yes. These are just Companies House directorships that I have drawn up.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I would like to see them because I am not sure which --

Keith Prince AM: If you go on the website for Companies House, you will see which companies you have been director of.

Moving on from that, I was interested in your comment around prison overcrowding. What were you inferring about prison overcrowding?

Cllr Sophie Linden: What I was talking about was the importance when somebody is sent to prison that the situation and the support that they are given in prison enables them to have the right support and intervention not to carry on the offending when they leave prison. We know that at the moment there are a number of issues in a number of prisons where there is overcrowding. Some of the prisons are housing more people than they were built to house, which makes it much more difficult for the rehabilitative work to take place.

Keith Prince AM: Do you think that increasing the prison population is a bad thing?

Cllr Sophie Linden: As Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, obviously, that element of the justice is not under that [office's] domain. However, in terms of who goes to prison and why, we have to make sure that there are the right conditions within the prisons to ensure that people do not continue to reoffend. Often, especially for women and with Holloway Prison about to close with the announcement from the Chancellor [of the Exchequer] during the [Autumn] Statement, for people on very short-term prison sentences, sometimes tougher, better, community sentences may be better for them. I know that the previous Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime did write to ask for the ability in London. It was absolutely right to look at women with under-three-month sentences and how we can ensure that there are adequate community sentences to ensure they get the right support and intervention.

Keith Prince AM: As a special adviser to David Blunkett during his term as Home Secretary, would you say you were a member of his senior team?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I was a member of his special adviser team. I was one of four special advisers. It was, again, a political appointment. I would --

Keith Prince AM: Would you say you were a senior member of that team?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I would say that a special adviser is a senior member of the ministerial team, yes.

Keith Prince AM: I am sure you would be interested, then, in the comments of the General Secretary of the National Association of Probation Officers, Harry Fletcher. I would be interested to see where you come after I have said this. Harry Fletcher said of David Blunkett that during the time that you worked for him, he:

"... missed the opportunity to get to grips with the underlying causes of crime - poverty, poor education and lack of opportunity. It led to a soaring prison population."

Clearly, the National Association of Probation Officers believes that David Blunkett and the time that you were working with him contributed significantly to the soaring prison population. I wondered why that was.

Cllr Sophie Linden: We did have an issue with prison numbers increasing, as we do now. That is Harry Fletcher's view of the Home Secretary's role in what was happening there. I do not necessarily agree with that at all. The Home Secretary, David Blunkett, at that time was - and is still - seen as quite a reforming Home Secretary in terms of the police service and did make an impact on crime and anti-social behaviour, as well as looking at the importance of rehabilitation. Clearly, I would disagree with Harry Fletcher on that.

Keith Prince AM: Lord Stevens [former Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis] also mentioned that David Blunkett and his senior team, of which you claim to be part:

"... had little knowledge of policing, had an anti-policing agenda and routinely leaked details of private meetings."

That is hardly a pat on the back, is it?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The former Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis can have his view on that and I have heard some of those statements before. I do not agree with him that senior members of his team - and that included not just political advisers but also senior officials at the Home Office - knew little about policing. We can just have to agree to disagree on that one.

Len Duvall AM: Can I just go back? You mentioned a statement around accountability and transparency. This role is quite an interesting one. Are you the police service's friend or are you bringing in tough love? How does that work in reality? Explain that to us. You mentioned our role in that. Are you going to be taking sides, then, on issues between the police and the interaction with the public? How does it work? What do you mean by that? Paint me some pictures and give some examples of how you think it will work over the coming term.

Cllr Sophie Linden: The issue of the accountability and transparency of the MPS is an incredibly important one, not just in terms of ensuring its effectiveness and value for money, which is a major part of the role of the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, but also in terms of ensuring that the structures that are in place are put in place and I would like to look at this in more detail. Obviously, I have not been confirmed yet and I am new to this position, but it is one of the things that I want to review to make sure that those structures of transparency and accountability work for the public and for the communities.

It is not just about my relationship with the MPS. It is about the communities' relationship with the MPS and improving that. Through good transparency and accountability mechanisms, you can improve the confidence and trust of the public. Where there is a feeling that decisions are made behind closed doors or a lack of understanding of where police officers are or what the reasons and logic behind some of the priorities are, mistrust and lack of confidence starts to grow and continues to grow. We know that about a quarter of Londoners do not have confidence in the police service at the moment. That has to be worrying, especially as that overarching figure will be more extreme for some communities and some individuals.

In terms of my role as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, I would want to hold the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to account not just informally through regular meetings and a regular understanding of what is happening, but also formally through the Police and Crime Committee. It is very important that not just I as Deputy Mayor - if confirmed - come along and be held to account but the police service is also held to account for the decisions that it takes and the role that it undertakes in the community.

Len Duvall AM: If I can take you back to your supporting statement where it says, "I will be working with the police to rebuild the trust of Londoners", you are looking at specifically targeting that -- sorry, what percentage did you say?

Cllr Sophie Linden: It is about a quarter of people do not have --

Len Duvall AM: About a quarter do not seem to have confidence in policing in London. I was just going to say that 64% do. What specific issues over the coming term would you want to see? You obviously want to see a shift in that quarter and you are going to target that to try to win people over.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I would like to see an improvement in the confidence and trust of the people of London in the MPS. I know that the Commissioner wants that, too, as do all local police officers because it is important for a number of reasons. If we are to really have policing by consent and legitimacy of the police service, we

have to have that confidence and trust. It is about accountability mechanisms, but it is also about reintroducing real neighbourhood policing so that there is that understanding and that relationship that is built up between police officers whom the community know and police officers who are based in the community so that the public has the confidence to come forward, not just to act as witnesses but also to report crime.

I am worried that there are a number of people out in the community who do not report crimes and who do not report what has happened to them because they do not have the confidence to do so. We can see in domestic violence and domestic abuse that the number reporting is going up and that is a good thing, but we would want that reporting to increase quite significantly and that is about confidence and trust in the police service to be able to deliver what they need in terms of victims of domestic abuse and violence.

In terms of what I would like to see and how I would like to do that, I need to review what is happening with accountability mechanisms. I need to review the way that we assess the outcomes of that. We do have the Public Attitude Survey that is undertaken, which is a useful and important tool. I need to look at whether that gives us the information that we need because sometimes I feel that the overarching figures can hide significant problems in significant communities or significant within young people. We need to make sure that we know what the issues are so that we can put in place the polices to tackle them.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): You talk about confidence and about local policing and you talk about "real neighbourhood policing". As someone - and I am not alone - who obsesses about confidence in police and engagement, we are not talking about the last four years; we are talking about what you are going to do going forward. The model at the moment, in your perception, does not work? Is the Local Policing Model ineffective?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The Local Policing Model as it is now is one that has been drastically reduced because we now have only one police constable and one Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) per ward and previously there was the three-two-one model. I know we cannot go back to that because we are in very difficult and different circumstances financially, but we do have to make sure. I would like to see and I want to look at how there is some flexibility and what flexibility there is and to see how we reintroduce real neighbourhood policing. That means having dedicated officers in wards, not in larger neighbourhoods as they are at the moment, whom the public know.

Also, I would want to see what we can do to reintroduce and develop more PCSOs because they are incredibly important for neighbourhood policing. They are important for the confidence of the community and they also enable more diverse recruitment of people into the police service. If you look at the figures around diversity in the MPS, there is about 12% black and minority ethnic police officers when 44% or 45% of London is black and minority ethnic. When you go down to PCSOs, the figures are far better. We have seen a significant reduction in the number of PCSOs and I would like to review and work with the MPS to see how we can reintroduce and increase those numbers.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): You would want to put more officers and more PCSOs into neighbourhoods?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I would like to see how we can do that and the Mayor's manifesto commitment is to restore real neighbourhood policing. That is a priority, absolutely.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): They will have to come from somewhere or you will have to increase the budget. My last point is around engagement. Like many Members, I sit on and, indeed, chair a ward panel. I

probably should not but I do. I attended last night a Safer Neighbourhood Board meeting. Are you a supporter of ward panels and Safer Neighbourhood Boards?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I know - and I am afraid I have not read it in full - that the Police and Crime Committee did undertake a report either last year or the year before on Safer Neighbourhood Boards. I am a supporter of good, effective neighbourhood engagement. The Safer Neighbourhood Boards, I understand and I know, have varied in quality. Some are incredibly good and some are not so effective.

What we need to learn and what I would like to do is to look at how we can take the good practice of those Safer Neighbourhood Boards that are effective, spread that good practice and develop and empower the local community to have that engagement with the police. I have been along to my own local Safer Neighbourhood Board and I used to go to the panel as well and I know it can be difficult sometimes for residents to fully take part in that role. We need to look at how we can engage and empower residents in the communities to properly take part in the role of police panels as well as Safer Neighbourhood Boards. It is certainly something that I will be looking at.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): As will we.

Andrew Dismore AM: On the Safer Neighbourhood Panel issue, this structure was set up to replace the old structure that Boris Johnson [MP, former Mayor of London] inherited on the basis that it was not sufficiently representative of the communities. It is very patchy. One of my concerns is that a lot of these are still not representative of the communities and a lot of the Safer Neighbourhood Panels seem to be the same old faces all the time.

How do you go around trying to get people involved in Safer Neighbourhood Panels and ultimately Safer Neighbourhood Boards who simply have not been engaged so far to try to make them more representative of the communities?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I agree with you that there is an issue about some of the Safer Neighbourhood Panels and Safer Neighbourhood Boards not being representative. However, I always feel slightly - I do not know - defensive or protective because I hear from other people as well that it is the same people at the meetings. We should not say just because the same people come to the meetings that they do not have a voice to be heard and they are not also rooted in the communities.

I want to encourage people to still come along but to think about what we need to look at - I know some areas have done this and the police have done this as well - and look at different ways of engaging with people. It is probably councillors and people like us who spend a lot of time in meetings. Normal people do not wish to come to meetings in the evenings. There are other ways of engaging and the police have introduced virtual panels where people are engaging, discussing and looking at issues through an online forum. That is something that we need to look at more and whether that will help a more representative sample of people. It should not just be that because then we will start to possibly exclude other people who are not online and we have to be very aware of that. It is about looking at what else can work to make sure that we get representative voices. I do not think we should be just stuck on meetings.

Andrew Dismore AM: I agree with that. Obviously, we do not want to exclude people who are giving their time freely to come along and do this work. It is a question of how you make it broader and I like that.

One of the things that used to happen with the old Safer Neighbourhood Panels - or whatever they used to be called before - was that the local people were able to set the priorities for the local ward, three priorities for

whatever period they happened to meet for. That was taken away as part of this process and a lot of people felt rather disenfranchised as a result of that. We had a falling-off in the people who did go to the meetings. Do you think that was a good or bad idea?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The ability of the public to set priorities? I used to participate in those panels and go along as a ward councillor to those panels. People felt quite empowered by the idea and by the feeling that they could look at and talk to their local police and have some control over their local policing priorities. There is a role for that.

What I would like to do is to review how far we go on that and what that means in terms of strategic priorities as well because there sometimes can be a tension.

Andrew Dismore AM: On a slightly side issue, going into wider engagement, contact points were put up as a bit of a fig leaf for the police station closure programme under Boris Johnson. Do you think they have worked or not? What do you think their future is under you?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Again, the world of engagement and the way the public engage as well as report crime has changed. I would have to look at the contact points. I do not have my own personal experience of that and I would have to look at whether the contact points have worked as part of the work going forward.

What we have to ensure is that when the public do need the police, they can find and contact the police as quickly as possible and that when they wish to engage with the police, it is an easy process. I would have to look to see whether the contact points have worked in that way.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I will make a point. Only last week I set three priorities as the chair of a ward panel and so I do not think they have been scrapped necessarily.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is because you are in charge, Steve. That is why.

Sian Berry AM: There was one point relating to a number of the most recent answers we have had from you on things. I know you have been in charge of these issues in Hackney and a lot of the answers you have given us have been, "We must look at this". I would much prefer to hear some concrete examples from you about how you have approached these things in Hackney, the things you have tried and the things you think might have worked, rather than just to agree that we need to look at issues. It is just to say that and I hope that that is taken on board when you answer further questions.

I did want to ask about diversity and your answer before was about PCSOs being far more diverse than officers. That is true. We also know that PCSOs are more likely to live in the local area and know local people. That is a plus when it comes to engagement and I am pleased to hear that you want to increase those numbers.

Officers are still very unrepresentative of Londoners, particularly the representation of women and the representation of people from minority ethnic backgrounds. I wanted to ask you what priority you think should be given to increasing the numbers of officers who represent Londoners better so that the police look and feel more like Londoners and might be able to relate better to them and engage better with them. How far do you think those kinds of measures should go?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The diversity of the police service is a priority. It was set out in the Mayor [of London, Sadiq Khan's] manifesto that the police service should reflect the communities that it serves. We have to be

realistic about how quickly that can happen because there is small turnover in the police and recruitment in the police, but we do have to make sure that we do all we can to ensure that that happens.

I am sorry to say this again, but in terms of diversity we have to make sure that the practice of the police service in its recruitment does improve. It has improved and there has been some progress in ensuring that there are more black and minority ethnic officers, but we have to make sure that that continues. I will have to discuss that with the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, whom I know is also very keen to ensure that this happens. This is something that we want to do together. What we do to do that is a question. It is part of confidence and trust because, if people have confidence in the police service, they are more likely to enter the police service as well and break down some of those barriers. We have to make sure that the recruitment processes are right.

We also have to ensure that it is not just about recruitment; it is about retention and it is also about progression. Yes, we want to have more black and minority ethnic officers and more women police officers, but we also want to have them at the higher ranks of the police service as well. In order to do that, we have to think about progression, about the routes of progression, about how people are supported and also about the actual culture of the police service. Does it enable women to stay in their jobs? Does it enable them to progress? Does it enable black and minority ethnic officers to progress as well? That is about probably getting down to the detail of shift patterns for people with caring responsibilities to make sure that the service is one that people can stay and can progress in.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you. That was my next question and so thank you for outlining some practical things that you might do about that.

Len Duvall AM: I want to ask you about the top challenges that you see that you face in the role of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime.

Before I do, you have said a lot this morning to take in and you have covered some of it, but I want you to focus in. One of your first tasks is to prepare the Policing [and Crime] Plan. Tell me in very crisp terms some underlying vision. I get the bit about engagement. You have covered that this morning in your answers. What is the underlying vision and philosophy of the Policing Plan that will guide you in forming the document? What is your thinking around that?

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of what should be in the Police and Crime Plan, we have to look at the challenges that London faces and the key overarching challenge is keeping London safe. What that means is that we do have to look, as the Mayor has said in his manifesto, at tackling extremism and radicalisation and at what we can do together across London, not just the police service but with partner agencies, to do that. The other key challenges are around hate crime and violence, domestic violence and abuse and also serious youth violence and gang violence.

However, at the heart of all of this has to be putting the victim at the heart of all we do and ensuring that the way we tackle these challenges looks at how we make sure the path of the victim through the service and through the criminal justice system is made much easier and that victims are supported.

Len Duvall AM: I might agree with the Mayor about extremism and counterterrorism and keeping Londoners safe and that is probably the number one priority of our senior police officers and security services. Actually, if I go back to my constituency on the ground, it would not be the number one priority. It would be about that street-level issue. Therefore, there is a bit of a dilemma. We need to do both.

How do you reconcile that in terms of explaining to the public what the key priorities are and actually dealing with the street-level priorities, the fear of crime or being a victim of crime? What is your thinking about that? Do you think the public are wrong if they think it is the number one priority? Do you believe that?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I agree with you. If you ask members of the public what the priorities are, it is that they want to feel safer and they do not want to be a victim of crime.

There is not necessarily a tension between tackling extremism and radicalisation and ensuring that people feel safer in their homes and safer on the street. For me, at the heart of delivering that is real neighbourhood policing. Real neighbourhood policing will enable really good, effective local policing to deal with burglaries, to deal with street crime and to deal with anti-social behaviour and disorder, but it will also be the eyes and ears and how police officers and the service can pick up the intelligence they need. It is through the confidence that real neighbourhood policing gives that the community will be able to come forward and feel confident to come forward with information. It is part of the plan and it is part of the process of keeping people safe from extremism and radicalisation because we cannot have two different police services. It is part of the same role. Real neighbourhood policing can deliver both.

Len Duvall AM: Let us turn to the top three challenges that you face in terms of your role in policing and crime in the coming term. What are they? Are they the issues that you have just mentioned or are there other issues? What are the top three?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The issues that I have just mentioned are a bundle of the major challenges and tackling extremism and radicalisation is absolutely vital.

In terms of the other challenges that I face and the MPS faces, as well as the partner agencies within the criminal justice system, has to be the financial situation that we are in. Millions of pounds have already been taken out of budgets not just of the police service but also of the partner agencies and the local authorities, which are vital in providing the preventative services that we talked about earlier. That is the major challenge. How do we make sure that the service runs as efficiently and effectively as possible? We do have to get more money out of the system as far as we can without impacting frontline services. That is the second of the major challenges.

The third major challenge is, as I talked about before, improving the confidence and trust of the people of London in the police service and in the agencies so that we can all work together to provide safe communities, public spaces and homes for people.

Len Duvall AM: I do not know where the MPS is on it, but there is a national index that says, "These are the police services that provide that whole range of services of policing that we expect". A number of years ago, it was the MPS and maybe Liverpool or something like that or Manchester and Scotland were the only ones that could tick all the boxes and the rest of the police services could not.

Is it your intention, against the financial background that we face, that the MPS would provide a full range of policing services and deal with a full range of crime from anti-social behaviour right through the spectrum to counterterrorism on your watch in this term? Is that what our expectation is of you? Can I expect as a citizen of London that the police will not be picking and choosing which crimes they are going to be dealing with but will be trying to offer a full range of services to me as a member of the public?

Cllr Sophie Linden: What we have to do is look at the prioritisation of police services and the prioritisation of capacity within the police. What I am really interested in in terms of the Police and Crime Plan is looking at

vulnerability and harm to make sure that what is prioritised is risk and that is about risk around the vulnerability of high-harm crimes. As part of the process of developing the Police and Crime Plan for the Mayor, I would want to look at how we can ensure that we address vulnerability and harm so that all Londoners feel safe.

In terms of your question about, basically, are you saying that some services for the police may have to stop or --

Len Duvall AM: No, I did not say that. I want you to maintain them.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am sure, absolutely, but it is about prioritising and being honest and open with the public about what the priorities are and what they can expect in levels of service.

Len Duvall AM: From your experience, as you told us earlier on, domestic violence is not just violence against women; it can lead to murder. Hate crime is not just name-calling and spitting at people; it can lead to murder. Anti-social behaviour in policing priority terms may not rank and different police officers have different views; it can lead to murder.

In terms of what you have just told us, how does that fit into the scale? I am really trying to get at what it can lead to in terms of communities. You must have had experience in Hackney around anti-social behaviour. It steps up. It begins with, as they would say, a bit of banter and leads into a violent behaviour in some form. Where do we fit that in? Where does the intervention of the police come in, in your view? Where does that fit into a Police and Crime Plan for London?

Cllr Sophie Linden: What you are asking in some ways is what I was trying to paint a picture of about actually looking at vulnerabilities and risk. Where anti-social behaviour can lead to violence and can lead to more significant problems, what is important is that the police service and partner agencies understand that vulnerability and understand that risk. That is about repeat victimisation, understanding what is happening and not just taking every incident. As we know from things like the very tragic [Fiona] Pilkington case, we know that that is about repeat victimisation and understanding the wider picture.

Also, one of the things that we have to do going forward - and I do not have the answers to that at the moment - is to have a discussion about what the role of the police service is and what the roles of other agencies are not just in prevention but in enforcement. If you take anti-social behaviour, local authorities have a very large role to play in tackling anti-social behaviour and do so alongside the police. As part of the development of the Police and Crime Plan, we have to have that discussion and debate about where the police service is and what domain it steps into or steps out of and for other agencies - such as local authorities - where that line is and what they are stepping into or stepping out of. Everybody in the public service is under huge financial constraints and pressures and is having to get more savings. What we have to make sure of is that the individual decisions that individual agencies are taking are looked at in the round - and, for me, looking at them in the round is around safety and vulnerability - to make sure that individual decisions are not taken that impact on the safety of Londoners. They might look like the right decision at the time but have a significant impact on safety.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes. Obviously, you have been preparing for today over the last couple of weeks since your name was put forward. Can you tell me about the reports of our Committee that you have had a look through, which ones you particularly agreed with or disagreed with and a bit of background on those issues?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Yes, I did look at some of the reports of the Committee. I looked at the report that was published recently on the Prevent Strategy. That was an interesting report because it looked at some of the challenges that the Prevent Strategy has but also some of the opportunities that have been put in place with the Contest Board and what needs to happen around that. Also, I was a councillor when the Police and Crime Committee produced reports like the report on water cannon or looked at the use of Tasers. They are not just useful for this role; they are also useful for local lead members and local councillors in looking at what is happening across London.

Yes, I have looked at some of the reports and some of the recommendations and I will continue to do so. It is important not just for Assembly Members and me in this role, but it is also useful for other agencies that are taking decisions and working in partnership with the police.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: In terms of the report on the Prevent Strategy t, we made some recommendations about what we would like devolved to London for MOPAC to have a greater role in terms of the Prevent Strategy and implementation in London. Do you agree with that? Did you agree with our conclusions?

Cllr Sophie Linden: There is a greater role for MOPAC in its leadership role and its convening role in chairing the Contest Board. Your report came out before this, but Louise Casey [Director General, Casey Review Team] has a review of social cohesion and integration in relation to extremism and radicalisation. Before really looking at that - I do apologise, Chairman, again - I am waiting for that review as well to look at what the role of MOPAC is in helping and looking at what those recommendations are. It is not just about what the police do; it is about what communities do around social cohesion and social integration to look at the vulnerabilities of individuals who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Another important piece of work we did recently was on cybercrime, which, although it is not really recorded, has a huge impact on Londoners and, really, it is so under-reported. If you actually measured it properly, it would be one of the highest crime areas. Have you any thoughts on what you would like to see the MPS doing in that area?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am afraid I have not had a chance to read that report on cybercrime and I can do that. The Mayor has committed to developing a cybercrime strategy and to appointing somebody to undertake that, look at that and focus on that.

Cybercrime is an issue that - you are absolutely right - is under-reported and we need to look at how it is reported properly and what that means for our crime statistics to make sure that we really understand what is happening. It is a whole area where crime is not being recorded in the way it should be recorded and so there is that under-recording.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: There are some other areas that we have been particularly concerned about in terms of preparing for things like the forensic medical service and the issue on custody suites and the real shortage of nurses and medical experts in there and delays in transferring the whole service to the National Health Service. Have you looked at that at all yet?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am afraid I have not and it is something that I will have to look at.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is a really big issue. You mentioned you had looked at Safer Neighbourhood Boards and diversity in the MPS. We also did a huge report on that. Actually, a majority of the Committee at that time pushed for some positive action in that area. Is that something that you will pursue?

Cllr Sophie Linden: It is something, as I said, that certainly we will be looking at and I have not reached any conclusions on that. The outcome that we all agree on is that we have to improve the diversity of the MPS to reflect --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You do not have a view? You do not personally have a view on whether positive action should be put in place?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Politically, when you have reached a point where you have tried everything else, personally, I like the idea of positive action. However, whether that is something that we will be able to pursue we will have to look at.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That was helpful. Yes, that has covered my points.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Sophie, I welcome your comments about the working relationship between the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Assembly. That was the first thing that you said and it was really good news to hear that. There have been people who have not thought that this Committee is important and who have been quite dismissive. The questions I have are within that context. They are following on from Caroline's point about the reports that you have read and about what you think your relationship with the Assembly and this Committee should be.

The first question is, when you were announced as the candidate for the role, how many members of the Committee did you meet with following your announcement?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I asked to meet with you all and I have met with the few of you who were able to find time in your diaries. I certainly asked to meet with you all and I hope I now have appointments to meet you. I would have to look into it. I have tried.

Kemi Badenoch AM: You have not actually been confirmed yet.

Cllr Sophie Linden: No.

Kemi Badenoch AM: I was wondering. Do you think it is appropriate to meet the people who will be confirming you before the actual hearing?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I do not think it is inappropriate, no. It is not an attempt to persuade somebody. It is an attempt to try to talk to Assembly Members about the issues. I do not think --

Kemi Badenoch AM: You were not trying to sweeten us up before the hearing?

Cllr Sophie Linden: If I was, it did not work, did it?

Kemi Badenoch AM: Who arranged these meetings for you?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The office in MOPAC.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Do you think that you should be using MOPAC resources already before being confirmed?

Keith Prince AM: Is that an appropriate use of resources?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I was the nominated candidate from the Mayor. I felt that it was important to try to prepare myself for this question time. I do not think it was inappropriate to ask to meet the members of the Committee.

Kemi Badenoch AM: It might not be depending on your intention, but it is inappropriate to use resources that you are not officially confirmed to have control over. That, for me, was a little bit disappointing because that is an indicator of not being particularly respectful of the Committee or the Assembly. Those are my questions.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I would say that, for me, the opposite is the case. The fact that I wanted to meet members of the Committee showed my respect for the members of the Committee because it was important to me for the members of the Committee to understand that I wanted to develop that relationship from the start. It was not a way of trying to be inappropriate in the use of resources or trying to sweeten people up. It was to understand the importance of --

Kemi Badenoch AM: That is fine. I am not disputing that and we have all had interviews before, but I have never been in a position where I could start using the resources of the job before I actually got it. Thank you very much, Sophie. That is the end of my questions.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): To be honest, I would endorse that. I was kind of surprised to be approached for a formal meeting via MOPAC before confirmation. It was just awkward. Poor judgement worries me.

Florence Eshalomi AM: I wanted to go back to some of the points that Len [Duvall AM] raised in terms of the Police and Crime Plan. You touched on priorities in terms of different crimes and which are more important to Londoners.

If you look at the previous Mayor's plan, there were a number of targets and 20% was bandied about a lot: a 20% reduction in different types of crime, a 20% increase in public confidence and a 20% reduction in costs. Do you think that these targets were useful and would you personally seek to introduce some form of target? What is your vision in terms of the Police and Crime Plan?

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of those targets, going back to Assembly Member Caroline's [Pidgeon MBE] question, I know that the Police and Crime Committee was heavily critical of those targets and some of those targets have not been yet met. Certainly, from my own position in Hackney, I was critical of those targets because they were drawn on a baseline that looked to be unfair to some boroughs that had already made significant progress in reducing crime. Setting what felt like fairly arbitrary 20% target was difficult. It meant that we were almost being set up to fail because it was not going to be possible to reduce by 20% the MOPAC 7 because we already in Hackney had. We made those representations at the time.

In terms of the longer term in relation to what targets or aspirations will be set in the Police and Crime Plan, I am not heavily wedded to targets but nor are targets the wrong thing to do, either. What matters is that we set the right targets and that they do not become counterproductive in the way that in the police service - or any public agency that sets a target - people will only focus on that target to the detriment of other targets.

For me, as I said earlier, the Police and Crime Plan needs to look at vulnerability and harm across London, to look at how we can best set aspirations - possibly targets - to ensure that we really tackle the harm in the communities and harm to individuals and to make sure that those targets are sophisticated enough to catch the most important crimes and the most important harms that happen to people but do not produce counterproductive behaviour so that there is just the chasing of targets.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): My only comment really is that - for good or for bad - the MOPAC 7 has infiltrated the whole range and depth of the MPS and, when you go to a ward panel, the police understand those seven neighbourhood crimes. It has taken a while to get there, but they have got it. It is in your gift and the Mayor's gift. If one was to dismantle that, you would be waiting a long period of time to then install another process. Do Londoners have that sort of time to keep crime down?

Peter Whittle AM: I wanted just to carry on from your top priorities, as it were, going forward. Sophie, looking forward, I want to refer to something in your statement. It has already been referred to as a general approach before. You say we want a city that is safer, et cetera:

"... but I am determined to tackle the social inequality which means that the most deprived are at greatest risk of crime and disorder."

Do you mean those at risk of committing crime and disorder or those at risk of being the victims of it or both?

Cllr Sophie Linden: It is both. If you look at the data that we have on vulnerability and what has happened across London, in the most vulnerable wards in London you are three times more likely to be a victim of a high-harm crime and you are four times more likely to be an offender and so it is both. Whilst ensuring that we tackle that inequality in victimisation and inequality in offending - and I am very aware of this - we also have to make sure that we are providing a service for the whole of London so that everybody feels that they are part of the policing and the safety of London in every part of London. I wish to tackle that inequality because it is driving crime and affecting people's lives. We also have to make sure through the Police and Crime Plan that there is a good service for everybody.

Peter Whittle AM: It seems to me, you see, that this goes right to the very root of your general attitude to what the police should be in terms of a service or a force. It rather leapt out at me when you said, "We will tackle some of the inequalities which lead to crime". Len [Duvall AM] already mentioned how this sort of thing would be done on a day-to-day basis, but it seems to me that this is crucial for the plan. Really, is that exactly what you see your role as being? Is it somebody who should equally be tackling social inequalities?

The reason I am asking is that when we talked about the lack of confidence in the police amongst a proportion of the population, I would suggest that that attitude about their own role is one of the things that actually might lead to that lack of confidence.

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of dealing with inequality, my role as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime is to look at inequality in victimisation and inequality or disproportionality in offending and disproportionality of some communities in the criminal justice system or first-time entrants to the criminal justice. That is what I will have some influence over rather than the wider issue around social inequalities. It is about the inequalities in victimisation and the inequalities in offending.

Just to pick up on your points - and it has been touched on a couple of times - about a police service or police force, I do see the police as a police service. It says what it is. It is the Metropolitan Police Service. However,

it is a special service in relation to the fact that it has the ability to use force. It is knowing where that line is and ensuring that where it is appropriate enforcement does take place. I certainly do not shy away from that. In wanting to tackle inequalities in victimisation, I would not shy away from, as I said at the beginning, drawing the line and saying, "Whatever the reasons are for your offending, your behaviour is impacting upon the community and it is our duty to protect the community because that just cannot continue".

Peter Whittle AM: Yes, protecting the community, but do you accept my point that basically, when it comes to a perception amongst a large and significant minority, in fact it is because you now see yourself - to use that colloquialism - as kind of social workers as opposed to people upholding the law. That might well have contributed to the lack of support that there is.

Cllr Sophie Linden: There are a number of reasons for the lack of confidence in some communities and some young people around that and it is not an issue about the police being "social workers", as you put it. There are a number of different issues. We have talked about one: diversity and whether the police service reflects the communities. We know that stop-and-search has been an issue and that is certainly a completely different issue to the one that you are alluding to. Therefore, I do not think that that is the case.

This role as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime; it is about the police service and the effectiveness of the police service, but it is "policing and crime" and so it is also about that convening power, the leadership power and the ability to influence other criminal justice agencies and other partnership agencies to look at the safety of Londoners and to ensure that those support mechanisms are there.

Other agencies do also have enforcement powers. Local authorities have enforcement powers. How do they use them to ensure that the Police and Crime Plan and the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan are delivered? It is not just about the police service.

Andrew Dismore AM: I just wanted to pick up briefly on your answers to Florence and others. One thing about the MOPAC 7 and the 20:20:20 thing was that it was very easy to benchmark success or not. If you are proposing different sorts of measures in the Police and Crime Plan, how will we be able to measure its success or otherwise?

Cllr Sophie Linden: We have not yet formulated that and I need to look at what those measures are. I take your point entirely. I agree that one of the positive effects of target-setting and one of the important effects of target-setting is that it makes public accountability and the measurement of success or failure much easier. We do not want to make things so complicated that members of the public or the police panels, as has been said already, can easily look to see how the service is and how things are progressing. It certainly is something that I would want to make sure can happen because it is about police accountability and the accountability around performance. It is about ensuring value for money as well. Taxpayers and the people who pay the precept need to know that what should be delivered is being delivered and is being delivered effectively.

Andrew Dismore AM: I did not particularly like the MOPAC 7 crimes and I think we would all like to, probably, have a different permutation of the seven. The key thing is that, whatever comes out in the Police and Crime Plan, it has to be something where its success can be measured objectively.

Cllr Sophie Linden: Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I go on to the question I really want to talk about, which is the impact of the budget? You have to face £400 million worth of cuts or at least that is the last figure we have had. The sorts of things that were being talked about before the election were closures of more buildings, in particular police

stations, with a minimum of one per borough; merging Borough Command Units (BCUs) so that each borough did not have its own command but was merged or two, three or even more boroughs; and removing several ranks from the rank structure. Are all of those still on the table or are you looking to try to change some of those priorities?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am sorry, but the real answer to that is that - going back to your point - I have not been formally briefed about the budget or the BCU plans or any of that. It is something that I am going to have to look at as part of the Police and Crime Plan.

What I can say is that whatever is proposed, as I said before, I would want there to be proper consultation around it and to ensure that it is not just consultation at the point of publication of the Police and Crime Plan but proper public consultation of stakeholders in the development of the Police and Crime Plan. I see you as Assembly Members as important people. I know that there are a range of views around BCU Commanders, there are a range of views around police stations as well and we will have to look at it, but I am not in a position at the moment to say what is on or off the table.

Andrew Dismore AM: Fine, but these issues have been discussed very widely for some considerable time now and I believe that the plans for particularly the borough mergers are well advanced. I am rather surprised that you do not have a view on that, particularly if you have been involved in Hackney because, presumably, Hackney's Borough Commander has been talking with other Borough Commanders. At one time there was talk about Camden, Islington and Hackney or it may have been a different permutation. This has not crossed your radar? It is one of the things that has people very exercised.

One of my concerns is that you are coming into this process relatively late in the day because the MPS and the previous administration has been developing these plans considerably. How confident are you that if you do not like what is going on you are going to be able to stop it or change it? Public consultation is fine, but how are we going to make sure that the public consultation is a genuine consultation and not just saying, "We will consult and then do what we were going to do in the first place anyway", which is what usually seems to happen?

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of whether this has been across my radar before, yes, it has. Of course it has. As you know, from my own borough I have heard of plans about BCUs.

However, what I said was that I have not had formal conversations at all about this or formal discussions about this. It is something that I need to do across London. There are a number of different views about the role of BCU Commanders and whether it is possible. I know that there have been discussions about possible mergers around that. We need to look at it in the round and we need to look at what outcomes we are trying to provide. Alongside what happens locally in terms of what the priorities are and the outcomes, for me the priorities are ensuring that there is a locally accountable senior-ranking officer at a local level, that there is proper partnership working and that we have the restoration of real neighbourhood policing. Those are very difficult things to pull off and it is something that I am going to have to work on and look at to make sure that those negotiations are undertaken with the MPS.

Keith Prince AM: To be fair, Assembly Member Dismore did actually get to the point because I was quite surprised that you did not have a view, having been a borough leader myself. You having held a very senior role within your own council, you will have been fully aware of the discussions that the MPS has been having about these BCUs and super-boroughs.

Can I just drill down on that? With your Hackney hat on, what was your view then of the proposals to merge boroughs and change the rank levels of Borough Commanders? What was your view?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am sitting here not with my Hackney hat on. I am sitting here as a nomination for Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. I would also say that from the point of --

Keith Prince AM: I will make it easier for you, then. What is your view as the potential Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, then?

Cllr Sophie Linden: One of the things that does need to change is that before the election there were those discussions but there was no formal consultation with boroughs. It was all a little bit of information arriving and no formal consultation. That is something that really does need to change to ensure that that consultation and that engagement with local partners, including local authorities, takes place so that views can be developed by our local partners that are based on the facts and based on what is really being proposed. That is one of the things that I would want to change quite quickly in terms of the way that partnership working and engagement takes place.

As I said, what is important is what the outcomes that we are striving for are. The outcomes that we are striving for are to make sure that we have the right police in the right place at the right time and real neighbourhood policing with a senior-ranking officer in every borough who is able to take the decisions that need to be taken and undertake the partnership working that needs to be done. We are in a position that there will have to be, as has already been said, a significant amount of money taken out, but we have to have those discussions and there have been no decisions taken.

I have been reprimanded for setting up meetings; I would surely be reprimanded for having full-blown budget discussions before a confirmation meeting.

Keith Prince AM: That was very helpful. Thank you for that clarity. I was very pleased to hear your view on the PCSOs and encouraging more diversity. It is something that we do need to do. We need to do that with warranted officers as well, clearly. In fact you want more PCSOs and, as you know, the trend has been to have fewer.

I just wondered how you were thinking you were going to fund that. You mentioned that you were going to have to have negotiations with the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and have high-level negotiations. Who else do you think you might have to have these high-level negotiations with in order to get the funding you need for extra PCSOs?

Cllr Sophie Linden: It is not just about the PCSOs. We need to look at the budgets and what flexibilities there are in the budgets. It is about prioritisation; it is not necessarily about extra, additional funding. It is about what the priorities are and what the budget can provide in terms of delivering those priorities.

Keith Prince AM: On the budget, though, we were asking about you having experience of dealing with high-level people. Who do you believe you will be negotiating with when it comes to the budget? You have mentioned the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. Who else do you think you will be negotiating with?

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of the quantum of the budget or the envelope of the budget --

Keith Prince AM: You define it.

Cllr Sophie Linden: -- the Mayor and I will have to have discussions with the Home Secretary and the Chancellor about what that quantum is. In terms of the priorities within the budget, that is a negotiation between MOPAC and the MPS led by me.

Keith Prince AM: You said in your additional supporting statement about having to rebuild the trust of Londoners. Quite rightly, Assembly Member Duvall has pointed out that 64% of Londoners have trust, belief and confidence in the police and so 64% is the current level. If you feel that there is a need to rebuild the trust of Londoners, what does "rebuild" look like? At what percentage of confidence in the police would you feel that you had rebuilt the confidence of the public in the police?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am not going to sit here now and pull a target out of the air. We have had a discussion about targets and making sure the targets are the right ones, but I want to see progress in that figure. I would like to see progress in that figure, but I would also like to see progress in terms of looking at underneath those figures and at what that confidence is within particular communities and particular age groups.

Keith Prince AM: Will you set a target for confidence so that we can know that you have rebuilt the confidence of Londoners and trust in the police?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I will look at what we need to do to make sure that confidence in the police is publicly accountable and, as we have discussed, how it is publicly assessed and I will look at what we need to do about that. We do undertake the Public Attitude Survey so that we do know what the confidence in the police is. It is a priority for me and I will look at what we need to do within the Police and Crime Plan on that.

Keith Prince AM: I just have a piece of friendly advice. You were saying about Safer Neighbourhood Boards and looking at good examples of Safer Neighbourhood Boards. Can I direct you to Assembly Member Len Duvall, whom I believe has an excellent Safer Neighbourhood Board?

Cllr Sophie Linden: As does Hackney.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Touching on Keith's point about rebuilding the trust of Londoners. Sophie, it was very interesting when looking at that paragraph in your supporting statement because, when I read it, it sounded as if you were saying that the previous administration had not done anything at all even though trust is at record highs. It led me to wonder what your relationship is with other parties.

You have talked a lot about what you have done in places like Hackney where everyone is from the same party as you, but how will you be working with a Conservative Government and a Conservative Home Secretary? How do we know that you are not going to be partisan? I have seen some of the tweets that you sent about David Cameron [Prime Minister] talking about Eton mess and so on. I am sure that you were being facetious but, at the same time, there is a concern that you are someone who only knows how to work with people on your own side. What can you tell me about that?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Part of that question is about impartiality and, like everybody who is appointed to public offices, like you as Assembly Members, especially those who are [representing a] geographical [area], it is about knowing that this is absolutely something that I can do and do but, once you do hold that public office, party politics is set aside in the delivery. As I have said before, it is a position that is for all Londoners. It is not just for Londoners who happen to have voted for a certain administration. Absolutely, in terms of impartiality, it is what I have done as a councillor and what I have done all my life.

However, if you are asking about my ability to work across parties, absolutely. One of the things that Hackney did was to lead a campaign on betting shops, which had cross-party support locally within London and also nationally and actually had a change in the law. It is not something that I have a problem with.

Kemi Badenoch AM: I appreciate that. I am looking for really specific examples of you directly working with other people and I have not seen that. It will come into the role in other areas, as the Chairman mentioned, with the budget and so on. There is a lot of stuff that you have said which is good, but I am not getting specific examples of, "I achieved this", or, "I did this", or things that I can grab hold of. There is a lot of motherhood and apple pie, if you will excuse the phrase, and I was looking for something a little bit more meaty.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I do not think the gangs unit in Hackney, which has reduced gang crimes in Hackney, has reduced the number of knife crimes and has drastically reduced gun crimes, is motherhood and apple pie. That has had a serious effect on the lives of individuals and communities in Hackney --

Kemi Badenoch AM: Was that something where you worked with people who had opposing views? I have not seen anything that shows how you have maybe convinced people who disagreed with you about something.

Cllr Sophie Linden: To set up a gangs unit, you have to work with all of the professionals who are within that gangs unit and, to set up and deliver services, you have to do that. Of course, whilst it is a Labour administration, the officers in Hackney are absolutely impartial and that is the way I am used to working, as I will work with MOPAC officers, in an impartial way because you are there. Yes, you know my background. I make no secret of it. My background is a political background and this is a Labour administration, but it is an administration that will work with and will look at the evidence, as I will do, to ensure that the decisions that are taken are evidence-based and evidence-led.

Kemi Badenoch AM: It really does surprise me because I am of the view that there are some people who have 100% political CVs but, given that context, I would expect that you as a political operator would have specific examples of how you have worked with other parties, not impartial officers who are working for you but specific examples. Given that you have worked completely in the political sphere, you have not given any examples at all.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have given you an example of the gangs unit. I have given you an example of the betting shop campaign --

Kemi Badenoch AM: That is not what I mean. I do not know how much more I can clarify and I do not want to take too much of the Committee's time.

Cllr Sophie Linden: You do not want to hear my answer? I have given you the example of the betting shop campaign --

Kemi Badenoch AM: No, you have not answered those questions and I do not want to spend too much time on it. You have not answered my question.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): You can continue. Have you answered that for us?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am trying to answer it but being told I have not answered it and so if you, Chairman, would like me to --

Keith Prince AM: The question was very clear, Mr Chairman. The question was: can you give examples of where you have worked with other political parties to get a result? Your gangs unit, whilst a very good example, is not an example of you working with other politicians.

Cllr Sophie Linden: If you would give me the opportunity to answer that question, I will be able to give you examples of that. You just keep saying that I have not answered the question.

In terms of working with other political parties - and you do not wish to hear the betting shop example - when I worked in the Home Office and in the Department for Education, one of the things I had to do was to negotiate and provide support and advice around, for example, the Sex and Relationships Education Guidance, which is still in place. I know it needs revising and I understand all of that because it is a long time ago, but that is what I worked on. I steered it through a political situation, working across parties with Lords and with other Members of Parliament (MPs) to ensure that that was brought through. Within the Home Office, I had to do the same.

In terms of ability to work across parties, I do not have a problem with that at all. I do have examples of that. This is something that I understand. Public office is incredibly important and it is wrong, if there are issues that need to be solved, to only look at them in a political way --

Kemi Badenoch AM: I find it hard to believe that if you are unable to say, "I worked with this MP or this Lord or this person". You keep saying, "I worked with other MPs". Anyone can say that. That is why I said you were not giving an answer.

Andrew Dismore AM: That is how the Government works.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): The debate is a fair debate because you and the Mayor will have to be negotiating at a very high level with a Government not of your political colour for the whole four years. It is a fair debate and it is interesting to tease out your experiences and negotiating skills with people not of your party. It is a fair debate to be had.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I wanted to go back and just pick up the point about this issue of borough mergers because it is very much a live issue. I went to a reception at Scotland Yard this week. It is very much on the agenda. They do not like us using the term "merger" but that is what it is. Can you tell us what the opinion of Hackney Council, Mayor Jules [Pipe] and your administration there was of the proposal to merge boroughs?

Cllr Sophie Linden: As I said before, we had no formal proposal to merge boroughs. There was some information. We were concerned about, the ability of local decision-makers to interact and engage with senior high-ranking officers who could take decisions. We were also concerned that there should be appropriate transparency and accountability and, if there was going to be some form of flexibility across borough boundaries, what the accountability and transparency would have been about where police officers were deployed. At the moment, that transparency and accountability is not there and is certainly something that needs to be there.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You and your borough had concerns about this proposal that was being mooted?

Cllr Sophie Linden: As with everybody, when there is change, we have concerns and want to make sure that what is best for our local borough is what comes out of the proposals.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You said you had had no formal meetings with the police, quite rightly, but have you had any informal meetings or conversations with the MPS at any level?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have met the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, yes. I have.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Have you had a chat about some of the issues?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have had just a chat about ways of working and key priorities. That was all.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The previous Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime appointed a range of non-executive advisers and - with respect to the Chairman - I had no idea really what their purpose was or what they did. Will you be planning to appoint some similar advisers or are you still reflecting on that at the moment?

Cllr Sophie Linden: The way that I would go about it is by developing the Police and Crime Plan and developing the priorities and what we are trying to achieve. I would then have to look at whether the expertise and capacity is there in MOPAC and then would take decisions around that. Having been an adviser myself, they can be helpful, supportive and useful. I am not, in principle, against them. However, what is important is to make sure that when the outcomes are set upon and when we know what the Police and Crime Plan is, we look at whether we have the right mechanisms, the right capacity and the right expertise to deliver that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you.

Sian Berry AM: I just wanted to get you to expand on the "and crime" part of the job. We have heard quite a lot about policing activities, but the Mayor said that your priority will be preventing young people carrying knives. I want to get an idea of your view on the possibility of spending within the MOPAC budget and the Police and Crime Plan on things that are not MPS activities. We want to do this, for example, in supporting victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Would you be considering changing the budgets to spend at a more grassroots level - for example, plugging gaps in local authority youth services - as a way of preventing knife crime? I just wanted to get an idea of your view on that approach to prevention.

Cllr Sophie Linden: You will know that MOPAC has a significant role in commissioning and a large part of its budget is about commissioning services. I know that a lot of London Crime Prevention Fund money has gone into the voluntary sector and to community groups. That is important because I have worked for a long time in a local authority and I know they do incredibly good work and provide very good services, but sometimes it is the community and the voluntary sector that is much more nimble, much more fleet-of-foot, much more innovative and much more grassroots. That is important. I would be looking to see how some of the commissioning work that will be undertaken can support the voluntary and community sectors in providing those services.

You asked about knife crime and young people. The voluntary sector is the place that can provide those services because young people will not come to statutory authorities and will not be able to engage with statutory authorities in the way that they can with community and voluntary services.

Sian Berry AM: Thank you.

Keith Prince AM: We have had an indication of your views on water cannon through your tweeting, but I just wondered what your thoughts now were on water cannon.

Cllr Sophie Linden: They are the same. It is not appropriate to have water cannon on the streets of London. The Mayor's manifesto is very clear that we want to sell the water cannon.

Keith Prince AM: How much do you think you are going to get for third-hand water cannon?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I am not really an expert on third-hand water cannons. We will have to wait and see.

Keith Prince AM: This is another random question, then, on closed-circuit television (CCTV). You may have seen that Westminster is planning to switch off its CCTV or shunt the £1 million cost of the CCTV to the MPS. Do you have an initial view on that?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Of course, I have seen that and it does really concern me that a decision like that has been taken. One of the things that is happening and that I understand is happening is that the police service is now talking and is in negotiations with Westminster City Council to look at how the capacity and the monitoring of the CCTV can be undertaken. I understand that the decision that has been taken is to stop the surveillance of the CCTV but the capital money is still in the budget --

Keith Prince AM: Yes, the revenue.

Cllr Sophie Linden: -- to ensure the upgrading of the CCTV system. I welcome that because it is incredibly important and allows the door to be open for appropriate mechanisms to allow that to happen.

Keith Prince AM: That was very helpful, actually. Thank you. You did mention - and I am paraphrasing and forgive me if I have it wrong - the need to look at the skills and the ability of the team at MOPAC. I am paraphrasing what you said. Just to assure you, you are very blessed with an excellent team at MOPAC and they have tremendous skills and ability. They are a really good bunch of people.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I assure you, absolutely, I did not mean it in terms of coming in with a negative view of it but in terms of coming in and delivering the outcomes.

Keith Prince AM: No, I did not say that. I was just giving you some reassurance. I am being nice to you for once! You are very lucky. They are a great team.

Len Duvall AM: It was quite interesting to hear the work that Hackney did on betting shops because I do think they are of interest to enforcement agencies - not wishing to stereotype - as new places where crime might take place.

What is your thinking about drugs and alcohol and about the consistency of approach across London in dealing with those as the underlying causes - not the total cause - of some of our crime and in driving up some of our crime figures? What is your thinking on that?

Cllr Sophie Linden: There are a number of things about drugs and alcohol and how they can drive crime, sometimes especially in the level of anti-social behaviour and the feeling of safety when there is street drinking taking place, which can be difficult.

In terms of consistency, I am really interested in looking at how the alcohol abstinence orders are working. I understand that they have been put in place on a number of occasions and have worked quite well. I am interested in that in terms of where there have been problems and where those orders can be undertaken.

What we do need to look at, especially with the constraints on public health and the Health and Wellbeing Boards, is ensuring that those services are maintained and what we can do to ensure that those who really need it are given the support and intervention to try to overcome some of the difficult issues that they are having and some of the addictions that they have, which can be driving problematic behaviour and some criminality as well when it is driving a need to get money.

Len Duvall AM: On the enforcement side, what about best practice across the MPS in terms of policing?

Cllr Sophie Linden: There is definitely a role for ensuring that there is a spreading of good practice around that. It is a difficult balance. In some ways, it comes back to your question about the Public Space Protection Order because there is a difficult balance to be had around how far you keep the support going and the intervention going if there is problematic behaviour. That is where the police come in on that enforcement side. There has to be some shared understanding at a local level and it will not necessarily be one-size-fits-all because this is a local decision and these are sometimes local matters, not always, but there does have to be a shared understanding at local level in their Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships about what they want and what they are going to deliver.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Sophie, you have talked a lot about all of the things that you have done in your CV and what you are proud of. Can you give the Committee any examples or tell us about things that you regret, things that you would do differently in any of your political roles, decisions that you have made or things that you would not do again if you had another chance?

Cllr Sophie Linden: I would do the PSPO differently and, as I have said, I have learned from that. Yes, that would be an example of what I would do differently. I would still want to tackle the anti-social behaviour that is connected with it, but I would want to undertake that in a different way.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Do you regret the way you carried this out, then? Do you have any regrets about it?

Cllr Sophie Linden: It was not undertaken in the best way and so I have learned from that.

Kemi Badenoch AM: Okay, thank you.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Sophie, on stopping the spread of extremism, which the Mayor referred to in his letter to the Chairman, I know that you have touched on this issue in passing, specifically when you answered Assembly Member Duvall's questions. Given the importance of this issue for Londoners, can you give us your thoughts on how, if confirmed, you intend to approach this very important issue? The Mayor in this election when he was a mayoral candidate repeatedly talked about being a British Muslim who will take the fight to the extremists. How, if confirmed, do you intend to put flesh on that particular message?

Also, would you refer to some examples of anything that you have done in Hackney and - I know it was some ten years ago now - when you were working as a special adviser to David Blunkett, who had some fairly robust views on this matter?

Cllr Sophie Linden: Taking that first, the world has really changed since I was in the Home Office. I was with the Home Secretary when the Twin Towers were attacked. It was such a different world than the world that we are in. It has changed so dramatically. In terms of tackling extremism and radicalisation, it was really early days then. It is more in my work in Hackney that I have come across this and in just being part of the community.

In terms of what I would want to do, I would want to make sure that the London Contest Board works with the opportunities that the Police and Crime Committee have set and to work in partnership to make sure that we are enabling and empowering mainstream Muslim voices, as well as others, to be part of this process, to work with parents, to work with families and to work with communities to ensure that those who are vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation are supported and families are supported to be able to spot and to understand where there are difficulties arising. I see the issue around tackling extremism and radicalisation as an issue of safeguarding of young people and of vulnerabilities. When you look at it in an overarching safeguarding way - and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime has an important role about safeguarding - I see it within that as well. It is about partnership working and developing alliances.

Then you asked about cybercrime. What do we do about online radicalisation? That is a really difficult one because it is about online safety, people in their bedrooms looking online and what we can do about ensuring that there is appropriate safeguarding for online activity of young people.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): I have just one more point. Do you accept that non-violent extremism and violent extremism are different sides of the same coin? I will tell you why I am asking that question once I hear your answer.

Cllr Sophie Linden: We have to be concerned about extremism and radicalisation when it will tip into violence and when it can be problematic. It is not just about extreme forms of Islam. Was it this week that somebody was caught in Ukraine for right-wing extremism as well? We have to be concerned about extremists and extremism, especially as we wish people to have tolerance and to understand each other. You were going to tell me why.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Can you use one to fight the other, as some Home Secretaries have tended to in the past? Can you work with non-violent extremists to fight violent extremists? There are very practical issues here of whom you work with.

Cllr Sophie Linden: As the Mayor has said, we want to work with mainstream Muslims to tackle extremism and radicalisation and to find the best ways of doing that. We need to find people who are able to talk to young people and engage with young people to try to bring them back from that radicalisation.

Len Duvall AM: Just following on from that question on some of the issues at the crossroads of Prevent Strategy and what you said earlier on, if the issue is to stop people harming and hurting everybody, do we need something wider around our Prevent Strategy along the lines of prevention *per se* in our schools about men who think they can hurt women and their treatment of women, people - mostly men - who have attitudes of hate towards other groups and racist or homophobic behaviour as well? Do we need a wider Prevent Strategy about violence *per se*? There is an issue about dealing with radicalisation and the threat we face and counterterrorism. Equally, we know that it all links to violence and hatred in some way. Is there a way - without wishing to change the national agenda or the focus of it - with some of the things that we are tackling across London if we are going to do a new Prevent Strategy? Should we think differently and radically about what that means? It does mean working not just with mainstream Muslims who are opposed to violence *per se*

in terms of terrorists but also with other groups of people in terms of tackling some of the wider ills that we face in society.

Cllr Sophie Linden: In terms of the role of schools and the wider issues of violence and the ways that people treat each other, absolutely, part of the partnership that I wish to develop – and that is already here as well – is about what happens in schools and what happens in places where young people go. It is incredibly important. Actually, one of the things that I found most concerning about some of the work in Hackney is the normalisation of some of the abuse and the fact that some young women who are being abused and being exploited by not necessarily members of gangs but by young men do not know it is abuse, and it has become a normal part of their lives. That, I found, really concerning. It is about working with schools and working with young women and girls, but it is also about working with men, young boys and teenagers to make sure that there is an understanding about respect and an understanding about the appropriate way to treat each other and what the norms should be rather than a very distinct way of being.

In terms of working with mainstream communities, we do need to do that and we need to have a proper partnership there. In terms of what next and how the Prevent Strategy can be improved or developed, we do have to wait for Louise Casey's review, as I said earlier, because that is not just about violence and tackling violence. In my understanding, it is also about social isolation, social cohesion and integration. It is policies around schools but it will also be policies around how people are engaging in apprenticeships, training and employment and in what parts of their lives they are being marginalised to make sure that they can come back as part of mainstream society.

Len Duvall AM: Thank you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is the end of the Q&A session. It was a long session but quite properly so.

Cllr Sophie Linden: I have drunk nearly a jug of water!

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Thank you for your responses. You are now invited to leave the session while we have a further discussion. I would like to thank you. You are very welcome to observe. It is up to you.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That was a good debate. It was two hours. That was wholly appropriate. Hopefully, people had the opportunity to ask all the questions that they needed.

Now we need to arrive at a decision around a recommendation to the Mayor, which I shall put in a letter form. Just to formally read out the options again, option one is that it be agreed to recommend that the Mayor should proceed with his appointment of Sophie Linden [Deputy Mayor of Hackney] to the office of Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. Option two is that it be agreed not to object to the appointment of Sophie Linden as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime but to write to the Mayor to provide comments regarding the proposed appointment. I think we have all seen examples of previous letters that we have used in the past, although of course we would not necessarily use those words. Option three is that the Committee may veto the appointment where the candidate is not a member of the London Assembly if the Committee votes by at least two-thirds. Basically, it is a veto. Option three is a veto of the appointment.

What we need to discuss now and to decide upon is which option and, if indeed it is an option with comments, what indeed those comments are. I will offer out the first suggestion. Are we agreed – and, if not, can people

leap in and comment - not to veto the appointment or do we wish to veto the appointment? No? We agree not to? I need to pursue it, just logically.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, we do not want to veto.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We agree not to veto the appointment? Good.

Now we have the other two options. One is to write to the Mayor and agree, without condition, or to write to the Mayor, as we did four years ago, not to object to his appointment but because of either background information submitted or comments in the previous discussion to make comments to the Mayor around his appointment. Do we want to open up a debate regarding what we would like to do, i.e. either option one or two, fully accept or accept with comments?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I can give my general view. I do not know what comments they would be. I have sat through both confirmation interviews, this one and the predecessor, and this was a far better interview than we had before. I did not know Sophie at all. I had not heard of her. I could not find much online, to be honest, when looking her up for this. However, she showed good knowledge - personally because of the safeguarding work I have done and stuff - talking about safeguarding and talking about the Pilkington case in terms of vulnerable adults pressed buttons for me. There were some areas I did not particularly agree with her on, but she showed good knowledge. Her approach to the Police and Crime Committee, which she set out at the start, was very welcome and refreshing compared to the previous holder of the post.

I always want someone to have a few more opinions and express them, actually, even if I disagree with them and that is an area, in some ways, that reminded me of Isabel Dedring [former Deputy Mayor for Transport], who was very good in her previous role but would never really give you an opinion on stuff. That is something that she will need to strengthen, but I thought it was a good performance.

Kemi Badenoch AM: I disagree with Caroline but for completely different reasons. I had looked at Sophie's CV and I liked it and so I do not necessarily agree. I understood the point you were making about it being a political CV, but I do not necessarily think that that is something to hold against people. Some people want to do just politics and that is fine.

Before we had this session, I read the complete transcript of the session with Stephen Greenhalgh [former Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime], which was interesting. Yes, Sophie presents excellently. I love her story. I love the fact that she is a working mum. I love the example she gave about her son's mugging.

However, what worries me is that there is a lot of talking but not necessarily anything to hang on to. She gave a statement about wanting to work well with the Assembly but she did not actually say anything beyond that and there just seemed to be quite a lot of platitudes. I asked a question that I thought was going to be helpful, which was, "Give examples of working with other parties", and I am a Conservative, yes, I meant any party; I did not ask about the Conservative Party. I was expecting, "When the Liberal Democrats wanted to do this", or, "When the Greens wanted to do that", but there was no mention of anybody, which sounds to me like someone who has never, ever spoken to anyone who was not a Labour person, which really concerned me.

When I mentioned the Home Secretary, I thought she would talk about, "I do not know this Home Secretary but I have worked with the previous Home Secretary". There were lots of things that I was really throwing out, throwing the bones out, and she did not take them. Maybe it was because there were so many of us on the panel. Looking at the previous Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, having someone who is able to

demonstrate that ability to work with people who disagree with them is important. It is not something that is worth vetoing because at the moment she is the only candidate, but for me those are very strong concerns.

Also, my first question about using the resources before actually getting the job, is that something that indicates that this is somebody who thinks, "Well, once I get the job, it is going to be OK"?

Len Duvall AM: Stephen Greenhalgh did that --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, it is about the Mayor's Office.

Len Duvall AM: -- but I was not going to interrupt you with those issues. Can I just go back? I am still unclear about what your concerns are. Are your concerns that she did not list off a list of party people whom she spoke to? She did list off a range of partners whom she did business with and then she did say, "Actually, I am prepared to work with all members, including in this body, with the different parties". I am still not clear about what your concerns are.

Kemi Badenoch AM: My concern is, in any other interview that I have conducted, if someone gave that kind of answer, you would say it was waffly. What you want is, "This was a situation, this is what I did and then this is" -- even mentioning -- and that did not come out. I am not saying that that did not happen, but to me anybody can say that --

Len Duvall AM: I understand that.

Florence Eshalomi AM: To be fair, I totally understand what you are trying to get at, Kemi, and I agree with you to some extent. However, I am not trying to defend Sophie in any way, but sometimes as a councillor you have to work with different political parties. As a councillor, in her role - and like I said, I am not speaking for Sophie - I am sure she has worked with the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives in Hackney and on the Safer Neighbourhood Board.

Kemi Badenoch AM: She should be able to say that.

Florence Eshalomi AM: On the LGA, which I also sat on, again, you work with different parties and independents as well. I am sure there are probably examples that she failed to mention but it was right that we did press her on that.

The other thing that I would add, following on from Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] as well, is in terms of some of her knowledge and some of those key issues that I feel do not get enough attention but are really serious like the stuff that Sian [Berry AM] raised about violence against women and girls and domestic violence. For me, across London, it is quite worrying that some of those trends are going up. We do need someone making sure that the MPS are more focused on that. When we are talking about the different priorities that we want the MPS to focus on, some of the replies that she gave on them were quite good for me to say, "Actually, this is a big issue". Sometimes it is those headline crimes that always make the front of the papers and those smaller crimes, which to the victims are not small, do need someone who is able to champion them and say, "Actually, all crimes across the board should be getting some of that focus and priority".

The other thing that I would add as well - and you touched on it - is that it is good to see a working woman. Sometimes, unfortunately, a number of these key roles are going to men. There is nothing wrong with that, but she will bring something different to that. Some of her engagement with the police I am hoping will help

in terms of them thinking about their senior appointments as well. It sends a strong message that actually, in this important role, we are going to see a working woman.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is a fair comment. My concerns were around things like control of the budget. I still am not convinced about her ability to negotiate at a very high level a very large budget and also to be able to influence and change that budget. I know that the Deputy Mayor of Policing and Crime does have to influence and negotiate with the police. I have some thoughts around that.

Andrew Dismore AM: First of all, on the budget thing, I do not think anybody has had the opportunity really to run a £3.5 billion budget in any form of previous government unless you were actually the Prime Minister or something.

As far as Kemi's [Badenoch AM] comments, I entirely disagree with her. I have two points. First of all, she criticises Sophie for not specifying how she wants to engage with the Assembly, yet she has gone out of her way to try to speak to us. You cannot have it both ways.

Having been in Parliament and seen how Parliament and Government works, you cannot be a Special Adviser and not deal with the Opposition parties. It is part of the job and you do it all the time. She gave one example of when she had done that. As a Member of Parliament (MP), I had to work across parties all the time. That is what you do behind the scenes. You may not see it if you have not been in Parliament and been with the Government, but that is what happens behind the scenes. I have no doubt that Sophie as a Special Adviser - and the example she gave was one of them - would have worked with other parties. You have your political perspective that you have to work to through your Minister, but your job is also to deal with the other parties to try and get as much political support for your position as you can and occasionally, you tailor your policy to head off good points coming from the Opposition. That is all below-the-radar stuff. It is not done in public.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): What we are trying to do is to arrive at a decision and it sounds like we are moving to a decision where we are not going to object but we are going to write a letter with some comments. I am trying to drill down in this last piece what comments Members want to make, whether it be the CV or influencing. I just want to drill down on that.

Keith Prince AM: Just to take up the point that Assembly Member Dismore was making, yes, you are absolutely right that as an MP, as a local councillor and certainly as a cabinet member, you will engage with other parties. That is absolutely right. Her failure was to give any examples of when --

Andrew Dismore AM: She did give an example.

Keith Prince AM: If you would let me finish, her failure was to give any examples of when she had successfully had these negotiations. Of course, I can engage with the Leader of Redbridge Council; it does not mean to say that it was a successful engagement. What we were looking for was examples of --

Kemi Badenoch AM: Absolutely.

Keith Prince AM: -- when she had had the engagement and had had a successful outcome. Kemi and I have employed people and, as an employer, you are not just looking for examples of when someone has done something, but for examples of success. There were no examples of any success on anything, let alone just this one particular issue. Yes, of course we accept that she would have engaged with other parties. We are engaging with other political parties now, but that does not mean to say that we are having a successful engagement.

Andrew Dismore AM: She gave an example of sex education in schools.

Peter Whittle AM: Just as a point, the argument about not being able to engage and all the rest of it is such a red herring. Working with other parties does happen and there is no point. You cannot say, "He said, she said; we did this, that and the other thing". You kind of do. You just do. You have to. The Mayor at the moment has gone two feet first in engaging with the Government, actually --

Florence Eshalomi AM: Exactly.

Peter Whittle AM: -- much to our regret, maybe. Anyway, I do not think it is that. As a comment, I thought that Sophie handled all the questions - some of which were very tough - superbly and highly professionally. That sort of thing gives you confidence.

What I would just like to say as a comment, though, is what I said to her in the session, which is that I just felt that a lot of the answers - particularly the stuff in the statement - were the sort of things you could hear in almost any public appointment now. That was my feeling. It was almost that I felt that this was, "Yes, on the one hand this, but on the other hand that. On the one hand this, but on the other hand that".

I would like to register that I would really like the emphasis to be on, basically, enforcement of the law and less on fighting social inequalities, not because I do not think they exist but that that is the role that we should be looking at as members of the Police and Crime Committee.

Sian Berry AM: Yes, I thought she gave very good answers to most of the questions. There was lots of detail in there. I talked about this during the session. My criticism of that as a job interview would be the lack of examples and stories that illustrated points. It was not just that we did not hear about specific examples of working with other parties. It was just that if you were going for a job like this, you would expect to be asked that question and you would be, presumably, full of stories to illustrate how you worked with people and how that led to the approach you would now take to issues of that kind. There was that quibble I had with the answers that were given.

I also thought that some of us - Len [Duvall AM] and Andrew [Dismore AM] - asked some questions trying to get out an idea of the approach she would take to the job and the philosophy she would have towards it. There were questions about whether sending a signal is an appropriate thing ever. That is a philosophical question there. Is it appropriate for the justice system to send signals or is it supposed to be about individual cases? We really do not know enough about that. I know that that is the job of drawing up the Police and Crime Plan, but if we put in a comment that said that we would like to get a better idea of the approach and philosophy overall, not just lists of things to achieve, which we heard a lot of today, but the actual approach and methodology and how that stems from previous work.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That is fair comment but it is probably my fault that we did not flush enough of that out in the second part of the meeting. We tried --

Peter Whittle AM: I tried myself.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): -- but it did not quite come out. I get that.

Len Duvall AM: All right. There is an issue about interview technique and there are probably 57 varieties around this table of how we could do it. I thought we had a very good interview and exchange of views. Of

course, I would like to have had another hour of it because I probably had another four or five questions I wanted to batter into it. In terms of what we have at this stage, it was appropriate for making a decision on what we need to do.

If we are going to make some comments, they have to be done in a way that is useful for the future. The first one and how we couch and draft this issue is -- I do not agree with Peter [Whittle AM] but his comment should be said and so somehow we should say, "An individual made the following comment and said that". I now understand Kemi's [Badenoch AM] point. I do not necessarily agree with it. Sian's point is very fair and so what can we say about what we would like to see in the Police and Crime Plan is quite a useful way of pointing us for the future.

With hindsight, and I did not read the full background of the CV in the way that I should have but I read the supporting statement. If we had seen other CVs of other mayoral nominees, then maybe it would have been better if that had been done. Sophie answered that and she offered to do that. They are the sort of comments where we say what we might like to see around a fuller CV and it might well have those achievements that people are looking for.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Some examples, yes.

Len Duvall AM: I thought there were examples but, actually, in fairness, I can understand why members of the Committee might have wanted to see a few more. That is where I would like to see that.

What I do not want to see is comments that are not fair in terms of what we have seen. I do not think we are getting that way, but I just want to put that marker down of where we are.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Just as a process point, which is quite unusual for precedent, you want to capture individual members' suggestions? The danger of that is you might be going towards the second part of your comment.

Len Duvall AM: I thought Peter [Whittle AM] made a comment that was there and it would be worthy of recording, to be honest. I am not saying that all of us individually want our bits in unless people feel strongly about it. There is something in Kemi's I would like to explore a bit more, but time permits us to have a conversation about it --

Kemi Badenoch AM: If I may, maybe a point that I was trying to get at and Sian [Berry AM] touched on is that sometimes when you read these things, it could be Stephen Greenhalgh who put in this supporting statement. There is so much of "empowering communities" and the same buzzwords keep coming out. I never felt that I could scratch beneath the surface of Sophie and that is why I was asking for those examples.

Len Duvall AM: Sadly, that is the thing about politicians. I do not think that is anything about Sophie. It is a thing about all politicians. I am guilty sometimes. I wish I was not. We are forced into that.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): What I am hearing is, clearly, you do not object to it. There are some comments around that we are hearing and officers will go and draft some stuff and then we will share it. We have made some comments anyway. It was philosophy and approach. Was that something that we heard?

Sian Berry AM: To learn more about [the philosophy and approach], yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): There was a gap. We had a gap in philosophy and approach. We were disappointed. We must put on record our disappointment about the CV. I know it is not going to be conditional on any appointment, but we did discuss earlier that we would like to see something much fuller, just as a point of reference.

Peter Whittle AM: Sorry. Does that not trivialise this, rather?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): No, not in the slightest. I do not think so. We would like to --

Peter Whittle AM: At this stage of the game, it is not --

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): No. It is not conditional, but we discussed that. Actually, I would like that regime to come through that we do have that and that is right because otherwise --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: For all future mayoral nominations, we would expect more detail. That should be just a process thing.

Len Duvall AM: It is more of a message to MOPAC to say, "Give some guidance" --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Or the Mayor's Office.

Len Duvall AM: -- or the Mayor's Office.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): That was wrong and we need to make sure it is in the letter that that was wrong and ill-judged.

Unmesh Desai AM (Deputy Chair): Also, note the apology.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): And note the apology. I still have a thing about budget expertise. I would like some words around the fact that -- I am not hearing reassurance around it. They are not managing on a day-to-day basis a budget, but there have to be negotiated levels of a very high budget. I would like to hear something about that.

I have three things there. Is there anything else that you want to add in that needs to go in?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I am not sure I agree with the issue of budget. If it was a bloke there, you would not have said that. Just because it is a woman, it feels to me, you are saying that. She gave us very good examples as a councillor and of being in the Home Office. I really disagree on that. There was nothing she said that made me think she is not capable of doing that.

Sian Berry AM: I do not have any concerns about that whatsoever.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We were doing so well, Caroline, and I disagree with you on that one.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It is just how I feel you were coming across. That is why you were going on about budget. If it were Stephen Greenhalgh there, I would have no confidence in him having any capability with budgets.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Let us all calm down for a minute. Stephen Greenhalgh, rightly or wrongly, for good or for bad, was running a business and he understood the numbers. He had other things that were not correct, but that was that.

Len Duvall AM: Chairman, the wording about the budget is that we are going into a very difficult period of the budget.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Exactly.

Len Duvall AM: It is not just a message about Sophie that we are sending back. It is one to the mayoralty about how we will have concerns about the budget. I thought she gave an honest answer about the budget and her expertise, what she had done and where she had been. The trouble is that it is not just Sophie who is going to be doing this about the budget. It is going to be the mayoral team. It is going to be the MOPAC team. It is going to be the Greater London Authority (GLA) officers here. There is a message that you might want to send that, "There are concerns by this Committee about the finances that we have in terms of delivering an effective police service for London and we think that you, the Mayor, as well as your Deputy Mayor, need to focus very strongly on this issue because it is going to be a key part of your delivery".

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is fine. That is different to saying she is not capable.

Len Duvall AM: With that wording, we can live with it. I do not think the wording about the individual and her leadership of that issue is fair. I am looking at that and you can send a very strong message that would echo all of the parties around this table about how there are some real concerns about the budget and service delivery and what it means for what Londoners get at the end of the sausage machine.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I see your --

Keith Prince AM: Chairman, with respect - and I actually have a lot of sympathy with what Assembly Member Duvall is saying - we are not here to give guidance to the Mayor on the future economic position of the country. We are here to comment on his appointment of Sophie and, therefore, the comments should be around any concerns because we are saying we have concerns about Sophie and what those concerns are about Sophie, not what our concerns are about the general financial position of the country.

Len Duvall AM: Chairman, it was not about the general position of the country, in defence of that. Look, if need be, for time's sake I would hope that we would not have to do this, but I am happy to force a vote on this issue about whether we feel that she is competent enough to deal with budget issues or not and we are forced to vote.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): We may have to get to that and I am happy with that --

Len Duvall AM: I do not want to do that.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): My point was not the response; the response was perfectly fine. It could be male, female or any combination of both. It could be me saying, "Yes, I was a cabinet member for finance and that was kind of good". However, it is that reassurance of stepping up to that level because I know from some of the personal negotiations that the Deputy Mayor had to be very strong and very safe in himself around the budget and the figures. He had to be so. It is just worth putting that on the record. A last comment, Sian, and then we are going to come to a proposal.

Sian Berry AM: I just wanted to say that I do agree with that. Having been a cabinet member in a council within an important area, she talked about how she had managed cuts in the council and in her appointment in the Home Office. I have no concerns about this and I do not know what experience you expect somebody to have to step up to that level when they have not already had the job. Who has?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I was just putting it out there. We need to mention the importance of the budget and it is just a question of having the right wording around it. However, what you are not content with - and I do not want to go to a vote but I sense the majority is going in a certain way - is more about the importance of the budget and the challenges going ahead for the Mayoral Team. Bear in mind the Mayoral Team itself might take on advisers. There was some expertise. It was not me. There were some experts behind Stephen [Greenhalgh, former Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime] who knew their stuff about the figures. If the decision is not to have people around advising about the figures, it is even more of a challenge. Let me just put that out there.

Kemi Badenoch AM: It was just because I have heard what everyone said. The budget was not something that I had specifically been focusing on. If I understand what you are saying, I do agree that what Stephen Greenhalgh had was non-political experience and some business experience, which is budgeting within a different context, within a financial/corporate context, very similar to how the MPS would operate, as opposed to a council, and that is what we feel is lacking. Is that what you mean?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): I was highlighting the fact - and we are now taking it too far - that Stephen had around him people - and it was not me - who were political in another life but did have some expertise and were able to contribute to advising him around the figures. If Sophie decides not to do so --

Florence Eshalomi AM: She has not made up her mind yet --

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Exactly, and so I am just continuing that line of thought, which I will close down now and so that is kind of fine. The important thing is officers pick up on this. The decision of the group is to not object to the appointment, which is important; to make two or three comments about philosophy and approach; to comment on the CV, which is appropriate; to ask for a fuller CV and indeed background information necessarily; and to comment on the importance of grasping the budget in these difficult times. If you can draft those, how do you feel about that?

Teresa Young (Senior Committee Officer, GLA): Chairman, would you like to ask the Committee to delegate authority to you in consultation with the party group leads to agree the final wording?

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Yes. Are you happy to delegate to me?

All: Agreed.

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Of course, I will circulate those - clearly, working with the Deputy Chair - to party leads to agree it themselves and agree that before it goes.

Florence Eshalomi AM: And Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM].

Steve O'Connell AM (Chairman): Happy with that? All right. Good.