

Police and Crime Committee

2 February 2012

Transcript of Item 3: Question and Answer session with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police Service

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Before we turn to our questions today, there are a couple of stories that have appeared in the press this week that we would like to raise and get a formal answer from the Commissioner, if we can. The first is on the Virgin Media story, which was in the press this week, stating that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) had received payments from Virgin Media in relation to police overtime as the result of a fraud investigation within the company. Commissioner, would you like to tell us a little bit about that?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Chair, in terms of the report on this incident, I just want to indicate that there was a service agreement in place for this particular investigation. That came under sections 25 and 93 of the Police Act Agreement. That agreement was the subject of a judgment by His Honour Judge Bing, at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 9 May 2011, so that was actually mentioned in the first court case that appeared before the court.

In the judgment the agreement did not amount to an abuse of process and was described as lawful. His decision is to be appealed to the Criminal Court of Appeal and, therefore, it is rather difficult for me to carry on discussing that particular case, only to hopefully reassure the Committee that we are going to look into, first of all, this particular agreement; and secondly any similar agreements that may be in place to reassure ourselves that they are appropriate. Obviously, we will await the outcome of this appeal with interest and what the Court of Appeal decides.

Jenny Jones (AM): Legal does not always mean ethical of course. Will you give us a list of similar arrangements, either about overtime or donations? Could you give us a list of similar agreements over the past ten years, say? I am happy to have that in writing obviously. We would all like to know how many times it happened. I realise this is not in either of your times in office, so you cannot be held responsible.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): There are similar arrangements with other organisations that you will be aware of. It is not unusual for the MPS to receive funding from outside, whether it be local authorities or Transport for London (TfL). Indeed, I think there was the launch today of the sponsorship of the Wildlife Crime Unit by an international wildlife charity. So it is not entirely unusual and, indeed, the Police Act envisaged that these kinds of arrangements may be entered into, but I am sure we will be happy to provide the list.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): The concern with this one is that it was the victim of a crime that was providing funding. I think that is the difference, so there obviously must be strict criteria around it. I think it would be helpful if we knew what that criterion was as well.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, we will do whatever we can to share what we have. The only slight hesitation we have is the longer we go back, I suspect, the harder it will be to get the information but we will do our best. If it is ten years then we will do that. As you say, there is a distinction here that obviously, the victim appears to have been part of the agreement. The second thing is that this is a private prosecution, which distinguishes itself from a criminal investigation. The third thing is whether or not there has been any sort of agreement about the Proceeds of Crime Act. So these are all things concerning – as Jenny pointed out – not only that it is legal but the ethics of it. In saying that, I am not saying it was unethical. At this stage we want to reassure ourselves that things are OK in that case and in any other cases there may be.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): It would be very helpful if you could write to us, particularly when you have conducted your investigations. The results would be useful.

The second item that members have raised is reports this week about deaths in police custody figures and how those are recorded. The concern was raised by the BBC this week that anyone who dies following restraint but without being formally arrested is excluded from the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) figures. Obviously, this is not the IPCC but I think all of us want to be assured as to how the MPS records figures for deaths in custody. I do not know if you are able to remark on that now, Commissioner, or whether you are able to write to us in more detail later?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, Chair, I am quite happy to share any information later because I am afraid I do not have the figures here about deaths following restraint, although I am unfamiliar with any recently, and what used to be the Metropolitan Police Authority may well have as good a memory as I but I do not think there have been any recent cases.

However, I just thought as a reminder we might just mention the categories that the IPCC presently has, and therefore you may see whether or not it includes the particular one that you are concerned about.

The one that everyone remembers clearly is deaths in or following custody. We then have a category, which is death during or following other types of contact with police that is not to do with custody. I imagine that may include restraint, but I do not want to say that to you here until I have established it for certain, but I think you will find that probably includes that category. We then have fatal shooting incidents involving the police; then the fourth category is fatal road traffic incidents involving the police. A final category was added recently by the IPCC, which is suicide following custody. I think what they are gradually doing is trying to make sure that they capture any death in any way associated with police contact. Those are the categories. I am afraid I cannot give you an absolute guarantee that during restraint is included, but I think we will find it is included in the category following other types of contact.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): My understanding is that it is in the numbers that we have presented in point 1, IPCC category 4, which is death following any police contact that might not involve an arrest or otherwise, but that is subject to an IPCC investigation. I think all deaths that involve police contact are subject to an IPCC investigation. So category 4, which is in the fourth box down, includes what we are talking about.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): The only thing to add is that any deaths in those circumstances, during restraint, would automatically be referred to the IPCC.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Thank you. That is very helpful, and if you follow up with any figures that relate to the MPS that would be useful.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Chair, I think from what we have heard we see how complicated this is with the different categories. My question was directed to the Commissioner, that it just seemed odd that this report came out on its own without seemingly any understanding of how it would impact on those families who, clearly, have lost their loved ones, whether before, after or during what has happened. There was talk of Roger Sylvester – a family that I know – that was in 1999, and he died immediately after custody in hospital. It just seems strange to ordinary people and Londoners that there are these categories. I think maybe we ourselves have to meet up and understand how we are going to talk about these categories, because I have to say the IPCC, with all the work that it does, has not done itself any good service with the way that it has handled this.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): I think some reassurance from you, Commissioner, will be very welcome.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Chair, the only thing I would say is that these figures are published annually. One reassurance we should take from the figures is that no one has died in police custody from April last year to this January, in the Metropolitan Police area, and there were significantly less deaths in any contact with police from the previous two years. Of course, we are only part way through the year and we hope no one else is injured or dies, but I think there is some reassurance there that things on the whole have improved, but these figures are published annually.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): That is very helpful. Thank you. We now move to our main item of business, which is to the formal questioning of the Deputy Mayor and Commissioner.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I just wanted to mark a point in history and to thank you, Chair, and your team for the work that you have put in in helping us with the transition from the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPC) and the Police and Crime Committee (PCC); a huge amount of work has gone into it I think on both sides.

From my point of view, you have obviously caught us very early in the process – our report just covers the first five days – and the information that we provide to you will obviously evolve over the coming months as your requirements become clearer, and you have our commitment to work with you to make sure you get the information that you need.

One of the broad principles we have tried to adopt in the report that we have put forward is to try and give you, and therefore, Londoners, a longer term view of some of the crime trends in the capital. In my view, that gives a more realistic picture of what is actually happening, rather than the month-by-month fluctuations that can be affected by all sorts of different variables. Ultimately, it is the long-term performance that we have certainly been focused on over the last three years, and this gives us an opportunity to move towards contemplation. That is not to say we will not, as we have done, publish the month-by-month information too, but I think seeing it in context is extremely important. I also want to thank the Commissioner and his team for the work they have done and for bearing with us over this time.

It is fair to say that the new relationship is also work-in-progress, not least in some of the approval mechanisms, the mechanisms for briefing, the kind of governance role that the MOPC has over the MPS and making sure that it is all documented correctly, dealt with appropriately; that we evolve, if you like, a kind of pro forma for decision-making and for governance of police operations. Obviously, we would be more than happy to share that with you as and when you require.

One of the things that I am quite keen to do is to make sure that our work – MOPC – dovetails as much as we can with your work, specifically your second committee meeting that you are going to have every month about particular themes. Sitting down with you early on and agreeing some kind of work plan, so that we can make sure you get all the information you need in as timely a period as possible, that you are not having to wait, that we have as few written responses as possible, particularly where you are doing themed meetings around important issues, would be very helpful. So we would welcome that kind of meeting.

Just finally from me, there has been a lot of talk about the drawbridge being drawn up and a reduction in transparency and all that kind of stuff. You have my commitment, certainly, as long as I am in this job, that where we can we will enhance transparency, particularly trying to present things in as readable and understandable a way as we can, rather than the big thick reports that everybody gets three pages into and then gives up. We will try and be as user friendly as we possibly can and get as much information as we can out there.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Thank you. I think we will all welcome that commitment to transparency. Certainly, you are right, this is a work-in-progress at the moment and certainly the monthly report, while very helpful in some regards we perhaps think could be rather more helpful. I know officers are talking about how best we get the information that we need.

The other issue that has been raised with me by Members is the timely nature of us getting information. For example, the letter from the Home Office about the extra money for policing, I think Members genuinely thought that perhaps we should have had that at the same time that you had it. Perhaps in the future we can talk about the timely nature of getting information to

us as well. Thank you for the comments about transparency because certainly we all, on a cross-party basis, want to see as much information as possible getting to the public.

Perhaps I could just start a little bit, Deputy Mayor, with some of those governance issues. We are aware that you are working through them, and some of these questions you have been asked before, and I think we would just like to know where you are with the status of some of them. If I can pick three out to start with: one, there has been talk about the appointment of an advisory board to MOPC, particularly in relation to governance issues. Perhaps you could tell us a little bit about how you see that working and what steps you have made with regards to that. Secondly, with regards to public engagement, as I understand it, the legislation does not require you to undertake any of your meetings in public. So it is a question about what you are doing to engage with the public. We are aware that there are two MOPC road show events currently. Members have asked when you are going to get across the rest of London and what programmes you have for that. The third issue is about funding. The Mayor's Budget talked about looking at the MOPC funding, because I think we had thought that the new body would be more streamlined and, therefore cost less, but at the moment that is not reflected in the budget. So perhaps you would like to discuss those three items to start.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, on Advisory Boards, there are two bits of governance – well, governance/skills I guess – that I think we need because fundamentally this is a £3.6 billion business. If we were a listed company we would be in the FTSE 100, all that kind of stuff. We do want to establish an independent audit panel, not just for us but also for the MPS, which would be a small number of independent people to whom the auditor could go and anybody else who wanted to could go and talk about those kinds of governance issues. It is very important that the independence of the auditors, and the independent voice of the auditor, particularly around finance, is able to be heard. So we would like to have that established; a small number of people that would not necessarily meet that often but, as I say, would be part of the financial governance cycle.

The other side of the business, as you say, the kind of non-executive director. As you may know, all Government departments now have non-executive directors. It is a great development. They tend, though, to be skills based rather than, like the old Police Authority was, representative. So we are a business with 53,000 employees now, or thereabouts. It would be nice to have somebody who has some experience of HR and people management in a very large organisation somewhere. Similarly, we manage an awful lot of money and it would be good to have somebody who has been used to running a business with that kind of money, who is able to look at some of the bigger strategic decisions, properly assess them from a risk point of view, put them in context and offer advice in a board-type environment. We have had conversations between us briefly about what that might look like, and the usefulness, not just to MOPC but also perhaps to the MPS, in terms of having that check and verification. I have, though, taken a decision not to proceed with any appointments until after the election because, given that that is only a few short weeks, and given where we are in the budget cycle, i.e. while there are decisions coming through most of the big ones have been set, I thought that it would be sensible to wait until after the election to give, whoever happens to be in the job, a free run about the appointment of the set of skills that they want to put in place. So that is that.

On the public engagement, this is a challenge. We have lost 20 odd Members of the Authority, many of whom are link members, and obviously the constituency link, so there is a challenge. We are having these two road shows. We are only having two because then purdah kicks in and slotting them in, or doing them on a Saturday morning, we just could not do it. If I am still in the job after the elections we will continue the programme, running it across the whole of the City.

As you know, Joanne because you came to one, I have been doing the road shows now consistently for three years around all parts of London and I will continue to do so. I have to say, one of the pleasing developments of the new Commissioner's arrival is that he is also doing Ask the Commissioner road shows around London. So, both of us are getting in front of the public much more, I think, than any previous Chairs or Commissioners ever did. So that is helpful.

The more challenging thing for us is around the month-by-month engagement with the various bodies that sit in each borough in various guises and formats, whether that is Independent Advisory Groups, Community and Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs), ward panels, and all the rest, and we are just giving some thought to that, not only how we might engage but also whether that structure needs to be looked at. I know we talked – those of you who were on the MPA – about a revision of engagement structures, and I think the time has probably come, given our constraints, that we might need to have a look at that. Again, I think that has to be work-in-progress for the next couple of weeks and, post-election, we will have a plan in place to say what we think it should look like across London and how we will engage.

At the moment all the Borough Engagement Officers of MOPC are still doing what the old Borough Engagement Officers at the MPA did. So they are out and about gathering intelligence, sitting on CPEGs, talking to CDRPs (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships), safety partnerships, all that kind of stuff, and feeding intelligence Back, and also promulgating policies from the centre. So again a bit of a work-in-progress, albeit I hope over the next couple of months we will come up with a model.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Will you be consulting with those groups as to what a preferred structure would look like?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Over the last two or three years I have had lots of conversations with lots of groups about what it should look like, and I have to say it is quite hard to come to any sort of consensus. So it may be that you cannot please all the people all the time and that we have to impose something. I have to say, one of the big consultees will be the MPS because, similarly, they also have a very tangled engagement structure that is not consistent across the whole of London. Indeed, as we saw from last summer, there is some question about its effectiveness, in terms of feeding information and community intelligence back. So, there is a joint project there to do, which is absolutely vital but, as I say, hopefully we will come forward with concrete proposals quite soon.

On funding, I have to say I was sitting in the budget debate and I did not actually get to this particular point in my speech, because I ran out of time. To be honest, I think people have been

a little unfair to MOPC in terms of the budget. While it is confusing perhaps to see what the true cost of the MOPC is, given the transfers in and transfers out, the truth is that the MOPC headcount is down about three people and yet the function is much expanded. So they have taken on most of the functions.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Us too.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. I have said publicly that maybe you want to bid for more funding from the Mayor for the Committee, and I would welcome that. We have taken on most of the function of the old Community Safety Unit (CSU), so actually we are doing more for slightly less. I have to say the budget is different from what we actually spent, and it is worth pointing out that last year the MPA had a £2 million underspend. We are forecasting this year a £1 million underspend, and I have a contingency in the money, that is money that has not been spent yet, of £1 million. So, over two years we are actually £4 million cash out the door less than we were in the previous period. There are two types of budgets that the MOPC has. There is a budget that is spent on staff, which is reduced but we are doing more, and then there is the budget that is spent on prevention and diversion, and that is the money that we do want to get out of the door, and I would like to see that money increase if we possibly can. The Government is helping us, so we are getting some money, drugs intervention programme money is coming in and the Community Safety Grant has come in. There is likely to be more of those bits and pieces of money that Government tends to give for crime and community safety across London being funnelled in, which allow us we hope to spend it more strategically and more efficiently.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): In terms of the few weeks you have been in post, have there been any decisions that you have made, perhaps reversing decisions that the MPA have made previously?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): None at all?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Not yet.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): Not yet. So you envisage there will be some?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am looking at a couple.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): Will you be able to let us know what those are in due course?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I can do. One of them is probably commercially sensitive, so I am happy to discuss it with you in a private session.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): Thank you.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): I think one of the things we have asked for with regards to information is a forward planner and when key decisions are being made, we would expect to be on that as well.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. I should just say we are hoping to replicate the Mayoral Decision model. Indeed, we have been working on a pro forma, and there will be a rolling programme for decisions. I have to say those decisions are now coming in and we have given the MPS a five day turnaround. So having a rolling programme that alerts you to what is coming would be helpful, yes. I think we have put some in the report, but in the five days of the report we did not get that many coming through.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): You have provided the monthly report to us and we are going to move on to that now. In this meeting we have focused on four key priorities you set yourself as a MOPC, which was youth violence, including knife crime, frontline police officers, burglary, robbery, drug dealing and gangs and re-offending. Before you get into those particular questions, Victoria had a general question she wanted to ask.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Thank you. Commissioner, last September we talked about the number of crimes that are called “no crimes”, and you said that you would like some time to look at that and how you would want to improve it. Obviously, I was disappointed to read the recent news from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) that did not seem to show a great deal of progress, and I think in order to give Londoners confidence in our intentions, and that you do want to assure people that their crimes should be followed up, perhaps you could just talk for a little bit about how we could improve that situation?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Chair, first of all, the report is based on information from, I think, eight months ago now. So things have improved during that time. I think the report, by its own admission, sampled quite a small number of reports. That said, I think it does show a worryingly high level of inaccuracy in the crime reporting, so we need to do something about that.

Just to reassure the Authority that, with the Deputy Commissioner now, I think on day eight, that is one of the things that he has been given as a priority to look at. The other thing I have to reassure the Authority is that the HMIC will return in March – so a matter of weeks away – to see whether or not what they found last time has improved, and we can share that information, obviously, with the Deputy Mayor and the panel if they want to see that. I would expect to see an improvement, but generally we need good data.

The final thing I would mention on this is that one of the things we might come to talk about, in terms of crime performance generally, is that the new Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing, Simon Byrne, has just started a COMPSTAT process. He has been here now for about three months and this is the first opportunity he has had to start. One of the things that he relies on is good information. So it is vital that we know what is happening because then we can direct our resources, together with partners, to make sure that we stop it, arrest people or help victims. So that will drive better data and it may squeeze some bad things out of the statistics, but it is better we have accurate data because it reflects the fact a crime happened

and we do something about it. I think, for various reasons, you should be reassured that, certainly from here I should be able to provide you with some information soon that shows how we have changed over the period of time since the last report.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Because obviously it was disappointing to see that crime, thefts and burglary, seemed to be the ones that were suffering, I think it would be very welcome that we could make sure that people did not feel that they were being ignored. Thank you.

James Cleverly (AM): Obviously the issues of knife crime are always high profile and continue to be so; they cause a lot of distress. How do you intend to maintain the pressure, or indeed strengthen the pressure, to drive serious youth violence, knife crime, etc, out of the City?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): You are quite right, James, to raise this as an issue. This has been a battle we have been fighting for three years now, as you know. We have had some success, not least at the very severe end where, thanks to the work of the Metropolitan Police, youth homicide has now more than halved from the figures back in 2008. It continues to be of significant concern. If you look at the performance graphs, you will have seen that knife crime fell fairly significantly in the first year or so, for a couple of years, and then we have seen a swing back up. I am going to pass to the Commissioner to talk a little bit about what he is doing about that. We have been talking very seriously for some time now, both to this Commissioner and the one previously, about what action could and should be taken, and this is all, I guess, to a certain extent tied up with the discussion and the debate around stop and search, which the Commissioner might like to enlighten us on in a minute.

For me, this still remains the number one priority. We do not have this licked. While violence overall in the City is down, in this financial year - the end of last week we are down about 8,500 offences overall. That is just under a 7% reduction. The serious youth violence bit of it is edging back up again. We are up about 287 offences in the financial year to date, and that is of concern. You would know, because it has been trailed in the media that on 8 February the MPS is launching its gang operation. We have high hopes for that making a huge impact on violence because, obviously, people who are involved in gangs are disproportionately represented in those numbers, but it does remain the number one priority.

I have to say, that where MOPC can add to this – and this is where we are looking – is at revamping our efforts in terms of youth diversion. Some of the CSU functions that have come across we will be looking at to see how we can make those more effective. I had a conversation just this morning, for instance, about how we might tweak the operation of the Project Daedalus to see if we can improve reoffending patterns, particularly, post release. We are also talking to other parties, not least those involved in offender management, probation, the National Offender Management Service which looks at prisons to see what can be done, and I have a meeting with the chair of the Sentencing Council next week to talk about what role sentencing can play in terms of deterring youth violence in particular.

James Cleverly (AM): One of the things that I know the MPA discussed on a number of occasions, and I have had brought to my attention by a number of police officers from a whole range of ranks, is about the definition of knife crime and how we get useful knowledge out of

the raw statistics. The difference between the reactive statistics, where what we would recognise as a crime has been committed with a knife and where someone has been found with a knife but has not committed any crime other than carrying the knife, etc. Now, at the moment those all go into a fairly generic pool around knives and sharp objects, and that can hide quite a multitude of things. Are there any plans to strip that out to look at in more detail or to have an idea of whether proactive searches are driving this or where we are exactly with this?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I have to confess, I find myself conflicted in this area because I would like to move to more simply understood crime statistics. Actually, you are quite right; when you look underneath the crime stats, if you look at knife crime, for instance, 33% is intimidated and only 2% of knife crime involves an injury and, you are quite right, a very high proportion will be generated by the ladies and gentlemen that work for the Commissioner. Whether it is useful for the public to know particular detail, I do not know. I suspect what we should do is provide the overall number and for those who are interested, certainly tactically analysing those numbers makes a big difference, we should provide that too.

Ideally, you are quite right, what we would like to see is police driven crime detection going up because that is about police activity. I know we are going to talk about drugs later. If you look at the sanction detection on drugs offences it is very high, and that is because it is almost entirely police driven activity. At the same time I do not want to confuse people and, as I say, we do want to see the victim side of it going down. Internally we would like to see that. I think externally the public would probably think we were just politicians playing with numbers.

James Cleverly (AM): Again, I am not sure whether this is directed more to you or perhaps internally, but it would strike me that consistent across a timescale and relatively straightforward and simple figures for broad public dissemination, as you say, is desirable, but I think for a group of people who are hoping to continue their role as experts in the field an increased level of granularity would help, because, as you say, there is a huge difference between proactive seizures and someone turning up to a violent incident.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The only fly in the ointment, of course, is the Home Office has an entire department teeming with people who want to adjust the stats every now and then just to confuse us all. So part of the reason we can only present numbers on some of these things back to 2007 is because they changed all the definitions in 2007, so knife crime had to come in, but yes.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Because this is one of your priorities we would want to see figures of overall knife crime, where knife crime has been used to injure, and also figures for the most serious youth violence. I actually asked, in November and again in December, the MPA and I still have not received those up-to-date figures. You have given a figure of 287 extra offences on most serious youth violence, but certainly having those details to us on a monthly basis would be very useful.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Sorry, that was just to the end of last week of the financial year, by comparison. Of course, the problem is when you get into

certain severe crime types where the numbers are quite small, but the reason I am giving the number of offences is the percentage swing may give a disproportionate effect.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): That is why we would want both percentage and number of offences.

James Cleverly (AM): What I wanted to solicit from the Commissioner was obviously, we have the focus prioritisation policy but you are Mr Implementation and Operations, so from that side of things how does the MPS look to progress this?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Chair, first of all, just in terms of where you finished with that classification. I think it is a bit of a dilemma because, of course, as the Deputy Mayor said the classification changed in 2007. To be fair to the Home Office, they responded to pressure to change. So of course, as soon as they changed, they are criticised for not having consistency, and I think it is a real problem. Of course, depending on a contemporary problem depends on how people want to classify things, and every time people change the question you get a different set of stats, and all our IT is set up for one answer and every time you change it, it gets difficult. So it is a constant battle. The bottom line is that anything we can do to support the Deputy Mayor, or the Committee, in providing statistics, if it will help, we will do our best. There is a constant challenge.

In terms of what we are doing, first of all, the COMPSTAT arrangements I talked about earlier. It is the first time that the Assistant Commissioner has sat with 32 Borough Commanders and asked what they were doing about crime together. Not just in Wandsworth, not just in Southwark but together what they are doing about crime types, because of course the criminals we are talking about do not respect the boundaries that we all recognise. So we have to acknowledge that in what we do; and secondly it allows them to share best practice and some of the things they are doing already is Operation Target, which we have had ongoing for some time. That is built on some of the previous learning from – members of this panel who were previously on the Authority will remember – Operation Strongbox. Many of the core things in each of those operations are similar because it is the same type of crime, although often with a slightly different dimension because in this case, obviously, around half of the robberies, for example, are around mobile phones. That has changed over time, and if we are looking for the market where the goods are disposed we have to be aware of how we are going to deal with that.

As the Deputy Mayor said, we are launching some gang work – a big piece of gang work – on 8 February. I hope this group of people together with the Mayor and the Assembly will be able to support that. We believe we have the support of the 32 borough leaders in London, and they recognise there is a gang problem in 19 of the boroughs particularly, but it does spread out across the other boroughs that are not directly affected and I hope you will be able to support all the work. What we are not saying is that all the gangs are the cause of all the crime, but I think they have a significant impact and, of course, in amongst their numbers are frequent offenders and that includes robbers and that includes burglars. So we are going to target that work and you will see more on 8 February. It is working with our partners too because, of course, not only is it the enforcement but diversion is very important. I think what you have

seen, certainly generally across the street crime, is that you had a big surge at the beginning of the year. It is now not below what it was in the previous year, but we have not yet recovered that gain at the beginning of the year, but we will keep working at it and I am sure we will be able to make progress.

The only final point I would mention is about Stop and Search. The Deputy Commissioner, amongst his other priorities, but also to be fair on one of his professional leads across the country, is looking at the Stop and Search work that I signalled to the Authority before the Authority finished. We expect that by March we will have something to share. You may say, "Well, actually I thought you said January", which is a fair point. Of course I was challenged at the last Authority meeting by Cindy Butts [former Independent Member, MPA] who said, "Well, what consultation have you done? How are you taking people forward?" So that is part of the work that Craig Mackey [Deputy Commissioner, MPS] is now going to take forward. We have already had all the Borough Commanders together; we are working with community groups across the Capital to make sure that the new work we start is better than the work we have now.

Now, my point is that it needs to be smarter and the interactions need to be handled better. That could mean it goes up; it may mean it goes down. It has been interpreted in the press to mean it will come down. The main aim is that we target the right people and that we deal with the Stop and Search in the right way, and I think there are intelligent ways we can get better and we will be able to share that within a matter of weeks. Particularly, if we are going to target gang members, I want to make sure that we keep the good people on our side who do want these gang people sorted out, but we have to make sure we are acting reasonably.

Jenny Jones (AM): On the Stop and Search, you did say that you wanted to reduce the section 60 stops and searches by half. So I am assuming that is still an aim. The Deputy is nodding. The other thing is it has only ever had a 6% success rate, so presumably you are going to have a much higher target than that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I missed the last part of what you said.

Jenny Jones (AM): Stop and Search has only had a 6% success rate.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes.

Jenny Jones (AM): So presumably you will aim for a much higher success rate, and if you do not get it you will perhaps desist from the stop and search in the way that you are doing it?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Certainly I want to see a higher hit rate. Some of our officers tell me that sometimes we underestimate how effective it is. We only record, for example, do we find a knife, do we find drugs, do we make an arrest, which is very clear representation of the way it is successful. I am told that sometimes we under record when we find drugs, and it leads to a street caution. Now whether that is true or not, I do not know. At the moment what you can see is that the vast majority appear to be ineffective. As I have said, I think here before, to Harrow High School when they made that

point, I do think we need to be more effective. It needs to have a higher percentage hit rate. Of course on the 6%, if it takes 200 knives off the street it is still a valuable event. What we need to make sure is that we do not turn 90 odd percent of the public off if they have never been in trouble and they never will be in trouble. It is that group, the repeated searching of innocent people we want to try and reduce and ideally eradicate. I doubt it will ever be eradicated but I think it can get better.

Jenny Jones (AM): I would argue it is not a particularly good way of combating knife crime, considering there is another 20, 30, 40 million knives out there in London that can be just picked up. However many you take there will be millions more.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I understand that, it just seems to me if someone has a knife and it is an offensive weapon, they have to explain why they are carrying it and there are some people in society who have a reason but not many.

Jennette Arnold (AM): I have said it before and I will say it again, I do not know many people who do not expect the police to be stopping and searching if they have evidence, if they are in an area where there has been a crime. I do not think that is the issue, and I think the Commissioner touched on it. It is with the low rate that is a result of how it is being done now, and then the impact on those who are totally innocent and also on young people. I just would want to hear from you. You talk about people, I think it must be with young people because they are one of your target areas and it is the integrity that you have to build with those young people. When I speak to college students they say, "Well, they stopped and searched us but we know that the young person they should have got was on the other side laughing at them", or that the gangs had come earlier and gathered up their crew. So what I want to hear is how are you going to make that connection within colleges with our young people, so that they understand that you are definitely on their side and that the method you are going to use is going to really pick out those who are causing the crime, those who are the ringleaders, those who are a danger to them. Because they are just fed up that they are the ones in danger and you and your staff are just coming and not appearing to do anything on their behalf.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, I entirely agree with you that the people most affected by Stop and Search are young. They are disproportionately affected by crime anyway, because they are the victims or offenders disproportionately. So that is the group most affected and are on the streets. Many more mature people are in their homes in the times that we tend to do the Stop and Search. They are disproportionately affected.

The second thing is as part of our plan we will encourage them to tell us who are carrying knives, because they will know, and then we will have to do something about it. I am afraid I do not think we have enough good systems that when a young person says, "He's carrying a knife. He's on that bus. His name is ... he's wearing" we have enough in place to 1) get the information; and then 2) do something about it. It seems to me, if you act properly and reasonably on reasonable intelligence, I think people will understand that. That I think is one way through it. The other way is to have the dialogue with young people, particularly, and the third leg of what we are going to do is about a refreshed engagement strategy particularly with

young people. Not just about diversion away from crime but also about explaining ourselves, "If you've got criticisms then let's hear it". There are some good young groups about who are prepared to produce DVDs; start acting things out. There is one in Barnes that we are working on improving with us our Stop and Search, so we can engage in that way.

The other final thing I would mention, I received a letter this week from a school in the north of London. They have quite a long petition saying that we were handling Stop and Search badly in their view. I said I will go and see them and find out what their experience has been and how we might improve. I cannot do that alone, but we must improve the quality of that interaction. Certainly for me it is a priority. We are going to get better at it and I accept that there is a problem, but what I cannot do is lose, as you said, the ability to stop people carrying weapons particularly but also other illegal items.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Thank you for that answer.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Of course we have scheduled in a session to look at your new Stop and Search policy at one of our next meetings.

Steve O'Connell (AM): I think it is important too, and I agree completely that the record of success around Stop and Search has not been a roaring success: 6% is not good enough and that is clear. Although the point made is a good one that if 6% means 200 knives taken out that again is good reassurance. That reassurance is the point I would like to ask you about. It was important for us as MPA members to assure our boroughs that we wanted to get to a situation where if young people or anybody left home with a knife in their possession, there may be a high chance that they will be caught and thereby criminalised. The only way that you will reduce knife carrying will be to get to an environment where that exists, then they will think twice about leaving home. I would urge that we do not throw the baby out with the bath water and that we do improve Stop and Search, but it is a tool that is necessary for the safety of our people.

Can I turn then to Blunt 2, which is all part of the same operation. It was deemed that there was some success around that. Would you be able to talk a little bit about the lessons learned from Blunt 2 and how that will form your thoughts, led by the Deputy, and how you are going to adjust the way of thinking and the way of working?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): The critical thing about Blunt 2 is that to some extent it targets people who are most likely to be carrying knives, but particularly what it does is it targets geography, it targets places where it is believed there has previously been violence or people are congregating and might be a victim of violence. I think that is the major thing that we take from Blunt 2 or we put in the section 60s, for example, in the right area; are we doing too many and are we putting the right rigour into deciding whether to apply a piece of the law?

The section 60 power, which is designed to quickly put in place a Stop and Search regime where there is a problem, is a good thing. We just have to make sure that we are not applying too low a hurdle before we put it in, and of course if we do put it in we enforce it in the appropriate

way. I do think there is a real issue, and we want to work with local authorities about this, which it seems to me is that if you go into an area in which there is a section 60 you ought to know it. I would argue that most people would not know they have gone into one of these areas. What then happens is an officer may challenge, particularly a young person, use the section 60 power, explain that and they may not believe them. There is a risk. It seems to me if there are as many ways as we can, and there are risks in putting banners up and all the rest of it, but whatever we can do to say to someone, "This area, we've had a problem and we need to do something to stop anyone getting hurt and this is the action we're going to take", the people who stop and search may have a better support for that tactic. I would argue that at the moment many people in section 60 areas do not have a clue that they are in one. So, somewhere between frightening them to death and giving enough information to warn them about this type of tactic I think is where we have to get to. If we can get the local authorities' support to put banners up or Blunt 2 people or whatever, I think that could be relayed. I think they are the major developments from Blunt 2.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I want to add a note of caution about using the success rate on Stop and Search. It is actually quite a good example of the new governance. The Deputy has been with the Commander to brief me on the strategy before it goes out to consultation, that looks fine and there is a target in there for success, and they will come back after consultation. If the strategy is successful the success rate should fall because people should be deterred from carrying knives. I would actually quite like to live in a city where every stop is unsuccessful because there is a likelihood of being caught.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): That is not the point.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): The critical thing is, as the Commissioner says – absolutely right – the quality of the encounter but also that the right people are being targeted. Those people need to continue to be targeted after they have stopped carrying knives, because the lesson is that once you stop and the deterrent goes it will start again. So making sure that those two things are in place means if it is successful, if you are stopping the right people, they should think twice about carrying a knife and so your success rate should, in theory, fall.

Jenny Jones (AM): That is a good point, except is it a complete waste of police time when they should be doing other things, and perhaps they should be intervening earlier in young people's lives rather than wasting time.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): I think that this is a debate we will have at our next session.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I agree it is a big enough organisation.

Jenny Jones (AM): Success would be zero.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I agree with you, and it is a big enough organisation that we can do both but it is certainly the case that the last number I saw

was Blunt 2 was taking something like 11,000 knives. If only 1% of those had been used that would be 110 kids dead over the last three years, which would be more than double what we have actually had. You cannot underestimate the problem of knife carriage and the importance of Stop and Search, notwithstanding the problems with it in deterring that. The fact that we have had half the number of teenage homicides and a general reduction in youth violence, albeit serious youth violence is bubbling up a bit now, and that knives used to injure is down given that that was against a rising trend up to 2008 you have to put that down to police action and that has been around Stop and Search. The evolution I think is extremely welcome but we have to bear in mind that if they are being successful the carriage rate should start to fall.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): We will have a bit more of this debate when we come back and look at the consultation. Mike, you are going to ask about the budget and front line officers.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): Front line numbers, yes, and to say it is nice to be here. I think with Gareth I am the only new boy to the world of policing. I have to say I am slightly struggling with some of the language. It seems to be a different language, certainly acronyms and terminology, but I will get there in time since we do not have a budget for simultaneous translation as we go!

Just to focus on the workforce, your second priority. Can I say what I do not want to talk about is whose number was bigger than whose, and all of that yah boo stuff? Others may come in, I just want to focus on what is happening now and the governance around the numbers, who actually sets the targets and so forth.

In terms of what is happening now, my understanding is officer numbers peaked in November 2009 at 33,404. They have come down until November last year and the corner has been turned, so we are about 2,000 off the peak but we are on the way back up and there is a forecast number of 32,320 by March. So can either of you, because I am not sure where the responsibility for this actually sits, tell us what is happening in terms of getting to that forecast around policing community support officers becoming permanent police officers, and so forth?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): We expect by March to be around 32,300. As with budgets, you can never align these things exactly because it depends in part on recruitment and in part on wastage. That is having people retire, leave and transfer to other organisations. We expect to be within probably about 100 of 32,300 by the end of March.

With the two methods we have of bringing people in we are reasonably sure we can meet that figure: 1) because we have some Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) who are in our pool who are employed by us and we can get through the vetting, etc, fairly quickly. Then we are taking around 160 transferees. The benefit of transferees who are coming from other police forces is they arrive as regular officers already trained. They are a little more expensive but they do arrive with skills, so they may be a firearms officer, they may be a detective, but it allows us to get fully developed officers. In short, we should have that in place by the end of March. We already know that about 97 of the 160 are going to be in by the end of this month, and then we expect to try and get the balance of that group in by the end of March.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): That is very helpful, and obviously if they are coming in, as it were, part trained or part experienced, whether from other forces or through the PCSO route, they are more predictable in terms of whether they meet the qualifications and so forth. My briefing note says that in terms of those PCSOs, can you give us the numbers there because I got a 700 number and a further 400 number, so just to unpick what is happening in the PCSO area.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): 1,100 all together, of which we already have 700 committed, and, yes, we know where the training courses are, etc. We agreed this morning a further 400; this is within the MPS. So that is how the 1,100 is made up: 700 already committed and training courses allocated, we know the timings; 400 just need to do a bit of sorting out and then we have the 160 transferees.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): Then the other element is wastage, people leaving. Presumably, at this point people who are leaving need to have handed in notices, and so forth, so you presumably have a fairly good idea as to the wastage levels – another bit of jargon.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, and that is what has enabled us to go for these figures, the 1,100 and the 166, I think it is; the two groups. The other thing, however, is that junior officers only need to give us 28 days' notice, and here we are just at the beginning of February. It is never entirely certain, there is always a little bit of flexibility and, sadly, occasionally people die in service, etc. That is why I say we cannot be absolutely certain, but I would think that with the 32,300 if we get within 100 we are nearly there and we can remedy it within 28 days I would say afterwards, even if there is a problem.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): Then looking beyond that what are the next milestones? I am afraid I just do not know whether you set forecasts six months ahead, or targets or whatever. So what is the journey after that? What are the near term targets?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): One of the big benefits of being able to keep the number of officers is that we have managed to keep the numbers high for the Olympics. Obviously, that is going to be a great challenge as we move into June, July, August and September. After that, the budget predicts that the numbers by the end of March, the financial year, will be about 31,900. We will not know until December of this year or into January of next year what average it will be for next year. We are very grateful for the £90 million, but we did not know until a few days ago we were getting it, which makes it rather difficult to predict what will happen next year. With the present financial structure we will definitely be able to give more detail, but on the budget that we have, with the money that we can be sure of, we know that we can maintain 31,900 by the end of the year. Of course, if we get to December and January and suddenly we have either a reduction in grant next year, or do not get everything we expect, we will have to look at that in the final quarter of the year, which will be something I am sure we will discuss later in the year.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Most of the force, although I think 338 police officers are specifically funded for the Olympics from the Home Office by separate grant and so post the Games they will go, and I think the number – you are right – drops to

about 31,957 which was the exact number but, as I say, give or take, given that you cannot predict when people come and go.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): Just sticking with the numbers and we will come on to the money. So there is no plan for another round of training or recruitment from outside and so forth?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It will be constant to maintain the number.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): To cope with the wastage?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): If it helps, during the year it varies a little by tax and all sorts of reasons why people leave, different numbers, but broadly you are talking something of the order of 1,200 to 1,500 police officers leave a year.

So you are talking about a 3% to 4% turnover. That is the turnover we have to do on normal recruitment if we are going to keep it at the same level. If we have to increase we have to go up a bit, but that is the number broadly we work with.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): The recruitment taps, as it were, had been turned off; they have been turned back on and the plan is to keep it flowing gently as it were.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It is worth saying that one of the benefits of the recruitment model that we have adopted is that all the recruits have to broadly be a PCSO or a Special, which means that they can be held and brought in quickly if required. It is not that difficult. Once a Special, for instance, has some control status they then do not need any training, or minimal further training to become a fully warranted full-time officer. So we have a reserve now getting towards 6,000 Specials, of which a very large proportion want to be full-time police officers.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): That is on the £90 million. So that is the letter that has just come out in the last few days, which talks about meeting the special challenges in the spring and summer of this year. It is just general funding. It is not specifically tied to aspects of the Olympics and so forth?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Not that I am aware of. Like all these negotiations with Government there is often a bit of rumour flying around, and we have yet to see the specific grant agreement. The letter itself, as you will see, is fairly broadly drawn. I do not expect the grant agreement to come out any differently. I mean, look, the Olympics is recognised as a particularly stretching period, as is the Jubilee, as is the whole public order, in Parliament. I think it was a general recognition of that, plus frankly also a recognition that we have, collectively, put our shoulders to the wheel on savings. Getting on to £400 million in savings in the underlying budget is a pretty massive achievement, but that is helping us through

the next year or so, a couple of years on that resilience front was critical for all sorts of reasons, and that is why the money was forthcoming.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): In which case there is the civilianisation but I will leave it for others to come in.

John Biggs (AM): I am confused because there is a number of 300 and something officers who are specifically going to disappear after the Olympics, so they are funded specifically for the Olympics.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): 338.

John Biggs (AM): OK. That is very helpful, 338, written in your bones I am sure, and I picked up last Friday's *The Times*. It has a lovely coloured chart in it that tells us that every single piece of authority in the country, with the exception of Surrey, is projected to lose officers. So I am interested to know what is special about London, other than there being an election that requires additional funding to maintain police officer numbers. We have already established that 338 officers are needed for the Olympics and will disappear afterwards. What are the other factors, Commissioner, which require London to have this special slug of money to keep its police numbers up?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): A few things. The Olympics in itself, the grant which is related to the Olympics is those officers dedicated around the Olympic venues, but of course the pressures that we will experience this year are over and beyond the Olympic venues, and there is more than one Olympic venue. We obviously have the Olympic Park; we have the beach volleyball and Horse Guards, and the equestrian events at Greenwich etc. So there will be many pressures just around the Olympics that are not all entirely recognised by the grant we are to receive. The second thing is there are many parallel events. A lot of local authorities have actually done an awful lot in licensing terms to make sure that some of those licences do not go, neither the local authority could cope nor could we, but it will bring pressures.

Then the final aspect is probably, I think everyone is aware, that there have been protests, political protest particularly in London but not only in London. Of course, we saw the events of last year in August in the City. So I think for many reasons there are some good arguments why we need some help this year and my understanding is that is an argument the Government has found persuasive. Obviously, we as the MPS – and I hope the people of London – are very grateful for that support, but the Government could probably better explain exactly what they found most persuasive. Those are the building blocks of why they thought it was a good argument.

John Biggs (AM): Goodness me. It is a dangerous question. You are anticipating a particularly heated summer of rioting this year and next year it is going to go back to normal or something? What are these particular factors? I do not understand that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I did not quite understand that, John. What did you mean?

John Biggs (AM): We have a special factor which is the Olympics. You have not told me anything which is particularly spiky about this year in London that requires additional --

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I am sorry. I was trying to say that it seems to me, in the middle of what is an economically difficult period, that there has been quite a lot of protest already and I am not sure that within the next 12 months anyone is expecting the economic situation to be remedied, so I suspect that there will be tensions around. Many times, that tension manifests on the streets of London even when the issue is elsewhere because this is the seat of Government. Then, of course, what we saw in terms of last August, although there was public protest in different parts of the country, most of that happened in London. So I suspect that those are things that are important for Government but also are important for London.

John Biggs (AM): There are already methods for dealing with that. There is aid and we already have this thing called resilience within the police service. We are always told there are officers sitting behind desks who can leap from them, pick up their truncheons and subdue the crowds.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes, but what everyone saw last August was that it did not quite work like that. I think everyone has acknowledged that on the Saturday night and through to the Sunday and the terrible events of the Monday, too, the MPS was challenged and had to see support in mutual aid terms from many other parts of the country.

John Biggs (AM): I do not want to go into the detail of that but the letter from the Home Office suggests this is a one-year settlement, so there is a question of sustainability which raises a number of concerns. You seem to be saying that there are particular issues in London this year, although you have not told me what they are, which implies that next year we do not need this money, which is interesting and I do not understand that. Perhaps you could write to the Committee and explain that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): John, I cannot explain it more. I have said that I think there is some risk. I cannot say there is a direct threat, so any letter would not take us any further than that.

John Biggs (AM): See, I happen to think it is a political decision, but let us not dwell on that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not here to answer political questions.

John Biggs (AM): I know you are not. Can I ask the question slightly differently, then. The Mayor in front of the Assembly advised that he was anticipating a three-year settlement which would give him satisfaction to maintain his objectives for police numbers up to 2015. The letter

from the Home Office does not suggest that that is the case, so are there sustainability issues with those numbers? As the Commissioner, is it reckless of you to appoint officers when you have no indication of the budget to employ them after this year?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I do not think it is reckless. As I was indicating in my first answer, what we are planning is that with the money we have the numbers will drop back to 31,900. In the last quarter of the year, we hope we will get a little more notice than we have this year about what the 2013/2014 budget is. If there is any indication that either there is no more support or not the same support or the grant drops, we will have to start to take action in the last quarter of the year at least to get down to the numbers we will see in any succeeding years.

I have already said in my answer to Mike that the overall turnover is about 1,200 to 1,500, so our leeway on the whole in the year is about 1,200 to 1,500. We cannot make police officers redundant at the moment. I am not seeking it. We have something called Regulation A19 [A compulsory retirement rule for those with 30 years' police service], which we have never used. So, broadly, that is our leeway. If there is any danger that we are not going to be able to lose the number of officers, as your question indicates, then I would be worried, but I do not see that concern at the moment. Provided it is within that window, I think we should be OK. It is a constant thing we have to keep an eye on, I agree.

John Biggs (AM): Are you going to recruit PCSOs to replace the 700 who are becoming police officers? Did I miss that earlier on?

Joanne McCartney (Chair): We have not asked it yet.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): No. I think the budget shows exactly the number of PCSOs we have. I am sorry. I do not have it exactly in front of me at the moment. Broadly, there will be fewer PCSOs as there will be less police staff, which is what is set within the budget.

John Biggs (AM): So we are not recruiting additional PCSOs this year?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): We will. Yes, we have set the establishment and we recruit to that establishment. I am sorry. I just do not have the figures particularly in front of me at the moment. Certainly, where we have an establishment or a strength that we should keep to, we will keep to it.

John Biggs (AM): I do not want to hog the show. In fact, I am not going to be able to. The problem we have is a sort of lumpiness problem. The route into policing is through being a PCSO. If we reduce the number of PCSOs or Specials, then we are reducing our capacity to recruit and that is potentially a problem. We have another problem with sustainability, which is recruiting officers including people from shire counties who I imagine coming to London will probably be younger officers, fewer of whom are going to be seeking early retirement. There is a real question about sustainability. Unless the Mayor knows something we do not know we are in for a shock in about a year's time.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): The only thing I latched onto on the professional side is that I think you are quite right. One of the things about recruiting PCSOs and Specials is you build in a turnover. That is a risk because of course the PCSOs who work in the community build up relationships and then they become police officers and the danger is you lose the very thing we selected them for which is their relationships. I acknowledge that.

The strength - and I support this - in picking the PCSOs and the Specials is that we are generally recruiting Londoners. One of the big challenges - and I come back to your point about transferees - for the MPS over the years has been on the whole we have recruited people from outside London. We had years in which we recruited 60% and 70% from different parts of the country. One of the things I was challenged about - I am not sure if it was actually in this forum or somewhere else - was do you think that one of the things that is contributing to stop-search tensions is that people have not grown up here and do not always understand some of the issues and then go home somewhere else at night. I think it is an interesting point.

So, for me, the fact that we are recruiting PCSOs and Specials where one in three of those people are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, where we have a higher proportion of women, almost a proportionate proportion, I think is a positive thing. The downside is exactly what you have identified: we do get a bit more turnover.

Obviously, the final thing I would say is that of course our recruitment strategy which was set 18 months ago now expected three strands: Specials, PCSOs and others, the others being potentially graduates who, again, have higher proportions of black and minority candidates and women. That did not work at the same level, so I think in the future we want to make sure that that route is open because we do not just want to restrict to those two.

In terms of the final point which is about 166, the transferees, given the proportions, we are talking about 1,100 compared to 160. We are talking about one in ten, so there is some risk that they are coming from outside London. We are getting the benefit of some skills and in some areas where we have dropped down this year - we do need firearms officers, we do need some of the other skills - without having to spend all the money and the time on training them, we are getting ready-made people here. So I think you are right. There are risks but as usual we are trying to mitigate some of those risks.

Jenny Jones (AM): I do think we ought to know more about this £90 million because, quite honestly, it looks like a bung before the election. That is what it looks like to us and it would be good to know what your figures were. What were your arguments to the Home Office to give you a one-off? This is the problem. If you have an amount now and you increase the police numbers, getting rid of them is, as you say, is very difficult. That means the easier thing is to start increasing civilianisation, i.e. getting rid of police staff. You are doing it already and yet the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and our very own Budget and Performance Committee here say that in fact civilian staff are cheaper to employ by £20,000 each and they are more dedicated and often more efficient because that is their job and you are not moving police officers around every two or three years. You are already de-civilianising. You are

already potentially becoming less efficient. With this £90 million, you increase your police officers. You cannot get rid of them if you do not have a similar amount next year. That means you have to get rid of police staff and become less and less efficient. How are you going to fix that particular problem? You have not actually given us a forecast for civilian strength, Kit, and yet the figures we have had before somehow --

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I can tell you what it is going to be.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): You can? Could you try and do it succinctly? That would be helpful because I am aware that we only have --

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. On Jenny's two broad points, it is a mistake to think that the £90 million is somehow unusual. We receive one-off grants all the time from the Home Office. We receive it around public order. You will see in the paper we are receiving grants around Operations Withern and Kirkin. We have made very strong representations all the time, as you would expect me to do because I am elected in London to do exactly that, champion the cause of London and make sure that we get the funding that we think we need to maintain resilience.

In particular, you will remember, Jenny, that we made a deal with the Government around the Games where we agreed to a level of extraction that we were willing to put in as London's contribution, if you like. That was based on a certain level of resources. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the budget and the financial calamity that hit the country, that was no longer available. One of the points we made was that that deal needs to be looked at again. If you want us to make that same commitment, we have to have that same number of officers. When you add into that the Jubilee, the public order environment and the comparative costs of getting more mutual aid in to deal with the Olympics gap, then the case became compelling.

I do not think you should see this as unusual because we do get tens of millions of pounds from the Government all the time in one-off payments for specific events and eventualities because the Capital is different. I presume you do not want us to send the money back. We are quite grateful to have it. You have to remember this is a very small part of closing the equation. By far the biggest part is the efficiency savings, the hundreds of millions of pounds of savings that we have to put through the budget. There comes a point where the Government recognises that for particular circumstance or during a particular time we have a particular problem. I was one of the ones four years ago who said we should not have the Mayoral Election just before the Games. It is absolutely crazy from a resilience point of view.

Jenny Jones (AM): Can we talk about civilian staff? I think that is going to be a problem.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): For the civilian staff, back in March 2008 we had 14,070 civilian staff. The forecast number I have here in front of me is 14,801.

Jenny Jones (AM): Is that what you are going to have?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That is the forecast for March 2012.

Jenny Jones (AM): How are you going to get that number in post? In December 2011 it was 1,500 below that. Are you going to increase your civilian staff?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do not know. I will have to come back to you on where those particular staff are coming from and how they are being recruited. That is the number that I have put in front of you.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Yes, we are coming on to the section related to the third strategic priority targeting robbery, burglary and drug dealing in every borough. Can I start by asking the Commissioner? He started to tell us earlier about ComStat. I have to say my own relationship with ComStat has been via the TV and watching programmes like The Wire and stuff. Briefly, you said you are going to have your Deputy Commissioner meet with - was it Borough Chief Superintendents or was it Sector Commanders? Was that daily, weekly or monthly? When they saw things happening in a number or one borough, are you telling us that they will then get extra resources over what they get now to go in there and then, relating to your use of section 60, we would actually see an operation there, so there is an issue here, section 60, and it would, say, be about robbery, burglary or drug dealing? Is this how it is going to run? Is that ComStat? Is that what you are talking about?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): What it amounts to is that there are 32 Borough Commanders at least and they use other people, too, so other people are running the Territorial Support Group (TSG) and other departments who will be there. The idea is that you talk to a Borough Commander in Camden and ask them about their performance in the way that you are asking me about ours, so they will be expected to account for it. It is process by which they enter the room knowing their stuff. They know what is happening in their area and they should know what they are doing about it.

It is not a case of trying to destroy them. It is a case of trying to find out what is happening and whether they understand it and then what they are doing about it. What you often find is that people do know their stuff and they are doing things. It may not always be working but colleagues are able to help in two ways. One: they might say, "We have tried this in our area. You might want to think about it", or, with the adjacent borough, "If only we had known you had that problem, we would have done more to help you and we will work on it together".

In terms of whether we can redirect the resources of the Met to problem areas, the answer is yes. In fact, we have already started that around Westminster but also in some of the northern boroughs at the moment, so that the resources that were in Central Operations (CO), the public order side, and horses, TSGs, etc, are being targeted towards some particular problems that we think are happening in those areas. We have seen in fact how they have had quite an impact over the last two weeks. If we were not careful, those resources would have just been spread evenly around the MPS, so we try and target the resources to where they are most needed.

That is an operation called Impact and it is something that the new Assistant Commissioner in what is now CO and SC (Specialist Crime) - I think we now call it SCO, specialist Crime and operations - is making sure that he assists territorial policing by targeting the resources in the right place, so they will have their own COMPSTAT to see how they can support their borough colleagues.

The essential part of COMPSTAT is that you have lots of information - it gets back to the question Victoria asked earlier - and making sure it is accurate data and then the police are supposed to respond. If you can get partners to help, then even better.

Jennette Arnold (AM): We have seen variations on this but we have also seen boroughs who have then had an ongoing issue with robbery, with burglary, with drug dealing. So what are you going to do? When they have had their COMPSTAT discussions, what will you do to ensure that the issues and the rising increase of that particular robbery, burglary or drug dealing is dealt with?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Jennette, you are right that the MOPC needs to have some kind of input and I am pleased that I have been invited along. It is actually called Crimefighters, the meeting, not COMPSTAT. The MPS has done performance management in the past, obviously, but they have never done it all together and it has never been done in quite the same detail.

Jennette Arnold (AM): I think we have heard from the MPS. I was asking you. You know they have had it and you have boroughs that are in distress where there is an issue there of either robbery, burglary or drug dealing. You want it sorted out because you and the Mayor said at the start of the life of MOPC that you were going to provide a structure that would make this city safer and these are the three areas you identified as priorities. So what I want to know is whether you have thought through the action, the order, so that it can be resolved?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, I have. I think, Jennette, perhaps you are getting slightly confused. Crimefighters is not about just providing information about which boroughs are in trouble. Crimefighters, the COMPSTAT meeting, is about making sure that solutions are promulgated across the entire city to those things and they come from the conversations that happen prior about performance. It will not be any surprise to you to know that the Commissioner and I sit down every week and look at the performance charts that have happened that week and look at particular boroughs that are having particular problems. We use, I now like to think, more sophisticated statistical analysis than we did before, particularly the use of standard deviations, to work out which boroughs are performing and which are not. It is not just up and down. It is who is deviating from the norm. I have those conversations also with the Assistant Commissioner for Territorial Policing (ACTP) and the new Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Crime and Operations - or public order- I am not sure what it is called yet. So all those conversations happen all the time.

Crimefighters is about the Assistant Commissioner sitting down and making sure that that happens consistently through all the boroughs. One of the things that I have said over the last two or three years that slightly frustrates me about MPS performance is exactly what you are

alluding to. It is the inconsistency between performance in neighbouring boroughs for the same crime type. The idea of getting all 32 in the room is to say, "Why do you stick out amongst your peers on robbery? Why are you not doing the same as them? Why is your performance different? You need to get into line with everybody else".

Jennette Arnold (AM): It is something that we will come back to because you have another level of senior officer here, the sector commanders, whom we have not heard of and I do not know what they are doing. We will come back to that, I am sure, at future meetings.

These questions are about getting a sense that this new structure is going to make a difference and that is what I am pressing for. What will be the difference? We have had performance management and many Members have sat in when previous deputies have said to Borough Commanders, "You will work together". We have had the whole thing about boundaries and I am just saying: are you committed to ensuring that this structure will deliver the action required? Then we will find out more about how you are doing that as the thing grows.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It will come through in the numbers. I think you have to get the process in train. I have raised with the Commissioner right from his very first day some of my frustrations around performance. His solution to that is to recruit - and we have jointly recruited - a new Assistant Commissioner, the opportunity you gave us, who had plans. One of the things that we interviewed on and those of you on the panel will remember, was about what specifically they would do to get crime down and in particular the crime types that were of concern to London at the moment. What you are seeing is the results of some of those demands coming through.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Thank you. We are frustrated and Londoners are in despair around these particular crime types. Commissioner, can you just tell us briefly whether you have any reasons why we have seen these recent increases in acquisitive crime? We hear that it is because of the economic situation or the police response. Can you identify a problem with the police response or is it an economic factor?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, as I said to you earlier, you see that the majority of the rise was at the beginning of the year and you have seen that things have improved later in the year. I am not claiming that benefit. I am not saying that is down to my arrival because the improvement started before I arrived. I think you saw that with the crime types we are talking about - very important ones, robbery and burglary - that people are concentrating on it and they are doing something about getting it down. I think that is the first thing. It became a priority and people have done things. I am not sure about the economic situation. I do not think I could comment on that.

I think one thing I just wanted to add in terms of the questions that you were asking Kit and that you went to with me Jennette, was that first of all you mentioned about sector commanders at the commander level. Every 28 days the ACTP holds to account the 32 Borough Commanders at least in one room, but the Sector Commanders together with the Deputy Assistant Commissioners will hold them to account in between every 14 days. So the accountability process is increasing. The Crimefighters label is one I started in Merseyside

because I genuinely believe it is about time the police started fighting crime rather than getting too distracted by many of the things that we have to do. The distinction is that what we are forming is a new form of governance, a new form of accountability. The deployment decisions are mine and we will take full responsibility for that. The accountability is entirely down to a single individual rather than to what was an authority. Either way, I do not mind accountability, but we are trying to put things in place. I hope that will reassure.

The final thing I will mention that Simon Byrne has brought from the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) is that within the boroughs there is something called a Grip and Pace centre and a Superintendent is going to be there 16 hours a day checking what is happening day by day, hour by hour, which is quite a difference. In the past it might have been several days passed before interventions happened. The idea now is within a day, three times during the day, a superintendent asks, "What is happening? What are you doing about bail? What are you doing about some of the people who are wanted?" I think what you have seen overall is a package of performance management which is more interventionist, more on timely and relying on better management information. I know that we are not there yet and our team aims to get better as to the way that we get the information. We will get there and the thing that will drive it will be these meetings.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Just very quickly, while the robbery spike, if you like, is alarming, I do not think people necessarily should despair. The numbers are still well below what they were in 2005/2006. They are 23% less than they were back in 2001, ten years ago. While that is no consolation to somebody who is going to be robbed this afternoon, as I said to you right at the start, in terms of the long-term trend overall the number is down and the city is much safer than it was five or ten years ago from a robbery point of view.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): As you have said, that is no consolation to yourself or your neighbour or your street where the robberies are taking place now. Steve?

Steve O'Connell (AM): Just very quickly, first of all I would like to comment on as I was there at the beginning for what was COMPSTAT. I welcome them and I welcome this new group of people because what they did do was take Borough Commanders and borough leaders out of their comfort zones, which is never a bad thing and I think we saw some positive results.

Picking up on acquisitive crime, certainly the trend, as you say, is going in the right direction but speaking for burglary and residential burglary particularly, it is a crime that does affect many people throughout London, sometimes in areas where they do not normally experience high crime rates but they do have a disproportionately high fear of crime. Whilst I see the trending figures are going in the right direction, residential burglary is something I would be interested in your thoughts on. Then I would like to ask a question about acquisitive crime and the links to drugs. First of all, residential burglary, your thoughts and are we heading in the right direction?

Joanne McCartney (Chair): We are very short of time now and we are going to have to extend the meeting by a little bit, so perhaps the drugs bit we can ask in writing, Steve?

Steve O'Connell (AM): The drugs point I would like to make is, firstly, I would like just briefly your thoughts on residential burglary but, secondly, clearly, this is acquisitive crime in many cases linked - I think over 50% - to drug offences. Really, I would be interested in whether the MOPC with the Commissioner are looking at the attitudes to drug usage and what we would be doing about curing the problem as opposed to the symptoms. Residential burglary would be interesting.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Just briefly from me, we have around a 5% increase from last year, approaching a 6% increase, so it is a worry. Any increase is a bad thing because it is a serious crime. What you have seen is we have an operation running around each borough nominating and monitoring their top five burglary suspects, so we are actually taking active action against the most prolific offenders together with all the other performance measures.

One thing I have found in the past is about the way the questions are posed, which is very reasonable when we are talking about crime types, if we only talk about crime types we miss the fact that the same criminals commit different crimes, so a burglar is a robber one day and sometimes assaults someone the next day. Sadly, criminals have mixed profiles. So what we have to do is make sure that although we deal with specific crime types in the way that I have said we will pick out the burglars, we also have to acknowledge that if we manage performance rigorously we will take them out for many things.

The final example I would offer is the Operation Hawk days that we have started, which is to have mass warrants executed if we can convince a magistrate to give us the warrant. If we go in for drugs, we often find a burglar or a shoplifter. Shoplifting is often driven, sadly, by drug addiction. What we find is by going for the drug we get the acquisitive crime that goes with it and I think we have to tackle all of it together. Of course, this is at street level. We have to work at level one, as it is called, the international supply or the supply across London and we do that as well. The most physical part of the work is really what you see in the boroughs and Operation Hawk is just part of that.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Thank you. That is very helpful. Perhaps you could write to us about the future operation target as well. I am just thinking that Mike raised the issue that he is new to the PCC and even for those that were on the Police Authority, perhaps just a list for us of the various operations and what they are doing would be very useful to be circulated again. Jenny, you wanted to talk about some of the issues that came out of the gangs meeting last week.

Jenny Jones (AM): I will be quick. We had a session on gangs which was very interesting and I hope that we will be writing to you about that. It is an opportunity with MOPC now to be a little bit more creative perhaps than we have been able to be in the past. One of the issues that came up, for example, was actually dealing with things in a more cross-border way because at the moment things get jammed into boroughs. There is some cross-border working but it might be time for MOPC and perhaps us as well to take a bigger overview.

I did want to ask if there is any update on the MPS gang strategy. I think you are going to make an announcement. I wondered if you would like to make it to us first rather than to the press or to a fundraising dinner or anything like that.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If this is about the gangs thing, I think the truth is, Jenny, it is still in development.

Jenny Jones (AM): You are still making it up? Good. The creative juices are flowing.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It will be revealed. You are absolutely right. One of the themes that is in there is about much more of that cross-border working, recognising that a gang member will live in one borough, be educated in another and offend in a third. Also, there is the fact that where you see particular boroughs that are very successful on gang enforcement like Hackney, there is intelligence to say that those people will go next door and offend because they know that in Hackney they are going to get treated in a particular way. There are boroughs that have a small area of gangs. In my own constituency, North Kensington, obviously, the rest of the borough is broadly gang-free but there is a bit across the top that links in with North Westminster and then across into Hampstead and Fulham and you tackle that geographical area in a holistic way, so we are still looking at it from that point of view.

On MOPC, you are absolutely right. One of the conversations also we are having with London councils is about how we might spend some of the money that is currently allocated to boroughs centrally but is now coming through the MOPC and whether we should with their agreement spend that more strategically on these problems and therefore squeeze more bang out of the buck, if you like, rather than just give everybody £80,000 or £100,000 and let them spend it how they want.

Jenny Jones (AM): One of the other issues that came out was partnership working between agencies and so on and that is also where MOPC could take a leadership role.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That is exactly right. You may know for instance that we have had somebody from the Probation Service seconded into my office now for the last six months and that will continue into MOPC. They have put one of their highfliers in to try to see how we can work together much more. That has resulted in the integrated offender management pilot in the northwest sector that is going on at the moment. She is off on the Senior Commander course, as it happens, for three months but then she will be coming back and starting to work in the office. I actually had a meeting with the Head of the National Offender Management Service on the regional offender management, if you like, for London and the South-East who now wants to have a conversation about how we might commission services jointly in the future, which is the first step towards London having greater control over what happens to its offenders once they are incarcerated and, again, once they get released.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): The Time for Action Programme, the Mayor's strands around preventing youth violence, is that going to be linked in and will you be taking responsibility for that or is that going to lie outside?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): No, it is linked in. In pure physical terms, the only programme that has come across is Project Daedalus. This is the wing at Feltham and their resettlement programmes for young offenders. The rest of it is remaining at City Hall but there is, yes, a strong link between the two. Obviously the advantage, if you like, of the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime having a foot over on that side of the river and a foot here is that he can provide a link between the two.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): That would be useful, I think.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): Yes, I just wanted to pick up the issue of sexual offences and we have seen rape offences increase by 7.6% in the 12 months to November. The sanction detection rate for rapes has fallen by 20% between 2007 and 2011. I am just wondering, perhaps, Commissioner, what your response is really going to be to this fall in sanction detections of rape.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, it was an issue that was raised in the old MPA and we did do an immediate review and in fact we have seen an increase in the amount of detections in the latter part of the year of about 22%. You know what it is like with percentages. You can trade these all the time depending on what your base is.

I think what we have seen is that the work we carried out with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has really borne fruit. The first thing is they have dedicated lawyers to this issue. It has helped to reduce the backlog. One of the reasons for lack of detections is because of the backlog of cases in the system where a charging decision had not been made, so that has enabled that backlog to be brought through. Of course, we have looked at how we can improve our investigations, so we are seeing an improvement in the latter part of the year and it does seem a large part of it is our liaison with the CPS.

I think what we have seen is although overall for the year the charging decisions have reduced slightly, more people have ended up in court because often after a charging decision it can be that either a complainant withdraws or something happens in terms of charging where the charge does not actually appear at court, but we have seen an increase in the number charged at court. I think there are some positive signs in the last part of the year but you are quite right. In the year we have seen an increase in rate and a reduction in detections, but it does look as though there was a blockage either by us or with us with the CPS.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): The report some of us saw when we were on the MPA came to our Committee and you had this big review of the unresolved rates. Is that part of the backlog that you are saying has how been cleared? There was a big action plan within that. What progress are you making with the action plan?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): It seems that it is bearing fruit and we can offer, if you like, some figures on the action plan. Really this was the work that Assistant Commissioner Lynne Owens started with the CPS and now we have a new Assistant Commissioner in there and they are taking it forward. If you would like some update on the action plan, I am very happy to provide it.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): That would be helpful. Thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Of course, the other important indicator in this is that reported rape is up and the sanction detection is down and we need to also look at victim satisfaction. The switch towards a much more victim-centred approach around rape investigation has resulted in some positive indicators on victim satisfaction coming back on surveys, albeit we would like to lock a lot more rapists up.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): The only other thing I would mention is that we have sent two of our senior Sapphire officers to the GMP to see what best practice they have. I suspect that is not entirely unconnected to the fact that we have just taken the Deputy Chief Constable from the GMP. I think that one of the things we are trying to encourage the MPS to do is to think that there may be other places who might have a different take on something or might have a better way of doing things, so we are making sure we go around the rest of the country, as well as sometimes hoping that we might have something to share with others.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): I noticed that you provided some very helpful and interesting long-term crime volume statistics looking back over an eight-year period. Rape offences appear to have gone up by about 30%, so it is interesting that you say there was a backlog in charging decision. I think it begs a question about whether this is driven by increased reporting or increased incidence or both. Is there a long-term mismatch between the resources being applied to tackle this, to prevent as well as to detect and prosecute, given that there is this growth in volume?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): We keep saying that the increase in rape is down to better confidence and I am just not sure. I think all the research has shown that there is a relatively low percentage of rape which is reported so, even if you see a large percentage increase in reported rape, we still do not know whether or not the overall rape figure is going up or down. I think there is a real concern about the stats for a start and the analysis. I have asked for as much analysis as we can because are we seeing the same pattern across London, outside London and in adjacent places. I have a concern because then of course we split the rapes into different categories.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): These are big volumes of changes on what are already quite big figures, so I think I would like to see some kind of special project to examine the statistics, what we know and what we are learning from them. I know we are short of time. Can I just ask you if you want to say anything about any issues within the wider criminal justice system that affect the sanction detection rate? I know it often comes up as a systematic problem, the management or dare I say even sometimes the very poor management of the criminal justice

system, and I am sure there is a feedback loop here that women see what happens in the courts and how people get treated and how long it takes, etc. Is there anything you want to comment on in relation to the criminal justice system?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not sure how to comment particularly. I think the whole system needs to help the victim to believe that they can be confident in it and I suspect sometimes in our adversarial system some victims do not feel entirely supported. They are challenged about their account.

I think one thing we always have to bear in mind of course is that we have men victims, too, and it is a growing issue. If we have an under-reporting with women, we certainly have, I believe, an under-reporting with men, too, so I think we have to be aware of that. We also know that about 80% of the people who report crime have a vulnerability one way or another. That vulnerability can be a psychiatric illness, it can be drink, it can be an issue that there has been at the time of the crime. Sadly, sometimes, the system is not sympathetic to people in those groups.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): What would you change about the criminal justice system in this regard if you could?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I am trying to avoid being reported as calling for something to happen, but I genuinely think that there is something --

Valerie Shawcross (AM): I realise it is difficult. I think the public would really like to know what you think is essentially going wrong there.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Sometimes you give a straight, adult answer to a question and they end up saying you are campaigning for something. I think, for example, I will just point this out. There is a disparity in London. London, I think, has a good classification system because it acknowledges there are differences in rape. It is very serious no matter what it is, whether it is a stranger or an acquaintance, etc. The law does not recognise that distinction and juries are apt to charge and convict and sentence on the basis of one charge and I do not think that always help.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): So a broadening of the categories?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Just to add, you may have seen the paper that Alison Saunders, the Chief Crown Prosecutor for London, wrote. She gave a speech just upstairs on Monday about exactly these issues. She attempted to explode some of the myths around rape which I think are absolutely key: the fact that people think it is always a stranger, the fact that people think if you have been drinking you are somehow partly to blame, all those kinds of issues that need to be addressed in persuading juries to convict.

The other side of it is obviously the confidence thing and I have to say it underlines the importance of the Rape Crisis funding that the Mayor has put in place and the continuing

funding of the Havens that the MPS does half and half. What we are hoping to do is bring together all those parties, the criminal justice system, Rape Crisis, the MPS and others to make sure that the victims feel confident as they go through it. There will be a momentum. Once we get more convictions we will become more confident about taking prosecutions, juries and judges will become more confident about convicting and we will get a virtuous circle.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Just quickly, I noticed also there was a long-term growth in homophobic offences. Is this something that you feel there is a resourcing issue around or a public education issue around?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): It may be long-term but this is the contradiction to the trend. There is a long-term growth but of course in the last year we have seen a slight drop.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): It was 13% over that period. I understand that there are short-term fluctuations.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): That is right. You are right.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): If I can add to that, I do think genuinely that that is confidence. Now, every single borough has a LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) liaison officer which there was not before. Three years ago it was patchy. Some had some and some had none. So I think it is partly that.

Just on resources, I should have added actually that it is worth saying that the Met has put significant extra resources into rape investigation, not least because the very significant drop in homicide has allowed investigative teams to move across, so there are lot more detectives doing it now than there were three years ago.

Jennette Arnold (AM): The issue is that there are particular boroughs where these figures have been high for a significant period of time. I wonder whether or not, now we have the MOPC, Kit, you are going to then look at those boroughs, see what the issue is and then we will be able to get a better understanding of why some boroughs clearly have such a low rate of conviction or processing the work.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Of course, rape charging and investigation is now centralised in SCO so it does not actually form part of borough --

Jennette Arnold (AM): It still relates to the boroughs, so --

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): It does, but understanding some of those issues is exactly what we are talking about.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Maybe that is the issue. We should then not be putting it against boroughs but be looking to understand how best to present that, then.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I am happy to. Boroughs have to respond, so the number has to be there for a Borough Commander to be aware of what is going on. I have to say again what I have said in other forums: rape is a slightly odd offence in that its prevention does not respond to normal policing tactics. You cannot patrol, necessarily, to prevent rape. There is not a lot of intelligence about rapes unless it is a serial rapist that you obviously want to pursue. So the prevention has to be more of a societal/cultural thing. Obviously apprehension and conviction is a police and criminal justice thing.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Thank you. We have to move on now. That is the end of our questioning on the performance figures. What we thought would be useful at these meetings is to actually have a half-hour look at some issue of importance. For this first meeting, we are looking at --

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Can I just say, Chair? I do not want to delay. Can I just say? I absolutely welcome the performance thing. We never did this at the MPA and I always hoped that Members would pick up the cudgel on performance because it is the most important thing, often.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Wonderful. We are now moving on. The first item we thought we would look at in a bit more detail was the MPS's and MOPC's responses to the August disturbances. I appreciate we are still at an interim stage at the moment, but we do have four reports or pieces of work that have been released. There has been the interim report from the Riots Communities and Victims Panel. We have had the London School of Economics (releasing some of their work in "Reading the Riots". We have had an HMIC report called "The Rules of Engagement: A Review Following the August Disorders", and then your own interim report into Operation Kirkin. Steve was going to start off with looking at some of these questions.

Steve O'Connell (AM): Thank you, Chair. I think it is very timely. I was at the Croydon regeneration taskforce last night supported by this building with the representatives of residents and businesses and it was quite clear that it is now six months on. Indeed, six months away will be another August, so we are moving on in time. Residents and businesses and people in London often get a little bit impatient around reports and reviews and they want to seek some reassurance.

So, in that context, I think it is worth spending a little bit of time on it. We are awaiting the formal publication of various reports, as mentioned by the Chair, although there has already been some interim intelligence coming out. I think there would also be an expectation that both the MPS and whoever the controlling body is has already rolled up their sleeves and is taking some action and not waiting.

Could you perhaps tell the Committee about your thoughts and the actions that you have already taken and you propose to take?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Certainly, Chair. First of all, we expect our final report, the report that Assistant Commissioner Owens wrote

which you have the interim version of, within the next few weeks. We are trying to make sure that we work with the IPCC who are publishing their report into two things. One is obviously the death of Mark Duggan and the other is obviously the way that the aftermath, if you like, was handled in terms of communication, particularly with the family; both of those reports will be helpful in our understanding.

I think the thing that we acknowledged within the first report was that our community engagement needs to improve. The new ACTP is building a new model of community engagement. I think that has been quite a sensitive area which I think politicians of all parties might help us with. In trying to improve it, we might be acknowledging that the links we have with people are not representative of the people we need to talk to. As you all know, a lot of ownership is built up in those relationships and people will not easily walk away from them, so I think we are going to need to sensitively work through that. It is best we get it right rather than we carry on with something that frankly is not really, I do not think, fit for purpose at the moment.

The second thing is to try and simplify. We have many groups and it is all very well being reported. The Chair asked about the new engagement for the Deputy Mayor and the convoluted, sometimes, processes that the MPS have in place. So I think we have a lot but it feels a bit like a kaleidoscope and I think we need to simplify it. Probably by reducing we will get a better impact. That includes the independent advice and the independent advisory groups. They were one of the positive developments from the murder of Stephen Lawrence and the Macpherson Report. Again, I think that is quite a long time now and I think we just need to look to see whether they are working in the right way.

In terms of mobilisation, Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley is leading on that and this is really addressing the first point. If you remember, on the Saturday night, we have accepted from the beginning that we did not have enough police available to deal with Tottenham High Road. Had we been able to do that, possibly we would not have seen the Sunday and the Monday that followed it. We now have significantly more police officers available to deploy. We have tested that so that we make sure it is not just a nice plan but actually we have more people in place. The ACTP is reviewing how many people who were in response, the ones who in the evening tend to provide that reserve capacity, are actually available on the shifts because there was some evidence that the shift patterns we had were putting enough people out to deal with the incidents but that does not necessarily leave enough in reserve when somebody in an adjacent borough says, "We need your help now". That has been a fundamental problem and we intend to address that very quickly.

Finally, we are finalising the numbers of people who we think need to be specialist trained in terms of public order. I do not want to get too boring about some of the acronyms but we have level one, two and three public order training. Level one are the most trained and they spend the most time doing it, so we reduce the numbers and hopefully they deal with an incident. Level three are the least trained and probably the basic training officers have on how to hold a shield and how to work as a team, and then we have a middle tier. The level ones and twos are the ones that we are significantly going to increase. We just need to make sure that all the training is in place, but that should deliver during this year. We at first thought that the

contract that we have down at Gravesend, which is a private finance initiative contract, would not accommodate that, but I am told that it looks as though that will be OK and we probably will not have to find any extra money, but it will mean a little more abstraction from the boroughs.

I just pause there for a second because over the 20 years since we have last needed police officers to do this type of thing, a lot of people have said, "Why do you keep taking police officers away from neighbourhoods in response to go and train for public order when you do not have riots?" Sadly, as we saw in August, from time to time we do need them and unless we train them they are not ready, so we are going to have to invest in that more. It will not significantly affect the neighbourhoods in response but it will have an impact. We cannot have it both ways. We cannot say, "They are not available. They are not trained". We have to train them, so that is going to be something that we will put right.

We are looking at whether all the kit and the tactics are right. We have already changed some of the tactics. We want to see people more on the front foot and more using vehicles - "front foot" is probably the wrong phrase when you are using vehicles - but the idea is to go forward, not to stand in a line. I know there has been criticism of the police for not going forward enough but on the Saturday they did not have enough officers. At the later times we need to see more mobility and using vehicle-based tactics and that is something we are training for now.

There are other what can be seen as extreme measures. We have not reached any definitive recommendations on that but, if we are talking about things like water cannon, baton rounds have been expressed as an emotive issue but they have been there for 30-odd years. If there are to be other changes, I think that needs political involvement in that and we will work with the Home Office to see what they want to licence and whether or not they want to, frankly, pay and in any case whether they want to see that type of tactic used. I do not think it is something necessarily the police should impose but I think we can start the debate. I do not think it is reasonable to blame the police for not using things and then not to have a debate about whether they should be employed, so we will use that.

We do an awful lot of work around investigation and CCTV. One of the things we have found with this type of incident - which we have seen with other major public protests in the past few years in London is that when we have a big incident like this we had about 700 officers and staff committing to reviewing lots of CCTV footage. I think at the last count it was about 20,000 hours of footage. It takes skills to do that. It sounds as though it is easy but you have to learn these things and track people. What we found was we put these teams together and we then had to send them back to general CID and then we did not have the skills anymore. So we are looking at how we maintain a core capacity because sadly in London from time to time we have mass events where we need to use that sort of work.

Finally, I think something positive came out of this, which is that the criminal justice process worked very well. We started working days and nights. We put people through quickly. witnesses and suspects were dealt with quickly. In my view, there were some strong sentences passed, so messages were sent rapidly. I think we should take strength from that and make sure we build it into a regular way of working, too.

So those are some broad areas but I am happy to obviously take any questions and we will produce our final report which will be made available within the next few weeks.

Steve O'Connell (AM): I have one or two supplementary points. Again, it is all about reassurance. It is making sure people in Croydon and Tottenham and elsewhere in London do not start, as it moves towards the summer, fearing that this is going to happen again. That would have an effect on trade and all sorts of issues, so it is important that we get our results out or we tell people what we are going to do and there is some sort of reassurance around it.

That picks up on the engagement piece which we have talked about already. We need to get that right so that people out there, the right people, get the message and become advocates. For what it is worth, when we talk about engagement, I am a great fan of the Safer Neighbourhood Panels, so I put that on the record. It is reassuring about the public order training level because I have experience as we all have where the people out on the streets that night did not have the training. That is reassuring as well.

Lastly from me, again, it is the debate about numbers in the areas of Croydon and Tottenham. It is coming back from businesses and residents. We may not have had it right on the night. We may not have had the numbers on the night. That will come out in the reporting. We can have that again in August this year, so I think that is just a comment on behalf of my constituents.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Chair, following on from Steve, I welcome what the Commissioner has said because clearly, in my involvement around three boroughs, the scary thing was about resilience. Is there a next tier? Is there any more? Where are the troops to come from if this kicks off? So I welcome what he had to say.

I just also say that when I was a member of the MPA's Olympic policing scrutiny, I looked at the figures around public order and raised it then as an issue. I think Victoria will remember that there was never going to be the capacity to do anything big with the numbers that we had there, so I welcome that.

In addition to that, when I looked at those figures, this cadre had one of the lowest ethnic profiles as with other specialist areas in your service. So can I ask that any activity you do starts with an equality impact assessment? If we cannot get members of the police service who are from ethnic minority backgrounds and women to come forward with a first request, what actions and what mitigation will you take to actually ensure that they are spoken to and given the right encouragement? It seems to me really quite odd that a public-facing part of the service has such a poor profile, especially on ethnicity, when it is going to be going into some of our most diverse communities?.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, in terms of the equality impact assessment, we will. It is a real challenge not only about racial profiling but also about gender. Despite the fact that we recruited 24% BME or 25% when we have been recruiting women, we have not seen the same level of recruitment into those police support units, so I think it is a good point but we do need to train people into that.

I think the second thing in terms of the Olympics is that hopefully, going back to Steve O'Connell's point, people will be reassured around the Olympics period that the Government has provided some extra finance to enable us to put some more of the public order units on during this period, partly around the summer, partly around the Olympics. Without going into all the detail, you are talking of something in the order of 600 to 700 extra officers that we will have available as a reserve in case of difficulties. That is over and above what we already have. I know we had the big discussion at the beginning about numbers and what that means. We have a reserve. That is spread over the day and into the evening but it is a significant amount of people.

The final thing I would say is - and I do not want to mislead here - even when we have done all the things that we have said we will do and we will do, it is always very difficult on the first night. We have people; we have officers. They are not sitting there waiting to do this. They deal with domestic violence. They deal with whatever else they deal with. They are going to have to pull together, be briefed, work as a team, get the kit and all the rest of it. It takes time and they are not always match-fit in the first few hours. I would always acknowledge that. There is not much excuse for 24 or 48 hours later. We ought to have our act together by then. I think it is very disruptive and nobody really knows what they are dealing with. No matter how much training we give, it is going to be a real challenge on that first night. The more officers we have available, frankly, the more chance we have of success if they are well-led. You have my commitment that that will be better.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): I want to pick up the issue of engagement at various stages if I may. Perhaps as the Member representing Tottenham, I have certainly had a lot of feedback from various people there about the way they perceive that both the MPS and the IPCC failed the residents, so I have to deal with different parts of the disturbances.

Firstly, can I ask what the MPS is doing with the IPCC about sorting out what happens when a serious incident such as the shooting of Mark Duggan occurs? There was a feeling that the police thought they could not say anything because it had been handed to the IPCC. The IPCC was slow and gave out misinformation as well and then did not correct that misinformation until a number of days later. Can I ask what work you are doing to sort out that protocol on who can speak and that your officers are empowered to actually engage with the local community throughout this?

My second question relates to the early stages of the disorder or the time between that incident and the disorder. I am aware, for example, that HMIC has published a report called "The Rules of Engagement" where they stated that the MPS was very slow in communicating with the local community and the national press immediately following Mr Duggan's death. It was reported that the MPS's community impact assessment system did not pick up the mounting tension in the community. Certainly we have had various community figures saying that they had passed this on to the MPS and it was not acted upon. Perhaps you cannot comment on that at the moment but I would be interested to know when your report on this is actually coming out. It seems to me that there must be an engagement strategy for those early stages so that figures in the local community are alerted and do feel empowered to give their views forward and know

they will be acted upon. I had a third area but I will come back to that in a minute, if I may. I do not know, Commissioner, if you would like to start with that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): For me, they are linked. In terms of the IPCC, we immediately sat down with them and tried non-pejoratively to work our way through what happened and what either of us or both together could have done better. One of the initial conclusions is - and we now have better written definitions but the main thing is what we are going to do differently and how we are going to train people - that we have agreed that it is perfectly OK for the police to speak about these incidents. Previously, every time sadly someone dies in contact with the police, the police leave it to the IPCC, not trying to interfere with their independence but trying to indicate that they are under investigation.

What we are saying in the future is that we will take that opportunity in a way that we have not in the past. That may cause its own tensions because you have seen some of my senior colleagues in the past who have made statements about firearms incidents and later regretted it, so I think there is a real tension there as to how we manage that. There is going to be a willingness in the future for us to at least be involved and to put people up to speak so far as we can. The difficulty at the beginning is always, if you speak too confidently about what you know too little about, you can later regret it. I think we have to get that balance right but we are prepared to engage more and at a very senior level within the IPCC to make sure that we are engaged. I think one of the things we both acknowledge: did very senior people talk as well as the people who were actually involved on the ground?

The second thing is, in terms of the community impact, as you say, it is probably a little difficult to talk about it too much until the IPCC report comes out. I think even in the interim account there is a very clear point that there was certain information available to us which we did not take enough notice of. We have to make sure that our Borough Commanders and those people who work with us and the management teams and the different intelligence systems we have, first of all, know about things and give things their appropriate weight. There was some evidence on this occasion that that did not happen so we will see how we can improve that, which therefore will lead us to either defusing a problem but if we are not going to be able to defuse it we are better prepared. On both grounds, we obviously did not succeed in Tottenham on the Saturday.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I think it is worth saying that the engagement failure was also the MPA's. I think the failure was also that the MPA - Joanne, you are the link member - was not necessarily identified as a route through which these things could be raised. I did not get any calls. I do not know if you received a call or if anybody told you before it was going to happen. For me, I would like to disentangle those people who actually were wise before the event and those now who claim they were. That would be an exercise that I think we need to go through around the engagement, and were there people who would have known and had the information that we should have been talking to and engaging with over some time, but those routes of information, either through the Borough Liaison Officer, through the Community and Police Engagement Group, through the Link Officer, all that, none of that rang any alarm bells at all prior to the riot. So something happened where people did not

identify those, what are supposed to be the accepted engagement routes of the Authority, alarm bells – they did not ring at all.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Could I just add one thing, because it is really important, I think, about the point there, about who said what to whom. When we publish our report, one thing, I think a line we have got to tread really carefully is, if we publish a report and claim a fact which seems self-interested or self-beneficial, those who are affected by that fact may well say, “Well, you would say that, wouldn’t you?” It is one of the dilemmas of us publishing our report into this event, because it is a partial account, and that does concern me. When we publish our account, we will try our best to give out accurate information, but others may say, “Well, that is self-interested. How can you conclude that? Where do you get your fact from?” which is where I think Dara Singh’s report I hope will help to give an objective, open, independent account of what they say happened and who said what to who, and we are going to have to try and manage that carefully when we let our account out.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): I have got a question before I come back to James, but you have mentioned about wanting to look at the engagement structures and whether you are talking to the right people. I think an organisation should always do that, because new communities are coming into any area and people do change, but there are people that have a long history in certain areas and do have valuable opinions. What I would not want to see is the MPS only talking to the people that it thinks gives them the answers they want to hear, so that is a grave danger, I think, and when you are looking at this, I think you need to be very sensitive to that, because that is often when you are looking at new people or we want to engage with different people, there is that great danger around there, so you have people that do not actually speak for anyone and only speak what you want to hear. That is just a warning.

James Cleverley (AM): Are you going to create – is it possible to create – a kind of assessment protocol so that we know that the people who speak on behalf of the community do actually speak on behalf of the community, because there have been suggestions that a number of the people who claimed to be the authentic and authoritative voice of the community at the time actually were not providing speedy, useful intelligence or forewarning beforehand, and then there are a number of people who said, “Oh, if I had been listened to”. Now, it is very difficult to know who does or does not and there but for the grace of God, that situation could happen in any part of London where we have so-called authoritative voices. So are we going to get a protocol or some kind of way of testing – or assessing is perhaps a better word than testing – which are genuinely the authoritative voices in any given area or ethnic or social or religious community, and sometimes those self-appointed people who claim to be, but in hindsight prove far from it?

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Of course, some of them may well be as well.

James Cleverley (AM): This is the thing, and that is the problem. If you have a roomful of people who all say, “I am the authoritative voice” some are and some are not, and we want to make sure that we are listening to those that are and only listening to those that are.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): You have described the dilemma very well. I am not quite sure entirely how we are going to resolve it, but it is a dilemma and I think we have got two ways through it, really. One is that we have a formal elected process, this body is a formally elected process, and we have formally elected representatives. It seems we must use that channel, because that is what democracy provided for us, so we must make use of that. That is one challenge. As the Deputy Mayor says, did we make enough use of that on this occasion - not sure - or have we got too attracted to some of the elements who would first of all represent themselves, but secondly, over time, there may be a danger that people who start out as radical challengers become comfortable or become comfortable with each other, and of course in becoming comfortable, then it is quite difficult to disengage. I think that is the thing that we going to seek some help with, because I am not sure; it is almost a political process to run this, and I am not sure that we are that skilled at it.

So I will come back finally to your main point, James. I think anything that would help us to, first of all, get the right people today - whatever 'right' means - but number two is to keep it under review regularly, because otherwise we could go three years and have gone quite a long way off-beam. The only final thing I say on this is that the particular challenge is many of the people we are talking about are disenfranchised in many ways. They do not have a very good set-up; they do not have a very good network, so we end up plugging into whoever will talk to us, which makes us vulnerable. Anything that anybody can do in their thinking to help us with this we would work with, and one of the things I have asked in terms of our final report is whether we can build a democratic element into helping us make exactly that judgment, and of course the democratic element always helps sometimes. It is a dilemma and anything that would help us, I would give it a go.

James Cleverly (AM): One of the other things that I would like perhaps this Committee to do - and I would preface what I am about to say by saying I am not suggesting that, for example, the Trident IAG are any better or worse than the others - but, for example, as the ethnicity of communities in London shift, what can we do to ensure that those organisations that are not directly under the MPS's kind hard levers of power are evolving too? So as black Londoners become proportionally less West Indian and more African, then perhaps more North African; how organisations like the Trident AIG, for example, evolve over time to reflect those changes in the community. I am not suggesting that they are not good people, because I know that they are, but how do we also bring in that fresh blood and is there anything that we can do to help kind of stimulate that change?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Maybe you could talk about things like selection processes, but of course wherever the power resides to decide who is selected there is a challenge, so I agree with you entirely, anything we can do to keep moving as the communities move we will attempt to do, but I think anything that keeps it dynamic and under continual review and not develop into comfort zones would help everyone.

Gareth Bacon (AM): I am not quite sure what you can do to fix this, but I want to talk about what I consider to be the spectacularly naïve performance of the IPCC, particularly in the media during the riot time. I am referring of course to the announcement very early on in the process that there had been an exchange of fire with Mark Duggan, which was not corrected until the

Friday, and the timing of the correction and the way that the correction was put out into the media at the time, I remember thinking we had just managed to - or you had just managed to - quell the activity, the riot activity, and then we get an announcement from the IPCC that says, "Actually, there is no evidence that Mark Duggan fired on police". Had there not been the numbers on the streets by that time, that could very easily have reignited rioting all over London. I remember thinking at the time that was one of the most spectacularly unhelpful things I had ever heard anybody say in the media at any time. What can be done really to sharpen the IPCC up, because in that instance, it seemed to be about saving the IPCC's bacon, not about looking at the wider picture, which was, London could go up in flames again off the back of this comment?

Joanne McCartney (Chair): It created a lot of anger locally as well.

Gareth Bacon (AM): That is exactly the point, because this is an ongoing investigation and there could be all sorts of - I mean, I do not want to stray into that actually, because I have heard various rumours and I am sure there are various other rumours, but by making that announcement at that time, it created lots of anger locally and we could have seen the whole thing go up again. Is there anything that can be done? I mean, do you have views on this?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I think the only thing, Chair, I can really answer for here is what the MPS do. I have tried to acknowledge if we have not done things properly, then we will try and improve, but of course, in a way, the IPCC are there to sit in judgment on the MPS or the police generally, so it would be a bit odd for me to do the reverse. I think that is for others to comment. I think the very least everybody acknowledges is that the communication failed between the death of Mark Duggan and the riot on the Saturday. We have acknowledged where we could have done better, and in time, I am sure that others will consider their position, but I can only be responsible what we could have done better. I have tried to indicate we have senior involvement, prepared to be on the front foot in terms of media communication and to work together to make sure that we - I suppose at the MPS at least - would have the humility to say that it is something that we would be well prepared for. To be fair to the IPCC, it is not often an area in which they get engaged too often. They deal with private complaints in a private way on the whole, and then they carry out their investigations. We are more used to being in the public eye, so we have to acknowledge that.

Gareth Bacon (AM): Yes and there was no criticism implied of the MPS, Commissioner. I think the IPCC dealing with private complaints privately is the way it should be. I think it is a matter of regret that they decided that that was the appropriate time to go public on something that was so highly sensitive.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I do have some views on the IPCC, actually. I mean, there is an unfortunate tension between the IPCC and the police, which is caused by the fact that the IPCC deal with conduct matters and investigation into senior officers, and that naturally, because we are all human beings, everybody tries to be as professional as possible, but that colours the relationship. I think the IPCC should be stripped of its powers to deal with police conduct matters. I think, frankly, they would be quite happy to do

that, and therefore specialise in investigating those critical incidents where things do - or possibly - from time to time go wrong or where there is public concern and therefore that tension, if you like, that human tension about, "This is the organisation that is going to be looking into somebody complaining about my personal conduct rather than an incident" would be removed, and that is a representation we made during the passage of the Bill. Unfortunately, the Government did not accept that, but I think we need to split the two and allow the IPCC to specialise and become much better at that critical incident investigation.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Chair, I would just ask that we return at some time to that really very useful conversation that we started about communications and networks. I do not want to open it up again, but these are just issues that are key to understanding. I just wanted to say to Kit there are examples in boroughs, where people did know and people did feed that information in.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): To you?

Jennette Arnold (AM): Not to me, but to the systems, to the police officers, to others. I can tell you that there was a group in Leyton who, when they found out what had been spread around a BlackBerry message network that one of the workers was a part of, they absolutely made that information known.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): On the Saturday night?

Jennette Arnold (AM): Yes, yes. So there was information fed in.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Sorry, what I am saying is the MPA was not used as that conduit. I am not denying that the information went to the MPS.

Jennette Arnold (AM): OK.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): As far as I am aware, no member or officer of the MPA received any intelligence that something was likely to happen on the Saturday night.

Jennette Arnold (AM): No. I think, like you, it would have been the Sunday morning quite early when I certainly was contacted by my local police officers to say this is happening, but I have to say, during the early morning, if you were part of the networks, you were reading stuff that there was a lot of noise about, and you were waiting to hear from the police. So I am just trying to say it is a very complex situation and we should be saying to people that much more work is going to be done about this, because I think people would like to be assured - and this is a very emotive area - about the police's ability to be monitoring the social network systems. I mean, I am not sure that is done and how that will be developed, so I think it is just a much wider debate and discussion. It is not about being dismissive and the thing about the usual suspects or the authoritative voice, it is about the what, the when, the why and the how. I think everyone who puts themselves forward and says that they can represent or they can give you an

opening or a relationship with a community should be welcomed. It is really how the police service locally, if you like, monitor that and develop that relationship.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): Useful points and I am sure that the networking session is going to feature in some of the later reports.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): I wanted to pick up the issue of mobilisation. You have already touched on it a bit and you have already said that on the Saturday night particularly there were not enough officers, and I am wondering what lessons really you have learnt about mobilisation of officers from the riots and how you are looking to learn from this and perhaps change how you respond for future planning particularly around, for example, the Games we have coming up.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): First of all, we are probably referring back a little to some of the early comments, which is that first of all, the total number of officers available to make sure that, generally, we have a profile of officers available during the day and then another one during the evening and another one in the night - particularly in the evening we have a higher and larger number of officers available; secondly, of those available, that they are better trained and we have got more equipment available. We also looked at having the right vehicles around, so that when they deploy, they can deploy in a vehicle that can deploy the team and not twos and threes. We have also rearranged for them where they rendez-vous so that they are well-briefed when they arrive as a team, and finally, to make sure that they are well-led. So those are, first of all, we have increased the number, and we are going to carry on increasing it; two, to increase and improve the training, and three, improve the available kit. Now, those three things together, it is not only that, because then we have looked as well in terms of preparation about social networking sites, for example, but also in terms of responding if things become difficult and we have not been able to defuse it, those are the major things that we have done.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): I think earlier you said something about you have tested some of this. How much have you tested this? Obviously you have got these huge events all over summer with the Olympic and Paralympic Games at the end of it. How much are you practising particularly for that?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): There has been two occasions since August where we have actually had a mobilisation, I think both in the evening, but both at different times, so that we test at different times in regards to the plan, who turns up, what do they turn up with, and are they in a position to actually act if they had to? That has been reassuring. They are never perfect, because of course when people believe they are on exercise, if they are dealing with a rape victim, they will not leave them, or if they are dealing with a domestic, you know, there is a level of role-play. So you never get 100% turn up, but sometimes that represents reality too, but the turnouts were reassuringly good, that in fact the plans that we put in place are now delivering far more well-trained, more available, well-equipped people.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): So you are confident that going forward that you are far more prepared in terms of being able to get the officer numbers?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I am not going to give you a guarantee that it is perfect.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): No, of course not.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Your words, it is better prepared than we were, and I think I am reassured professionally that I can sit here and say that we are in a stable and confident position, but there is more to do, partly about more people trained and partly about more vehicles to be made available. We are certainly in a far better position than we were last August, but sometimes to suddenly get 1,000 officers better trained takes quite a while and I cannot sit here and say we have done everything yet, and I will not.

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): In 'Reading the Riots' which came out, it mentioned that a number of authorities have questioned why a London-wide gold team was not established to help with regional planning and allocation of resources, but I know Lynne Owens stated to the MPA that there was a Gold meeting that was chaired by a Commander. Can you clarify for us whether a gold meeting of that sort actually took place and what was the outcome from that?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Well, we are talking here on the Saturday, is that the question?

Caroline Pidgeon (Deputy Chair): Yes, I think so.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): There certainly was a gold meeting and it was a pretty confused affair, given all the information that was coming in and the lack of resources, but there were gold meetings. It was of course on the Saturday it was simply, but sadly, about one borough, which was Haringey. Now, in succeeding that, then it was across London that it spread on the Sunday and even more on the Monday, but there were Gold arrangements in place. Now, clearly it didn't all work, but the gold arrangements were in place. What you also saw was on the Sunday and Monday - not as much on the Saturday - we did get some mutual aid from other quarters, but by the Sunday and Monday we saw more coming in, and of course the ACPO had put in place what is called a Police National Information Centre, Police Mutual Aid Centre, which actually co-ordinates the delivery of extra resources, so that by the Tuesday, we got significantly more numbers in London from other places.

Val Shawcross (AM): Can I just get clarification there. Are you talking about a gold command arrangement for within the MPS or are you talking about a Gold command arrangement for London Resilience, i.e. a multi-agency response?

Because I would have thought there are a very large number of agencies that needed to be co-ordinated London-wide, and we have had a problem in the past, I think, about nobody

recognises a major incident that is wide-reaching enough to trigger London Resilience until it is almost over. So what kind of gold command structure are you talking about here?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): That is a helpful question, because on the Saturday, there was some level of gold command with other agencies so, for example, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service, but not a great deal with other agencies. So that was the Saturday. By the Sunday and Monday, that was better developed, but I don't think anybody is saying that it was perfect.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): I think that is an issue, Chair, because we are supposed to have really well-developed multi-agency gold command, London Resilience working arrangements and yet nobody seems to me to be terribly confident about who triggers it and under what criteria.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): When I have been in and visited the control room on the Sunday night when I returned, there were various representatives at the Gold meeting. I am not entirely clear myself, from memory, who was actually there, so it may be we are able to give you a list when the various gold meetings took place and who was there, because I have been at gold meetings when there has been TfL and the Ambulance and the Fire Service are supposed to be there.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): That is the London-wide resilience one.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): To be honest, given that pretty much everybody, including the MPS, was taken by surprise, actually getting it all mobilised in time and getting people, frankly, across town in a riot situation to be in the control room might have been difficult, but I am sure we can pull that information out.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Yes. I think that there were elements that were in place Sunday/Monday. Was it a full Rolls Royce? I could not say, but we can find out and share.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): I just think it is a useful question to be asked, whether or not it should have been, and is there a fundamental problem about identifying and securely triggering that London-wide procedure?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Where I do think there is a problem is that by, I think, the Monday, there were various gold cells running. There was certainly one running in the Home Office; there would have been one running at our Command Centre. There was obviously a Cobra going on that started, I think, on the Tuesday morning. I don't know if we had a Gold cell upstairs, but it could all get a bit confused unless it is all brought together into one sort of central centre. For me, that should be under the auspices of the Metropolitan Police Service. They are broadly in the front line.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): The MPS is the lead agency, yes.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): That would be sensible.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I mean, the only thing I would say, and sometimes what does happen in these events is that the police have no law that says that we can command anybody. We cannot command the Fire Service to do anything, but generally people accept our leadership.

Valerie Shawcross (AM): Well, they are very co-operative, yes.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): They accept our leadership broadly, but of course there is a point at which the Gold command needs to move to other people, so it is using consequence management. As we saw in Haringey, lots of damage, lots of things that local authorities and other partners need to do. Really, the focus is on the work that comes from other agencies, and the police should slide away really, but on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday, it remained very much a police issue and other emergency services too.

Jenny Jones (AM): Only a very, very small point, actually, and that is misleading information of course can be very, very damaging. Have you got a protocol for all your officers to not tell the public anything, in the nicest possible way?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): That is a bit of an open question there. I am not quite sure, do you mean generally?

Jenny Jones (AM): Well, because I know myself if I see a bunch of police officers and something happening, I come up and say, "What is going on?" and most of the time they are very nice and try to tell me, but actually, in this sort of instance any sort of guesses or misleading information could have huge repercussions; we have seen that already. So are your officers told, "Do not say anything"?

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): We get torn really, because you end up sometimes talking to the press. If we say to officers, "Do not talk to the press" we are accused of suppressing information, and in an instance like this one in Haringey, if we said, "Do not talk to the crowd" then as it happened on this occasion, then some of the family happened to be in the crowd. So we do not say to them, "Say nothing". We usually ask them to explain things that are very obvious, but they rarely have all the information, and certainly at the beginning of the incident, they never have all the information that is accurate, so they are wise to say precious little, but to share whatever is open information. We try to appoint a single spokesperson both for the public and working with families or working with other people, so on this occasion, family liaison officers were appointed. So the ones who need most information, we try to give a single point of contact and make sure they are well-briefed on the facts, but at the beginning, it can be pretty confused, so we do not say to people, "Do not talk to people" but we do suggest they should not talk about specific facts when they do not know them. They can only guess, quite often.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Just to add to that, part of the problem we have got is, I think, in some of these instances, the instantaneous nature of the news, the fact that as soon as an officer says something on the ground, it may well appear on the ticker, on Sky News, this is a big problem, and when you add into that the consequences of the misinformation on the shooting of Jean-Charles de Menezes in Stockwell and the dire consequences that had for people's confidence in the police, it would naturally make senior officers very nervous about saying things in uncertain, fast-moving situations like that.

Jenny Jones (AM): It is not even so much senior officers, it is just ordinary constables who are dealing with crowd control and that sort of thing.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): Just again, one thing you have always got to be aware of is police officers and other people in a position of authority is if you are not careful, you get trapped into, "Because you have got a uniform on, you must know what is happening", and therefore as the pressure grows that you have to talk and be authoritative about something, when in fact they know no more than everybody else. If you are not careful, they start commenting on things about which they have no information. So I think getting that balance right is important. We certainly don't tell them not to say anything, but don't start trying to be specific about facts about which no one is yet clear. That is the critical thing for me.

Jenny Jones (AM): I actually saw a constable completely disarm a quite irritable crowd once by saying, "I've got absolutely no idea. If you can tell me anything, I'd be glad" and actually --

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I may use that here in future. It is not a bad tactic to reveal you know nothing sometimes, or you do not know.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): Clearly cannot do justice to this subject, but we are six months in and so it is important to draw these things together. The topic was tactics, but let's not do that sort of street level containment/dispersal. Let's pick up with Kit the point that the Commissioner made about the more - he did not use these words - extreme end, the water cannon and baton rounds and Army on the streets and what have you. So that does cross into a sort of political domain from a purely operational one. What is the process by which we are going to bring that debate to a head rapidly so that we know how to behave, how to act in fairly short order? How do we form a view as to what is the right level?

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I think just the point in principle, I do think that those kind of decisions do need some democratic input, and I think if you are going to use new types of weaponry or tactics, offensive tactics against the people of London, you need to talk to the Mayor of London first and find out what his or her view might be. So from that point of view, I think the process needs to have a democratic input. There has been some research and briefing around particular - like water cannons. I know there are other tactics that the Home Office are looking at and assessing. Once that is done, then obviously the police will come to their professional view about what they think they require and then they will come to the Mayor, the MOPC, first of all to say happy or not, but secondly also, "Would

you mind paying for it?" and the, "Would you mind paying for it?" is probably as much a control lever as the happy or not.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): So behind the scenes, people are looking at options, but I am not aware of a Home Office paper setting out the range of options, seeking views. The media will no doubt pick up on it and have --

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes, I think that is because they naturally look at a wide range of options and vast majority of them will go nowhere.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): So I am saying what process? You have said a process that will get to an end point, but I did not hear there being a public debate about that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): No, but if it helps, one of the things is that the police can only use sometimes what is licensed, so tasers will be one example, baton rounds are another. Those are things that have been licensed by the Home Office, so we are not talking about tactics, we are talking about equipment, if you are licensed and whether it is available. As far as I am aware, water cannons have not been. So there is a certain process by which would it ever be available to the police, so guns, another example, so the process they go through, which has got various elements to it, but one part is something that I think has just changed its name actually, but it used to be called the Home Office Scientific Development Branch. So they will test these things, and they will see what they do, what are the risks, what is reasonable. The second thing is does anybody want to pay; three is how widely are they ever going to be used, if ever, and who wants to pay for something that is never used if it is very expensive? All these things.

Then of course you have got the other one, which I think is a very proper political debate, even if they are available, you can afford them, do you want to use them? Now, that process has been gone through with things like tasers, like baton rounds. They have been available; 30 years they have been licensed and available. The tactics have been known but they haven't been used, and of course it is wonderful having something in the cupboard. As soon as you think about using it, there is a process, and of course 30 years on, things have moved on. So it seems to me that the debate, probably although people said, "Six months on, how far have we got?" it seems to me this is the sort of thing that mature reflection is better to decide what you want to do in the future. I just think that it would be unfair to say to the police, "You did not have these things available, you did not use them" or, "You did have them available and you chose not to use them". We can't have it all ways, blame them for not using things they have got available and then say, "We don't want you to use them anyway". That is not fair. I do not think it is reasonable. So I think we are getting to the end of that process now.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Yes. From our point of view, what would happen is not dissimilar to what has happened with other even non-offensive tactics, for which there would have to be a process of communication/consultation across London around their use. I mean, if you look just recently about the removal of Stop and Account, for instance, we went across London and the Home Office decision was it should go, lots of forces decided to get rid of it. We were a bit doubtful, so we went out and asked London and the resounding

voice came back and said, “No, we want to keep it” and so we are keeping it and we will be different to lots of other forces for that reason. The same would be true – admittedly, it might be a bit more of a heated debate – around some of these more offensive tactics. I think the question is actually very wise. If we had had the debate about water cannon in the days after the riot, we might have got a very different answer to the question than if we have it next year.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): I take on that. I am still just not clear what the forward process is. There is no rule that says riots can only happen in August, and we are six months on. When will this issue be brought to a head and a view taken, otherwise we may be --

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): This is a very British arrangement, Mike. There is no formal system.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): We will muddle along.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): These things emerge after discussions between Home Office, the Mayor’s Office, MPS, this Committee, the community. No, there is no formal process.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I would have thought the building blocks for that decision-making are you can see them and some of them are in place, so you have already referred to the HMIC report, to our interim report, then we get a final report, there is Dara Singh’s report and then many of the boroughs have produced theirs. It seems to me Government, as part of the democratic process, will take all of that into account and then decide which way they want to go. Some of the decisions have already been made, in a sense. Some of these things are available now. The operational decision to use them has never been taken. I think that should give you an indication that no one is racing towards these things. It is a brave person that would decide to use them.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): I mean, what has tended to happen in the past, in reality, is that the police think they need a particular item or tactic and then they go out and try and build a coalition of the willing behind it, and that includes the Government, the local governance, the people of London and that is certainly what happened with taser, you know, here is this new whizzo thing that we think will be very good and officer safety, all that argument. That is an ongoing argument that they have been having, but the coalition was built, particularly at that time, with the Government saying, “Yes, we think this is worth having”.

Mike Tuffrey (AM): I am not hearing a great coalition-building exercise going on in terms of new provisions and new forms.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): I think what you see in this is if you remember central Government were challenging the police, “Why didn’t you have certain things available? Why didn’t you do certain things?”

Mike Tuffrey (AM): Yes. No, I understand that.

Bernard Hogan Howe (Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service): The emphasis is in a different place, and of course the second thing is I think we all have to acknowledge sometimes the debate depends on the outcome of the event, and if on the Sunday morning we had woken up to 50 people dead, I suspect the debate would have been far more quick, and it would have been potentially a far different outcome; but depending on where that lay I think was in chance as to what happened on that night, on the succeeding night, because when you have got burning buildings and people jumping out of them, we were incredibly fortunate so few people either died or were badly injured. Sadly, sometimes the level of death or fatality and serious injuries drives which way people want to go. Now, we are relatively fortunate, a terrible incident and some terrible things happened, but that, I suspect, depending on what happened on the Sunday and Monday would have driven political motives and political priorities as well as would have police.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): Plus - just to add one last thing, sorry - is to say I think we also fall slightly into the trap of thinking there is a technological solution to these issues and the truth is water cannon does not stop a riot.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): No, it is community.

Kit Malthouse (Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime): None of these things stop a riot. It might shorten it, but it doesn't necessarily stop it happening.

Joanne McCartney (Chair): I think on that note, I am going to thank you for coming and we look forward to seeing you next month. It was certainly very useful. We are going to, I think, write to you, Commissioner, because I think our next meeting is looking at policing into the future, looking at the business plan, and I know we have got your Director of Finance coming, which is very welcome. I think we do want a senior officer to talk about some of the issues that you have raised before, for example, looking at whether Territorial Policing has got the right number of officers in it, what the shape of the force may take, so we will be in contact with you on that one, but can I thank you for coming.