

## London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – 14 May 2019

### Transcript of Item 8 - Question and Answer Session with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Service

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Now we move to agenda item 8, which is the question and answer session with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). This is a monthly meeting. Firstly, I would like to welcome our guests from the Electoral Commission who are attending for the first part of this session. Welcome. Please could you introduce yourselves and very briefly outline the role of the Electoral Commission?

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** I am Bob Posner, the Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission. Briefly, our role in the context of referenda and elections is to regulate political parties and campaigners and to make sure the rules are followed. As an organisation, we oversee the running and administration of elections as well.

**Louise Edwards (Head of Regulation, Electoral Commission):** Louise Edwards. I am the Director of Regulation at the Electoral Commission.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Before we put our formal questions to you, the Deputy Mayor has asked if she could have an opportunity to make an apology to the Committee.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Thank you very much, Chair. I would just like to put a correction on record from I think the previous time we met in March [2019]<sup>1</sup>. Assembly Member [Susan] Hall asked me a question about the proposed Conservative budget amendment. When I was answering that, I conflated two things: one, your budget amendment, and the second thing was the proposal by Assembly Member [Shaun] Bailey as part of his mayoral campaign. I conflated the two, and I have had a formal complaint from Assembly Member [Gareth] Bacon about that, and we have been in correspondence. I said I would put the record straight in front of you, this Committee, to apologise for conflating the two separate proposals and for any confusion caused.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Thank you, Deputy Mayor.

We now move to the first set of questions. The first set of questions is an update on progress of the MPS's investigation into Vote Leave/Leave.EU/BeLeave.

**Len Duvall AM:** To set the context from this Committee's point of view, we had originally asked questions in relation to the MPS about its potential criminal investigations into Tower Hamlets, which was a referral by the Electoral Courts. On this particular case, we are concentrating on the referendum issues of where the Commission has done work and has referred it to the police. The similarities of the two cases are about exchanging information and who received what. For the last nine months we have been predominantly in correspondence with the MPS and more latterly with yourselves at the Electoral Commission. I wonder, Chief Executive, if I could begin by just confirming some dates, and then maybe you could set the context of your work before it goes into or gets referred to the police for their investigation. Can you confirm that the

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<sup>1</sup> 6 March 2019

Electoral Commission published the conclusions of its investigation into Leave.EU on 11 May 2018, and then you later went on to publish your conclusions on Vote Leave on 17 July 2018? You just might want to answer that yes or no but then set in context the type of work that you did.

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** We are agreeing; that sounds correct.

**Len Duvall AM:** Yes. Fine.

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** In the referendum, one of our jobs was to regulate the main campaigners. Vote Leave was the lead campaigner on the Leave side. Leave.EU was very active and a major campaigner as well. We regulate those campaigners. Both of them we found broke the rules in the referendum on campaign spending rules. We regard those breaches as serious, and we published an investigation report that reflected that, and we imposed - within the scope of fines we can impose - a number of maximum fines on them.

Since then, those findings have been upheld by the courts, and the fines have been paid by the campaigners. That is where those matters stand. In a sense, that was our role in the referendum in this context of those bodies of campaigners, and that was completed.

The other thing we do - I will hand to Louise at this point - is when the rules are broken and we are regulating the campaigning organisations, it may be that certain individuals from those organisations may have committed criminal offences. That is not within our remit. Those sorts of matters we would refer to relevant police forces. Just before I hand over to Louise, just to expand on that, I think it is important that I say we work very well and very closely with police forces across the country, including the MPS. That is our broad reflection of where we currently stand on this matter.

**Louise Edwards (Head of Regulation, Electoral Commission):** Just to pick up from that, we asked the police to look at particular offences that we thought may have been committed because we had some evidence to suggest that was the case. As is routine in these matters, what we do is first of all outline to the police why we are writing to them in the first place, what it is that we think they might want to look at, and then there is fairly close liaison between us and the relevant team at the MPS after that to make sure that they have all the information they need, that we are talking to them about what our investigation found, what that evidence shows and what it means. In amongst that there are some formal requests for evidence, which then get dealt with, but overall it is very heavy liaison between us.

Obviously, the police are not re-running our investigation; we have found offences, we fine them, and fines have been paid, as Bob said. Where we can assist and support the police with understanding the information we have given them and understanding the laws that we have asked them to look at, we of course stand ready to do that.

**Len Duvall AM:** Thank you very much for that. To the Commissioner or to the Assistant Commissioner, I do not mind who. To the Commissioner. Chair, I received a letter from Commander Jerome, and I will share these letters publicly for the Committee to have and use to put on to the website. In terms of the letter from Commander Jerome, it says the MPS requested all the material from the Electoral Commission straight after these reports were published. The data protection agreements were put in place so that this material could be shared. That is very complex, and it is appropriate that that takes place. This took some time, but by September 2018 the MPS had made the request for relevant material.

Is this correct?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** That is a question to me, then? Yes. Yes, I believe it is. That is correct, from my briefing.

**Len Duvall AM:** Does the MPS now have all the relevant material from the Electoral Commission?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I understand that in the last few days, as is not uncommon, on examination of documents on another occasion – and I think you know from the correspondence it is by no means the first time – we have looked at the material and realised that for our criminal assessment, which is different from what the Electoral Commission has to do, there is other material that we believe may be relevant that may be held at the Electoral Commission. On a number of occasions in the last several months we have asked for further material, and we have done that again in the last few days. I understand in the last few days further material has arrived, and we are now assessing that further material. That is not an unusual process when working with another body.

**Len Duvall AM:** I am pleased to hear that, because in a letter dated 23 April 2019 Commander Jerome informed me the MPS did not have all the relevant material. I am glad that you have been able to get all that material together. However, you say it is not uncommon, but I have a concern on what should be a relatively straightforward issue – if anything is straightforward in criminal aspects of investigations – that it took ten months to get the material together. Why did it take so long? What is the difficulty about gathering all the material for you to make an assessment on your part of what is a complicated subject?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** As you say, it is complicated, and I am certainly no expert on the law in this area. I have a team, though, that is really, from a police point of view, very, very well versed. To go back to your previous questions about what you referred to as Tower Hamlets, I do think that we have learned the lessons that there were there, and the team is a capable team. It is well led. It has very good senior leadership and commander-level support and scrutiny of what it is doing. They would say to me this is not a straightforward piece of legislation. It is quite complicated.

One of the things they have to do always is liaise early with our lawyers and more to the point the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). They have of course done that. Then they have begun to assess the original material. As I say, on a number of occasions, as they have assessed the material, they have realised that to form a view as to whether the criminal threshold has been met and an investigation should start, there is, they believe, further material that may be relevant sitting at the Electoral Commission.

I take your point that 11 months seems, from a distance, knowing nothing about it, potentially a reasonably long time. It is not a few days. It is a long time. It is complicated, there is a lot of material, and it is two different organisations with different responsibilities and powers working together. What we and the CPS say is likely to be required and adds up to all the material and it is relevant material is something that we understand as we go, and no doubt the Electoral Commission or another body might have a slightly different view on that. It has its own responsibilities.

To cut to your chase, I am satisfied that my team has been doing its job expeditiously. I am satisfied that they are well led and they are getting on with it. I am also satisfied that we have a good working relationship with the Electoral Commission, and I look forward to that improving even further in the future. I think we are soon going to sign a service level agreement, which will clarify some of these points even further.

**Len Duvall AM:** Can you just very quickly paint some pictures of this interaction between your organisation and the Electoral Commission? I think of material being documents and in terms of their investigation issues. In a sense, once I examine those documents, is it that I am asking further questions of the Electoral

Commission, or am I requiring further material? What is it that takes so long in terms of the issues? Once I have read something and I have what I think is all the material, what is it I am asking of the Electoral Commission?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think you should ask Louise as well because I am further away from it and she has been quite hands-on.

**Len Duvall AM:** Yes, of course.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Thank you. It could be either. The Electoral Commission are experts in certain aspects, obviously, of what they are responsible for. They know what they have, and they know what they have not got. They also have their responsibilities to safeguard material and to comply with the law in terms of what they reveal to other bodies for whatever purpose. Most particularly, I think we asked for documentation that may go to either indicating a crime has been committed or may in fact do the opposite and make it less likely that a crime has been committed. We are looking for everything that appears to be relevant. This may sound like a black and white thing, that it ought to be obvious as soon as you look at the documents, but I can tell you it is not.

**Len Duvall AM:** I am not suggesting that at all.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No, and it is really not in any investigation. It is quite nuanced, and that is why there is a conversation back and forth. I think we are close, and we believe the last letter we sent has resulted in yet more material. I cannot tell you what the further assessment will be from that, but we now have a lot of material. We cannot deny that.

**Louise Edwards (Head of Regulation, Electoral Commission):** That is the experience on our side as well. During our investigation we gathered quite a number of documents, in the thousands, of both of the campaigners concerned. They are in structured files, which we had handed over following the formal information requests. As is very routine in these matters, not just with the police but other law enforcement agencies as well, it is a discussion. It is a discussion about what the evidence shows. It is a discussion about what we found. We will always stand ready to help the police, but they are running a different assessment into different offences. It is quite routine that law enforcement agencies might come back and say, "OK, now we are looking at this thing. Can you help us out with this information?" It has been a very co-operative approach and we have been very pleased to help where we can. There has been no difficulty in information-sharing or discussions between us.

**Len Duvall AM:** We are coming close to a resolution of whether there is a criminal aspect or whether there is not, or are we coming close to, "We have all the information"? I am unclear in my letters exchanged whether you have all the material. What is the next phase of this journey?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** As you know, we do not normally give a running commentary on any investigation, for good reasons, but I think it is fair to say the team believes - and Commander Jerome, who is taking a very keen interest in this, believes - that in some matters at least we may be able to come to the end of the assessment in weeks, not months and months and months. I hope that is the case. That obviously would be based on our view that we have all or virtually all the relevant material. There may be a tiny bit more to get - I do not know - that we can assess and then add up with everything else and say, "Does this meet the criminal threshold?" We are working closely with the CPS.

**Len Duvall AM:** Just to both of you, finally - this is not arrogance on my part - I think my letters prompted certain activities. That is what I feel from the contents of the letters I received back from the police about pushing and pushing, as you are saying, "Where are you? Have you done this? Have you not done that?" Is there anything, in particular for future investigations, around that information exchange notice, speeding up that process, making sure that the police are very clear on what material they require for a criminal investigation of agencies like the Electoral Commission? It could be other agencies as well. Have we really got that right? You say to me that you have learned the lessons of Tower Hamlets. I know it is slightly different and I know it is in terms of a different context, but that was about information exchange. I am taking your answers and what you are telling me this morning is there, but it does seem just a bit too long, both for the people that are under potential investigation, who have gone through one process, civil, and are now potentially facing another, as well as for an organisation that does it. I know it is complicated, but it does seem rather a long time around that. Is there anything else we can learn from this process about how we work with other organisations and the exchange of information under the new data rules as well and how we commission the information we require?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I would beg to slightly differ from your view that it is your pushing and shoving that has led to action. For example, you can see even in the things that we have revealed in the answers to your letters that before you first wrote there had been a lot of communication, a lot of exchange and a lot of to-ing and fro-ing and us saying, "Well, now, what about this? What about that?" Secondly, I do think, having looked at it myself to some extent but more to the point spoken at length with Commander Jerome, the team has been quick on each assessment and each response. There is a lot to it.

In terms of lessons for the future, I have mentioned already that I think we will be helped even further by a service level agreement. I am sure, without any criticism of what has happened, we will have things that we want to debrief together on at the end of all this. It may be that a greater understanding - for example, of constraints that the Electoral Commission is under or our understanding with the CPS of what fully relevant material all adds up to - might inform future cases, but we will certainly debrief it together and I think it is a bit early to say.

**Len Duvall AM:** Chief Executive, is there anything you wish to add?

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** For us as an organisation, electoral offences are serious offences. Courts take them really seriously. They are truly an offence against the public and really matter. For us, it is really key that where we see things in elections as part of our responsibilities, we identify potential offences. That is not to say, when we hand matters to the police, that individuals have committed offences. Far from it. It is really just saying it is in the public interest and it needs looking at. What we want to see - and what we do see - are close working relationships with other law enforcement agencies, and we work really hard at that across the board and proactively.

I think it is fair to say, if one thinks post Tower Hamlets, and that was a significant event, that there is better and closer working generally across elections matters with police and other law enforcement agencies across all elections across the country. That is a really good thing.

I would tangentially raise one thing, listening to the debate. It is a challenge for us and it is a challenge for all the police and other law enforcement agencies to deal with electoral offences that date from the 19th century and to deal with challenging elections through an archaic system through things called petitions, and individuals bring actions and it costs them money. When one looks at Tower Hamlets, and I think a lot of great lessons have been learned, one really obvious, outstanding action - I have to say it is for politicians, not you,

but politicians generally - is that electoral law needs modernising. When one looks at electoral offences, if we all want to have confidence and want voters to have confidence, this is something that needs doing. Certainly, as an organisation, we would look for the Assembly to support it. It is a job of governments and parliaments to maintain our electoral law. This is a classic example of where there is an aspect here that the lesson is not yet learned, where there are outstanding things to be done. The police's job will be easier and our job will be easier. It will be in the public interest for electoral offences to be looked at and made right for a modern digital age.

**Len Duvall AM:** Thank you.

**Sian Berry AM:** To the police, have you been in contact with the people who have committed potential offences, the ones found guilty by the Electoral Commission of offences under their regulations? Have you been interviewing people and gathering more information this way yet, or are you waiting for the full extent of information to be boiled down from the Electoral Commission before you do that?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I cannot answer that question definitively, Sian, because I do not know. What I can say is that we are at an assessment stage. The norm would be that if there is a group or an individual who might be at some sort of risk, we might very well contact them to say, "We are now doing this assessment" because that is polite and courteous and it allows them to think about that. When we are assessing, we are not investigating, so it would be most unusual for us to be interviewing people at that stage. We are looking at the material that we have to see whether, *prima facie*, given all the work that has been done by the other body, there is a criminal offence made out by some party or another. After that, if there is, *prima facie*, then we would go on to the next stage of the investigation, which would normally include, but not always, interviewing. That would be entirely appropriate to allow the person or people to give their side of the story.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you. To the Electoral Commission, I wanted to ask for more information about what the data protection issues are here. As I understand it, the letters from May and July [2018?] were essentially saying, "We have come to conclusions about election spending and accounting for spending and working together and whether or not that counts" and all of those things that, if you are running an election, you put into the public domain and you are supposed to make public. The things that you are finding out are things that are not data-protected, as far as I can tell. They are things that should have been in the public domain.

I understand that your letter said to the police, "This information is now available to you", so what was the problem? What were the data protection issues that delayed you handing over the information to the police?

**Louise Edwards (Head of Regulation, Electoral Commission):** There were no data protection issues, but there is a process that we need to go through to make sure that we are complying with our obligations under data protection legislation. The evidence that we gathered during our investigations into Vote Leave and Leave.EU was quite extensive. It was not all public information. A lot of it was internal documentation, email exchanges, the sorts of things that you would routinely gather during an investigation of this nature. Pretty much all of it contained some elements of personal data. Therefore, it is right that we do a formal process with the police, which we routinely do, to make sure that we are meeting our obligations under data protection when handing information over.

**Sian Berry AM:** Is police evidence usually subject to these kinds of restrictions in terms of sharing and data protection? Is sharing things with the police a breach of data protection law?

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** No, but between any public sector agencies at all, when one passes information from one body to another, one has to follow law on data protection, basically, which in a sense is a process, it is a gateway, to make sure you are respecting people's personal data and rights. One is not, for example, passing to the police information we might hold about people that is not relevant to the legislation. It might be personal data about people that they do not need, whom they are potentially assessing or they are going to investigate. All public bodies follow these procedures. It is normal.

I do not think the "delay" word applies here. It is just a process that happens and carries on through. If one imagines a live matter, where organisations discuss them with each other and it is an iterative process, as we referred to earlier, it is happening all the time. I am not aware there was a delay - I do not think there was - but it is something that has to happen.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Electoral Commission, do you have any outstanding cases against either the Leave or Remain campaigns?

**Louise Edwards (Head of Regulation, Electoral Commission):** We have two outstanding investigations arising from the EU referendum into campaigners. We do not differentiate for the purpose of our enforcement activity what outcome they were campaigning for, so that does not really make any difference to us in terms of whether or not they followed the rules. There are two remaining.

**Andrew Boff AM:** There are two, and do they relate to the Leave campaign or do they relate to the Remain campaign?

**Louise Edwards (Head of Regulation, Electoral Commission):** I believe that there is one into a Remain campaigner and one into a Leave campaigner, but, as I say, it is not a factor that we take into account when we are doing enforcement work.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Bearing in mind the High Court's ruling that the Electoral Commission effectively misled the Leave campaign, do you not think that the Electoral Commission was complicit in the error that it made?

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** That coverage and suggestion that the Commission misled is just wrong. There are two judgments in that case. There were five grounds of challenge. Four were dismissed at the first stage. One of those was around whether there was anything misleading in the Commission's advice. The judge dismissed that. At the second stage there was one ground of challenge, which was whether, on offences the Commission had already found against the campaigner and applied maximum fines to, there was another interpretation of the law that would have led you to the same place in a different way, and the High Court agreed with that, agreed there was another way of looking at it. As the judge said himself, it led to exactly to the same place of the same offences. That case is currently in the Court of Appeal, so that may not stand anyway, but it - I was going to say hypothetical - has no actual, tangible application to what happened. That is not true; the Commission certainly did not mislead on advice, and I would refute that. The Commission did not mislead anyone on advice. I will completely refute that. A lot of things are said. Whether they are true is another matter.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Sorry? A lot of people have said? Surely the High Court said that you misled them.

**Bob Posner (Chief Executive, Electoral Commission):** I would challenge anyone to read the two High Court judgments and suggest that the Commission got anything wrong in its advice.

**Andrew Boff AM:** OK. Thank you very much.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** We now move to the next set of questions, which is on the policing of Extinction Rebellion and other forthcoming London protests, and that will be my colleague, Susan.

**Susan Hall AM:** If I can start with you, Commissioner, please, can you just tell me what the aims were of police operations during the Extinction Rebellion protest?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** In any policing operation we have some fundamental responsibilities to protect life and property, to prevent crime and disorder. When there is a protest or likely to be a protest, then we aim to ensure that people have the right to lawfully express themselves and to also, if required, lawfully assemble. We try to balance those rights with other people's rights to go about their daily business and their private lives.

**Susan Hall AM:** Do you have a right to park a pink boat in the middle of Oxford Circus? That surely contravenes everything.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** The law here is quite complex and develops all the time, but it is, as I imagine you are aware, against the law to obstruct the highway. There is a specific offence of that. There is no specific offence about parking a boat or anything like that or parking anything in the middle of the road, but obstruction of the highway is an offence. It is also the case that the law - more than suggests - tells us that in a democracy some reasonable disruption is to be expected when people are expressing themselves, and the courts have made various different rulings about what is likely to be reasonable or not in the United Kingdom (UK) and across Europe. We take our guidance from that.

To answer your question hypothetically as opposed to what happened on that day, I suppose one could imagine a circumstance, however annoying it might be for other people, in which some large item could be parked - your word - for a period of time, but not for an unreasonable or excessive period of time, if that parking was part of an expression of protest.

**Susan Hall AM:** You think the period of time that vehicles were allowed to blockade a major bridge and a large boat in the middle of Oxford Circus was the appropriate amount of time before they were removed?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Now, that is a different question altogether. Later on, on the first day, directions were imposed on the protestors, not least at Oxford Circus where the pink boat was, and the directions were, in effect, not to be able to protest in that place for a very protracted period. The law is again quite complex, and I am happy to talk about that, but no, I certainly would not say that it was reasonable, not just Oxford Circus but Waterloo Bridge and the area around Marble Arch, for those to be obstructed in the manner they were for the incredibly protracted period, and it caused huge disruption to an awful lot of people.

**Susan Hall AM:** We are in complete agreement there, then. Given that the police were able to remove the pink boat and the other vehicles when they did, what was the reasoning behind not doing that right at the beginning?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** If I go back to the beginning of the protest, I think it would be fair to say that Extinction Rebellion came in larger numbers than we expected, used different tactics from what we had been led to believe and expected, and certainly used new tactics well beyond anything that we had seen before. I do want to stress this: this was very new in the way people went about their protest and the disruption thereby. The fact that within minutes a large number of people were



locked on and glued on to the various obstructions that you have described, some of them in a very dangerous position for them, the fact that there were then hundreds of people around these obstructions, the fact that individuals were able, whilst not causing any violence in the main, as we know - very few violent incidents - to simply get in front of police officers and throw themselves on the pavement and stick, meant that we needed vast numbers of officers to deal with these protestors once they were unlawful. The only way that would be lawful for us to do it is to one by one remove and arrest people who have committed an offence in not complying with the conditions.

You will have seen on the television that each of those arrests, careful as they have to be, took four or in some cases five officers, and we had to just arrest and arrest and arrest.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes, I watched.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Then we had to unlock, unlock, unlock, very carefully. Some of those operations took many hours just to get one person unlocked, and many hours to get, for example, the lorry on Waterloo Bridge safe in order for the officers to be able to unlock people who might otherwise have hung themselves if we had been careless. It was a very protracted operation to remove the obstructions, and we had to literally remove every single person. Every time we initially removed somebody, two or three more would come and put themselves in that place.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes. I could see the issues you were facing. Personally, I wish you had put the end bit right further forward, because whilst these people have a right to demonstrate, businesses have a right to be able to carry on.

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

**Susan Hall AM:** I believe it is millions and millions and millions of pounds that have been lost. Given that it was a different form of protest, what have you learned from that? The concern must be that other people are watching what they did and think, "Right, we will do the same thing".

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Quite. I think you know full well this particular set of protests went on for 11 days. We had nearly 1,200 people arrested. We have had over 70 people charged. We have already put together a team to ensure that for the others who have been arrested we have as good an evidence package as possible to put to the CPS. That team, by the way, is probably 30 officers to progress those cases through the CPS and, if appropriate, through the courts. I think one thing probably the whole country will have learned is that there must be a deterrent for this sort of activity, and the deterrent, I would say, is within the criminal law.

The second thing we have learned is that obviously we do need certain more specialist skills in terms of debonding and delocking. We called on colleagues from around the country to do that. We clearly in protests, as always, have to be lawful and proportionate, but we need the best possible intelligence before such events, and we need to act very quickly when we have a large-scale thing like this, which we hope we will not ever have quite like this again, to put an enormous amount of resource in very quickly. That is expensive. For this particular operation, in additional costs, let us forget for a second the exhaustion of the officers, the people who are working 14 and 16-hour days, as you know, for the best part of two weeks, not on their boroughs, not answering emergency calls, not dealing with violent crime. The additional costs are £7.5 million, and that is overtime, that is kit, that is cherry-pickers, that is bringing people in from other forces. It is a very expensive operation for the police alone, let alone for the city.

To go to your first point, we went to very, very, very large-scale resourcing on the Thursday evening of the first week. You would say, I think, "Perhaps you should have done that earlier, Commissioner", and that is something that we are definitely thinking about, I can assure you. Next time, we will quite simply have more people earlier and be very, very fast and assertive about getting people arrested and getting obstructions, where we can lawfully, out of the way quickly.

**Susan Hall AM:** I am thrilled to hear that you will act quicker and be far more assertive. I think this will happen again and again because protestors could see how they were -- I went up there. I saw what was going on. It was more like a carnival going on, quite frankly. I was appalled by it, given that so many people were suffering, businesses etc, and people were milling around just dancing and laughing, which is great, but not at the expense of Londoners going on.

How will this affect you financially? Clearly, the MPS cannot afford just to lose that sort of money. Perhaps I should ask the Deputy Mayor. Is there special grant funding available in respect of this operation?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** The Commissioner has just outlined that the estimate is about £7.5 million, and the special grant application will go in to the Home Office. We have had positive signs from Home Office that that will be paid. However, I am always concerned because often the special grant applications are slightly underpaid. You get about 85% of the special grant application. Also, the Home Office will not fund the missed opportunity for the extraction of the police officers from their normal duties. We are putting that application in and we do expect it to be paid.

**Susan Hall AM:** That has not been assessed, has it? While those officers were dealing with this, we have knife crime and all the other crimes going out of control. They should be dealing with that, not dealing with something like this, which is another reason we need to go in there quicker.

While we are on the issues that I was concerned about, with all of those arrests, I believe that we had problems with finding cells for people that were arrested. Is that correct?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** If I could just outline a number of things that I think we should be very proud of, the first is the extraordinary good humour and professionalism of the officers, wherever they were: inside processing prisoners, dealing with the various logistics, or, more to the point, the people right in the face of this. As I said, you will have heard the MPS went to 12-hour shifts, which is something we very rarely do. Virtually everybody in uniformed policing and many of the detectives were on 12-hour shifts, but an awful lot of people were working 12, 14, 16 hours almost throughout that period. They did those operations without any serious injuries at all. They did those without any significant complaints at all. There were comments, of course, but we have not had complaints about people overreacting or using too much force. I do want to stress we have to stay within the law. I am sure there were people - perhaps not you - sitting in their front rooms saying, "Why haven't they sent in the horses?" or "Why aren't they using CS [gas] or something?" Completely unlawful. You know full well that if I had done that, my officers would be arrested by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) perhaps in a few days' time.

**Susan Hall AM:** Do not start me on the IOPC, please. It is shocking.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** We cannot use excessive force. We must not use excessive force. We have to uphold the law. I do want to pay tribute to the officers who were involved.

Secondly, I want to pay tribute to the leadership and the leadership in charge over, for example, the Easter weekend. There was a threat to Heathrow. Imagine what would have happened if Heathrow had been stopped. It did not happen, thanks to colleagues coming from around the country to help us. It was an Easter weekend. You will remember how ghastly Easter was a year ago with violent crime. We managed to keep our Violent Crime Task Force and many other units focused on violent crime. We had a peaceful Easter weekend despite it being incredibly warm, and there were really low levels of violence, thank goodness. There is of course a cost. There is a long tail to this. I still have officers who are tired out by what they had to do for those two weeks. While they were doing that, they were not doing something else, which is exactly your point: either having a day off or policing the boroughs.

**Susan Hall AM:** I agree.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** That is, in a sense, the nature of our job. We have to move and flex and surge. I am very proud of the fact that we did not have significant violent crime in that time period.

**Susan Hall AM:** I absolutely agree with all of that, save for the fact that had the MPS dealt with this in a more robust way a lot, lot earlier, it would have saved those officers being completely exhausted, as you have just said. It would have allowed them to go back to dealing with the terrible crime wave we have at the moment, and it would have meant that Londoners could enjoy their roads as they are supposed to be used, not for a carnival.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** There is a risk, if I may say, in robustness, as I pointed out. There is a risk in being very, very robust that one tips over into unlawful use of force. I take your point, but equally we can all be wise looking back, and now we know what we now know about what the intentions were, and how much disruption was caused, and what they ended up doing, and the numbers that they came in, and the tactics that they used. Yes, next time I would do it differently. It does not mean my Commanders were stupid last time. I know you have not used that word, but I do not believe they were.

**Susan Hall AM:** No, I certainly would not use that word about your senior officers. We can be sure that next time - I am absolutely sure there will be a next time - the police will be far more robust? I will leave it then because I know there are lots of other colleagues that want to comment. Lots of people that were arrested said they got strength from the fact that the Mayor was behind them. Is there any truth in that?

**Len Duvall AM:** Or Michael Gove [Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs].

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I have no idea. I realise I did not deal with your custody point. Sorry, Susan, I got excited there. The custody point was, of course, when you are arresting those sorts of numbers, there can be some delays. There were delays caused because, for example, a huge proportion of protestors wanted to use the same firm of solicitors, and the solicitors were overwhelmed. We used all our custody space really effectively. We have a very good system of doing that. I think on one occasion non-Extinction Rebellion protestors, but some other people were placed in custody just outside London. No, we did not completely run out. There were not great long queues in the yards. However, we had to be careful and measured about how we went about our work.

**Susan Hall AM:** Are you going to look at that in future, maybe expanding that? These were very peaceful protestors, I get that, but if we had riots again, where would we cope?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I would say this is a record number. None of us know of a time when we have arrested so many people on one operation in a short time, including the disorders in 2011. There was nothing like these volumes of arrests in that period of time, so this is very unusual pressure on the custody suites. Of course, we must look at everything. We must look at whether we can manage people differently in custody.

As an example, two days in, I said, "Right, if necessary, we will double up the cells". This is something we have not done for 15 years probably because there was a tragedy back then in different circumstances with two people in a cell - 20, actually - and although it is not in the law, Her Majesty's Inspectorate [of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMIFRS) and others do not like it. I said, "We will have to. We will manage the risk. These are people who mostly know each other and are not likely to hurt each other". We were constantly looking at better ways to do things. During the operation, we looked to see whether there were any other better ways to manage custody and other things in the future, and we are certainly talking to the Home Office about whether the law can assist us more in the future with some tweaks.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK. Thank you very much.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Just a couple of tidying-up questions off the back of Assembly Member Hall.

Commissioner, you talked about the good humour and professionalism of the officers. Should that have extended to skateboarding and dancing with the protestors?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Certainly not. I would just point out that I think my officers are probably more scrutinised than any professionals going about their work in the whole world. They have cameras and Body Worn Video on them all the time, especially in something like that with the extra cameras. 1,400 on average every day. If that is the most people can complain about, I do not think it is too bad. However, they should not have done that. Whether they are masked up, protestors who just do not want to speak to anybody, or Assembly Member Hall's comments, people dancing about and being quite cheerful and polite and pleasant, we encourage the officers to engage, to keep talking, whoever they are, because that always, generally speaking, makes protests go better. This was not professional. They took it too far in the engagement, if you like, and they have been advised.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** They have been advised. OK. Assembly Member Hall is right in terms of people buying into trends. Given the effectiveness, if you are an Extinction Rebellion organiser, of this protest, it will almost certainly happen again in a very similar way. You said that you would do things differently. Hindsight is always 20/20, but if this exact protest happened again and you had the knowledge you have now, what precisely would you have done differently?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think I have answered that as much as I feel I should. We are still in the business of debriefing. We will continue to look and think. I am sure protestors will be looking and thinking as well. We will be the first to try to understand, the first to get a good plan and the first to be in there and dealing with things lawfully as well as we possibly can. I am confident that my team will have learned lessons, do learn lessons, and we will continue to do so in the future.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** You will do things differently, but you do not know what yet?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think I have said already the sorts of things we would do.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** The 30 officers you talked about who are working on the prosecutions, are they working on this full-time?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Yes, they are.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** How long do you expect that to be the case?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Months, but not too many months.

**Gareth Bacon AM:** Thank you.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Commissioner, is there any guidance that is pulled off the shelf when you have to face this kind of policing operation? Is there any national guidance, National College of Policing guidance?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Public order policing is a real, sophisticated art, and the people we have leading it and doing it in London probably do more of it and are more experienced in it than anybody not just in the country but probably across the world. Each protest, each event, is planned for and managed slightly differently, but they are all trained to a particular set of standards. The leaders, for example, attend bronze, silver and gold courses. There is authorised professional practice, as well as all our own training, so they all have ongoing training which brings them up to date with the latest technology or tactics or anything.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I do not want you to recite the guidance, but if you could, then let me know or let the Committee know what the guidance is that is used when public order policing has to be done.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** It is about things like having effective command structures, effective communications. It is about having properly trained people. It is about having the right people for the job.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Is that written down somewhere in the guidance?

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

**Andrew Boff AM:** If you could let us --

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I will of course, but you can find it on open sources. The authorised professional practice is in the public domain, of course.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I find the National College of Policing a bit inaccessible, the library, to be honest. I have tried before. You rightly said that it is the leadership, isn't it, that sets the tone of the operation?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Yes, broadly. Yes, the leaders will say to the officers, "This is the intent. This is what we expect to happen", as with any operation. "This is what we need you to do. This is the look and feel." For example, if you know that you are going into a riot situation straight away, we expect you to be fully kitted, and we expect you not to have your faces showing because you have your helmets on, and in other situations not. Yes.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I know that it is returning to the same matter. I have danced with a few police officers in my time, at Pride and things like that. In organised events that are light-hearted like St Patrick's Day, things like that, you expect the police officers to join in. The police officers' job this time was to maintain order and also protect the income of a lot of people who had their livelihoods destroyed over that period. It did not seem as though that was the tone that was set by the leadership for this particular incident, for this particular demonstration.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I disagree. I think I have explained some of this already. I will let Helen have a go at it.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** In respect of the officers who were dancing, the Commissioner has exactly explained, and I was going to add that the staff in Professional Standards have reviewed that and talked to their line managers, and that was discussed. It is also now reflected even more strongly in briefings.

We have always set out to engage with people who are carrying out an event or a protest of any kind. Some of the best information about how to work with them to have a safe event comes from the organisers themselves, the people who are there. Some of the better ways of managing this event are through persuasion and negotiation with people who are there. We do not fault our officers at all for a very strong engagement-focused approach with the organisers.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I am not criticising the officers. Just for the record, I am not criticising the officers. I am talking about the tone of the operation.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** It applies to the tone of the operation. We would always set out to use the minimum levels of force and intervention that are possible and to reach agreements through engagement with organisers that mean that the protests can happen but there is as little disruption as possible.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Thank you. Commissioner, what conversations did you have with the Mayor during the Extinction Rebellion in the first two days of the demonstration?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I cannot remember what conversations I had in the first two days. Certainly, the Mayor and I had a number of exchanges over the two-week period, as I did with the Police Minister [The Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP] and the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP], just updating them in a very factual way about what was happening and the number of arrests, the number of officers and that kind of thing.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Did the Mayor indicate to you that his support for the aims of the demonstrators should feature in the policing strategy?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Certainly not, no. Absolutely not. I have worked with politicians for a very, very, very long time, and I can assure you, if any politician of any sort was to indicate that sort of thing, they would get very short shrift. I do not think the Mayor would dream of it.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Did the Mayor give you any advice whatsoever as to how to police the operation?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No. The buck stops with me.

**Andrew Boff AM:** We know that, but did he --

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No.

**Andrew Boff AM:** He did not give any advice?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Commissioner, when we go back to this, if you now look back on the operation, it appears that there were some things that you would have done differently, and you have explained that well enough. I can remember back to 2011 when we had the riots. One of the criticisms of that was that we did not bring forward more police officers early enough in the operation in order to cope with it. Does the MPS have no institutional memory whatsoever?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think the MPS has bags and bags and bags of institutional memory. I think you, with respect, go back almost as far as I do, and you can remember, let us say, since 2000, every other year or so there are major protests of one sort or another, or major public order challenges of one sort or another, which are different, which are new, which take a different dimension. If we talk about --

**Andrew Boff AM:** Commissioner, you have told us you are going to learn from this, but you obviously have not learned from previous --

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** If you would let me finish, Assembly Member. If you think about the Countryside Alliance, if you think about the Tamils, if you think about Israeli and Palestinian pro and anti, if you think about some of the student demonstrations we have had, if you think about the disorders, if you think about the various climate things, they have all posed different and new challenges. The challenge is a large number of - "peaceful" is the word that is used - people who are determined to mill around, not commit serious criminal offences, not be violent but get in the way constantly, sticking themselves on the pavement or just being in the way. The challenge that that poses is utterly different from the challenge that the disorders posed.

There is a common issue of needing to be prepared. I accept that absolutely. What we did not know was exactly what was going to happen here, just as we have learned the lessons from the disorders: better intelligence, having the Territorial Support Group (TSG) and others set ready to respond, keep on engaging, involve yourself early. We absolutely have, and those are institutionalised. In each set of circumstances, these certainly were very new, and we are not assisted by the law because this behaviour is not regarded as serious crime. I am hoping someone will ask the question where I can talk about that in a minute, but it is not regarded as serious crime. Therefore, you cannot send the TSG in with vans, all kitted up and using a great deal of force. You cannot say, "Right, you are in custody now and you are not going anywhere. You are remanded to court". You cannot do that. It is a very different focus.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Thank you, Commissioner. You realise that, in closing, there are a lot of businesses in the West End who will want to be assured that we are going to learn from the mistakes that we made during that demonstration.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Sure, absolutely. I would say we will learn. We will learn from everything that happened.

**Sian Berry AM:** I just wanted to get the final tally, as it were - maybe we can get that in writing, rather than having you read out numbers that you may not have - for the number of arrests made, the number of charges made initially, what each of those were, what laws people were arrested under in each case of the arrests, what charges were later dropped at a later stage and which ones are proceeding. I would like to find that out in each case, and if we can write to ask for that, that would be really useful.

You also said there were no complaints made, and I wanted to ask if we could get a full account of what complaints have been made against any police conduct. There are a few incidents that I did see, but I do not know if any of them resulted in complaints. If you could get that included as well, that would be useful to see and then we could discuss that at a later time.

There was one substantive question I had. You said solicitors were overwhelmed, and that was leading to people spending too long in custody. Some of the solicitors' firms involved were expressing concerns about the length of time people were being kept in custody, so I do not think that was entirely the reason for that. Can you tell us more about why people were kept in for so long in each case?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think many people were delayed. This is not me complaining, but many people were delayed by the delay in the solicitor.

**Sian Berry AM:** It just cannot have been only that, since they also --

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No, it was not only that, but, as an example, some people were absolutely insistent they wanted to have a particular firm, and they had to wait nine hours for that firm. That is a very long time. That was definitely the case. I was myself in more than one custody office on a number of occasions during the events. Equally, people were brought in quickly, processed quickly in the initial process, but there is then a requirement in most of the offences that we are talking about, and, to be clear, they are mostly the highway obstruction and failing to comply with directions. Not all. There were some more serious. Firstly, there needs to be a review of the evidence quickly done by the officers, disclosure to the person and an interview, and that took some time. Obviously, I regret that people were there for very protracted periods, but I am not aware of anybody being there for really excessive periods. I met several people in custody and people who had just left custody. I did not meet all of them, but nobody was complaining to me.

**Sian Berry AM:** You said you would do things differently next time and you are improving intelligence. Were the people detained photographed, and are you putting their images on to any kind of watchlist or anything like that in advance of future protests? Are you informing people when you do that?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Sian, I think I need to write to you about the exact process they went through.

**Sian Berry AM:** That would be useful. Obviously, we want to know about that.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think I should do that. I do not want to mislead.

**Sian Berry AM:** I have a question about police equipment. I was on the scene in some of the protests and quite often would say hi to the police officers. The Body Worn Video they wear has a little orange tab on it if it is on, and it is bright red if it is recording. The little orange tab means that it is buffering, so when you switch it on, it has 30 seconds of without-sound video that comes with what you are capturing. I saw lots of officers



with it off, as in the orange tab was not showing. When I asked a few of them about this, they said it was for battery life. I just wonder if there are any issues with equipment, if people are doing long shifts, of Body Worn Video running out, or whether that is not an issue and maybe officers are just taking precautions they do not need to. Obviously, losing that 30 seconds has potential risks for evidence. Perhaps you can take that away and come back to us.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I will take it away. Again, this is obviously a general point rather than an Extinction Rebellion or protest point.

**Sian Berry AM:** Yes. Some of them were there for a very long time.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** They do think about the battery life. They do, certainly. They do not have it on all the time. From the moment they go on duty, they certainly do not switch it on, as you know, until they are dealing with something because they do have to think about battery life, and some of them were working really protracted hours in this very complicated protest.

**Sian Berry AM:** Thank you for that. To Sophie, very quickly, you said you were making a special grant application to cover some of the cost of this, which you said is £7.5 million.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Yes, it might go up, but it is a start.

**Sian Berry AM:** I am aware that the last visit to London by President [Donald] Trump was recorded as costing around £15 million. Would you think about asking in advance for some money for extra policing needs for the future Trump visit, while you are doing that at the same time? We could anticipate it would be at least that, I would have thought.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** I understand we already have. I think the general issue on here is that, yes, we do need to be able to apply for special grants where there are special circumstances, but the overarching issue is that the Government needs to fund the National, International and Capital City grant to the extent we know it costs. The MPS is underfunded by 66% on that. It is £161 million underfunded. We need to have that properly funded as well as being able to apply for special grants.

**Sian Berry AM:** That is my point, saying we can anticipate. We are a capital city.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** You can anticipate as much as you want. Obviously, there is anticipation when there is something very specific happening. There is an underlying underfunding of London and the MPS because of its capital city responsibilities and duties.

**Sian Berry AM:** Yes. That does not stop us applying for every expense, though, does it?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Absolutely, and we do.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** When we have an expected event such as the visit of a head of state on the sort of scale that we [will] have in June [2019], or indeed, as is being talked about, a potential North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) conference later in the year [2019], then we start talking to the Home Office very early. Clearly, they will not give the authority finally until after the event, and they will not make the decision until after the event, but we start working with them really closely so that our costings and the way we think about the costs matches their understanding of how that should be

done, and we have the same sense of the scale and the scope of it as we go forward. We have absolutely started talking to them about the visit of the President of the United States.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Just a quick one on the numbers first of all. Something like 1,100 people were arrested. How many of those were arrested twice or three times?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I believe the number of arrests, as you say, is over 1,100. Eighty-nine is the number I have of repeated arrests. I think one could perhaps anticipate that more people came out of custody and back into the protests than we were able to subsequently arrest. This does go to my point about the law.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I was going to come on to that next. When I chaired the Human Rights Committee, we did a major inquiry into policing protests, and I think we scored pretty well. On the one hand the state has the duty to facilitate peaceful protests, and on the other a level of disruption is to be expected, but not excessively so. Summarising what you said, I think that is the case. I saw that Commander [Adrian] Usher suggested to the Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) recently that the legislation should be reviewed and changed. Bearing in mind the legislation and case law come from the European Convention on Human Rights and ultimately the Human Rights Act [1998], how can you change the law? What changes would you like to see that would not fall foul of the certificate of incompatibility?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** You are absolutely right to say that any change would have to be seriously considered in the light of the Human Rights Act [1998] and interpretation of human rights, but we are working with quite ancient laws. If you take, for example, the Public Order Act 1986, section 12 and section 14 being the relevant sections for us here, our ability to impose directions if what is happening may result in serious disorder, serious damage to property or serious damage to the life of the community is the relevant one for something like Extinction Rebellion. We would say that the powers that that gives us are rather limited and very slow and cumbersome to enact, which causes difficulties because we need to be swift and purposeful. It is a very slow process, so we would like that to be looked at. We would like the parity between 12 and 14 to be looked at, and it may be something you have looked at before, but they are rather different and we think they could be made more similar.

We also note that there is nothing - to go to Assembly Member [Susan] Hall's point - that prohibits setting up a structure or series of structures, gazebos and tents and cooking equipment and goodness knows what else. It is not specifically covered in any law. It just comes under the general highway obstruction. We think that is unhelpful. Some of them are quite small points. Some of them are quite big points.

My large point is this: serious disruption is serious disruption. Nobody can think it is a good thing. If anybody fancies doing it, it could just stop business going on for a long time and then be subject to a non-serious offence. These were so-called peaceful, but in the case of Extinction Rebellion certainly the vast majority are not violent. They were unlawful, but the offences that they may be charged with are summary only and not serious. Therefore, the deterrent is not strong. I think that is another thing that needs to be looked at as to whether there should be a stronger deterrent.

I am just a police officer, but this city has just gone through those two weeks and it raises a number of issues. I have been myself at the JCHR last week. It will be obviously a matter for Parliament and the judiciary in their interpretation of that. If Parliament seeks a policy change, we will play into any review that the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP] chooses to do. We are just one voice. This is a very difficult balancing act. I hope this does not come across as a politicised point. I think a number of the people who were sitting there thinking, "This is OK" would absolutely not think it was OK if it was protests of a different political

persuasion doing the same thing, and we have to be completely impartial, and we are. Whatever we think about any cause - odious, or privately somebody might support it - we have to police it impartially, and I do not think this sort of disruption should be not serious.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I do not particularly disagree with that. Finding a balance between what is a reasonable level of disruption and what is not is where the law is.

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

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Obviously policing protests is an operational matter for you, not for politicians. That should be made clear. What was your reaction when the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP] started to call for the full force of the law against these people, presumably the TSG and people like that?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I spoke to the Home Secretary [The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP] before he made that statement. We had a very productive and constructive telephone call, and I think he has a role in relation to relation to policing. My interpretation of what he said was not the same as yours. My interpretation of what he said was he supports the police in carrying out their functions, using our powers, which we did.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** We will move on now. The next set of questions relates to the MacPherson report 20 years on.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Perhaps if we start off, Commissioner, by asking what in your view has changed in the matter as a result of the MacPherson report.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** This is something that is very close to my heart. It is equally close to my colleague Helen's [Ball] heart, and I thought I would perhaps take a breather, if that is all right, and ask Helen - we speak about this all day long - to start answering the question.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I remember us talking about this at Hendon Training College about 15 years ago.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** It was some time ago, wasn't it? Yes, which I think demonstrates the importance of it to both of our careers and the lives of many of the people in this room. I am going to talk about what has changed, but I do want to go back to the fact that Stephen Lawrence was brutally murdered, and the changes needed to happen. It is a matter of intense regret and still is that it took his brutal murder to make some of these changes in policing. I know Cressida [Dick CBE QPM] and I and all of our colleagues are vigilant to make sure that other changes do not need to be brought about by such a dreadful event.

We have enormous commitment and have had right through the time since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report was published and right on into the future, to make the changes. When I was thinking about what we had done this year to mark the 20th anniversary of the Inquiry report with a range of different events - with the opening of the Stephen Lawrence Centre at De Montfort University, the conference that has taken place with Dr Lawrence - I did reflect on how very different the MPS was from how it was then, and I was in the service at that point. If I start with simply the investigation, you know how transformed our murder investigation is. It is demonstrated daily how differently we investigate now, how those investigations are supported by Family Liaison Officers. There are a number of deployments of Family Liaison Officers that happen every year in the MPS. The fact that that is now routine, it is an important part of the investigation, but it has not had any thought about it happens as a matter of fact as an important part of the investigation.

The same is true around hate crime. We have had a very large increase in reporting of hate crime, and our investigations are taken extremely seriously. I know we are going to go on to talk about hate crime and our sanction detection rate, which is not where we want it to be. Nevertheless, the increase in reporting is a really good step forward.

If I move to the issue of community engagement, I think we respect and value enormously the work of our Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs), our stop and search monitoring panels, our other ways in which communities can advise us on our practice and make sure that we are giving the best service possible and that we are responsive to their concerns. Engagement is happening now with particularly affected communities of violent crime. I will particularly mention the Somali community, who are affected disproportionately as victims of violent crime. We have done particular engagement with that community, and that has been very important.

If I turn internally to our staff, we have been building a workforce that is more representative of London. Here I would say there is huge improvement and still a long way to go, and we absolutely recognise that. At the time of the inquiry report we had 3% of our staff who were from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, and that is now 14%. It is steadily increasing. Our intakes of new staff are 28% BAME community members, and we are absolutely determined to continue recruiting from minority ethnic communities because we think that a representative workforce goes a very long way to helping people to be confident in our service and helping us to give a good service. It is not the whole answer by any means, but it goes a very long way.

In terms of the progression of those staff once they are in the organisation, that is something we are monitoring very, very closely. It is improving, but we are monitoring as those staff, who are almost always brought in at quite junior ranks and grades, are moving through the organisation. We are monitoring their progress.

Those are a range of places where there have definitely been improvements, longed-for and needed improvements, and there are many others which I could go on to, but I will pause to see if you wanted to ask any questions or go to specific areas.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I would like to, particularly in relation to internal discipline matters. In fact, I wrote to Cressida [Dick CBE QPM] in February about a case in my constituency, Mr [Andrew] Okorodudu, who was arrested in relation to allegedly nicking a bike, when the information that came through from the control was that the person involved was white as well as wearing particular clothing. He [Mr Okorodudu] was black and [the other person] was not, and the officers immediately jumped on him, pinned him down and so forth. The white guy ultimately escaped. It was only when the IOPC investigated that something started to happen. He is being paid compensation. I asked for an inquiry about what has been happening. I wrote to Cressida about it in February. She referred it to Catherine Roper [Professional Standards, MPS], who has referred it to the local Basic Command Unit (BCU), where it seemed to end up in a black hole with nothing back three months on, and I am rather concerned about that.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Of course, yes. That is not acceptable. I am sorry. I will take that up personally and make sure that there is an answer to you.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** It does seem as though in this case the four officers had either conscious or unconscious racial bias towards this particular offence, when they had information saying that the suspect was white. On a similar line, this is in relation to disability discrimination, slightly different. This is a constituent

who wrote to the Commissioner a year ago about false allegations of harassment against him, which were again looked at by the IOPC and referred back to you, now referred again to the black hole of the BCU, where it seems to have disappeared a year on. Again, perhaps you would like to look at that one. I will give you the papers afterwards if you like.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Yes, of course I will. I think “black hole of the BCU” is unfair, but I will investigate that and see what has happened. It is not at all right that you should not get a substantive answer when you have raised these concerns. We have Professional Standards Units at the BCUs, and they are capable and proper investigators of misconduct allegations. Referring something to one of those units is not a way of dealing with things inappropriately.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I am pleased you say that, but to the same Professional Standards Unit in the same BCU is, to quote Oscar Wilde, almost unfortunate to be smacking of negligence. Anyway, I will leave those papers with you and go back to my main line of questioning, which is: what are you doing to ensure confidence and trust in the police from all London’s communities?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** In all London’s communities, we have a whole range of different activities with all London’s communities. We have particular awareness that the trust and confidence from our BAME communities in particular is lower than from other London communities and so that is where our focus has been and quite rightly. We have IAGs that advise us in relation to race and, also, we have a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) IAG. We have different initiatives with different communities.

At each BCU, we have a Race and Faith Hate Crime Liaison Officer and it is their role to make sure that all the minority communities of that BCU know that they have someone that they can go to, to make sure that they are getting good service from the local police. Also, that is someone they can come to if they are concerned about something, want to report something or want to get some advice. Those Race and Faith Hate Crime Liaison Officers operate right across London’s communities.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Can I go on to stop and search? The Home Secretary has made an announcement on the best use of stop and search. What practical difference has it made to the way you are operating?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** You are talking about the changes in section 60 [of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994], in effect. It has, as you know, allowed inspectors on the ground to make the decision without the Chief Officer. Secondly, this will have had a greater effect nationally than it will have done here because we were already applying the law, which said that you could authorise a section 60 if you believed serious violence ‘may’ occur, whereas the best use had suggested only ‘will’, which is a higher bar. We were applying ‘may’, but now everybody in the pilot areas is applying ‘may’.

What we are seeing is that because there was already very good communication between the duty Inspectors, where appropriate the on-call Superintendent and the Chief Officer, the types of incidents in which section 60 has been authorised and the events that we would say are then being suppressed or prevented are exactly the same as they were before. We are not seeing, which might be a question you have, a huge increase in the numbers of section 60s since the inspectors have started doing the authorities. I have been absolutely clear that the senior officer, as soon as a section 60 is authorised by the person on the ground who can see what has happened and is about to happen, gets involved and the Chief Inspector in our command and control room will know about it immediately and the senior officer will be told as well. Therefore, there is some scrutiny over why, what and how. For example, the fact that we continue and must continue to let local people know as far

as we reasonably can that we are doing one and get our community monitoring groups and others involved in thinking about the use of the section 60. These kinds of things are flowing in the way that they were before. It is very early days and we will monitor it carefully and closely because we know that on the one hand some people welcome absolutely the notion that the person on the ground can just make that decision, and other people have some concerns about how that might eventuate.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Can I assume from what you have said that there are not any cases where you want to introduce a section 60 but there was not a senior officer available to authorise it?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No, that is right because we had, over the last 18 months or two years perhaps, really worked hard, and you will be aware that two years ago we were doing fewer than 25 section 60s. Because of the events in London that have happened and the horrible crimes affecting our young people, we have begun to use it a lot more again, last year over 300 times. We have senior officers very heavily involved in this anyway.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I presume you did not ask for the change; it just sort of happened?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** No, we did not ask for it. We had conversations with the Home Office about the changes and what they might consist of, and I was consistent in saying that I felt this might have slightly more impact on other parts of the country than it would for us but it would be welcomed in terms of bureaucracy, of course, by the Chief Inspectors, who get the opportunity to make the decision.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** I am asking these questions because the issue of stop and search is one of the key issues going on from Macpherson in relation to the relationship between the police and people from minority ethnic communities, who seem to suffer from stop and search disproportionately compared to white people.

I am just going to come back to a question I put to you before in relation to drugs and wealthy bankers, for want of a stereotype, engaging in so-called recreational drugs. How is it that we are not trying to target those people for stop and search in the same way that black people may get stopped in relation to cannabis or other things?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** If I first just quickly talk about the disproportionality, of course I am very well aware of the figures and you and I have discussed this before. One of the figures that is easily overlooked is that the positive outcome rate is pretty much exactly the same whatever community you come from. For every one white boy who is stopped and searched or one black boy, the same proportion - just under 30% - results in a positive outcome. That is proportionate. What is clearly happening is that we are policing in areas that are particularly vulnerable to serious violence. We are doing stop and search in the areas where intelligence suggests to us either that violence is about to happen or that violent people are there. Because victimisation of black communities is so very high in relation to knife crime in particular, our very high priority, we are ending up with figures that look when you first look at them, as you say, disproportionate. We will go on to think about this, I am sure, for a very long time. Helen [Ball] and I are deeply alert to this and to how we can best communicate and make sure people know about their rights, people understand what is going on and why this is happening.

To turn to the so-called recreational drug user, we are very clear that our focus since I have been Commissioner and our top priority is violence and violence on the streets affecting young people. When we look at drugs, we look at that through the lens of violence. We are absolutely certain that - as I have said to you before - to try to arrest our way from the person who is carrying a small amount of whatever in their travel to work or in their

office or whatever, to go and start targeting them for that, would not be a good, sensible, helpful way to reduce the demand for drugs, to deal with the supply of drugs or certainly to deal with the violence that stems from drugs. We can do our job in this very complicated area of drug supply and demand. I am utterly convinced we need to keep looking at the drugs markets and the violence that is associated with drugs markets. That is where our enforcement operations will be.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** Just to follow up on this - my last point, I suppose - the market has two sides to it.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** It does.

**Andrew Dismore AM:** If you are focusing on the supply and not the customers, one of the issues is that if you were targeting people involved in buying class A drugs, class A drugs have an appalling chain of violence all the way back to South America or whatever.

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

**Andrew Dismore AM:** If you can reduce the demand, that also starts to reduce the supply, surely?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** For certain, absolutely, and I totally accept that. I have said it myself about the chain of misery in the production, the importation and the supply. If you gave me 100,000 more officers, I might be able to do something effective about demand from this end of the equation, but there is a public health approach. There is an education approach. There is a role for those whose job it is to work at the borders. There are all sorts of people. My professional judgement is that the best way to reduce demand is not for me to start going out and trying to arrest every single person who is in possession. If I do that, it will distract me from child abuse, terrorism and violent crime as it involves young people. It is not the most effective way to reduce demand.

That said, we do not turn a blind eye. We never do. We do not walk on by. If somebody is in possession, they will be dealt with.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, I just wanted to come back to the issue around recruitment of BAME officers across the MPS. It is good to see that there is some progress but still very slow. I note that last year there was a quote saying that it would take over 100 years for the police to be fully reflective of the communities in London.

One of the challenges that comes up was raised at a community event I sat in on two weeks ago just down the road from here on Walworth Road with a number of youth workers, ex-youth gang members and residents. One of the residents said, "It is not about the colour of the police officers. We just want fairness. We want transparency". Another one of the young people raised the fact that it is not BAME officers making the decisions. That is quite important when we look at the retention and career progression of BAME officers. It is still disproportionately low. When you do look at BAME officers in senior rankings, quoting what Lord Paddick [former Deputy Assistant Commissioner, MPS] said recently, almost 50% of BAME [officers] of superintendent rank were under police investigation.

How are we going to change that culture when, if you are within the MPS and from a BAME background, there is even suspicion on you whilst working in the force? If we are losing some of those good officers and they are still having issues with unconscious bias against them, how are we going to then reflect that to the public?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** There are a whole range of different points there and I will go through I hope all of them, but tell me if I have not at the end, if that is OK.

First of all, that 100 years quote is not right. If we do nothing differently, it will take 100 years for us to be representative of London. That would be to have 50% women police officers and 40% police officers from BAME backgrounds. Of course, our police staff totals are already much higher than our police officer totals. If we do nothing, it will take 100 years, but we are doing so many different things already to recruit from BAME communities. We are having specific recruitment events in relation to those communities and, as I say, we are already seeing the levels of both women and BAME recruits increase through our recruitment campaigns.

I might mention the 100 years of women in the MPS that we are celebrating at the moment. In fact, you have an exhibition down here [in City Hall] as well of some of our capable women officers. That celebration is really making a difference already in the recruitment of women.

Whilst we think that being representative is not the whole answer, it is true that when surveys are done, minority officers - both women and also officers from minority communities - tend to be more trusted by the public. It is a really interesting outcome of those surveys. We think it comes from the fact that those officers have, in a sense, gone into an environment that is different where they are not part of the majority and therefore they have qualities of bravery that gives confidence to the public. That is one of the reasons, amongst many others, why we want to continue recruiting.

Our BAME officers are progressing through the organisation. Almost all of them join as police constables and so this does take time. I was just behind - maybe you [Cressida] were, too - the first wave of women officers as they progressed through policing. I now reflect back and think about what a privileged position I was in. I was not a pioneer, but I was nevertheless still relatively unusual as a woman for people to take notice and want to support me. I have had an enormous amount of support during my career.

We are going through the same process with BAME officers now. Our early pioneers have had some real difficulties, not least because, if you are unusual or even unique on a team, you stand out so much more and that has consequences. We are starting to see people moving through in much greater numbers. We are looking to do initiatives, for example, to keep those minority officers more together so that they are less unusual in their working environments, which will also support them as they progress through the organisation. I am positive and hopeful about the progression that we are going to make.

I do not want to talk about individual cases of people under investigation. It might identify people and that would be wholly unfair.

One of the areas we are looking at particularly is around whether BAME officers leave the organisation more than their white colleagues at different stages of their career. Certainly, it is true that, about the two year service mark, there is a slightly larger - it is not huge - level of attrition among BAME officers, but when it gets to three or three and a half years, that goes away. We are doing specific work to look at what happens in the first two years, how we can retain people longer and take them through what looks like a difficult point, just as in the way that we are doing for women. What happens particularly for women after maternity leave? Can we retain them better at those points? All of those different initiatives together are reasons why I am feeling hopeful about the future.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** That is good to hear. I would urge that any review of that is conducted externally. Again, I appreciate the cost pressures, but it is really good that you get an honest report back on what is happening and why some of these officers feel that they have to leave.



The other thing that I wanted to touch on lastly was that this year 22 April [2019] marked the first Stephen Lawrence Day. Commissioner, we were both at St Martin-in-the-Fields last year on the 25th anniversary of Stephen's death when the Prime Minister announced this special day.

I just wanted to know what more going forward. I know that the MPS had a big event this year with a number of Volunteer Cadets. I just wanted to know what more the MPS will be doing on an annual basis, maybe events for next year, and how we really do reach out to some of those communities, building on the fantastic work of the Cadets to inspire more younger people to think about policing as a career and to really drill down on that community engagement. Some communities still, unfortunately, have a mistrust of the police.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I am going to defer to Helen again, if I may, but just to say that this is one of my very highest priorities. I mentioned violence is number one. Number two is trust and confidence and reducing the gap between some communities and others. I have been consistent about that. They are equal priorities. Helen and I work very closely on this. We spent three hours on this subject together, as it happens, yesterday, including how we got on with the day this year and what else we are going to do this year in relation to Stephen's anniversary. What else?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Thank you. You are right. We had in fact several Cadet events. One of those, the Lewisham event, is leading to a whole programme around social inclusion that they want to now embark on. The work that they did in particular involved some of the BBC documentary around Stephen Lawrence's murder and there are some short teaching films that have been made for that. I went up to the launch of the Stephen Lawrence Centre at De Montfort University, which is Baroness Lawrence's initiative, and met the staff there. I now, in terms of going forward, want to establish a link with the centre so that recruits coming into policing in London can have input on the community and race relations that are very much informed still by Stephen's death and what happened to him and that they understand how policing has changed and why we do some of the things we do in the way we do them.

We recognise that when we need to start to recruit outside of London, we need to do some extra work with our incoming police recruits to make sure that they really understand London's communities and have good practice and good skills in working with London's communities. That relationship will help us to deliver that input. We are going to be working with our staff support associations and members of our communities to develop that input.

We also had an event with Mike Fuller, the first black Chief Constable, who was in fact in the MPS, who has written a book. The Black Police Association organised an event to talk to him about his career. I went to that and I was very struck by the real commitment and desire from many people who are great friends of the MPS. They may be no longer with us because they have retired but they are great friends and they really do still want to work with us on this agenda and we will be working with them, I hope, with their permission, going forward.

We certainly will be marking Stephen Lawrence Day each year with all sorts of different events but very much in the spirit of celebrating his life in the way that the charitable trust has wanted it to be done.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** Thank you.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Can I just pick up on your issue around some independent evaluation? That is one of the subjects for MOPAC and my role as Deputy Mayor and certainly something in terms of strategic oversight of the MPS. It is a constant theme in all our discussions but also very

specifically around workforce, recruitment, retention and progression. We have been through the figures about progression and retention. We are not complacent in any way, but it is relatively stable at the moment. 9% of those leaving the MPS are from BAME backgrounds. It is absolutely something that we constantly have oversight of and the Mayor has oversight of.

Also, in terms of some of the disciplinary proceedings, there has been an evaluation by MOPAC of that and research done around that. It is something we work very closely with the MPS on.

Your issue around procedural fairness and justice is incredibly important and that is why the accountability and the transparency around intrusive tactics such as stop and search and the fact that is so transparent, and that is a huge difference since the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report. There are the IAGs and the community monitoring groups. You can click on the MPS dashboard. You can see how many stop and searches there have been, the ethnic background, the reason and the positive outcomes. That accountability is a real step-change and a real difference. We have to be constantly looking at whether it is good enough and we have to improve it, but that is a real step-change in terms of what was happening before the murder of Stephen Lawrence and what came out of the Lawrence Inquiry as well.

**Florence Eshalomi AM:** That is good. Thank you.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I was not going to talk about drugs, but Assembly Member Dismore segued into it. Are you arguing, Commissioner, for a harm-reduction approach to protecting Londoners against the dangers of drugs?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I am always in favour of reducing harm and, absolutely, any approach to the drug strategy nationally or in London needs to take into account a number of different aspects. We have our enforcement role. Other people will have their education role. Other people will have their health improvement role. We need to work together on that.

**Andrew Boff AM:** In terms of enforcement, it is often said that in order to try to get a more robust attack on the demand for drugs in London, that this would be very resource-intensive. Are there any worked examples of how many more police officers would be required to change the strategy in that regard?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I do not think we have ever worked up an example.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Thank you. How supportive would you be of professionally run drug-testing centres such as those temporary facilities at many festivals being established in London?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I am sorry to say that I have not thought about it. I will think about it.

**Andrew Boff AM:** Thank you.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Commissioner, I was not going to come in, but I will because this is such an important anniversary 20 years on. I want to touch on two areas and I will just check with our clerk. I do not think we have touched upon these two areas: training and liaison with communities.

This debate has been going on for some 40 years about training. I remember a campaign in 1982 around a lecturer at Hendon, John Fernandes of the racism awareness campaign. He had his contract terminated for

challenging the sort of training that was being done in Hendon. That is going back to 1982, before Andrew's [Dismore] "15 years" comment.

What sort of training do you do in terms of tackling diversity issues, very specifically anti-racism training, to equip your recruits with the realities of modern London? Can you just give us a flavour of the training? Who does it? How?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** It is important to explain that we have been recruiting from London and that has had a very beneficial effect. All our recruits have community and race relations training, and they also have training in the impact of unconscious bias so that they are more aware of the fact that they will have biases.

We also put training on our initial promotion courses and recently you have heard about our large Leading for London undertaking, for want of a better word. Within that, we have inserted input on both unconscious bias and also how to be confident about dealing as a leader with staffing issues. One of the things that we were finding was that we believed that some of our staff were not confident to address issues of race with their staff and so we have built that into Leading for London. All 10,000 of our line managers - police and staff - are going through that as well.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Sure. I must put on record that enormous progress has been made with the very fact that you acknowledge that there are issues to be tackled. Is there a historical perspective to the training in terms of what shapes modern London, where our diverse communities come from and how we interact? It is that sort of practical thing I am looking at.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Yes, and that is indeed very much what I am looking at when we talk about developing a new input, not just as our recruits join who have been recruited from outside London but also because, when we reflect back on the inquiry report, it is right that we should have an even stronger focus on London's history and its communities. That is what we are developing now for our new recruits.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** It is something that the Committee may come back to to see how we can help. It is a two-way process. Again, going back to the Scarman [Report] and other campaigns that some of us were involved with, we had the Police Community Consultative Groups and I remember working for Hackney Council when Hackney at the time boycotted the Police Community Consultative Group - much before the Deputy Mayor's time as a councillor - on the grounds that those structures lacked powers. Yesterday I was in Newham, meeting the Director of Newham's equivalent of the Racial Equality Council, Racial Equality in Newham. She is also Chair of the IAG. Then we have Safer Neighbourhood Boards (SNBs).

Some of the structures - and it is not your fault anyway - are not representative in terms of gender, age, colour and so on. The debate has moved on from consultative groups to SNBs. Have you given thought to how we can get to grips with having really representative bodies? We talk about knife crime, but most of the seminars I have been to are about people who are not the subject of violent crime themselves.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Do you want me to pick up the issue on the IAG?

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Yes. I suppose the question would be more directed at you, Sophie. Is it time to relook? Given it is the 20th anniversary of the Macpherson Report, is it time to relook at the structures and how we can engage with communities much more effectively?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** It is a slightly complicated picture with the IAGs for the MPS and the SNBs are structures from MOPAC.

In terms of the SNBs and the community monitoring groups, in particular focusing more on the community monitoring groups, we are doing a piece of work at the moment with community monitoring groups about how to make them more consistent across London in the work they do and also how to ensure that they are more diverse and more representative of the communities that they are coming from. We are particularly looking at how we can engage with young people. In fact, we had an event here last week with over 50 young people to talk about stop and search and to talk to them about how to involve them more consistently and more methodically at a local level. It is certainly something that we are very keen on and we are putting in a process and ways of trying to improve that diversity and engagement.

Also, if you cannot really look at the structures around SNBs or community monitoring groups, there are lots of other ways that our communities are engaging with us at City Hall and also with neighbourhood policing, the Dedicated Ward Officers on specific issues, the Schools Officers and the Youth Engagement Officers. We have to make sure that you can engage with the MPS and with City Hall and it does not have to be through a specific meeting. That can become solidified and a little bit fossilised. We have to make sure that we are always improving the way we engage and also improving the way we understand what Londoners prioritise and what they think. That is why we have the regular public attitude surveys. We have the youth surveys. We are always constantly reaching out to those communities and so on.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** You have said it all, Deputy Mayor. I just want to put it on record. This is a challenge to all of us. With that, I will move on to the next set of questions, which is child protection and Caroline.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Lovely. Thank you very much. In March [2019] you will have seen they published the latest HMICFRS inspection report. It is not a happy read. Consistency of effective practice remains weak. Opportunities to act quickly and decisively to protect children and to prevent offending are still being missed. There is a lack of supervision and a high workload of investigators. Two thirds of cases reviewed did not meet the required standard. There was a poor quality of supervision. The decision not to proceed with providing training to improve front-line supervision was disappointing. The MPS anticipates it could take a further two years to get a consistent approach right across the MPS.

I will start with the Commissioner. How did you respond to this report, which, once again, is pretty damning?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Firstly, I note that you have picked out - perhaps understandably - the negative words. There are an awful lot of - as there are in any report - positive words as well and I do not regard it as a damning report. I regard it as a fair report that has described the progress we have made, the grip we have, the leadership we have taken, the strategy we have put in place, the performance framework, the training we have done in all kinds of ways, the new investments in people and kit and staff, and the restructuring that we have done.

It still, as you say, identifies areas where there is definitely room for things to improve further. Two years seems a long time, but I have to say that my team, as professionals, the people who understand it really well, have consistently said there is a turnaround from where we were in the report that came out sometime just before I became Commissioner. We would agree with the HMICFRS that the right sort of place to be is probably a four-year project. That seems a lot, but that is what we have always said. That is on the basis of our experience of other slightly similar areas where we have had that level of criticism.

The other thing I would say, though, is that the demands have continued to go up in some areas. We have not been doing this in a vacuum. We never are. For example, the child sexual abuse online, indecent images work, with the ever increasing number of registered sex offenders, it only goes on going up and up by definition pretty much. It is very rare for somebody to come off that register. These things have gone on, increasing the demand, and some of the complexities in investigations have gone on increasing.

I am pleased - and when you look at it you can see - that the number of good reports has gone up from 11% to 31%. The inadequates have dropped by about half. We are definitely making progress in the outcomes. Also, I do not believe that the things that are identified as not good enough yet have in particular cases put individuals at extreme risk. I have given you examples of those, where a very bad thing has then happened because of the imperfect investigation or whatever. Every time, we have a very strong inspection and audit team now, probably stronger than the HMICFRS itself in some respects, and as soon as we spot anything we go straight in there to rectify it and improve. This is a herculean task. It is a massive challenge for society. I am afraid, if you look at most police services, they would not find themselves in a better position than we are.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** The case studies in this, though, surely must show that actually, whilst there may be some improvements, you are still leaving children at huge risk. There was a case here: in August 2017 police traced the internet protocol address of a computer but no further action took place until May 2018, nearly a year later, and when they did they found that there was a six-year-old daughter at that address. She has been safeguarded, but there are issues around that. Children are being left at risk because not all of the decisions are being made in the proper way.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Perhaps I should have chosen my words more carefully. I have not had examples brought to me of individuals who have suffered significant harm because of anything that has been identified in the HMICFRS report. I cannot rule it out of course, but certainly that is a long time and somebody was sitting there when there may have been a risk. We do not know what that risk is and in that particular example - tell me if I am wrong - no harm eventuated.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Let us move on to some of the specifics that came out of this. One of them was around your merged borough units, the new BCUs, which all of us have expressed some concerns about. The early pilot out in Redbridge flagged issues around safeguarding. HMICFRS is also expressing concern and thinks your performance is going to dip as you move to these merged units. It has been flagged here that not all officers and staff within the BCU safeguarding teams have received the training they need. That means officers are not experienced or skilled and do not have that specialist training. HMICFRS is very concerned about the impact that is going to have. What are you doing to address that specific issue?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I do not think that any stage the HMICFRS said we should not be doing this.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** I have had conversations with HMICFRS on this and those are issues around training and capacity within the MPS. From my understanding, it is not a judgement on the structure itself. It is a judgement on the movement of people and the capacity of the officers and the training of the officers. It is not within this report, as far as I remember or am aware, judgement of the structure --

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** I did not say it was about the structure. They are saying:

*"The effect of this is that, although some of the BCUs are using the new model, the planned resources to implement it are not all in place ... there are still vacancies for safeguarding jobs ... BCUs are going*

*live with more vacancies than expected and there is also a shortfall [as we know] of qualified detectives ... However, we remain concerned about the effects of the restructure."*

That does say there are concerns there and we saw that in the pilot. How are you responding to that?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I am convinced that it is the right way to go. In all the circumstances, I am sure that it will in the end give a better service all round. We need to learn all the lessons from the early BCUs of course and get moving as fast as we can. There is always some dip in performance when you make a major change. There just is. People do not like it but it is, I am afraid, the reality. Some of what they are talking about is that.

Having said that, as I say, the end will be much better than we could have hoped for, given the increasing demand, given the stretch that we are under, if we had not made those changes. That is how I respond to that. I am very confident in the team that is leading this, and we are learning as we go. We do have a challenge with vacancies. We absolutely do. That is why we are recruiting as hard as we possibly can, but you cannot take somebody straight off the street and put them into this sort of role. If you look at the different BCUs, the vacancy levels are different. The lack of detectives is very much less now in the MPS than it was and indeed almost everywhere proportionately than any other service in the country, as I understand it.

We will get there. I also have some concern, but I cannot wave a magic wand and I certainly cannot - because it would be madness - change the structure of that again.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Are you putting any specific extra management resource in to try to mitigate this concern? It came out in the first pilot that it was a concern.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** We absolutely have, yes. Sorry, I should have said that. We have boosted the management and you will see that there are a couple of areas where we have put them. As we have understood more, we have ended up with the model having more resource in there. For example, we are now investing to improve the way in which we deal with indecent images and that will take people and bodies. We are also investing, thanks to the Deputy Mayor, in greater assurance work and learning as we go.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Could we move on to the whole digital area? The report says that they have significant concerns about your response to cases involving online child sex abuse and exploitation and have actually put in a new recommendation trying to make sure that you address this as a matter of urgency. There is a lot of description in here about digital forensics and the ability of the officers to access that. Only the specialist ones have access to a program that allows them to put the right mobile devices in that have images on them and can then prosecute.

What are you now doing around that area? As you said earlier, it is a growing area of concern.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** The challenge has been the growth and of course, within the growth, as my colleague Simon Bailey QPM [Chief Constable, Norfolk Constabulary] said, a very large number of complex investigations that need to be done are of people who turn out probably to pose no further risk other than - not to downplay it - looking at those images. We have a blizzard of those images and people to deal with. Digital forensics is a challenge for policing right up and down the country and for us at the moment, not just in child sexual abuse but in other areas as well. We are skilling up the people who will be dealing with this locally, as opposed to the central team that you are aware

of. We are looking at extra kit for them and we are looking at the best way that can be deployed to assist them to improve the quality and speed of digital investigations. It is an immensely complicated area.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** What is the timescale for getting the new kit if more and more stuff is being devolved to the BCUs? We have seen that central specialists have a far higher positive outcome than those cases dealt with by local BCUs. What is the timescale for increasing that capacity so that your officers are able to deal with this horrific crime?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I am afraid I cannot at the moment give you a timescale. I am just looking at my note on this. We do not have a specific timescale. We are working up a plan now. I will come back to you, Caroline, with some more specifics --

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Particularly as it is an additional recommendation that had not been there before, presumably you must have an action plan around it.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** We do. We have an action plan, yes, we do.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Maybe we could have sight of that as well. Some of the other areas we come back to time and time again: prompt access to appropriate adults in custody, staff and poor supervision. What are you doing to address those issues?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** The Deputy Mayor might want to talk about appropriate adults because it is not, if you like, our problem. It is certainly not caused in any sense by us, but it has become a problem for our people. I mentioned the training that we have been doing and that of course does apply to the supervisors as well. They are all being upskilled, and the quality of supervision is manifestly improving. That is why we have had the improvements that we have had here.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** It talks in this report about some training being cancelled. Still 60% of some staff have not received this training and yet they are suddenly going in and having to deal with this complex area.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** They have had some training. It is the new training they have not had, and we need to get that through, but we are a massive organisation. You know that, Caroline. It is not like sorting something out in my own front room. We have to deliver training to a lot of people to get their skills up in a number of different ways, including digital investigation, and we are doing that.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Perhaps we could have in writing just to understand the timescales to address these issues and the training.

Perhaps I can come to the Deputy Mayor now. This is probably your whole time in office that this has been a huge issue. I know you are involved in various groups. You must have been disappointed with this report. Yes, there is some progress but there are an awful lot of things in here that are not pleasant to read. What are you personally doing to make sure the MPS is responding to this? Perhaps you could talk a bit more about how you recently met Matt Parr from HMICFRS to talk about child protection. What came out of that?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Just quickly on appropriate adults, there has already been a lot of work between the MPS and London Councils and us about improving it, but the problem

is the number of appropriate adults not just for children but for vulnerable adults as well. That has been a real problem in terms of custody. I can write to you. I do not have the details. There has just been a contract signed around that to improve that with joint funding from the three parties.

In terms of this report, yes, the Commissioner knows that I do get frustrated by the pace of progress. However, the report, to be fair, is balanced. There has been a lot of improvement on strategic leadership. There has been improvement on the casefiles. However, it is more than two years on - I am not saying anything that Cressida has not heard before - and I would prefer the pace of progress to be much faster.

I do accept that the MPS is a large organisation. We cannot get away from the issues of capacity, which HMICFRS from the very beginning has talked about. The initial report in November 2016 said that the capacity was a real issue. That means lack of detectives and there has been a real problem with detectives and it means lack of resources as well. That does absolutely impact on the ability to really make quick progress. Change does take time as well, even if you have all the resources at your disposal.

In terms of conversations and what I have been doing in relation to those, when I received the report from HMICFRS in November 2016 I set up the Improvement Oversight Group that I chair and that meets regularly every six weeks. It has a representative from the College of Policing. Also, Matt Parr or someone from HMICFRS attends that. It is not just meetings. There is a formal process that we are undertaking to make sure that the progress and HMICFRS is engaged in that. He thinks, and it was put out in his report, that the strategic leadership and the focus on child protection has really and substantially improved and that is true, but what I would like to see is that step change in outcomes improving.

The report itself has issues around registered sex offenders. That has changed in terms of caseload. I understand that the average is now 56 or 58 or something like that. That has improved already in terms of caseload. We will monitor that to make sure that that is maintained and does not go up and down as these things can do. The Oversight Group meets regularly and will continue to meet regularly to check what the milestones are, make sure that there is progress and continue with that strategic oversight from me and from MOPAC.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** Thank you for that. We have already touched on this with the Commissioner. It is about two years before you expect to see, and that would be a full five years on from the initial report. I know it is a big organisation but that feels like a very long time and young people are at risk there. It is about changing that front-line approach to this.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Absolutely. I do not disagree with you in terms of wishing to see change and the safeguarding of our young people in London improve. I know that in terms of the high-risk cases it is the case in terms of what is happening. You can see from the reports that there are still real issues with frontline officers and how they are responding to those young people coming through the door. I have had those discussions when I go into custody around, "This is a child in front of you", and that is a real culture shift. HMICFRS talks about real progress in terms of the campaign the MPS has had. Wherever I go into the MPS, I see the posters, "Spot it to stop it". That is a cultural change that is happening in the MPS. They are there to safeguard and when those young people come in, no matter how challenging they are, they need to be treated as children and their vulnerability recognised.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** It is quoted in this report:

*"Another supervisor described a culture in which some officers and staff still considered missing children to be a nuisance rather than vulnerable."*



I know the British Transport Police (BTP) have done a really good amount of work in this area. They have a really fantastic poster campaign with two sides of a young person, "Is this a nuisance and a problem or a victim of crime and vulnerable?" It is really quite hard-hitting. What work are you doing with other police forces to look at where they do have best practice, to learn from that and to use that to really try to get some pace on change in the MPS?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** That is why, in terms of work with other forces, as the Commissioner has already said, unfortunately and disappointingly when you look across England and Wales, as I have done, and ask which forces you would point us to to show us where the good practice is, there is not one force that has all the good practice within it on safeguarding. There are a number of really difficult inspection reports that other forces have had. The MPS is not out of the pack on this. It is not an outlier.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** We have gone up and down the country looking at everybody else's practice and trying to beg, steal and borrow everything.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Absolutely. We have also had a peer review of the Central North BCU in Islington and Camden. A peer reviewer from Durham came in to do a force peer review to look at it from their good practice and look at the specifics of what is happening. That is why on the Oversight Group we have the National College of Policing. We also have a representative from the Chief Constables, Simon Bailey QPM, on safeguarding and child protection to make sure that alongside looking for good practice across the country, we have that as part of the oversight. We are checking that all the time.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** I would commend talking to the BTP because it seems to be doing some really interesting work and publicity internally, which I thought was visually really striking and might be something the MPS could borrow and use. Perhaps if you could get that action plan of how you are responding to this report, I would appreciate that.

**Len Duvall AM:** Thank you very much. I was very much taken, Commissioner, by what you said about the change. A four-year change plan is in place. Also, there has been improvement, but the improvement has been at the top and in the middle, not necessarily on the ground. What the HMICFRS is saying is that we need to accelerate the improvement on the ground for the outcomes with children. That is the bit that we are looking for. I do not want to beat you over the head with this issue, but we know in terms of outcomes for people - and you rightly said and corrected yourself around some of those issues - it does raise up a number of interesting issues. We talked about the appropriate adult issue and the issue of suitable accommodation, secure and non-secure, for children is with our partners. We are all under pressure, but we know that if that is not provided with local authorities, that risk remains with us in the police service and adds additional pressures to staff who are already facing ongoing pressures on these issues. That cannot be right. We are in crisis, it seems, there and we need to be looking at the pressures. What is the new way of thinking? Can we deliver this? What can we do?

It does seem to me a problem from just reading some of the reports and remembering, if this was a local authority service, this would have been taken away from the MPS from your original report. It was that drastic. Improvements have been made. I am not taking that away, but from our starting point and where we were, you are in another sector.

If you look at the child exploitation cases and the dip-sampling of that and the comparisons they are making between the National Crime Agency and then what is passed to the BCUs, there is a problem on the ground, is there not? It seems to me that we are not just dealing with this issue but a culture about some of the cases

that we are dealing with here. We are dealing with the most vulnerable, but what is happening on the ground? It is right to pause and think. What is the accelerator? What is going to make the outcome speeded up on the ground? It seems to me that we have a problem. I accept that the dip goes down or whatever.

Remember that one of the BCU changes and one of the strengths and why we are moving to BCUs and one of the promises was the missing persons bit, yet we have four boroughs here that have no live triggers on the missing persons bit. Is that acceptable or unacceptable? I do not know the circumstances, but I am hoping someone is asking that question and resolving it very quickly. They are the sort of accelerators. I am saying, "Hands up. Fair dinkum. Let us get on with this". Why do we have four borough that are in BCUs that do not have live missing persons for the regular people who go missing or whatever? That is what the report is pointing to. It does give you credit and I would not wish to take that away. Progress is good. Yes, change takes time, but can we really afford [to wait]? Are we looking again at what the accelerators could be? The problem is about that front-line delivery.

I take the point about the sexual offenders list, but I need to go back and do a bit more research on my own in terms of what goes on it, whether we are really managing risk, whose risk and where. Were there local factors in that particular BCU for why that caseload goes up? It cannot be consistent across every borough in terms of that work. Where else are they pushing those services forward?

Do not get me wrong and I know you were not saying this, but it did come across like, "Yes, we have this time, two years", but when we take this report back, where are the accelerators that we can look for? What can we really do to speed up the implementations? What real action will take a little bit more time? I do agree that you are a large organisation with the training, rollout and turnover and all the rest of it, but we have to get the outcomes right on the ground. It just seems to me that that is the bit that is missing. When we do this dip-sampling, I am very pleased about your own inspection team and that is a good sign, but the question is, when they raise issues, are they dealt with and who is dealing with them? What are the consequences if you do not deal with them and if you keep ignoring advice that you are giving in the centre about how you should be managing these issues? There must be some consequences.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I will perhaps ask Helen [Ball] to touch on the registered sex offenders and also that last point about consequences of inaction.

There are lots of things in what you said. I absolutely do not agree that it has all been change at the top. You will remember that one of the most significant criticisms two and a half years ago was about lack of priority, lack of focus, lack of leadership, lack of clarity about who was in charge, lack of a performance framework and lack of management. However fair or unfair that was, all those things are things that it was a priority for us to begin to put right, but we did not just wait and do all that. I have one of my very best Commanders, whom I am sure you know, Richard Smith, working on this all the time, working with other agencies as well.

I would say that you can see, which is why the HMICFRS is not coming back every few weeks as they once were, we have made some substantial improvements on the ground as well. The way in which information is disseminated is something we have not talked about, but they give us credit for the great improvement there as well. There are lots and lots of improvement.

In relation to missing young people, that is a priority. I do not like to hear your comment about them being a nuisance. Those of you who spend time with my officers will see that they are immensely humane and they are immensely compassionate. I am sure there is the odd one who does not always seem that way, but they really are and they really do care about young people. It is the case, of course, that frequently young people who are repeatedly missing are at risk and also it will appear to the officer that if another agency had done something

slightly differently, that would not be the case. Some of the frustration may come from that. We are doing lots of local problem-solving with other agencies, care homes and the like, trying to reduce together the likelihood of young people going missing.

The work that you reference from the BTP is not dissimilar from some work we are doing. That is coming entirely from county lines, really. They have young people up and down the system on trains who are absolutely at risk but who are also offenders, mostly, and we need to think about the obvious priority of safeguarding them.

In relation to accommodation, absolutely, Len. It does frustrate me, if I may. Not you, but the last report made it sound like that was our problem and our fault. It is really not. It becomes our problem, but it is not our fault. It is a challenge for this city. On occasion I know the officer or the Sergeant may ring up and ask for the wrong type of accommodation. That may have got some things muddled, but that does not happen now. We just do not have enough and it is a very big challenge.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** I really wanted to pick up on that issue around partners because this was a report on the MPS but there are issues for partners in there. We have London Councils' lead, Zina Etheridge, on safeguarding and children as part of the Oversight Group. We had a meeting last week of the Oversight Group and had a discussion around what else partners can be doing.

Part of the report on HMICFRS in the early stages was an issue around whether custody sergeants or detention officers were asking for the accommodation. They were not mostly because they knew they were not going to get it, but they now do ask and so we are now getting an improvement in the HMICFRS report.

What we are doing from MOPAC is working with the Department for Education and London Councils. It is long term and it will take time, but it is looking at trying to help make progress on that issue around secure accommodation in London because there is just a dearth of places for young people who need secure accommodation, whether that is because they are coming through custody, through welfare or through other issues to do with young people. Often, they are interchanging. We have a real problem. I have seen them going miles out of London to get beds, which is absolutely unacceptable. We have put this in place and we are working with the Department for Education and London Councils to map what is available - and we have done that - and also to ask what we can do to solve this. Until we solve that, this is going to be a constant problem and a constant issue for young people whether it is through justice, through custody or through welfare provision. That is why we have the London Councils' representative on the Oversight Group.

Just on your issue about how long this is taking, it is frustrating that it does take this long. There have been changes at the front line. There need to be more changes. It is a question that I ask at the Oversight Group. Is this a matter of resources? If you had more resources, would you be able to make quicker progress? In some cases, that is happening in terms of the online child sexual images and also in terms of the extra money being put in to ensure that the lessons learned can be disseminated more quickly and there is more capacity there. It is not just about resources; it is about cultural change. It does take time. I will continue to challenge it to try to make sure the progress is as fast as it can be.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** I was going to pick up a point that Sophie has just made and it relates to your point, Len, around outcomes. We all agree absolutely that that is the key measure. When you consider that we now have all of these different areas of work being dealt with at the BCUs and the immaculately careful planning that has been done to create those units, move work from different places and move staff from different places without introducing risk, that is a very detailed bit of

planning that is only just now working its way through. Our managers' time is very hands-on monitoring those changes because those units hold so much risk and it is important to take that very carefully.

That brings together at the BCU level some really high-risk areas of work. It means that families with complex different needs can have all of those needs catered for within one location. That is a massive step forward. It means that our relationships with partners working in this field will be improved as well. We have taken time to do that properly. It will take time to monitor the rollout and to make sure those units are working properly. We should not leave an impression that it is a long job and the change only happens at the end because there have been extraordinary changes already.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Thank you. We now move to the final set of questions on hate crime. I will start off here. Commissioner, can I start off by asking you how the MPS prepares for spikes in hate crime? Indeed, is it possible for the MPS to prepare for such eventualities?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** We can never predict what will happen. Nevertheless, we can prepare for events that will lead to a spike in hate crime and we have been doing that. Our practice in counterterrorism, for example, has been to be really clear that if there is a terrorist attack here or overseas, we know now what the tried and tested method is of reassuring communities, liaising with communities and showing presence. That has been built very much with the communities affected and with their involvement.

We have the same process going on in relation to other incidents of hate crime that fall short of terrorist attacks. Recently there was an incident at a mosque in London where a blank-firing gun was discharged. Not knowing straight away what kind of offence this was, we nevertheless were able to put our reassurance work into place. We have very good relationships not only with the mosque community, I believe, and so they have fed back to us, but also with other affected communities.

We have made an enormous amount of progress in being able to speak quickly about what has happened and what we are judging it to be, to offer reassurance and indeed to offer safety advice where that is needed. That has been tested, sadly, repeatedly over the last few years.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** I would commend your response at that particular incident. I know the mosque in Redbridge, the Al-Taqwa Mosque behind the Taqwa shop, and the lead shown by the Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council, Councillor Darren Rodwell, and the local police in sending out positive messages was really great.

What progress has the Hate Crime Diamond Group made in creating and delivering an effective operational hate crime strategy in London?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** They are overseeing our whole response and indeed proactive preventative work towards hate crime. What is notable about the Diamond Group is the range of different partners that are part of that group and advising us on our practice. Much of the increase in reporting can be attributed to the work of that Diamond Group and the partners who have worked so hard to make sure that people are confident to come forward, either through a third party or directly, to report hate crime when they see it. Some of the increase is in incidence that people are seeing online, even when they are not direct victims of it themselves, they are seeing it online and reporting it. That is very attributable to the Hate Crime Diamond Group in London. I am very impressed by the work they have done.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** I have met with the online hate crime officers. We hope to have somebody from the MPS next week to give evidence on hate crime. Helen, last year [2018] we heard that the introduction of hate crime liaison officers had helped improve reporting. What impact are these officers having on the victims of hate crime?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Again, what I have experienced when I have been talking to these officers is that they are becoming a very tried, tested and trusted local people whom many groups are contacting. They are less formal and much more approachable people in the communities. They also of course are backing up the work that is done by Safer Neighbourhood Teams and all of our officers and all of our partners in those communities.

One of the key things for the hate crime liaison officers is that tried, tested and trusted presence and the ability for people who really do not know where to turn, whatever has happened to them, to turn to. They are part of a fabric of organisations, interest groups and charitable organisations that all support hate crime being identified and reported as early as possible, which is what we really need if we are going to be able to solve those crimes, and in a way that is acceptable to the victims of those crimes.

**Sian Berry AM:** I have a couple of questions about work in schools to raise awareness of hate crime and raise awareness of what is acceptable and what to do if you are a victim. What have each of the organisations that you have been talking about been doing to deliver on the commitment to do more work in schools?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** That work is being developed through the Diamond Group and therefore those organisations - the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Anti-Violence and Policing Group (Galop), True Vision and other organisations - are influencing the work. I do not have the programme in front of me, I am afraid, to give you the detail of that, but as soon as it is fully developed it will be available for you to see. I can bring it back to you on a future date, if you like.

**Sian Berry AM:** That will be fantastic. Do you have any examples of school materials or guidance? I would be keen to see that as well.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Sure, yes.

**Sian Berry AM:** To the Deputy Mayor, a similar question to you about the schools, but also within your Police and Crime Plan you have a number of commitments and goals around this, including encouraging more people to come and report, reducing the levels of repeat victimisation and reducing the attrition rate through the criminal justice process. We have seen that sanction detection rates are getting worse for a lot of these crimes. Do you feel like you are progressing on your goals?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** In terms of the inputs, we are progressing in terms of the goals set out in the Police and Crime Plan. For example, you asked about how we are working with schools and educators. We did have a small programme, Heartstone, which was working at raising awareness of hate crime in London's schools. We also work with Stop Hate UK, which is an educational project. We are working with the Deputy Mayor for Social Integration [Social Mobility and Community Engagement, Debbie Weekes-Bernard] around making sure that we have good working across the Greater London Authority and across City Hall. The annual funding around hate crime is around £7 million now and that includes really good support for victims, working with the MPS and CATCH has already been raised. Sanction detection rates had fallen right across the piece and that was concerning. It is a piece of work that in terms of my role we have looked at in terms of oversight. I know it is going to be of concern to

Helen [Ball QPM] and Cressida [Dick CBE QPM] here as well. In terms of inputs, absolutely, we have made progress.

We have seen spikes in reporting after specific incidents, terrorist threats or the Brexit vote a couple of years ago. However, I know that there is under-reporting. We talked about it at Justice Matters, which I convened a couple of months ago. I am told by our partners that people are not coming forward as confidently as we would hope. It has improved. The reporting has increased but we still have a way to go that people feel confident to report, know how to report and have confidence that something will happen after reporting. That also leads into work with third-party reporters such as Tell MAMA, which are very important in terms of members of the community having confidence in coming forward and reporting to them. We work on this with them as well.

**Sian Berry AM:** Do you think you will get there by the end of the four years? Is one more year enough time to get to where you are aiming for, particularly with satisfaction rates going up and sanction detection rates going up?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** We will do our best in terms of the progress and making sure that we are putting the things in. There are some things that are beyond our control, capacity and resources in terms of City Hall. We are in very divisive times and very difficult times and that does really worry me in terms of increases in hate crime and increases in Islamophobia and race hate as well. We know that that is very divisive at the moment. That does really concern me. I hope it will not push us off course, but it may mean that there are more people and more communities who feel threatened and who feel that they need the services of our advocacy programmes as well as the services of the MPS.

**Sian Berry AM:** We are looking at the differences between motivated hate crime, which is crime that is generated by the hatred, and aggravated hate crime, which is other crime that is aggravated by a racial or hate-related side. They are dealt with differently, according to the briefing that we have. It seems like there is some confusion and officers do not quite know the difference. That makes a difference as to how they are treated. People who commit motivated offences are referred to, for example, safeguarding, and potentially those people could have risks of being involved in more extremist hate activity if they are being motivated offences or aggravated. The differences are not always clear. Is that being worked on and improved?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** This is a feature of the change to the BCUs. Before that, all of these crimes were dealt with together. It is right that the motivated hate crimes, which you have accurately described, are being dealt with by the safeguarding units at the BCUs. The crimes that are other crimes with an aggravating factor of some form of racial hatred are being dealt with by the initial investigating officers. Nothing stops a professional, a supervisor or an officer themselves from stepping in and saying, "Actually, I think this one should be dealt with differently", if it fits that category and there are factors that mean it should be dealt with differently. I am quite certain that that is going on. It is not a completely hard-and-fast rule.

It is something we will keep under review, but the initial investigating officers who deal with the victims when crime is initially reported are capable to deal with the aggravated crimes. We respect their professionalism and think that they will be able to do those investigations well.

**Sian Berry AM:** Are you confident that they know the difference and when to refer?

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** Yes.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Probably they do, but the point I suppose is that the process is in fact the same. It is done by slightly different people. Evidence is put to the CPS. If the CPS, which sometimes does happen, as you probably know - and it is quite a complicated area of law to decide if it is really aggravated or not - thinks that it is aggravated, then they will put that in and will charge that. It will be taken into account at sentencing. The process of investigation is in fact the same. There may be the odd occasion on which people are investigating something that turns out to be motivated when they thought it was just an aggravating factor --

**Sian Berry AM:** That was the question, yes.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** -- but I do not think there is a huge amount of risk in that, myself.

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** The Central Hate Crime Hub will also be very important here because there is expertise and they are reviewing the cases. That is incredibly important in terms of the focus and expertise that has been put on hate crimes. That is an important element to remember. The central hub of officers is reviewing cases. It is not just when it comes to the CPS.

It is also around victim support. It is not just about the case, important though that is in terms of bringing perpetrators to justice. It is also about ensuring that victims are offered appropriate support and that is an incredibly important part of the work. That £7 million that I mentioned is over the course of this administration in terms of advocacy, local projects and programmes and victim support.

**Sian Berry AM:** In terms of data for us to be able to hold you to account, are you able to provide separate data on motivated versus aggravated offences for us? I have to be very careful what I say at the present time about this, but in terms of organised racism and hate, tracking whether that is increasing in the same way and things like that which would be more associated with motivated crime, that is where there are safeguarding and risks, that is where there are referrals to prevent, and that, if you can follow that, is the sort of data I am looking to find out. Is that possible to get?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Helen [Ball QPM] is telling me it should be. It should be. There are two ends of this thing to look at and I think a useful place to look is in the court disposals because that is what finally decides whether a particular offence was proven or not, whether it was motivated or not and whether it was aggravated or not. At our end of it we depend on the recording and the flagging. We can absolutely share the data. As Sophie [Linden] says, there is somebody who every morning is looking at all the crimes and checking they have been dealt with appropriately, but I do not want to commit to exactly what format that will come in or how regularly and anything like that because I think it is slightly complicated.

**Susan Hall AM:** Just a very, very quick one. Regarding the Online Hate Crime Hub, the data shows 711 cases have been investigated and only five of them successfully prosecuted, which is 0.7%. Can you first explain why that is so low? Also, given that the funding for this is £1,730,000-plus over two years, meaning a cost of over £865,000 per year, every successful prosecution has cost £173,000. Do you think that is good value for money?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I do not think that last point is a fair way to put it because an awful lot of people - in fact a very, very high proportion of people - who report to us do not want a prosecution; they are not going to support a prosecution. They want the unpleasantness to be identified. I am generalising here, but they want to know that this person is not doing it to lots of other

people and they want it stopped. In the Online Hub the team work really closely with the providers, the companies and, of course, the victim and third parties on occasion to ensure that the outcome the victim is looking for is what is achieved.

I do not rule out that we could improve - it is something we are looking at really hard at the moment - the number of prosecutions. However, it would be wrong to think that every time there is a report it should end up in a successful prosecution, absolutely not. Therefore, your metric of each one costs all these thousands I do not think is quite right.

**Susan Hall AM:** I accept what you say. Nonetheless, it is very, very low. If people are actually prosecuted it does send a message --

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

**Susan Hall AM:** -- to other people, perhaps it would cost us less in the long run because it is a prevention method. It would stop people if there were prosecutions that became known of and perhaps would stop an awful lot of that carrying on.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I agree with that. It is also the case that the ideal place we are all hoping to get to is where firstly, obviously in a totally ideal world, it does not happen at all. Secondly, when somebody tries to upload something online that is offensive and in such a way that it is likely to be grossly offensive it should, one would think, trigger the company to take that down straight away or to prevent it even going up. That is where we are working really closely with companies to try to help them think about the law, the technology that is available to them and their ability to prevent this rather than us enforce it.

**Susan Hall AM:** If only we were in an ideal world.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** We are heading in the right direction, I would say.

**Susan Hall AM:** Yes. In the meantime, good prosecutions that are well and truly displayed for all to see can only help.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Yes, sure. Absolutely, and we have had some very high-profile prosecutions in the last year, both online and off.

**Susan Hall AM:** OK, thank you.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** In terms of your investigating officers on the ground, when they have a case - say it is a robbery - and there has been a series of robberies, and they are all people from the same community whose houses have been targeted, are your officers trained almost to question, "Is this a hate crime as well?" or there is not that curiosity and they just say, "This is a spate of robberies" or something? They are not thinking, "Look at the households who have been targeted, there could be an issue here where it is a hate crime"? Are they ruling it in or out, if you see what I mean? I am not quite sure what their thinking is on the front line.

**Helen Ball QPM (Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service):** I think the thinking on the front line very much is, "Is this a series?" Certainly, they would be very much looking for patterns and repeats.



There is nothing we like more than going and arresting a robber or a burglar, and if you have a series of similar crimes that can help you to solve the crime. They might not be looking specifically at, "Is this a hate crime?" but certainly they have their investigative mindsets working to say, "What is going on here? Is there any pattern?" If the pattern showed that, yes, this could be a series of hate crimes, I think it could well be spotted by the initial officers. It could also be spotted by the Hate Crime Hub that, as Cressida said, reviews every crime every day that is flagged as hate crime. If they saw two, they might start thinking, "Is there a pattern here?" and go and look for it.

I am not sure there is specific training in looking at a crime and saying, "Is this a hate crime?" but nevertheless people are alert, they are investigators, and they will, I think, spot those sorts of patterns.

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM:** I had a case recently that I ended up complaining about and speaking to a superintendent. Their view was, "No, this is just a burglary". I said, "Look, there is a link here". It was just like, "No, no, no, it is a burglary" and that was it. It was not, "We have considered this and this is why we have ruled it out". It was just, "No, no, it's a burglary" and that was the end of it. That worried me slightly, knowing they have all this other work going on. It is probably just a one-off, one would hope.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I recommended the setting up of the Online Hate Crime Hub in a report I did back in June 2015, so I am delighted it has been done. However, it is possibly now time to review its operations to see what lessons have been learnt. Is that something you can undertake to do?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I think we have done a review. Of course, there have been conversations about whether there should be a central one at a UK level and how that might work, and we have been talking to other forces about what they do and how that works. We have done that. We have reviewed it.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I do not sit on the Police and Crime Committee usually, so I probably have not seen that review. I would be very grateful if you could let me --

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** There have been lessons learnt from the Online Hate Crime Hub. One of the lessons is when you are talking about hate crime is that it is useful to focus - and you need the expertise to deal with the online - but you need to be looking at hate crime across the piece, wherever it takes place. I think that is the learning that is being implemented in terms of getting a Hate Crime Hub now, with expertise in online but looking at all hate crime.

**Andrew Boff AM:** I will be interested in seeing that if possible, thank you.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Commissioner, the number of racist and religious hate crimes in London hit their highest levels in the year following the Christchurch mosque shootings. Clearly, global events are a big influence on what happens in London and I know that many of our constituents are very worried. I was with Superintendent Waheed Khan at the weekend at a mosque in Newham where he offered a very positive reassurance message, so some great work has been done there. There was a fantastic event here, Deputy Mayor, around security of religious institutions. What was really good was it brought all of London's faith groups together. I was only going to stay for ten minutes but I ended up staying for the whole session. It was really positive and worked well, so well done for that.

Commissioner, can you speak about some of the other initiatives that the MPS is planning to undertake to improve the security of our places of worship? Are there any specific initiatives that you have in mind? Also, bearing in mind that both myself and also Members of Parliament have made representations to the Home

Office about more funding for our religious institutions. I personally have called for a risk assessment of all religious institutions in my constituency. That might seem a mammoth task - I do not think it is - but I think it has to be done because what I do not want is groups competing against one another for the £5 million that is on offer. Are there any thoughts that you have about how to improve security or how you are preparing to face any escalation of tensions?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** In relation to security around religious civil institutions in the broader sense we were, of course, at the meeting that was convened here at City Hall. We have ongoing relationships locally with a huge number - I cannot say absolutely 100% because some are very, very niche but I would like to think almost 100% - of our religious institutions. The local Neighbourhood Teams and, indeed, the BCU will know where they are, who they are and be reaching out to them, as you say, after the terrible incidents. Since, for example, Christchurch and indeed Pittsburgh we have been reaching out and we have been giving advice. We give security advice, we also give counterterrorist advice and we have directed people to where they may find other sources of support and advice, not least funding. I know the Community Security Trust, which works with our Jewish communities, is working very closely with --

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** We have them here next week.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** -- other communities to try to take some of the learning it has had about how places can be appropriately secured, what that takes and how one goes about it. We are very happy to work with anybody to do risk assessments and to help them think about what a sensible and proportionate way is to try to keep themselves safe.

We fairly recently started Ramadan, of course, and we have a massive operation around Ramadan in terms of people on the street, people talking with institutions, providing a visible presence and encouraging institutions also to protect and safeguard themselves. We have the same for high holy days and it is not just within Muslim and Jewish communities because we also have Hindu institutions, Sikh and others where we are doing exactly the same kinds of thing.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Bearing in mind the amount of time I want to move on. I want to talk to you very specifically about what goes on around our sporting institutions, and in particular our football clubs. A report came out last week from Faith Matters called *The (Democratic) Football Lads Alliance: A Far Right Antechamber?* It talks, quite rightly, about leadership needed from political leads, their words, and celebrities, sporting heroes and public figures all playing a role in marginalising extremism nationally and using, "Official clout to put far-right-wing groups and militants on notice". In that context, Deputy Mayor, clearly, they are big responsibilities. I welcome that the Mayor signed *The Times'* manifesto on fighting racism in football. You will need to defer to your colleague, the Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement, in another context. Will you work with her to use sport and culture as vehicles to build community cohesion?

**Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime):** Absolutely. That is a key strand of the work she is doing in terms of Sport Unites, and the work of some of the projects and programmes that have been funded through not just the work she is doing but also the Mayor's Young Londoners Fund that really looks at sport and the importance of sport. It is not to find - as the Mayor always talks about - the next Olympic champion but to give young people the opportunity to come together, to do something fit and healthy and to be diverted possibly away from either crime or extremism.

The Mayor announced a programme of countering extremism about a year ago, which is coming to an end, and we hope to produce a final report on that in the coming months, fairly shortly. That really does look at what is the role of Prevent, what is the role of the MPS and what is the role of Government and local authorities and also, absolutely, what is the role of civil societies, sporting institutions, community groups and voluntary groups. We have been working together - myself, Joanne McCartney [Statutory Deputy Mayor of London] and Debbie Weekes-Bernard [Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement] - to work with specialist advisors and the team on countering violent extremism within MOPAC. There has been very extensive outreach. Probably, within the next couple of weeks or months we will publish that report, which I hope will show you how we are working together on some of the recommendations.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** I think that is a message that the owners of many of our football clubs - the so-called 'big clubs' - can take on board.

To finish on that note, Commissioner, when I met with an officer from the Online Hate Crime Hub, we discussed the role of football clubs in particular. He felt they could do more. What can clubs in particular do, bearing in mind what your officer told me? Is there anything specific? I think there are a whole host of things but is there anything much more that they can do to combat hate crime?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** I am afraid I have not had that conversation with that officer and he would, of course, speak for himself. Suffice to say locally and centrally we work closely with all the football clubs that we police, and many others as well, encouraging them in their community initiatives; as you know many of them are very, very active in their local communities in a whole variety of different ways. We also work closely with them to try to ensure that anybody who is committing crime of any sort - including, of course, particularly hate crime or racist crime - is dealt with effectively and they can take their measures to ban people from the club for life and we can also take measures to take people through the criminal courts and put orders on them as well. We collectively have a zero tolerance to that.

I have policed football for 30-something years. We have seen huge improvements in so many different ways. One would have to say that, here and more particularly in some cases overseas, there are still some people who support football - as there are in many other walks of life - who will indulge in really vile behaviour, some of which is criminal.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Let me give two examples of what I think clubs can be doing. There is a BBC programme this weekend on Radio 5 - I did speak to them - about the so-called Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA). Three clubs were singled out - Arsenal, Crystal Palace and Manchester City - that have requested that their club badges are not linked to the DFLA. Fantastic stuff. That is the sort of action I think clubs should be taking, being proactive.

Another example are emails from a group of West Ham United supporters who happen to be Muslim. They meet as Muslim supporters, there is an online forum, and they have suggested the club could produce reviews that can be shared on social media the day before matches, explicitly addressing racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and homophobic chanting and encouraging people to challenge such behaviour. They see the sort of Transport for London campaign that Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] talked about earlier as a role model. Do you welcome these sorts of things? Does it help your work?

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** Absolutely. We have to remember we deal with crime and criminality. People's general behaviour is not for the police to deal with. However, we are obviously concerned about stuff that tends to lead people towards violence or crime and we want big,

powerful institutions - influential institutions of all sorts, not least football clubs - to take every opportunity to try to prevent crime and criminality, and that is one way in which they can do that.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** You also have to challenge the whole hostile environment that leads to a lot of this sort of criminal behaviour, it is that sort of racist ideology that leads Islamophobic chanting or abuse that is seen at many of our grounds and especially in the last few weeks.

I will finish on this note, Commissioner. When I put a call out about West Ham United endorsing my call that the DFLA is not part of and never will be part of the West Ham family, the Mayor agreed with me. The Mayor said that clubs should call out their supporters who spread hate messages. Do you agree? Do you not think that clubs should be speaking out about such issues much more? I am particularly worried about the activities of street gangs like the DFLA referred to in this fantastic report by Hope Not Hate.

**Cressida Dick CBE QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis):** In this wonderful and diverse city - probably the most diverse city on the planet - it would be great if all significant institutions challenge division and hatred, absolutely, in every way that they can.

**Unmesh Desai AM (Chair):** Thank you. Can I thank your guests for attending today - I did not formally welcome you earlier, so apologies for that - and for your answers to our questions?