

London Assembly Police and Crime Committee – 15 October 2019**Transcript of Agenda Item 6 – Monthly Question and Answer Session with the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime and Metropolitan Police Service**

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): We now move to our main item of business, which is a monthly question and answer session with the Mayor’s Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). I would like to welcome our guests, Sophie Linden, Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, and Sir Stephen House QPM, Deputy Commissioner, MPS.

Before we move to the questions, I am going to ask both of you, starting with you, Sir Stephen, to make the three opening statements you would like to make. The first opening statement is on the policing operation around Extinction Rebellion and in particular the Londonwide Section 14 notice [Public Order Act 1986] served last night. Sir Stephen, if I could ask you to --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Thank you, Chair. Thanks for the opportunity to do so. As Members will know, Extinction Rebellion protests started in London really on Sunday night [6 October 2019]. We are probably into day 10, although there was the fire engine prank outside Treasury on the previous Thursday, I think. We are now into day 10 of this demonstration. We have made 1,400 arrests and climbing.

We have so far cleared protesters who were camped or locked on illegally in locations at St James’s Park, Horse Guards Road, Trafalgar Square, Whitehall, Marsham Street, Lambeth Bridge, Westminster Bridge, Horseferry Road, London City Airport, Bank, Euston Road, New Scotland Yard and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) headquarters at Portland Place. We have been gradually trying to clear London’s streets so that London can go about its business. The situation we had most recently was an encampment in Trafalgar Square and an encampment that is still in place within Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens in Lambeth.

Last night we issued a Section 14 of the Public Order Act [1986] notice, and I have to be very clear on this. The wording of it is specific. It says this is to do with ‘Extinction Rebellion: Autumn Rebellion’ or ‘Autumn Uprising’, which is their terminology for the demonstration, saying that they now had to cease this demonstration across London.

What we are not saying is that people cannot demonstrate across London, and indeed today there will be a number of demonstrations across London on a variety of different things that we will police as we normally do. We are also not saying to Extinction Rebellion or any other group that you cannot protest on climate change, which is clearly a massive issue of public concern. We are not even saying to Extinction Rebellion, “You cannot protest again in future”. What we are saying is, “In relation to this demonstration, it must now cease”. It has been going on for 10 days. As I say, we have arrested over 1,400 people. Last time this happened in London it cost the MPS over £16 million. It will be more this time, we believe, because it has gone on a bit longer and we have used more mutual aid.

We are disrupting Basic Command Unit (BCU) activity. We are pulling hundreds of officers a day away from the 12 territorial BCUs in London, putting huge strain on our officers. I spoke to some officers on mutual aid last night on Lambeth Bridge who had been working 18 hours that day. We simply cannot allow this to

continue when the demonstration is illegal, which it is. We have made moves to curtail the demonstration. Trafalgar Square is now closed to the demonstration and is cleared of the demonstration.

Members will see police officers on the streets dressed in blue tabards. These are Protest Liaison Officers. We continually try to reach out to Extinction Rebellion to try to agree with them a lawful protest that they can continue with. They have not engaged with that so far. I would repeat again this morning that if Extinction Rebellion wish to get in touch with us and talk about mounting lawful demonstrations, we will very happily engage with them. What we cannot do is continue --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): What we cannot continue to do is to police an unlawful demonstration. I accept that 99.9% have been perfectly peaceful - possibly even more than that - but that is not to say that it is lawful. It is an unlawful demonstration and it has to cease now. That is where we are.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you for those comments, Sir Stephen. Deputy Mayor, do you have anything to add to what Sir Stephen has said?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I think the Deputy Commissioner has been very clear around the complexity and the burden that the protests and demonstrations have placed on the MPS over the last eight, nine, 10 days.

This is a really complicated matter. The Mayor is clear that we are in a position of climate emergency and we need to take this incredibly seriously, and we respect and support the right to lawful and peaceful protest. We are really clear about that. We also respect the right of the MPS to take operational decisions to keep London moving, to keep London safe and the community protected.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you.

Sian Berry AM: You have outlined your reasons for imposing a Section 14 order over the entire city and the City of London area as well. Was this proportionate to an immediate risk from these protests and why was it put on at 9.00pm, at very short notice?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): My short answer to you, "Is it proportionate?", is yes. I have outlined why it is proportionate. We believe it is proportionate.

Why was it put on at 9.00pm? It was put on following lengthy discussions within the MPS and with partners around it. We had spoken to Extinction Rebellion over the previous 48 hours to say, "Look, we need to clear Trafalgar Square", and a good number did clear Trafalgar Square and went to the Pleasure Gardens in Vauxhall. We acknowledge they did that and Lambeth Council were accepting of that for a while.

We also made it clear to Extinction Rebellion, as I say, through our Protest Liaison, that we expected Trafalgar Square to be cleared. That is why we went ahead and cleared it and issued the order. I do not think we were being unreasonable because we were talking to them for 48 hours beforehand saying, "Look, this needs to be clear. We cannot block Trafalgar Square any longer", and they knew that.

Sian Berry AM: You described the demonstration as illegal and you have also said that at Trafalgar Square people were illegally locked on, but for days running up to this police officers have been saying to protestors, "In order to protest legally, go to Trafalgar Square". Then at half an hour's notice, you removed that. You are saying that the protest in Trafalgar Square was illegal. It was not illegal until you imposed this order last night.

Is that not correct? People had a right to peacefully protest up until the point at which you issued this order. You made it illegal at very short notice. Is that not correct?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No, I do not believe it is correct. You can quite happily say that the order went into place and therefore it was done very quickly, but it has to go in at a certain time. There were discussions in the days leading up to that with Extinction Rebellion, through a wide range of contacts, saying, "Look, we need you to move from Trafalgar Square", and a good many did move from Trafalgar Square. There has to come a time when we put in place an order that makes it illegal for them to stay there any longer.

I would characterise our behaviour up until this point in time as completely reasonable and proportionate. We have been sensible throughout. We have had to clear certain parts of London and certain roads to allow London to go about its business and keep the city moving. We put forward Trafalgar Square, we facilitated that for a couple of days, but it was always made clear that you cannot stay there forever and we had never signed up to 14 days, never. That is a view from Extinction Rebellion, which they are perfectly entitled to do, to say, "We are going to protest for 14 days", but we are also entitled to say, "Right, enough is enough. We have looked at a variety of things and it is now to call that to a close at Trafalgar Square". That is what we did.

Sian Berry AM: A few more short questions. Sorry.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Last one and then we move on.

Sian Berry AM: Yes. This is a blanket ban across the whole city. Can I ask at what level this was signed off? Did the Commissioner, the Deputy Mayor or the Mayor know in advance? Did you ask the Home Secretary about imposing what is effectively a ban? Trafalgar Square is Transport for London land. Was this at the Mayor's request?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): You would have to ask the Deputy Mayor some of those questions but just to be clear, this is an operational police decision taken by operational police officers. The person who issued the order, I believe, was Deputy Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor. He discussed it with me earlier yesterday [14 October 2019] and I approved the action. I discussed it last night with the Commissioner, who was fully behind the action as well.

We have been very clear as a command team over the last week that we have to give reasonable time, we have to be reasonable and sensible and continue engaging with Extinction Rebellion, but I have to go back to the issue that it is fine to say, "Yes, Trafalgar Square was OK", they could go there, but over 100 people were arrested yesterday in Bank. We cannot have a situation where people are encamping in the middle of London and issuing out from there, carrying out unlawful actions and unlawful protests, breaking the law and then going back there at night, having a meeting and deciding where they are going to go again the following day. That simply is not acceptable in a society governed by law. We have to put an end to that. I think that is what we have done, in a reasonable fashion within the law.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you.

Sian Berry AM: Deputy Mayor, do you --

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): No, you have had your section.

Sian Berry AM: I do have further questions. They are very short.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): A brief question from you, Assembly Member Hall and Assembly Member Arnold, and then we move on.

Susan Hall AM: I would just like to say there are very many of us who are very supportive of what you have done. We are very grateful because it cannot continue as it was before. Some of us wish it could have been done a lot earlier. Thank you, on behalf of a great many Londoners, for what you have done. Thank you.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Final comment from Assembly Member Arnold.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Chair, I thought I had come to a scrutiny meeting. It just seems to me that our job is to raise questions about police activity. Can I get an assurance that if young people, who are usually late on to the scene for whatever reason - perhaps they had not heard but they are attracted and they are a part of this - do arrive at Trafalgar Square, there is some contingency so that they will not end up arrested? It seems to me that there is other work that needs to be done as well and I am thinking especially about young people.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is a very good question. I get your point that youngsters sometimes pick up on things late but they also pick up on things very early through social media, earlier than many other people do. We have put out on social media what the situation is.

I do not want yourselves or the public through this medium to get the idea that there are vanloads of cops waiting at Trafalgar Square to swoop on anyone who turns up. They will simply be told, "There is no demonstration here. This has moved on. There are no tents. You cannot pitch tents. You cannot put up cooking facilities. You cannot put up toilet facilities. This is a public square and it has returned to public use". I am sure they will work out where they want to go after that.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you for that.

Sian Berry AM: Chair, we must hear from the Deputy Mayor on this, surely.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Assembly Member Berry, sorry. We have spent 15 minutes on this item. We were going to spend five minutes. It is an important issue. That is why I allowed it to come on to the agenda. Our two guests were not aware that we were going to raise it. We really need to move on. You can always write to the Commissioner.

Sian Berry AM: The Deputy Mayor had a question posed to her.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): With the greatest of respect, we have to move on.

Can I now move on to the next item? Again, Sir Stephen, another opening statement from you. This is about Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and the latest PEEL assessment. PEEL, for our viewers who may not know what it stands for, is police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. Sir Stephen, can I ask you in your opening statement to give us your initial reactions to the latest PEEL report? What are the top priorities from the recommendations for the MPS to focus on?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Thank you, Chair. Yes, we have received the latest PEEL report and as always it is gratefully received from HMICFRS. It is still fairly early days. We will

reply before 6 November 2019 to the Deputy Mayor in relation to a full action plan following up on the inspection and the recommendations and then they will have until later that month to publish their response to our action plan.

As always in HMICFRS reports, there are some very positive things and there are some things that we quite clearly need to work more on. The tendency is to focus on where we need to do more work and that is perfectly understandable. I suppose we might want to look at that. I would also like to look at the bits that we got right. They talked about our investigative and our serious and organised crime, which was very positive. One of the areas that they said was outstanding was tackling serious and organised crime. We are also good at preventing crime and tackling antisocial behaviour. In relation to investigating crime and protecting people we are graded as "Requires improvement", which is the next grade down from "Good". We acknowledge that there is work we need to do there and we have put an action plan in place to tackle those issues.

One of the issues that we sometimes have to engage with on HMICFRS is that many of the recommendations and the way that they want to see an improvement, is that we put more resources into a particular area. The Commissioner has been very clear in public that we feel we need more police officers to deal with the challenges we face in London. We acknowledge that we need to put more officers into more parts of the role that they carry out in different parts of the MPS, in different specialisations, but we need more officers to do that. We could very quickly go to a situation where HMICFRS says, "You need to put more officers into this place", we say to our BCU Commanders, "How are you going to manage that?" and their response will be, "We will have to take officers from somewhere else". We are immediately into a decision about resourcing and comparative priorities. That is what we need to wrestle with, as leaders of the organisation, before we produce an action plan for the Deputy Mayor.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you. There will be questions in due course about aspects of the PEEL report but can I now turn to you, Deputy Mayor, and ask you to make a statement on MOPAC's Annual Report for 2018/19? In doing so, could you tell us what you consider to be MOPAC's main achievements during the last year and the key challenges for the forthcoming year?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Thank you very much. I am pleased to talk to you about the Annual Report for the year 2018/19. It is important in terms of transparency, accountability and scrutiny for you to be able to read the report and have the opportunity to question myself and the MPS around it.

One of the things I did want to say about my role as Deputy Mayor [for Policing and Crime] is that it is unique. It gives me unique opportunities in terms of understanding the work of the MPS, scrutinising the work of the MPS and also across the criminal justice agencies, and the ability to meet and discuss, not just across the criminal justice agencies but with communities, bereaved families and victims, what they need and how we as a criminal justice service, as well as local authorities in the boroughs of London, can fulfil what they need in terms of keeping London safe.

MOPAC itself manages and holds a huge amount of responsibility. During the course of one year, MOPAC will oversee the work of the MPS, which I know I do not need to remind you is the largest police service in one of the largest cities in the world, and it agrees and oversees a police budget of more than £3 billion a year. We also commission specialist services for victims across the course of the year, including over £5 million on the London Victims and Witnesses Service per year and £5 million for services for victims of sexual and domestic abuse.

We also oversee the London Crime Prevention Fund, which gives out funds annually of nearly £17 million to boroughs to spend as they see fit within the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan on reducing crime and antisocial behaviour within their boroughs. We maintain a citywide network of volunteering through the Independent Custody Visitors scheme, Safer Neighbourhood Boards (SNBs) and the Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups. We also, rightly and appropriately, respond to the scrutiny of you of as a Committee and of Assembly Members with their mayoral questions, as well as a large amount of public correspondence.

I am really pleased that during the course of this year, as with other years, we have levered in a substantial amount of extra money from the Home Office to enable us to set up and run programmes around stalking and domestic abuse, for example, and we have set out an ambitious agenda for improving safety in London.

2018/19 was a year of exceptional policing challenges in London and around the country. I do not need to remind you about the increase in crime, which is not just in London but nationally as well. Total recorded crime increased in London by 5.2% but 7.7% in England and Wales. At the same time both police and all the partners that we work with, and that our residents and communities rely on, have continued to struggle with the absolutely crippling effect of austerity and the measures of austerity which have been driven by this Government.

The Mayor and I have done everything in our power over the course of this year, as we have with other years, in these difficult circumstances, to scrutinise the MPS and be a critical and supportive partner with the MPS, as well as our communities, in the fight against crime and, particularly, serious violence. The Annual Report has much detail around the hard work around that, as well as detail around the budget.

As you know, the Mayor over the course of the last year has invested unprecedented amounts into the MPS, £110 million in 2018/19. That has enabled the MPS to increase officer numbers as well as fund the creation of the Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF). The extra investment has also included the setting-up of the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) over the course of the last year, which has been driving forward the public health approach to tackling violence, and of course there was the creation of the £45 million Young Londoners Fund, which is part of the significant approach around public health.

In 2018/19 we have seen - and we are in no way complacent - a reduction and a stabilisation in serious youth violence incidents in London, and over the same period of the last year we saw a 16% reduction in knife crime with injury to under-25s. As I have said, that is in no way complacent. It is a stabilisation from too high a point and one crime is one too many. We know and understand the scale of the huge challenge ahead of us to continue to reduce serious violence and continue to keep that violence down.

Violent crime, as you know, has been a national problem requiring national solutions and that has been one of the key aspects of our work across the course of the last year. We are very pleased that we now have an indication from Government that they understand that their cuts have gone too far and they have made announcements about partially reversing those cuts. We have had announcements about the number of additional officers we can recruit but let us be clear, the additional officers - just over 1,300 - are well below the 2,000 that we believe the MPS needs for the next financial year and we have been lobbying very hard to ask the Government for 6,000 of the 20,000 additional officers that they have announced police in the country will be getting.

We will keep lobbying and pushing the Government further, not just on police officer recruitment, police officer cuts and reversing them, as you would expect with the Mayor setting out the agenda around being tough on crime as well as the causes of crime, we are lobbying very hard for - as well as investing in - those

services that make that crucial difference in preventing crime and intervening, especially for young people so that they do not take the wrong path. I think the Annual Report that is set out before you today gives you a good indication of our progress on that for the last year and we will continue to build on that.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you, Deputy Mayor. There was a lot with that to take in. Our next set of questions will focus on some aspects of what you have said. Can I bring in Assembly Member O'Connell about the police service for London?

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you for that very full report. I will pick up on some points around that, initially on the additional officers. We all welcome the news of the Home Office increasing [the number of police officers by] 20,000 officers. I note your comments preceding that. We understand that the Commissioner is lobbying for 5,000 to 6,000 from that tranche of 20,000, which of course we would be supportive of. You mentioned the first tranche. My briefing is that we are going to receive funding for an additional 1,369. Probably this is from a planning aspect, Sir Stephen. Does that match your expectations? Are you able to plan, deploy and train up those officers in that first tranche?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I would respond to that, if you do not mind, by saying that we could do more. We could train and deploy more than that and we would like to.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, I am sure.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I do not think 1,369 is enough. I understand why - it has gone strictly down the formula in relation to funding - but frankly all I think you need to do is look at the events of the last 10 days in London to see that London is a case that has to be considered separately. We were hoping for 1,500 officers at the very least.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): In the first tranche?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes, at least. I would repeat what the Deputy Mayor has said. The Commissioner has made it very clear that out of the 20,000 we think we should have 6,000.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): You answered that question in two parts. No doubt we would all agree that we would like to see more officers deployed in London.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): It is a question about training them up because we all know that it takes sometimes a considerable period of time to get them through and on the streets. You have capacity?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It absolutely does. It takes months to get officers recruited and onto the streets. We do have some very good people working on our recruitment. In fact, one of our senior people is advising nationally on recruitment for the rest of England and Wales. We are very confident we can recruit those numbers. In fact, the passing out parade on Friday this week is going to have very high numbers, nearly 400 or possibly even over 400, and the next few intakes will be over 400. Our normal intake to stand still is well below that. We are growing rapidly and we will continue to grow rapidly. We can cope with 1,369 but we would like to be able to cope with more.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. We will touch on vetting later because that has been a challenge.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Can I just say --

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Deputy Mayor?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The announcement of the 1,369 officers is not an announcement of the funding for it, it was an announcement of a target being set for recruitment. We are still yet to hear what the funding will be for the next financial year in order to enable the MPS to recruit. We will start recruiting but we have not yet had the funding for that. We do not know how much they are giving us per officer. We are very concerned that that will be a national figure that will not take into account the costs of an officer in London, and we are also very concerned because we have had no indication of the longevity of this funding and how long that funding will last. There are still a number of questions the Government need to answer in order for us to be really secure. We have had the target set but we have not had the funding.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. Thank you. That is noted and we would want to pursue that, but your point, Sir Stephen, is that you would expect the MPS to have a disproportionately large amount, quite rightly, of that 20,000, London being a special case?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I would say proportionately, but yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Slightly more than proportionately, hopefully.

I mentioned vetting. You are enthusiastic about getting these extra officers. We still want to hear some detail about the funding and timings of it. The PEEL report was critical of vetting.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): It is all well and good having these numbers of good people who want to be officers, but you have had an extreme backlog of vetting. Do you want to talk to us about that?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes. Thanks for raising it. We are grateful for HMICFS raising it as well. It is quite clear from the brief I have had that what we are doing is prioritising the vetting of new officers and staff coming in. We have also been recruiting quite hard on civilian staff as well. What we are doing is prioritising brand new staff into the organisation to make sure we are taking the right people into the organisation. That has meant that we have slipped back a little bit in our re-vetting of existing staff and our awareness of staff's vetting levels, but we have reinforced the Vetting Unit itself and the figures are going in the right direction now. They have done so since the inspection. They are improving and we are getting through more vetting of existing staff while still prioritising new staff coming in. We have streamlined and made more efficient our vetting processes without losing any of the assurance that we need about the people who are coming in.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): By concentrating on the new officers, there was a backlog in --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): There was a slippage but we have reinforced the Vetting Unit now and it is improving across the board in terms of the figures.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. I have one more question just on the target of numbers, the overall MPS target of 31,000 by the end of the financial year. Obviously, this issue is being conflated and complicated by the Government's welcome announcement and the Mayor's funding for 2018/19. With all those factors, are we on target for 31,000 for the end of the financial year?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We are, yes. In fact, I was briefed earlier this week we will be at 31,000, we think, before the end of the calendar year. We should be at 31,300 by the end of the financial year.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you for that. Now, we are welcoming new officers coming to the MPS. You mentioned earlier that the priority may well be to fill specialist positions. There have been gaps in that. Was that the point? What Londoners may expect to see, if we hear of these extra officers, is them on the streets as uniformed police. Is there potential - particularly we are short of things like detectives and so on - that that will soak up those extra officers and you may not see them on the streets?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Thanks for raising that because I did not mean to say that and mislead anyone into that thinking. The clear focus for the new officers will be around impact. What we are discussing at the moment within the organisation - we will be talking about the Deputy Mayor and the Mayor about it; we have already commenced but there will be more discussions - is: what are we going to do with the extra officers that we get in? I certainly was not saying that we will take the HMICFRS report and simply put the officers where HMICFRS has suggested we need them.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): I was not literally saying that.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): With all due respect to HMICFRS, it is a bigger debate than that and we need to make sure that we get the right effect from the extra investment that we are getting. Much of that will be visibility on the streets. It may be through proactive visibility. It may be through more Dedicated Ward Officers (DWOs). We do have a shortage of detectives and we do have shortages in specialist areas, particularly around domestic abuse and sexual investigations, and we will be looking at all of those.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. Touching on the BCUs and the local officers you just touched on out in the boroughs, certainly my two boroughs and other people's boroughs are under-number - bad grammar - or understaffed, as it were, and have been for some considerable time. Are you saying that the BCUs will be receiving benefit from these new officers? Many are considerably under roll, are they not?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): My expectation is that once we have come to a decision with this and discussed with the Mayor where the Commissioner wants to put the extra officers, the boroughs will get a significant benefit. We believe that they are already starting to see extra numbers arriving but that is partially through officers funded from the Mayor's budget rather than the Government. Officers have not started arriving from the 20,000 uplift yet but we have seen extra officers come in and we are recruiting hard, as I said. That is on the back of money from the Mayor.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): They are being increased but it is from a low base because from my experience my boroughs are particularly understaffed, which is causing pressures on officers.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I agree, yes. I do not want to minimise that. I am not seeking to. There is a shortage of officers. We want more officers.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Linked to that - and this is probably for the Deputy Mayor initially - you picked up in your very busy report SNBs, engagement, Ward Panels and so on, which I and others feel particularly strongly about. From the work I have done, and this Committee has done, the SNBs are not in a particularly healthy state at the moment. I do not want to prolong the debate for too long but what is your take on that, Deputy Mayor?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The SNBs have had their funding protected over the last year and they continue to get £1 million for the work that they are doing. I hope they have had confidence in that. I know there have been some issues with a couple of SNBs in London around a couple of the boroughs. MOPAC officers have been working very hard with communities and the boroughs there to try to re-establish SNBs where they have not been functioning as healthily as they should be or where they have not been functioning. But overall, I would say we have across London a healthy network of SNBs that have the funding that they had before and have the ability to fund community activities across London. I am very aware that there are some particular issues in some boroughs and we are working to put that right.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. I welcome the funding that comes to the SNBs but that in itself is not a measure of successful Boards because while you can give them the £20,000 or £25,000, that does not make them healthy.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): My last point, Chair, is connected to that: an issue around confidence and satisfaction. Over some considerable time, probably as long as I have been doing this, I have tried to make it clear that they are two separate measures. Satisfaction, as we all know, is the experience of a Londoner after dealing with the police. Confidence is a different measure altogether. When I have been asked about confidence I have always said, "The MPS's confidence is not very good but it tends to bumble along about mid-60s". In the last figures I have, it has dropped right down to possibly below 60% on confidence and equally victim satisfaction is in decline. That is in small part linked to that previous conversation about Boards and engagement. Do either of you or both of you, perhaps, want to comment on the reduction in confidence and satisfaction? Stephen?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I am happy to go first. I agree with your analysis that they are two separate things. Confidence is a very difficult thing to influence. We have been talking for a number of years about policing numbers, budgets, austerity and cuts, and inevitably that has an impact through the media and through direct engagement with the public. They start to feel, "That is bad", and it sometimes is not reflecting their reality.

It is very similar to a story I keep hearing, which I believe. People say, "What do you think of the National Health Service?" "Not very much". "What do you think of your local hospital?" "It's pretty good". "What do you think of your local doctor?" "Very good". "What about the nurses?" "Brilliant". The closer it gets to them and their experience, the more positive, but they have a negative feeling because of media and general take on things. I do not think it is that different with the police service in general.

I am hoping and we believe confidently, that the investment of extra funding from both the Mayor and from the Government, both very welcome, will start to turn that debate. I think we will start to see a more positive view from the public. It will be interesting to see in our local analysis if the new MPS documentary that is out - the third episode I think is this week - produces a bump, because it can do. It certainly gives us a bump in recruitment. It is that engagement issue through the media that is a difficult one for us to always manage.

Satisfaction, you are quite right, is far more in our hands and we need to act as a professional, caring organisation so that people are more satisfied with us. We need to look at how we deal with the victims of crime. I have spoken with roomfuls of officers who work in the Telephone and Digital Investigation Unit, who take an awful lot of the crime reports coming in from the public now, and they are a very motivated group of people. We have given them a lot of training in how to manage talking to the public to give them realistic expectations, to try to meet their expectations and meet their needs on the phone, and we are starting to see satisfaction levels there improve but they are still coming from too low a base and we need to do more about that.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): And the 101 service? That has been a cause of dissatisfaction.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I think here the MPS does tend to buck a trend a little bit. We have been talking to Chief Constables around England and Wales who have been saying that they are thinking the 101 system is not serving their needs. Our figures, in comparison, are pretty good and they are going in the right direction, as are our emergency call numbers. We are satisfied with that and I would pay tribute to the people in Lambeth, Bow and Hendon who answer those calls 24 hours a day and do a great job doing it.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Last question back to you is supplementary to that. I assume you have an expectation of your new BCU Commanders and their teams that they support SNBs and proactive engagement throughout the boroughs, while I understand they are quite thinly spread at that level of command. That is your expectation?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes. We expect full engagement with all community aspects from the BCU Commanders as part of their role.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Did you want to add to that at all, Deputy Mayor?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): You are right to pick up on the issues of victim satisfaction and confidence and it is something that, as the Deputy Commissioner has already talked about, we have spent a lot of time scrutinising and working with the MPS around. London's Victim Commissioner, Claire Waxman, has been working particularly closely around victim satisfaction. There are a number of things that drive that around being there when needed, getting it right first time and information. All of these we all agree have to improve and there is a real drive within the MPS to improve that. You are right to look at that and think that there are some issues here and concerns, and that is what we have been picking up throughout the year.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. Thank you.

Peter Whittle AM: Sir Stephen, when it comes to the new officers that is very good news to hear you are going to be getting over the coming years, I just wondered whether the speed with which they could be effective is going to be affected by this ruling that all new police officers should be graduates.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is a fundamental change in police recruiting you are obviously aware of. It is the biggest change that I remember in terms of recruiting for police officers. I need to be clear it does not say that all new recruits have to have a degree. It is very important that we put that message out because that seems to be the general view. It is not true.

Peter Whittle AM: It is not true?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It is not true. You can join in a number of ways. Not unusually for London, we think the MPS is slightly different, it has different needs and Londoners have different needs, so we are moving forward with a slightly hybrid model which will mean that we will welcome people with degrees, and a high percentage of our current recruits have degrees already when they join, but you do not have to have a degree to join the MPS. We will phase that in in due course. What we are saying is that you can join without a degree but you sign up to a course of study that will get you to degree level in due course.

It is very important that you realise that you do not have to have a degree to join. We do not want to see people looking at the application online and saying, "Well, I haven't got a degree so I can't join the MPS". You absolutely can join the MPS without a degree. We welcome people with all backgrounds, with all educational attainments. What we would want them to do is to be able to meet our standards and in due course - not straight away - we will offer an ability for them to sign up, take a degree and get a degree within the organisation, which is a great offer, of course, because at the end of the day they are being paid as police officers, they are doing a job and they will get a degree at the end of it. We want to make sure that we attract people from all parts of society with all educational attainments and we are very keen that we do not turn it into, "You can only get in with a degree". You can join the MPS today and in the future without a degree.

Peter Whittle AM: That is reassuring, although I would say therefore maybe the way it is presented should be clearer because there have been police forces around the country who have protested about this. I think Lincoln Police Force said this was a terrible idea and that it would effectively take new officers out of service for one day a week while they are doing this degree thing. It is not just a misapprehension on my part; it seems that it is in the police too.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I was not criticising you at all. You are quite right. I know the Lincolnshire Chief [Constable] has a particular view on it. It is not a view that the mainstream Chief Constables necessarily agree with. We have looked at the abstraction levels for training.

We have to recognise policing is becoming more complex and even with the simplest crime there will be digital material involved in many of them. We are expecting high standards. We want to improve customer satisfaction. We want to make sure that the officers who join are properly equipped for what is a fast-changing, fast-pace role in society. I think it is right that we look at the standards of training that we give to our officers but that is not the same as saying, "You have to have an academic degree to join". Most Chiefs that I have spoken with around the country are very clear.

We welcome graduates and, as I say, we have a high percentage of graduates now, but you can join the MPS - and I think you will be able to join all forces - without a degree. You may, in some forces, have to proceed straight away to work towards a degree, but the MPS is going to do it slightly differently and there are going to be effectively three ways in. One, you join with a degree. Two, you join and you sign up to take a degree. Three, you join in the current way right now because we want to make sure we do not put anyone off.

Peter Whittle AM: Thank you. Please make sure that that is clear in your recruitment ads and everything.

Susan Hall AM: Can you tell me, Sir Stephen, how many vacancies you are running with at the moment?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I cannot give you that exact number. I would not want to mislead you so I cannot give you that figure. Do you mean across the whole organisation or a particular area?

Susan Hall AM: I will tell you the thing, and last year it happened as well.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Sure.

Susan Hall AM: We were being told that there was under 30,000 police and so on, constant complaints about that, and at that level I agree, but there was funding in place for more police officers. The fact that there were not police officers in place where there was funding for them is a failure not of Government or whoever is funding them, it is the fact that you have not recruited to those posts.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is not a picture I recognise, I have to say.

Susan Hall AM: It is the figures.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I have been back in the MPS for 18 months and we have been recruiting pretty hard for all of those times. Certainly, right now we are recruiting as hard as I ever remember the MPS recruiting. I think we are getting over 400 people in the intake on Friday. We are filling up on BCUs and putting more and more officers out there.

Susan Hall AM: Yes, I know you are --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It is a complicated picture. We do have vacancies in some places but that does not necessarily mean that we are not recruiting properly.

Susan Hall AM: By the figures, at one point there was - from recollection - well over 900, I believe 975 less than there was funding for them, and that was last year. I know you are recruiting now. I know lots of people that are working within that and it is working well now, but you were all complaining a year ago that there were not enough police officers and there was far more money in the pot for police officers than you were recruiting. Therefore, you were working from a low base because you were not recruiting properly a year ago, which I have mentioned before.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I hear what you are saying. I do not accept it but I hear what you are saying.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Well, we will get the figures and we will look at it again.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Sure, OK.

Susan Hall AM: The figures are out there. These are all from your figures. Thank you, Chair.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I just wanted to pick up a point. You said, Sir Stephen, that you could train and deploy more officers but I know it is very complex in the volumes you are talking about. I have been asking a few Mayor's Questions because I understand that the first stage of assessment of candidates for Police Constable (PC) is done by civilians and these people are hired through an agency. I had raised with me some serious concerns about the agency assessors having difficulty getting paid. The agency has been trying to increase the number of candidates that the assessors see from 24 to 96. There is the complexity every day of trying to get through that number of assessments.

I am just wondering what scrutiny perhaps both the Deputy Mayor and yourselves are doing to make sure that this agency is functioning properly. I had a mayoral answer in September [2019] where you seemed to say it is all fine and rosy but I would just like to know how you are interrogating that to make sure that the process is smooth and that this agency is acting properly on your behalf.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I can answer you in part in figures, if I might. Our target for September recruitment was 310. We ended up recruiting 421 officers. Our October target was 400. We are looking at a projection of 461. In November our target is 446. We are looking at a projection of 547. The numbers within the pipeline to bring into the organisation are, I think it is fair to say, extremely healthy.

To my recollection, what you have said, I have not heard before. I can certainly have it looked at. If it is acting as a brake on recruitment, then it should not be. We would welcome even more numbers in but the numbers we are getting in are pretty healthy. I have regular meetings with Clare Davies [OBE], the Human Resources (HR) Director, and we focus very strongly at Management Board level on the recruiting numbers and the processes. We have done a lot to streamline the process to make it more efficient and to try to make sure it is as reflective as London as possible. We run events to keep recruits warm, in other words to keep their interest up, particularly aimed at black and minority ethnic candidates because we know that we have a challenge there.

It is quite a vibrant area and there is an awful lot of work going on, as you would expect. With the money that we hope is coming from the Government and the extra officers, we are very keen to make sure that we are recruiting as efficiently as we possibly can and we know that we can recruit more officers than we have been offered so far. I am pretty confident the system works well but I am not overconfident. I am not complacent. I am happy to take away your comments, get them looked at and come back to you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Would you and the Deputy Mayor just look at that to assure yourselves? Obviously, I have had forwarded to me concerns.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have seen your Mayoral Questions on this and if you do have cases of this happening it would be very useful to know in terms of the scrutiny that I undertake, very similar to probably what the Deputy Commissioner does as well. I have regular meetings with Robin Wilkinson [Chief of Corporate Services, MPS] and Clare Davies [OBE] on this. We regularly scrutinise the figures and we scrutinise very carefully that pipeline of recruits, assessment, where people fall out and what is happening. I myself have been down to SSCL, who are our contractors on this, to talk to them face-to-face about their ability to deliver on this recruitment. They have assured me, and I can see it through the figures, that they are recruiting, they are getting people through the system and they are getting the numbers that we need.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It sounds like the figures, as you say, have really gone up. I have had raised with me that assessors are having difficulties getting paid and getting their identification (ID) card. That potentially, if you have to scale up more, could delay it. Perhaps you could let me know on that.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We can take that up.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I would be grateful.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Getting the ID card could be a vetting issue.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, of course. Thank you.

Susan Hall AM: Yes. My two favourite areas, which are Tasers and spit guards. If we can start with Tasers, Deputy Commissioner, how will the ringfenced funding announced from the Home Office for equipping police officers with Tasers benefit the MPS and its plans to extend the number of officers who can carry and use Tasers?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We acknowledge the ringfenced money and obviously all funding is welcome. The Management Board had already, pretty much in the same timescale, had a meeting and decided to initiate a further uplift of Tasers. There has been publicity on this and the Commissioner has been talking about it in public. At the moment we have just over 6,000 officers trained on Taser usage. If I just give a comparison, at the moment I think the figures for West Midlands and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) are around 1,000, 1,200 or 1,500 officers trained with Tasers.

We decided that we wanted to increase the number of officers trained to use Tasers. We have decided to uplift that number to 10,000 officers over the next two to three years and obviously the Government funding will be part of that uplift calculation. What we want to do is to make sure that there are enough Taser-equipped officers on duty so that there is a very quick availability of Tasers to officers who need them.

Susan Hall AM: Is it correct that during the August thing in the street - what do they call it? Thank you, the Notting Hill Carnival - that there were not enough Tasers to go around for all the officers who could use Tasers?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Not as far as I am aware.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Will every officer that wants to use a Taser eventually be allowed to use one in London?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Comparing the MPS with other forces - it is not easily comparable because the numbers are so different - if an officer wants to carry a Taser and they are capable of using one, what is the reason for not allowing that to all officers who want one and who are capable of having one?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Just to be clear, my comment was just to bust this myth -- sorry if it was a little abrupt --

Susan Hall AM: That is all right. I do not care.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): -- that officers can queue up for a Taser and be handed one.

Susan Hall AM: I know. I know some of the trainers.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I know you know that but it is important that the public realise that we do not operate that way. There is a Taser training course that you have to pass and there is a failure rate at it. It is a difficult course. In fact, the Commissioner went to see it last week to see it operating.

We say that if you are in a post that is nominated or designated as a Taser post, then you go on the course and if you pass the course you will get a Taser. At the moment, we are saying that we are focusing on emergency response officers to have Tasers, Territorial Support Group (TSG) officers, firearms officers and a number of other areas. We are increasing that to more roads policing officers and to dog section officers as well. They operate on their own a lot and pan-London. This is the availability argument that we believe in.

We are still in discussion in Management Board about the issuing of Tasers to DWOs. The Commissioner has made clear it is an appropriate decision point to think about maturely. Not everyone in London is comfortable with Taser issuing and usage by officers. Some members of the community have understandable concerns about use of force and we have to issue Tasers in a consensual way with the support of the public and with the support of a broad range of political views because there is a public confidence issue here as well, there is an officer safety issue and most importantly there is a public safety issue which means we have to have Tasers very readily available within London. Because of the density of the population and the density of policing, we believe that does not mean that every single officer needs to have a Taser at this moment in time, but we will always keep it under review.

Susan Hall AM: I think the important point is that 80% of the times they are drawn, they de-escalate situations.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Absolutely.

Susan Hall AM: To me, the safety of a police officer comes as absolute paramount, but I am sure we will go back to that argument constantly.

Now on to spit guards. You will recall you and I had quite a few conversations on spit guards.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We did, yes.

Susan Hall AM: They were agreed about six months ago. I have been told by the Mayor at one of the Question Times that they have not been issued out yet to frontline officers. Is that correct?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No.

Susan Hall AM: They are used on the front line as well as in custody?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The way we are doing it is that we are requiring officers to go through training to apply the spit guard safely. It is now incorporated into Officer Safety training. When officers rotate through their next Officer Safety training course, they will get a unit on spit guards. Once they have had that, they will be issued. Sorry, just to clarify, that is if they are in an operational deployed role. We are not issuing them to all officers. I will not be issued with one, detectives probably will not be issued with them, but response officers and others who are engaging with the public on a daily basis will get them once they have been trained.

Susan Hall AM: "Will get them"? How many are out there at the moment? Of all the police officer I have asked, and I stop police officers in the street and talk to them - we all do odd things - none of them so far are even aware that they are getting them. In actual fact, I have been argued with by some saying, "No, they are only used in custody".

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is not true. They are being issued and they are being issued on the back of Officer Safety training courses.

Susan Hall AM: How many would you say are out there now?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I do not have that figure.

Susan Hall AM: 50%? 20%?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I would not want to commit. I will need to find out and come back to you.

Susan Hall AM: Perhaps you will let us know because the Mayor seemed to think they were not going to go out until next year sometime.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The experience I have with it is a TSG officer who said to me that she had just joined, she had not got it and she had had some distressing experiences with spit guards in the past. When I contacted her again a couple of weeks ago she had been on her Officer Safety training and she had a spit guard.

Susan Hall AM: That is good news. Apparently, the data shows that they have proportionately been used more on females. Is there any reason for that?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I do not know. I do not have --

Susan Hall AM: Are women more likely to spit or bite than men? No, it is a genuine "I have no idea" question.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I have no operational or research figures to back that up whatsoever. You obviously do.

Susan Hall AM: No, no, I do not. I am asking the question.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No reason --

Susan Hall AM: It is written down. The evidence is there. I am just wondering if you --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The use of a spit guard is the use of force and these figures will be publicly available on the MPS website.

Susan Hall AM: Yes. I am just wondering if you have any idea whether there was any reason behind that.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Not here.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No.

Susan Hall AM: OK. Can you tell me how many police in the last year have been treated for any sort of disease that has resulted from a bite or spit from somebody that they have been --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Not from the briefing I have here, no, but I can certainly write to you about it.

Susan Hall AM: That would be really helpful. Thank you very much.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Right. I am conscious of the time. We could spend the whole morning talking about the issues raised by the PEEL report and MOPAC but I have to put this question to you, Deputy Commissioner. This is about officers' welfare. One of the findings from the PEEL report was that forces are providing more wellbeing services. However, the Inspectorate felt that the workforce does not always feel the benefits.

To put that in focus, there was a news item on BBC Breakfast news this morning. There was an Inspector from Greater Manchester Police who had brought some cards along from a young person thanking the police for their response to the incident at the Arndale Centre. It was quite moving. The Inspector made the points that he was just a manager sitting behind a desk and it was the frontline officers, who do not get bonuses or company cars. He also mentioned the morale in the force and that has been well-documented elsewhere.

What do you have to say about this particular aspect? We often forget the welfare of officers as well. The Committee is here to look at a number of things, including how officers feel. What are your views about the PEEL assessment and what is being done within the MPS?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I think the PEEL assessment pays tribute to the direction that the Commissioner has set in terms of trying to make sure that the officers are well-equipped, well-led and well-supported. The *Met Direction [Strategy 2018-25]*, which is the Commissioner's strategy for the next five years, makes it very clear. One of the seven pillars of that strategy that we are focusing on is taking care of our people, our officers and our staff.

We have put a lot more money into a wellbeing offer and if you go to the internal MPS website there are numerous ways for all members of the organisation to access services around physical health, mental wellbeing, to get help if they need it as soon as possible. That is also available for supervisors in an extra package so that they can spot if any of their officers or staff need any extra assistance, and the supervisors can access that. That may go to your question about the Inspector in Greater Manchester Police and the officers who dealt with that traumatic situation. After we have a traumatic incident we run a structured debrief. At that we can try to identify if any of the people involved in it have any need of welfare assistance in terms of mental health or just need to talk about it to a counsellor. That is available over the phone or also, for more serious need, it is available in person.

We have put a lot of extra money and a lot of extra thought into the delivery of welfare services to our staff, partly brought on by the traumatic incidents in 2017, the terrorist attacks and the Grenfell Tower disaster. We have always known it, but that brought home the sheer trauma and difficulty that people suffer going through such difficult incidents. They can deal with it at the time but afterwards it starts to have an impact. There is a lot in place now. I am sure we can always do more on it and we will continue to focus on it because the Commissioner is determined that we look after our people as best as we possibly can.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you. Finally, Deputy Mayor, if I can ask you this. You have already been asked about MOPAC's approach to community engagement but I am going to put this to you. We are meeting with John Shapiro, the Chair of the London Communities Policing Partnership, and these are points he made to MOPAC in correspondence last year, questions that I must say that MOPAC were incredibly slow in replying to. We were copied into it. In fact, if I am right, it took months before a reply even went. The list of concerns

expressed were: delays in receiving SNB funding monies – I think we have addressed that already – insufficient support from MOPAC to assist with problems faced by SNBs, a lack of response to general inquiries or questions concerning administration and process, and no public acknowledgment or promotion of the role of SNB chairs.

John [Shapiro] also made the point that he, along with others, are all volunteers in this job. I personally know because he lives in Tower Hamlets, which I represent, the amount of time and dedication he devotes to that particular SNB. The reason that I raise it formally is that we are meeting John and his team tonight and it would be good to get a message from you to that meeting. I think MOPAC are at the meeting.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I used to attend the SNB in Hackney, so I totally understand. We are grateful for the volunteering that takes place through the SNBs. They are really committed people who are committed to their communities and engaging with their communities. As I said earlier, I do know that there is a variance and variability in how well the SNBs are working and functioning in London.

I will look back at this. You have raised – and I know that it has been raised by John Shapiro as well – the level of support. My understanding is that there has been quite a lot of work in the boroughs where there have been particular issues of unsafe SNBs, a lot of work from officers to try to support and to get those SNBs up and running again. I know there have been some delays with the funding. We are pushing that through and progressing that. I believe the Interim Chief Executive of MOPAC is meeting John Shapiro very soon around that. It might be the meeting that you are referring to this evening. I will double check that. I have seen the letter that has come through and we are looking into that as quickly as we can.

I would say that SNBs are one part of the infrastructure around community engagement. It is not the only way that we do community engagement or that we understand what Londoners are thinking and Londoners want out of their police service. They are an important part but they are not the only part.

Steve O’Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): My only addition to that is that the form for applying for the funds that you are offering is 30 pages.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I know. I have heard this and we are looking at that. It is under £1,000 a page.

Steve O’Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): If you could look at that that would be good.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is being looked at. I know that was a specific complaint.

Steve O’Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): These are volunteers.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I understand that, yes.

Steve O’Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): I will now hand over to Assembly Member Arnold to take us forward, tackling violence against women and girls.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you, Chair. Good morning, Sir Stephen.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Good morning.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: HMICFRS made observations and recommendations on the MPS on domestic abuse in its recent PEEL assessment. I am just going to pick up two of those and see if you can help us.

The MPS's domestic abuse [reporting] rate is higher than the England and Wales average, so congratulations on that, but its use of voluntary attendance at police stations, when a suspect is interviewed but is not under arrest, is almost double that of the England and Wales average. It recommends that the MPS review why this is happening to ensure that it does not put victims at risk. Will you be looking into this recommendation with a view to accepting it, given the risk to victims and the persistent rates of offender activities in this area?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The answer is, yes, we will. I am not content with the figures as they are. HMICFRS is quite right to raise it as a concern. I have asked for some work to be done looking at our releasing under investigation (RUI) and bailing of domestic violence suspects. I am concerned that we may be not using the full power of the law to protect victims, more often than not statistically women, so that does bother me.

I am pleased that there is a deal of work going on in the domestic abuse area. There is a group being led by Commander Bas Javid [MPS] that is looking at improving our performance across the board on domestic abuse, and looking at our arrest rate because I think that should be higher. This is the initial attendance. We all know that a great many victims of domestic abuse pull away from the prosecution because they do not have confidence. It takes too long. They do not feel that they are getting the support or that it is being taken as seriously as it should be, or they come under threat by the offender in the first place because of the domestic circumstances. That is why I think the bail issue and the RUI issue is an important one.

Our initial arrest rate is not as high as it could be. That tells me that we need to look more carefully at what action our officers are taking at the scene. Often that is masked by the fact, though, that the offender may have left. Therefore, the initial arrest is not possible, so what we need to do is make sure that in the next 72 hours - preferably the next 24 but the next 72 hours - there is relentless follow-up on that case and that the offender is identified and arrested. We should be using the caution plus-three approach, which is what you talked about, bringing someone in not under arrest.

You will of course appreciate that code G of the Police and Crime Evidence Act [PACE] tells us that we can only arrest somebody if it is necessary. Now, as with much in life, it is about interpretation. I wonder if our interpretation is as other forces are because our figures are so out of kilter with other forces. We acknowledge that we probably need to look at that again and say, actually, in many instances an arrest is necessary and should be carried out.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Yes, thank you for that. The other area that popped up for me was that they said that the MPS needs to use its powers more effectively to protect victims of domestic violence and review its use of Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs), DVPO notices and Clare's Law. It has also recommended that the MPS collect feedback from vulnerable victims of domestic abuse to improve its service. The first half is: should you be using your powers? You answered that really in the first half by saying you are not satisfied and you want more done.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Yes. On the DVPOs, tomorrow - it might be today or tomorrow - we are running a training day at Scotland Yard to disseminate best practice from our central Domestic Abuse Team, who hold the best practice, to the lead officers on each of the BCUs in relation

to domestic abuse and also to the local judiciary. It is a joint training session looking at streamlining the process and driving better usage of the orders to try to protect victims a bit better.

October will see the hard launch of the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme - Clare's Law - to make their rights clearer to victims and to help them be better informed, and also to make sure our officers understand how we can assist victims to improve their knowledge of their situation and protect themselves. Yes, I see the thing on the Victims' Voice forum as well and the aim is to create a group to give us feedback to shape our approach on domestic abuse.

In summary, there is a lot of work to do but people are working very hard. Officers do work very hard to try to protect victims. We need to look at some of our interpretation of legislation in relation to this, to do more and to do better on it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: I recall when I was a member of the old body, the Metropolitan Police Authority, there was very close working with Victim Support. In fact, it was really quite tight because the then Commissioner was committed to that organisation. Is that relationship still as tight because they really would have the evidence about feedback and I would say they could develop a better relationship with vulnerable individuals?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I am not sure, to be honest.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, our relationship with Victim Support is very close.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: When you say yours, you could be talking MOPAC's. I was wondering about the police service because there are two perspectives here.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I do not know that it is not good and tight. I do not have evidence to the contrary. I would expect it to be positive and strong, particularly because we rely on Victim Support to do what it says: to protect and support the victim. I would like to see us - and this is not a surprise - being more intrusive and more action-focused at the start of the incident, that is to make arrests where that is an appropriate thing to do, to follow through relentlessly, make sure that the victim is protected, make sure that the right agencies are engaged with the victim to protect them and make sure the criminal justice system, where appropriate, is engaged with the offender to deal with the offender.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you very much. I have a couple of questions for the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. The Mayor measures progress on domestic abuse by looking to reduce the rates of attrition in cases of violence against women and girls as they pass through the criminal justice process. Deputy Mayor, just remind us what was the benchmark that you started with and what are the current levels of attrition that you have secured with the work that you are doing in this area?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do not have the figures in front of me for the specific levels of attrition around domestic abuse, and I can obviously get back to you on that, but there has been a lot of work, particularly around one of the things I wanted to say. Claire Waxman, who is the independent London Victim's Commissioner, has done a lot of work in looking at, engaging and consulting with victims about their experience across the criminal justice service, which obviously includes a large part of the MPS.

It is a slightly false distinction between the MPS and MOPAC and our work on victims, because we work very closely with the MPS in feeding in the views and the lived experiences of victims, whether that be victims and survivors of domestic abuse or sexual violence as well. We know there is a real problem - and the Deputy Commissioner has been very clear - around the number of detections, sanction detections and convictions for women around violence against women. There are issues around domestic abuse and rape. There is a real problem here and there is a lot of work that is being maintained at the moment.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Let me stop you there because my question was quite specific. The Mayor has said he wants to measure progress.

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

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Are you saying you are not in the space to actually give that measurement because it is too early?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am saying I do not have that in front of me.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: You do not have it in front of you?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, that is what I am saying.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Well, can we have that?

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

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: I do make a distinction between MOPAC, your job, the Mayor's job and the police, and I just want to know that the Mayor's promises that he has made are being delivered, so I look forward to seeing that information.

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

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Can I just ask you a couple of questions as well about your funding of youth in major trauma centres? This is absolutely marvellous. I know that for at least 10 years or as long as the first project started my colleague, Assembly Member Pidgeon, has wanted to bring this into London. That recognises the key intersection between gang lifestyle and violence against women and girls. Can you tell us anything about this work? Is it delivering as expected or do you need to get back to us about that?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): On youth workers in accident and emergency (A&E) and trauma centres, you might have seen that the Mayor made an announcement yesterday - and I was in North Middlesex University Hospital with him - around an uplift in funding for that. That will increase the number of youth workers in some A&E units and in the trauma centres, but also increase the number of A&E units that have those youth workers. Part of that is around picking up young women and girls who are victims of violence, sexual violence or domestic abuse. The work that they are doing is incredibly important.

When I was speaking to practitioners, youth workers and clinicians at the North Middlesex University Hospital yesterday, they told me that they had had three youth workers doing this work. Through the Mayor's funding they will now have five youth workers and it enables them to really focus on the problems in their area. They are picking up young women and girls and they described the work that they do as "life-changing" and "life-saving". That is what we are seeing coming through in the work, not just in North Middlesex but in the

five extra A&E units that the money is being rolled out to and the increase in capacity in the major trauma centres as well.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: That is good to hear because that really matches what we heard from victims. I do not know whether you heard the statements from --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Redthread. Yes, I did. It is fantastic.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: -- the Redthread event, and that was attended by Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM]. You could not want that work to be expanded when you heard about how that would change lives, so that is good to hear.

Lastly, just another one. We know that housing is so important because anybody who has worked in this area knows that what victims are always looking for is an opportunity to start again or to move away from current behaviours that they have. Will you be continuing or improving the funding of the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal programme?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Absolutely. We are sustaining the funding of the Pan-London Housing Reciprocal programme. I have met them. There was an event with them - I think last week - around domestic abuse services and that programme. It is incredibly important in terms of being able to move women and families out of dangerous and difficult situations and move them out of refuges as well. This is not just obviously the women - important though that is - it is also picking up other young people and families who are at risk, whether that be from gang violence or whatever violence it is.

The problem with the Reciprocal is that there is always going to be a mismatch between demand and the resources that we are able to put in, and we get back to the fundamental issue that there is not enough housing in London to be able to easily move those people who are really in need of being moved.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you. The last question is: are you satisfied that action taken by MOPAC is looking at the other wider issues? Absolutely, we have to stay with violence but there is the financial and cohesive control that can go on for years, which can end up with the victim responding and then being charged for murder in some cases. Can you assure us that MOPAC has these other areas on its agenda in the same way that it has violence against women and girls?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): There should not be a distinction between violence against women and girls, whether it is physical, mental, coercive or financial. For me, it is all part of that spectrum. MOPAC's VAWG Strategy not just acknowledges that but views that as part of the spectrum, so absolutely the Strategy picks that up.

There is more work to be done, however, in terms of training and understanding around coercive control and what that means. I had a good meeting recently with an academic at Southpoint Bank University around the use of mobile technology and coercive control. We are looking about what we can do to work with her around some of the training needs, not just for the police but for probation officers or those that are dealing with perpetrators as well. It is part of the spectrum but it is an area where we do have to make sure that we are keeping up with the different ways of perpetrating violence against women and girls. Of course, control is absolutely one of those areas.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Thank you. As someone who, along with colleagues, put this matter on the agenda in 2000, I commend the work that we have heard about today and the work that is ongoing. Thank you.

Peter Whittle AM: Talking about violence against women and girls, two or three times over the past few years I have asked you about rape statistics. I know this is not exactly domestic abuse as such, but what would it be possible for you to give me an update on what those statistics are looking like now? There was a point at which there was a real increase - a very alarming increase - but I think we are talking about a year ago now.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We did do a piece of work *Beneath the numbers* trying to get underneath the question of: were we seeing a substantial increase in rape or were we seeing a difference in either confidence to come forward or reporting? As you know, that piece of research showed that as usual it is complex but one of the issues was that - and this is to the credit of the MPS - the way that they report and they record allegations of rape has really improved. That is one of the underlying factors around rape increasing.

I would have to ask the Deputy Commissioner who has the figures in front of him, in terms of incidents of rape, whether they have continued on that upward trajectory or that they have stabilised but, in terms of the issue of rape, there has been a substantial body of work undertaken by Claire Waxman [Victims' Commissioner for London] with her rape review and looking at what happens when the MPS gets reports of rape and that journey of the victim survivor through the criminal justice system.

Last Friday I chaired Justice Matters with Claire Waxman, bringing together the partners to ensure that her recommendations are taken forward and an action plan comes out of that. Every time I see the figures I am shocked that we are looking at 3% of reports in London getting a conviction. It is shocking. Every part of the system needs to improve and we also need to make sure that there are those support services for victims of rape to support them to go through the criminal justice system.

Claire Waxman's report is clear that one of the key factors of women falling out of the criminal justice system or deciding not to pursue the allegation, is lack of support, the ability to be properly supported. A large proportion of that is around resources. We have a big gap between the demand and the need of women in London and the ability of the services to keep up. That is why the Mayor put £15 million extra this year, on top of the £44 million, into services for violence against women and girls. That includes the ability of rape crisis centres and the Sexual Assault Referral Centres to reopen their waiting lists, which have been closed.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you. Moving on to the next section, which is about keeping young people and children safe, Assembly Member Pidgeon, please.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes. I will just pick up - it does link both together - the discussion Assembly Member Arnold was having with you, Deputy Mayor, about the youth workers and A&E departments. Does that mean every A&E department is covered or are there still some that do not have any?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Not every A&E. I think there are 28 or 29 A&E departments. The announcement yesterday was for five extra A&E units to be covered. They have been chosen by looking at need, as you would imagine. They are the top five where we have the ability to fund and they are the most in need of these youth workers. If we had extra funding, we would roll it out further. Whether it would go out to every A&E unit I do not know. It is just the top five at the moment.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you for that clarification. Let us start off by talking about the issue around knife crime. I am looking at the figures. It depends how you look at them. You can look at actual numbers of homicides and they are down. You said in your statement on the MOPAC report that there has been a reduction of stabilisation, so there has been a drop. I did not quite catch whether it was 16%.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): 16%.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It was 16%. When you look at things like sanction detection rates, for knife crime it was only 12.9% in the year 2018/19 - a fall from 16.7% in the previous year. The figures are still a very mixed picture and obviously we have seen some terrible fatalities in the last week, young people losing their lives. Can you both give me an update on specific actions the MPS is taking, or you as Deputy Mayor, to tackle knife crime in London? Also, I would like an update on the future of the VCTF because a lot of officers have been borrowed.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): As the Deputy Mayor said, knife injuries under 25 (non-domestic abuse) has varied. I think it is about 16.8% down at the moment. It has been 20%, so it is fluctuating a little bit and we are watching that to make sure the reduction does not get less, as it were. It is far too high a level. That is the issue. There is no complacency from the Commissioner or anyone else saying, "It is down X% therefore it is okay". It is going in the right direction but it needs to continue to go into that direction for several years before we get to a level that is still unacceptable, but it is our key issue at the moment.

As you will be well aware, we set up the VCTF. It has focused very heavily on trying to take knives off the street. It has taken thousands of knives off the street along with other colleagues across the MPS, but I think you have put your finger on the issue, which is the detection point. What we are doing now is reinforcing the investigative capacity around knife injuries. We are doing that in a couple of ways. We are looking to recruit more civilian investigators. I think my memory serves me that, for the violent crime area, we need about 100 and we are on course to get that but it is quite a difficult market. It is quite a tapped out market. A lot of police forces are looking for that sort of skillset, often retired police officers with investigative skills, and there are a lot of companies out there offering them different contracts.

We have started recruiting and they are starting to work with the VCTF and the intent is to improve the investigative side of things, get better evidence, get them in front of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), get them in front of the courts and get them dealt with properly in the criminal justice system, whether that is incarceration or something else is a matter for the justice system. We want to make sure we can get more of them into that system, so that is where our primary focus is. We are continuing the work of the VCTF. It will be extended in terms of numbers.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Those officers from the [Roads and] Transport [Policing Command] are going to remain in it?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): They will do. There has been a slight deterioration and impact in their ability to perform over the last 10 days because of Extinction Rebellion. To be honest, we have tried to protect them as much as possible so it has only been a minimal disruption to them. We think that is important because of the need to reduce violent crime.

We are continuing with our tactics around it. We are also looking at the BCUs. Every BCU has a violence plan working with the local council, which is heavily focused on diversion activities to try to keep people away from the activity that might lead to those sorts of offences taking place in the first place. It is not just stop and

search all the time, we are trying to be more nuanced in terms of on-street presence and enforcement but also investigation to get to the right end but also diversionary activities to try to keep people away from that level of violence.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you. Deputy Mayor, do you have any specific actions you want to highlight that you have taken around these issues of knife crime?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): On top of the investment from the Mayor that I have already outlined around A&E and trauma centres, there is the funding into the MPS for the VCTF. There is the setting up of the VRU and the programme of investment that [VRU] Director Lib Peck has outlined for this year around keeping children and young people safe at specific times, around working with schools but also around working with young victims of domestic abuse.

To put some specifics around that, in December 2018 the Mayor announced collaboration with Google, announcing an over £500,000 award from Google to work with young people around social media. There has been a plethora of activity around interventions with young victims around violence. We have increased the amount of money and the number of support workers for young people from 10 to 20, so that when young people have been victims - not just victims of crime but witnesses of violence - these young workers can be sent in to work with the communities and those young people.

We have funded the regional manager for Crimestoppers, which is an important aspect of trying to improve the information that is coming through to the MPS. It has certainly been activated. I know it has been activated on a number of occasions in recent murder enquiries and in the aftermath of recent murders to try to encourage people to come forward with anonymous information, to enable that investigation to go forward.

There is also the work we are doing on gangs with a London gang exit programme; the extra money and extra investment that have been put in by the Mayor to increase and sustain the London gang exit programme. Of course, there is the investment from the Mayor with the co-commissioning fund, which is a programme that we have recently published the results of, the first two researches around rescue and response for young people who are caught up in country lines and who are victims of abuse, sexual violence and grooming, who have been sent outside of London.

Across the piece, we have done a large amount of work and investment in enforcement and supporting the MPS to suppress the violence and enforce it but also in that longer term intervention and prevention and safeguarding of young people.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: There are a lot of projects there. The Google one, it would be useful if we could have something in follow up because that sounds very interesting, just to give us that detail.

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

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: How are you personally ensuring oversight of all these to know what is delivering and perhaps what is not, so you can prioritise for future years?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Over the last year I have been chairing the Knife Crime Executive Board - I personally chaired that - which brought all partners round the table to look at what was happening in London, where the barriers were for progress and what needed to be developed. We are now moving that into a Violence Reduction Board that will oversee the work. That will be part of the partnership coming together around the work of the VRU, sitting beneath the Partnership Reference Group.

I will continue to chair that to ensure that, on a regular basis, we are able to look at what is happening and make sure that we are quickly taking action if there are any barriers, or quickly taking action where there is a need for extra action in a particular area, whether that be through the assessment of the Knife Crime Action Plan that the VRU has undertaken or whether that be through working with our partners, such as Probation, to ensure that it is prioritising tackling violence in the way that it should be.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. Thank you for that. Let me move on to another issue: the issue of the gangs [Violence] matrix (GMV). You promised that you were going to have a complete overhaul of this by the end of the year. Are you on schedule with that and, also, are you satisfied that what comes out of this revised GMV will be an accurate tool to monitor gang members as posing a risk to the public?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We are working - and the Deputy Mayor is well aware of this through her role - very closely with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). It has given us some very specific requirements in relation to the GMV. We have taken action on the back of that. On 4 October [2019] we got a letter from the ICO agreeing that many areas of concern had been addressed and recognising the intention to comply with the notice. That is basically its way of saying, "You are on course". We are continuing to work with the ICO to put the matrix in a place where the ICO can give it a clean bill of health.

We had to take some steps since the notice. We have ceased to share the GMV in its entirety with partners until we have agreements in place around data sharing with all of our partners. That is an important aspect of it for public confidence, but I just need to be clear that we continue to be sure that the GMV is an effective tool for us in trying to deal with gang violence and try to interdict that violence and get people out of that lifestyle.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: By the end of December [2019] you anticipate you will have a revised matrix that conforms to what the ICO has requested?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Exactly. We are being helped along that path by the Deputy Mayor with oversight.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Good.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Sophie, I think you were at a meeting where this was a high priority issue in Hackney. Given the delay with this whole thing, there were the concerns felt in the communities - clearly it was a black community in some localities, including my own constituency - whether as soon as possible some sort of summary or an overview can be brought together so that we can then return to the discussions that were had at local level about this. One of the biggest attendances I have seen at Hackney Community and Voluntary Sector (HCVS) was about this. It would be good to feed back to communities about the actions and the latest protocol that has been agreed.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am well aware of the concerns in the community. I am not sure I was at the most recent meeting but I have been at meetings in Hackney HCVS where the Gangs Matrix has been raised, as I have with other communities across London. There has not been a delay in the work on the Gangs Matrix. When we published it last December [2018] we said that we expected --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Prior to that.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Sorry. OK. I am confident we are on track and by the end of this calendar year we will be in a position to be able to report back on how the recommendations of the review and the recommendations of the ICO have been implemented. The MPS has already put information on the website and information around the GMV, which are some of the early things that needed to happen. I have chaired a Community Reference Group but I am obviously aware that that is not getting out to all communities and all people, but we will be communicating. You are right to raise that in terms of trying to improve the trust and confidence around the GMV, around its operation and how it is and its impact and its effect. I am confident that we will be able to do that by the end of the year.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Maybe it is a conversation that I can have offline with the Chair of this Committee.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes. That is great. Thank you. If I can move on to other questions I have, one of your pledges, Deputy Mayor, is about making metal-detecting knife wands available to every school in London. In your report it says 250 schools have currently taken this up. Are you satisfied with that?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. Our commitment was that for those schools that wished to have them we would give them a knife wand. At the moment around 250 schools have asked for them. We are looking to see whether there are more schools and whether we need to replenish the stocks. We are not sending them out to every school. It is for a headteacher to decide whether they need one and we are very happy to provide one.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Are you doing any more work to encourage schools to take it up?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We will be looking at that. The communication was through the Safer Schools Officers going into that and we will be looking at that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. Moving on to Safer Schools Officers, what is the latest number of these officers and can you clarify for me: is it one dedicated, full-time PC per school or is it that there is a named officer but they work across three, across five, across 10 schools? Could you just clarify that, please?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The answer to that last part of the question is the model varies. I do not believe it is set. In some areas there is one officer per school.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is their full-time job? They are in that school the whole time?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is my understanding. In other areas there is a shared element. Sorry, I am trying to navigate this to find the figures. I do have them somewhere. Apologies. Sorry, I am not going to be able to find them in here. There is too much information. Hang on, schools and youth officers. The target -- this is schools and youth combined, not just --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What do you mean by "youth"? Can you clarify that for the record?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It would be Youth Engagement Officers, who have a wider remit. They are not attached to schools.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: These are police officers?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): They are police officers, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The figures I have are: target strength for sergeants for those two areas is 51 and we have 47 in place.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is the youth ones?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No, sorry, this is sergeants involved in both schools and youth work.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: All right, sorry.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I cannot split them up. I do not have them split up.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): For sergeants we want 51 and we have 47. For the constables our target is 484 and we have 395. My note here is that the HR data makes it impossible to differentiate between the two categories, Safer Schools Officers or Youth [Engagement Officers], so I cannot tell you what the figures are.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That is fine. That is different to what is the other information we have here, which is in MOPAC's Annual Report. That says there are over 450 in post and you have just said there are 395 in post, and it is going to increase to 550 later this year, while you want to go to 484. It is different to --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I am not trying to excuse differences but if you add the PCs to the sergeants it comes to 530-something.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Add them in. Yes, that is probably where the difference is coming in. OK. Potentially that is where it is.

You said in some areas it is one per school. In other areas it is shared. What is the maximum number of schools?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Sorry, I do not know but I can find out and come back to you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: That would be helpful, just to understand their goals. That would be good.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Sure, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you. I want to move on to the HMICFRS report. It was quite critical in some areas, obviously not all areas. Once again, we go back to the ongoing HMICFRS reports around child protection that have highlighted significant areas of concern. In the latest report one Missing Persons Unit showed 77 people reported missing in one day but only three staff on duty in the Unit. In terms of caseloads for officers, they are struggling in this area but also in the area of managing registered sex offenders, up to

around 100 compared to 60 in 2016. Is that acceptable and what are you doing – following this PEEL assessment and the other HMICFRS reports – to try to manage that?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The figure I have in terms of RSOs managed by our sex offender managers remains about 60 offenders per manager. That is what I am looking at. We are working hard to recruit and put more officers and staff into our safeguarding units. We are increasing in numbers, as we discussed earlier in the meeting, but we acknowledge these officers are under pressure.

I am afraid it is one of the situations that happens. The more that we know about offenders and the more offenders we know about, the more there is a demand for safeguarding for the public from those offenders, which is entirely understandable. That is our job but it does mean, the more data we have and our appreciation of even greater risk from people, there are more vulnerabilities for us to try to protect against. That weight falls on a number of officers and staff that is not growing as fast as the data grows and our knowledge grows.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The PEEL report does say that offender managers now manage around 100 RSOs each, compared to 50-60 in 2016. This was in the September [2019] PEEL report. You disagree with the figures?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We have had some work done and what I have is that the average figures of RSOs managed by our managers is about 60.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: This was also criticised, I recall, in the last HMICFRS report.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It was, yes. I am not saying 60 is a good figure. I am saying --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Are you putting additional resources in there to deal with that?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): As I have said earlier, we are looking at where our growth will go and we have to come to the best decision on that. I am sure that Mark Simmons, the Assistant Commissioner for frontline, will be putting that near the top of his list in terms of: "I need reinforcements here". I am sure a lot of BCU Commanders will be as well.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It did say in the PEEL assessment that the force should ensure frontline staff are aware of the RSOs in their area so they can play a part in monitoring and managing them. That is potentially working with Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) and others for perhaps some of the lower-risk offenders so they can help manage it. Is that something you are looking at?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): One of the actions we have coming out of the HMICFRS report is that neighbourhood policing teams will be appraised of the top RSOs on an ongoing basis in their area. That again feeds back to the fact that if we reinforce the DWOs with the extra numbers we will expect more results from them in terms of managing the registered sex offenders at a slightly lower level, obviously the lower-level offenders, leaving the specialist unit at the centre of the BCU to deal with the higher-threat people. It is trying to get to that balance.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: This is something you are moving to?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We are, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The PEEL inspection also raised concerns about how the MPS protects vulnerable people, particularly children. You have said in your response that it is going to take a further two years to ensure children receive a consistently improved response. Is that good enough?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Do you mean the MPS said that?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I am not sure who said that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. I think it is in my briefing. I am just trying to see where that is. It must be in the MPS's response to the HMICFRS that it will take a further two years to ensure that children receive a consistently improved response.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): If that is in our response that we have put together --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, that is HMICFRS noted that the MPS told it that it anticipates work to ensure children receive this response will take a further two years.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is anticipating the fact that we will be reinforcing the area. We are continuing to be under scrutiny from the Deputy Mayor on it and we want to improve but we are not going to say we can do that overnight, recruiting the staff. We cannot simply take people in. You know this. We cannot take brand new recruits and put them in. They have to have a level of experience and maturity and professional training to deal with it.

It will take time to build that workforce up. There has been a lot of change in that area. We know - because I think we discussed it at our previous meeting - that that has driven some vacancy levels. That needs to stabilise and they need to be reinforced with new people coming into the organisation and them gaining the experience to go in, which is probably why we said there will be a time period of a couple of years.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I understand what you are saying. I just seriously worry that - we started out with the previous HMICFRS reports and the quarterly inspections of how you are treating vulnerable children - now two years-plus on from that, you are saying it is still going to take another two years. That is four or five years before the MPS is really guaranteeing a child in any part of London will get the consistent and high quality service. I personally find that really worrying. Does it worry you in the least in the MPS?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It does worry me but the daily life in the MPS is now - and has been for a number of years, certainly as long as I have been in it - managing risk and balancing that risk. Do we make sure that we have enough firearms officers on the streets to deal with the terrorist threat? Do we put more officers and staff into teams to protect victims? Do we focus on domestic abuse? The answer is we need to do all of it but we need to do it in a programmed way. I believe the way the Commissioner is leading the organisation is a careful, considered but dynamic move forward across a broad front. I know we always focus on the negatives in PEEL reports, but if you look at what it says in the positive, it talks about the organisation moving positively in the right direction across a broad front.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, it does.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Because it has a good plan. It has a Commissioner who is clear on what she wants from her people and is determined to deliver it. Do I worry about child protection? Do I worry about domestic abuse? God knows, yes, I do.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I accept there are good things in here, and I have read it. Particularly around children is the area I often focus on.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Of course.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I just want to make sure you are fully --

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I chair the Oversight Group and I have done since the original report of HMICFRS came out. I totally understand your questions. They are the same questions I ask. Can you do this faster? Can you improve more consistently faster and can you prove to me that the outcomes for children are better? These are the classic questions that are right to be asked of the MPS.

It is right to say that there has been quite significant progress in child protection. HMICFRS also does acknowledge that. In terms of the work that we undertake and I undertake with the MPS in assessing that progress, I can see that coming through in the audit reports. You can see improvements. While there is still some way to go, we are seeing improvements in the way that the MPS engages with and looks after missing children. We are seeing improvements in police protection. We are also seeing improvement in child sexual exploitation, the reviews around that. There have been improvements.

There is still a long way to go but I also think we have seen improvements in the managing of risk when you talk about the RSO list and the caseloads. HMICFRS is right to raise that but also, through the work that has happened since the original HMICFRS report, there has been a new risk assessment and the MPS is much better at setting the list of RSOs. That is an important thing to acknowledge. Yes, there does need to be another step change and more progress made but it is not that there has not been improvements and there has not been an improvement in consistency as well.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I hope, through that work you are doing, you are doing your own dip sampling because that is what is very telling in the HMICFRS reports, when it has done those samples. Some are very, very good but there are still too many that are not giving the outcomes that children should have.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Absolutely. If you take, for example, improvements in the dip reports, overall grading in the review of missing children shows an improvement. The number of places from "Inadequate" to "Requires attention", they are moving. You can see it and that is what I look at. You can see that moving. It needs to move faster and better, but it is moving.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Great. Thank you.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you. We move on to the next section, which is quite appropriate given that this is National Hate Crime Awareness Week and after some of the scenes we saw on television last night in Bulgaria, but the Football Association Chair did remind us that we have problems at home as well. Assembly Member Eshalomi, standing together against hatred, intolerance and extremism.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Thank you, Chair. To you first, Deputy Mayor, obviously we know that the Mayor launched the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programme back in December 2017. Could you take us through the next step for this programme, please?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The next practical step around that programme is to deliver the Small Grants Scheme (SGS), which has been linked to some of the extra funding for hate crime. There is £1 million that has been set aside in terms of a SGS for community groups who will be working with young people around CVE and radicalisation. I hope that we will be able to launch that soon and that we will get bids through that soon so that we can have those programmes up and running before the end of the financial year.

Florence Eshalomi AM: That is great. If you could keep us updated, especially in terms of which groups have been funded, that would be really good.

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

Florence Eshalomi AM: Obviously, the Chair has mentioned the really distressing scenes yesterday from the England match. You will be aware that we more recently launched a report – quite fittingly – at Chelsea football ground on 30 September [2019]. Our report found last year that across London there are some shocking statistics. Homophobic hate crime had gone up by 81%. Racist and religious crime was up by 107%. Disability hate crime was up by 215%. Transphobic hate crime was up by 261%. You have responded to our report and you said that clearly a lot more needs to be done. Could you give us some practical measures in terms of what you think you and the Mayor could do to respond to this growing issue across London?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): In terms of practical measures around responding to the shocking figures you have just read out, one of the things that is obviously an important role of MOPAC is to commission victims' services and to make sure that those adults or young people who are victims of hate crime have the appropriate services. The Mayor has put extra money into victims' services, including a specialist service for hate crime victims, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) victims, extra money into monitoring and supporting victims of anti-Semitism, as well as community outreach programmes for victims, and upskilling those community organisations who are working with victims of hate crime. That is an important, practical thing and programme of work that we have undertaken. As I said, one of the key areas for us as MOPAC is making sure we have the right services for victims of hate crime. Also, an important aspect is making sure that we raise awareness of hate crimes so that those who are victims feel confident to report.

We have supported financially – as well as in other ways – the National Hate Crime Awareness Week. I went to the service in St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday evening, which was the start of the National Hate Crime Awareness Week. It is always a very moving and important ceremony and service. We have also made sure that we are putting funding into looking at how you prevent and how you work with communities to tackle hate crime before it starts, working with schools. We have the Heartstone interactive schools programme that we have invested in, which is working in that way. Then there is the work of the central Hate Crime Hub in the MPS, which is investigating and trying to bring the perpetrators of hate crime to justice as well. There is a way to go on that. I am very aware that the number of detections and prosecutions around that is not high enough, given the incidents that you have already pointed out.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Yes. On that last point, that is one of the things that our report did focus on. There is a range of proposed works that I think are the right steps, especially the rollout of the MPS's school education programme, which we think is vitally important. In terms of hate crime offenders, our report focused on the fact that we feel that a lot more needs to be done because, unfortunately, there is a cohort of people who feel that it is a victimless crime. What more do you think could be done to address the fact that a lot more focus needs to be given to the offenders of hate crime?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I agree. Every bit of our work you have to look at supporting victims and then working with the perpetrators, catching them and then working with perpetrators so that they do not reoffend. That is just as important in the sphere of hate crime as well.

The central Hate Crime Hub is part of that process to ensure that investigations are as good as they can be, as well as ensuring that where there is hateful material on line that that is taken down where it is causing harm. It is across that boundary between free speech into hate crime. That is important. There have been a number of occasions when hateful narratives on the internet have been taken down, because they have crossed that line, because of the work of the central hub. The MPS has increased the number of officers working in that central Hate Crime Hub. It is recruiting two more PCs to add to the team that is there already. Claire Waxman [Victims' Commissioner for London] again is chairing the London Hate Crime Board, which brings together partners across the piece in making sure that that section of activity is co-ordinated, especially important is hearing the voices of victims, of what they need and how they feel best supported in order to take investigations forward.

Florence Eshalomi AM: You just mentioned additional officers. Figures are being bandied about in terms of how many additional officers London will be receiving. Maybe this is one for Sir Stephen, I know that you cannot get involved with operational issues but is there any way or focus that some of those officers are dedicated to this really important area, or is it too early to tell?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): For me I think it is too early. I do not want to sit here and make promises to you around that. Equally, we take it seriously. On the issue topically of hate crime at the football match last night, I noted that one of the things we are going to do is provide specific hate crime training to our 16 Dedicated Football Officers who work with all the football clubs in London, so that they are more focused on it and up to date on the training and awareness and can pass that on to the club through their liaison with the clubs. We know it is an issue in London, but we need to deal with it as best we can and that is a good way of doing that.

Florence Eshalomi AM: One of the things in our investigation was the fact that the MPS is really good in terms of dealing with hate crime but there are still, obviously, areas for improvement. Our initial findings were that the police response to local hate crime was quite worrying. Is there more that you could reassure us on, in terms of officers dealing with that locally? Again, we appreciate the finite resources and the fact that officers have to deal with more complex issues locally but, again, the statistics show that this is all going in the wrong direction.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I get that. I know that we will be replying to you by the 31st of this month in relation to the recommendations. I have some of the initial drafting of what we are going to say. One of the issues is that we need to ensure that frontline officers are properly trained - up to date training on recognising and dealing with hate crime - and understand as much as somebody is not receiving it the impact it would have on the victim. That is something that we will be covering in training going forward for all frontline officers.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Thank you. Finally, it was welcomed that there was recently increased funding for the Catch Hate Crime advocacy services. You touched on the support for victims, but how far do you feel that this will go in addressing the demand that in a sense continues to grow in London for hate crime victims?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is an important addition to the investment around support for hate crime victims but I am not going to pretend that it is going to fill the gap in the demand. The money that the Mayor announced at the beginning of the week as part of National Hate Crime

Awareness Week was an extra £500,000, some of which is going to CATCH. That is going to support around 900 victims. That will give you an idea of that big demand in the capacity. Not all the victims will need the services of CATCH, which is the Community Alliance to Combat Hate (CATCH) but it gives you an idea that there is a significant gap in the ability to provide the services to those individuals and victims of hate crime who need it.

Florence Eshalomi AM: Thank you. I will leave it there.

Andrew Dismore AM: Sophie, I think this is for you: to what extent do you think divisions in the aggressive discourse around Brexit have fed this growth in hate crime?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We saw that after the referendum and the result of the referendum, a spike in hate crime. We were extremely concerned. You can see that when there are specific incidents around any of those political events such as Brexit. I think the discourse around Brexit is extremely worrying because it is so dividing and it is so divisive when we get to that point. It is public narrative and political narrative where people are being treated as 'other' and people are being treated in that divisive way. The language and the vocabulary that we see and hear day to day, it has an effect on the cohesiveness of our communities and it does have a knock-on effect into the way that hate crime is perpetrated. It is extremely worrying and that is one of the reasons that we have put additional money into communities and into the services for those who are victims of hate crime.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I can answer you by saying I know we should not have to put 60 police officers outside the House of Commons and the House of Lords to protect people who work there on a daily basis. That should not be happening in our society and it is.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): If I can just finish off, Sir Stephen, I am glad you said, and I quote, "We recognise there is an issue in London". You are talking about football clubs and I think recognition is half the issue. If you do not recognise the issue, then how on earth can you form strategies to deal with the problem? I met with the MPS's Hate Crime Unit. I think they are doing some excellent work and need to be commended; things have improved a lot.

Where I find the problem is London football clubs and their response to hate crime. Some clubs - and I am not going to name them - have been excellent, absolutely excellent. Some of the smaller clubs, who have no resources, relatively speaking, have been very good. Some clubs, quite frankly, have just been smug. What I am looking at is through your Hate Crime Liaison Officers and Football Liaison Officers, but there is a limit to what they can do. We need more positive messaging from the clubs.

I know, Deputy Mayor, you will be responding to our recommendations in due course, but I am hoping those are areas you can look at. These people do have a massive social responsibility. It is not just about being complacent. They cannot rest on their supposed laurels. They are only doing a fraction of what they can do in terms of education, messaging on match day, encouraging a much more friendly atmosphere and so on. I think that is the message I would like to pass to you, to your liaison officers. It is about actually shaking some of these clubs out of their inertia. You do not have to comment on that.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Sorry, I was reflecting on my experience in Scotland in dealing with sectarianism at football matches. It is one of the most difficult things to deal with. It is one of the most hateful things as well. 99% of people go to a football match to enjoy or suffer watching their team play, it is not to get that sort of abuse and be in a crowd with that sort of thing going on. It is an incredibly difficult thing to deal with. It has to come from the clubs and the players.

I am actually quite encouraged by the reaction of a great many of the players to this. It is essential, because they are the victims in much of this. It is directed at them. They respond in general in a very good way and I think they are the ones that will drive the behaviour of the fans, the people in the crowd. That is probably the way to go, the clubs, the players and people, just thinking about it, much as you say, Chair, in terms of awareness, impact and the sensitivities around these sort of things. The clubs need to take action. If they identify and can evidence it, these people need to be prosecuted. As importantly, and sometimes more importantly for them, and to demonstrate to the other people in the crowd, they need to be banned for life from any football match in the United Kingdom.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): One of the groups that gave us evidence is Hope not Hate, who have done an excellent report. They do a yearly report. They actually documented some of the links within organised gangs professing a certain ideology and the activity on the terraces, which in turn sort of contributes to --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): You all know, Chair, we have seen - and Neil Basu [Assistant Commissioner, MPS] has been very clear on it - an increase in right wing violent extremism. In my view, there is some linkage between that and the views expressed in some football grounds, both in this country and abroad. Certainly, when we see our teams play European teams, some of the things that occur in Europe and when the European teams come over here, very extreme views, racist views, often quite strongly politically aligned in a way that we just do not see in this country in the main.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): I will hand over to Ms Arnold, but can I again comment in terms of international work that you are doing? I have seen some of it first-hand and have spoken to people. The work is important beyond recognition, the MPS and generally all police forces over the last few years, so credit to you where it is due.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: I wanted to commend you for the work that you have done in leading this issue. It is like what Sir Stephen said about the invidiousness and lack of understanding that is underpinning this, it is really beyond belief. Many years ago, I remember in my locality walking and an Arsenal fan wearing an Ian Wright [English former footballer] t-shirt turned around and called me a "BB". I said, "Hey, we support the same team" and I got more racist verbal abuse, yet there he was wearing the image of his hero, of his football team.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It probably tells you a fair bit about the mentality, does it not?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM: Sometimes the mentality is beyond belief.

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): I am as one with the Chair on this issue, but just for the sake of balance, I am someone who does go every week to watch my London football team, who have a majority of black players most days, one of which torments the opposition supporters, and has never been the subject of direct racial abuse, although apparently there has been some Twitter abuse of that footballer. What happened last night in Bulgaria was shocking, but from experience, pleasingly, we do not have as bleak a picture in this country, but we need to be on top of it.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): On that note, let us go to the next section, which is a better justice system for London.

Tony Arbour AM: This is really for you, Deputy Mayor. The Mayor has constantly said that he wants official responsibilities for the justice system and we have been promised by MOPAC that you are going to come to us and tell how far this devolution has gone. Can you firstly tell us, is it going anywhere, and if it is going anywhere, what is it you want devolved?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As you know, we signed the first memorandum of understanding last year with the Ministry of Justice and London Councils. It is a tripartite memorandum of understanding. In terms of is it going anywhere, yes, it is going somewhere. I believe we are the only Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or only force in the country which has had devolved down to them the Witness Care Units and the funding for that. From April [2019], when we commissioned the Integrated Victims and Witness Service, that included the Witness Care Unit for London. That is not happening elsewhere. It is a devolved package, which has seen much greater integration for the support for victims and their journey through the criminal justice service.

We have made really good strides around female offending as part of the memorandum of understanding. We have sign-up to a blueprint across London, which is a holistic blueprint for how we work and intervene with female offenders to enable them to bring down their reoffending rate and to enable them to be diverted away from custody. Those were two specific examples that came out of the memorandum of understanding and there was further work which was signalled in the first memorandum of understanding. We have been working with the Ministry of Justice very closely to develop that further, with two key themes around tackling disproportionality and tackling violence. We are doing well with those negotiations and those discussions. We are hoping to be able to sign another memorandum of understanding soon.

I am sorry to say this, but it is true: one of the problems that we are having at the moment in order to progress it is the fact that many civil servants have been pulled off this type of work to work on Brexit and of course we have had a churn of ministers. You smirk, but it is true. We had very good relations with [The Rt Hon] David Gauke [MP, former Secretary of State for Justice], who is no longer there. We had very good relations with Edward Argar [MP, former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice], who has now been promoted to the Department for Work and Pensions. However, each minister that comes in, when they are briefed and brought up to speed with what we are doing with the Ministry of Justice and what they are doing with us, is very positive. I really hope that we will get to sign a memorandum of understanding, the second one, which will have proper and more devolution within it for female offenders, for piloting some transition arrangements, but we still have a little bit of a way to go on those negotiations and discussions.

Tony Arbour AM: What is on the shopping list? Irrespective of changes in personnel, your shopping list presumably has remained constant. I think you have only told us about services for female offenders, apart from the matters which are already in the memorandum of understanding. It is not a very ambitious shopping list, is it?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): We have five key areas that we are looking for in terms of devolution and working. One of the largest and the most ambitious is around the Probation Service. This is partly in the first memorandum of understanding, but it is absolutely something that we are working on and want to ensure that we have sign-up from all three, obviously especially the Ministry of Justice, around the new ways in which we will be working with the Probation Service around co-commissioning for rehabilitation services. Not the core Probation Service - that should stay with the Ministry of Justice - and not the employment of the probation officers, but those rehabilitation services like the Through the Gate services which are there for offenders, which will bring together the support services that they need to really enable them and support them not to reoffend. That is a large part of it.

We are continuing to push on victim services, because the Victim Contact Scheme at the moment is not a devolved budget. It sits separately within the National Probation Service. That is more complicated. Although it sounds like a small service to be devolved, that is very ambitious in trying to ensure that we bring together all the victim services and that bit of the Victim Contact Scheme comes together and is devolved down to London.

Again, as I said, these are things that we are still negotiating and discussing with the Ministry of Justice and we are also looking around youth justice arrangements in London. We are looking to have a pilot around transition arrangements in London. As you know, when a young person reaches 18, they often just fall off a cliff edge and they are then put into an adult institution, which is extremely harmful for them, so we are looking for transition arrangements around that. Again, these are things that we are discussing and negotiating and we wait to see whether we will be successful on that, but those are the types of things that are on our shopping list.

Tony Arbour AM: I have to say, I am quite impressed actually. I say that without any guile at all.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): You have made my day.

Tony Arbour AM: There is no doubt that one of the mistakes, which I think was probably before your time, with [The Rt Hon] Mr [Chris] Grayling MP, [former Secretary of State for Justice] was the problem with the Probation Service. It was an absolutely terrible mistake, in my view, as far as that is concerned.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It was, yes.

Tony Arbour AM: Tell me, what exactly do you mean by commissioning in relation to the Probation Service? Does that mean that MOPAC would be setting up some kind of supervisory body, which I understood was going to be taken back in-house, but from what you said it is not being taken back in-house?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That is the difference that I was talking about. It is being taken back in-house after 2021 because they have put the contracts back out to tender. Obviously, that is a very complicated process for the Ministry of Justice to run. That is the difference that I was talking about in terms of the core Probation Service. We are not looking to have that devolved down to us. It is those services that Probation themselves commission out.

Tony Arbour AM: Do you mean things like hostels?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Possibly hostels, but more around, for example, if you were to be an offender leaving prison, you should be having some support services; you should be having services taking you to housing support, looking at possibly what your mental health needs are or other interventions that are needed. At the moment that is done through the contract with the Ministry of Justice. We are looking to have that as co-commissioning alongside the Ministry of Justice. How far we get with that will depend on the negotiations we are having at the moment, whether that means that we have the budget devolved down to us or that we will be co-partners. I would like the budget devolved down to us. I do not know whether we will get there.

Tony Arbour AM: Again going back to your point at the beginning about changes in personnel, is the Ministry of Justice sympathetic to what you are proposing for the Probation Service?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Mostly it is sympathetic in terms of the rehabilitation services, yes, but being brutally frank with you, the question is about how far a budget will be devolved down. I am not sure we will get to the budget being devolved. I think we will get that co-partnering.

Tony Arbour AM: I guess that we, as a Committee, would look at budget after it had been agreed in principle that we might get this. The principle of devolution though to us, in the way that you have outlined, is something which - and my guess is it is probably not a ministerial decision - the civil servants are willing to see as a way forward.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Genuinely, we have really good productive conversations, not just conversations, really detailed work with civil servants and the officers in the Ministry of Justice.

Tony Arbour AM: When do you anticipate that we will know more about it?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That will depend if there is a general election. I am not being flippant; I am genuinely not being flippant.

Tony Arbour AM: No, of course.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It will depend if a general election is called very soon, because we were hoping to have signed something and it has been delayed because of all the pressure on the Government. My fear is that we will not get there because a general election will be called quickly and we will have to wait and then there will be different ministers again.

Tony Arbour AM: Again, I think this is for you, Deputy Commissioner. In regards to devolution and MOPAC's oversight, is one of the difficulties that we have with the administration of justice in London connected with the number of cracked trials because police have been unable, for example, to produce witnesses at the appropriate time? Is it perhaps connected with CPS not being adequately briefed? Are there things, in other words, connected with the administration of justice and their interaction with - I do not want to use the word "failure" - police shortcomings when the trial date is set that the trial has failed? Is there any way in which police can get a better grip over ensuring that cases go ahead?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): It is a pretty complex picture and the person who really understands it from the police point of view Nick Ephgrave, the Assistant Commissioner, who chairs the London Criminal Justice Board. I have to say, he does so very effectively. He is also the national lead on criminal justice, so he has a very good understanding of the whole system. He is working very hard on our disclosure issues with the CPS, but it is a very complex picture. As an example, the average length of time for a rape case to get to court is now 18 months from the commission of the offence. That is because of digital evidence, disclosure requirements, evidence from third parties and so on. The conviction for rape is pitifully small because of the length of time and the complexities involved. You could take that across many of the more complex cases these days.

I have to say, I regularly read in the newspapers, "Well, the case failed because the police officer did not turn up". All I can do is tell you is that every time we look at one of those, it is never that simple. The most recent one was exactly that, where the officer did not turn up. It was not publicity; it was an internal report. The officer did not turn up. In the criminal justice system, the trials are complicated and take a long time and in most cases the officer is not required. If all of a sudden there is a quick movement from defence and prosecution go along with it, "All right, we can hear it today", if the officer was not warned, there is nothing

the officer can do about it. It is a complicated picture and we are working very hard with the CPS and with the courts to try to improve performance.

Tony Arbour AM: There is a particular aspect I want to take up with you, and of course we have all been on visits in relation to rape and we have heard about the digital evidence and so on. One of the things - and we have already briefly discussed it with questions from the Deputy Chairman - is lack of confidence in policing. This is one of the things which must have a very profound effect.

If people are all teed up, the matter is going to go to trial, the witnesses have been warned and everybody has been there and there is some failure which has occurred further back in the system, I suppose it is possible that a police officer has not properly been warned or a piece of evidence has not appeared in court, that kind of thing has a very wide-reaching effect on lots of people. It is not just some person being stopped in the street and being asked about it. Huge numbers of people are involved in that. Is there no way in which MOPAC can take a grip on that for, I do not know, running the Witness Service or something of that kind? Not directly running the Witness Service, but commissioning it.

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I will not speak for MOPAC, but we know that there is investment going into supporting victims through the criminal justice system. Part of that is to try to get it made slightly more resistant to the damaging effect that time has in relation to it and potentially one trial after another and big delays, people are not ready and so on. Support to the victim can help them get through that because it helps them to understand this is going to take a long time, but it should not take 18 months for an average rape trial to take place. That is partly to do with disclosure issues, partly to do with the digital side of it and the fact that we have to have massive investment and technology and the use, I am afraid, of artificial intelligence to sift through the huge amount of data that we are now being asked to provide in cases.

Tony Arbour AM: Thank you, Chair.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you. The next section will be really quick. Assembly Member Hall did wish to ask the question and then Assembly Member Pidgeon may wish to come in, but it is about the MPS budget. Deputy Mayor, when do you expect to appoint the new chief executive of MOPAC?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I wrote to you around the appointment of Siobhan Peters as Interim Chief Executive. I hope to go out to recruitment very soon in terms of recruiting for a permanent person to come and take up that post. If we go out to recruitment now, the earliest we could possibly get it done, we would be pushing it this side of Christmas, but hopefully we would be able to do that. If not, it will be early January [2020].

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): In terms of the budget, there has been a near 20% increase in MOPAC staff. Why was this scale of increase required and what benefits has this actually brought? A 20% increase is a fair bit.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): One of the things that I said in my introductory remarks was that I was very pleased that we had managed to lever in extra investment. A lot of the extra staff are there because of the extra investment and you have to manage the disbursement of funds. For example, we got money from the Police Transformation Fund for the Drive programme, which is working with perpetrators of domestic abuse. We have to have staff in order: (1) to set that up; and (2) to make sure what the money has been spent has been spent right and is being delivered in the right way. That goes across all the different areas that we have managed to get extra investment. Then of course there is extra investment

from external bodies like the Ministry of Justice or the Home Office, but then the Mayor has put extra money in so that we have had extra resources around violence against women and girls. Again, these are commissioning services. I know you will agree and understand that to commission and to deliver services in an efficient and effective way, you do have to have the staff in order to do that. We are absolutely in line with the sort of perceived wisdom around staffing ratios to the size of budget for commissioning.

I would say if you look at the staffing levels of MOPAC, we are relatively small. In relation to our functions purely as a PCC around the commissioning of budgets, the scrutiny functions, we are absolutely in line with other comparable PCCs. We are not out of kilter with that. We are overseeing, as I said in my introductory remarks, the largest force in the country in the most complex capital city, one of the largest cities in Europe and we are in line with the functions that are needed to do that.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): I was actually going to ask you how you compare with other forces. I know specifically you cannot compare like for like, but you have touched upon that point.

Florence Eshalomi AM: I am just mindful of time. Obviously, you are saying that there are additional pressures that the MPS is facing. In terms of some of the work that MOPAC and the police are bidding for, do you feel that there has been any benefit in securing some of that funding and essentially getting more staff in MOPAC to bid for that, for example, some of the youth workers in accident and emergency (A&E) departments or the advocacy advisers?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): In terms of the extra staff that are managing that extra money which has either come in externally or from the Mayor, they are temporary members of staff. They are not permanent members of staff. It is not adding to the establishment of MOPAC, if you wish.

In terms of what the outcomes are for enabling that to happen, some of the extra investment has enabled rape crisis centres to reopen their waiting lists. It is enabling youth workers to go into A&E units. I have visited the Stalking Assessment Centre and it has enabled hundreds of cases to be referred to them for proper investigation and proper support for victims of stalking, which had not been taking place in the way that it should have been before. I have been to visit the Drive programme in Croydon, which is working with the perpetrators of domestic violence. Really innovative work taking place down there.

We are evaluating this. I am sure that is probably one of your questions, if we have time, how we evaluate this work. On those extra programmes through the Police Transformation funding, we are evaluating them at the moment as to whether they have given value for money, if the outcomes have been the ones that we expect and if it has had sufficient impact. We are evaluating that at the moment so that we can look to see whether we can find or bid for extra funding to continue them, because the Police Transformation funding will come to an end in March 2020.

Florence Eshalomi AM: I think that is one of the things that we will be looking at in one of our future meetings in terms of MOPAC's commissioning role, yes. Nothing more from me.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Just very quickly to you, Deputy Commissioner. In terms of commissioning and other stuff that MOPAC does, it obviously funds a lot of support services, but from a policing perspective, is there any benefit in funding the services such as youth workers in A&E departments? We saw something about that on the news last night. Would it impact policing if these support services were taken away?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I should say of course MOPAC is our oversight body, I am not theirs, so I would be careful about what I say. On the other hand, the commissioning services

you mentioned, a couple of those you have mentioned, it is not a case of consulting but we are very supportive of any activity that will work to protect the victims of domestic abuse, support them and will protect and reduce violent crime. As far as I can see, the commissioning services that are being commissioned are in the right area.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): Thank you. The last section: if we do exit the European Union on 31 October [2019], this will be the last chance for the Police and Crime Committee to ask you about the implications for policing in London.

Andrew Dismore AM: First of all, Sir Stephen, I would like to ask you if you could update us on the preparedness of the MPS for a no-deal exist on 31 October [2019], should that happen. Obviously, you have told us about the 60 officers outside Westminster. Is that going to be enough? What things are we going to need?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We do not anticipate it will be enough on 19 October [2019] when Parliament is sitting and we have also got a significant number of marched protests in London, which we will police, as we do. Yes, there will be peaks and troughs. I chair the Brexit Readiness Group for the MPS and we have met regularly. We have looked at all aspects of policing.

We acknowledge there is always something potentially that will come out of left field that people have not thought of, but we work all the way from the operational implications in central London, through to resilience on BCUs, through to our staff and the implications for them - we have nearly 1,000 who are non-United Kingdom (UK) European Union (EU) citizens but I think they are all in a pretty good place and understand that we will be supportive of them - all the way through to our contracts, those that we have abroad and how they will continue post-Brexit, no matter what happens. We do look at wide range of issues. We believe we are as ready as we can be. As you would expect, we are running a risk register on that. We believe we have mitigated risks as far as we can.

Andrew Dismore AM: There have been discussions in the media about mutual aid with other forces, particularly Northern Ireland, for example. Are we involved with that?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We have trained a number of officers for mutual aid in Northern Ireland. They have to be trained in slightly different tactics because officers are armed with side-arms in Northern Ireland. Clearly ours are not and would not be when they went out there, so the public order situation is slightly different. They have had the training for that, but I think in a previous answer I have said I do not anticipate a huge number of officers going from MPS to Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland's first port of call for mutual aid is usually Police Scotland and they have a substantial number of officers trained in Northern Ireland public order tactics. However, if there was a crisis and we were asked, we have been net recipients of mutual aid in the last week and will continue to be so for however long it takes. The whole system depends upon two-way working so we would provide mutual aid if it was required.

We would anticipate, however, potential for quite high public disorder around protests in London. Run of the mill, People's Vote has been to London in the past with big, big numbers. That was entirely peaceful, entirely lawful and therefore did not require a huge amount of policing. Our concerns are if pro and anti groups come together on the 19 [October]. That may be more of a challenge for us but we are geared up for it, despite other demands that we have on us at this moment in time.

Andrew Dismore AM: Just continuing the theme of mutual aid briefly, are we prepared for a request for mutual aid from forces with south coast ports?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We are. That has been talked about at a national level. I represent the MPS occasionally on a national group chaired by the Permanent Secretary in the Home Office which looks at these sort of issues. That is in discussion. Again, we would be prepared to provide it if it was required.

Andrew Dismore AM: The other issue I want to address is the consequences of Brexit, not in terms of public order and so forth, but in terms of crime-fighting. Neil Basu, the Assistant Commissioner, has talked about the replacements not being as effective. I think a whole list of things have been identified including the European Arrest Warrant, the Schengen Information System (SIS), the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), Europol, Eurojust and so on. Can you update us on progress that may have been made in discussion with the Home Office on arrangements for information-sharing and extradition post-Brexit?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): One of the things that was done very early on in policing was the setting up of the International Co-ordination Unit here in London, which has worked very hard in the last 12 months to put in place as many mitigating factors as we can for the loss of connectivity that we are going to suffer if we exit from the European Union.

The one you did not mention, which I am sure Neil Basu [Assistant Commissioner, MPS] did mention, is that we will no longer be able to be a member of Europol and instead we will fall back on our existing membership of Interpol. Europol is a very effective organisation and that will be a loss, the loss of the second generation SIS and a variety of others, ECRIS, means that we will be operating at a lower level and we will have to work harder to mitigate in some areas.

You saw in the Queen's Speech yesterday the Red Notice made an arrestable offence, which effectively means that if Interpol puts somebody out as wanted, the new legislation, which is not in yet, will give officers in the UK - possibly England and Wales, probably the UK - a power of arrest on the basis of that Red Notice from Interpol. We do not have that at the moment, so we could check somebody and Interpol could say they are wanted for something. We would not have a power of arrest at the moment and we need to put that in place.

Andrew Dismore AM: On the information exchange arrangements, are we going to be significantly worse off than where we are now?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): We will be worse off.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can you give us some examples of the sort of things you can do now that you will not be able to?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): At this moment in time, when a police officer stops somebody on the street and carries out a person check - name, age, sex, height, etc - and checks that person's identity to see if they have a criminal record, that check flashes across the whole of the EU. In future, it cannot do that, which means of course that if we stop somebody in London, it may turn out that they are wanted abroad or that there is criminal intelligence about their behaviour based on something they have done in Europe, but not in England and Wales or the UK. That will not be as easy to get because that information flashes across Europe hundreds of millions of times a year at the moment because of the number of checks that police officers do in this country, and vice-versa will be true when officers in Europe do the same thing.

That link will be broken, and as I understand it, we will have re-establish bilateral agreements with each of the countries. Much like trade agreements, there is optimism but it takes time to do that, so there will be a loss in

relation to that and also a loss in relation to criminal record history. We will not know as much about people. I think the figure is one-third of the people that we take into custody in London are foreign nationals, including currently EU, and half of that one-third, so about 15%, are non-UK EU nationals. We will not have as full a picture of these people as we currently do and we will have to build that up.

Andrew Dismore AM: So overall, it is not good news?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I think I am very clear in saying – policing has been clear from the start – there will be a degradation in our ability here. We have always said that. We have been open about it. We work hard to try to mitigate as much as possible and I think we have put a lot of mitigation in place, but it will not be at the level it is right now.

Andrew Dismore AM: Sophie, can you add anything about discussions with the Home Office trying to do anything with this?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I hesitate – well, not hesitate, I am a bit lost for words – because there is no good news in this at all and it is about losing substantial information exchange. That sounds a little bit dry but I think the Deputy Commissioner has already outlined what that means in relation to people on the streets of London who the police might want to question or need to find out their identity and they will not know whether they are wanted for serious offences outside of Britain. That is just one part of dropping out of Europe without a deal; this is if we do not have a deal.

I would just say AC Neil Basu said if we go out with no deal it would create an immediate risk that people who come to this country who are serious offenders, either wanted or serial and serious offenders committing crimes in this country, we would not know about it. It creates that risk. That risk is substantial. It is hundreds of people. It is a real worry. That is just about the information exchange. You then have European Arrest Warrants and you have passenger information records that are not going to be exchanged. It all sounds a bit dry but it is the meat, it is the bread and butter of policing in London and the country because it is about data. It is really important.

I went to Harrow probably about eight months ago for a public meeting around anti-social behaviour and some of what was happening in public along the high street. The local DWO said in that meeting that they had been working with street drinkers and working with those that were causing some of the problems for the local residents, who were complaining and it was really affecting their lives. The local DWO said in that meeting, “We ran this person’s name through the database and we found out they were wanted in Europe”. That is just one small example in a local public meeting of how often that information is used and needed.

Andrew Dismore AM: We know the Government has published *Yellowhammer* on some of the implications of Brexit. Has it produced a paper with some other bird name in relation to the implications for policing, security and public order?

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): In terms of the work, Richard Martin [Deputy Assistant Commissioner], has been leading for that MPS nationally. We know where the issues are in relation to the information agreements and the tools that are used, which the Deputy Commissioner has been through, which includes ECRIS, Schengen and the European Arrest Warrant. That has been worked through by the International Crime Co-ordination Centre at the cost of millions of pounds. It is about £7 million already that has been spent on doing this, which is particularly frustrating given the lack of funding that we need for police officers on the front line.

We also know that if we fall out without any deal, the impact that that will have, the extra officers that are going to be needed just to deal with trying to get through the cases. It will only be those cases of real high risk; it will not be the lower-down cases which the police are actually dealing with now.

Andrew Dismore AM: Has the Government produced a paper like it did for Operation Yellowhammer on some of the economic implications for policing, security and so forth? I know it is not published yet, but has it produced one? Stephen, do you --

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): There has been significant discussion at a number of Government-led meetings around the implications and Government is well aware of the implications.

Andrew Dismore AM: Has it produced a paper with a bird name, like it has for other things?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The only bird name I have seen is *Yellowhammer*, so --

Steve O'Connell AM (Deputy Chairman): You will be the first to see it, Andrew, do not worry!

Andrew Dismore AM: I have not asked to see it; I am just asking if it exists. It has one called *Kingfisher*, I think, on the effect on poor people. Is there one or is there not?

Sir Stephen House QPM (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I have not seen a specific paper in relation to that. There have been a lot of discussions about it. It is high up the Home Office's agenda in terms of concerns, I know that.

Sophie Linden (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If the root of your question is, "Is the Government taking the security implications of Brexit seriously enough?" no, it is not, because if it was, it would have had a separate agreement on security thinking of how to deal with it.

Unmesh Desai AM (Chair): All right. Can I thank our guests for attending today and for the answers to our questions?