



Metropolitan Police Authority

Gun Crime Scrutiny

Final Report

February 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chair's Foreword	2
Executive summary	3
Background.....	3
Key findings	3
Implementation	4
Process of the scrutiny	5
The Metropolitan Police Authority	5
The scrutiny panel.....	5
Terms of reference.....	5
Methodology	6
Structure of the report	8
Roles, Responsibilities and Resources	9
Roles and responsibilities - background.....	9
Findings and recommendations	9
<i>Terms of reference</i>	9
<i>Analysis of gun crime</i>	13
<i>Gun crime in minority ethnic communities</i>	16
<i>Resources</i>	21
Drugs	25
Background.....	25
Findings and Recommendations.....	25
<i>International comparisons</i>	25
<i>National comparisons</i>	27
<i>Drug crime in London</i>	28
Diversion	34
Background.....	34
Findings and Recommendations.....	34
<i>Influences behind involvement in gun crime</i>	37
<i>Influencing young people</i>	40
National Issues	48
Background.....	48
Findings and recommendations	48
<i>Replica weapons</i>	48
<i>Witness protection</i>	52
<i>Sentencing and legislation</i>	54
<i>Personal safety initiatives</i>	55
<i>Other initiatives</i>	56
Recommendations	57
Implementation	60
Abbreviations	61
Contact details	62

Chair's Foreword

The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) is an independent statutory body, which was set up in July 2000 and is responsible for maintaining an effective and efficient police service for London. Its primary tasks include securing continuous improvement in the way policing is provided in London, monitoring the performance of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and consulting with the people of London.

On 7 February 2003 the MPA's Co-ordination and Policing Committee agreed to carry out a scrutiny of gun crime in response to the increasing levels of armed criminality in London. The scrutiny process moved through three stages – a period of research and information gathering, followed by consultation involving evidence hearings and a questionnaire and then drafting of the final report. The work was directed by a scrutiny panel made up of nine members of the MPA.

The main function of a scrutiny is to look for areas that could be improved. This may create the impression that the MPS' response to gun crime is weak. On the contrary, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the MPS on the effort it has put into combating gun crime over the last few years. The work of Operation Trident (SCD8) in particular has brought considerable success and community support and it is significant that the increase in gun crime was limited to 3% last year, following a rise of the 34% year before. The outcome of this scrutiny is designed to add value to MPS activities, to learn the lessons and share best practice from successful strategies of the past.

The scrutiny found some confusion around the roles and responsibilities of the various central units and boroughs dealing with different types of gun crime. As a result the panel recommends that a more cohesive approach is taken to tackling gun crime in all the communities of London. The lessons learned from Operation Trident need to be applied outside the black community, while retaining the impact of the Trident 'brand'. The panel also identified drugs as a key issue at an early stage in the scrutiny and is recommending that the MPS co-ordinate the response to gun crime more closely with activities undertaken in relation to the drugs strategy.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has taken part in the scrutiny, it could not have been achieved without the support and assistance of the MPS, as well as the individuals and organisations who returned the questionnaire and attended the evidence hearings. Particular thanks go to Sally Palmer, Agnes Kitto and Natasha Porter. I look forward to working with the MPS to implement the recommendations of the scrutiny.

Cindy Butts
Chair of the scrutiny panel
MPA member

Executive summary

Background

1. Gun crime is currently high on the public agenda. During the scrutiny it emerged that a significant amount of similar work on gun crime was being undertaken by other public bodies including HMIC, the Home Office, the Youth Justice Board, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the all party parliamentary group chaired by Diane Abbott, MP. The MPS had commissioned a report called *Tackling Gun Crime in London*, which was completed during the early stages of the scrutiny and also instigated a review of the terms of reference of Operation Trident while the scrutiny was underway. The scrutiny report has been produced during a period of change in the local and national response to armed criminality. The biggest challenge facing the MPS during the implementation of the scrutiny recommendations will be ensuring that all the separate initiatives underway are co-ordinated and form part of a coherent multi-agency response to gun crime.

Key findings

2. Initial research gathering revealed that the responsibility for tackling gun crime was split between boroughs and a number of different pan-London units within the MPS. In general boroughs deal with low level offences with more serious firearms incidents allocated to central units according to the ethnicity of the offender and victim, the seriousness or location of the offence and the likely motive. The response to black on black crimes in the form of Operation Trident was well understood and some guidelines had been provided in the shape of *Special Notice 5-02: MPS guide for operational activity to tackle armed criminality 2002/03*. However, during consultation a number of officers admitted that the plethora of units involved in gun crime made it difficult to ascertain who was responsible for what. The *Tackling Gun Crime in London* report initially proposed a single gun crime OCU as a way of resolving this issue. The number of officers processing intelligence was also of concern. The scrutiny has proposed that the MPS clarify which unit is responsible for what as a matter of urgency and that a single policy to tackle all types of gun crime be developed.

3. The remit of Operation Trident was raised during early research and by some key witnesses in the evidence hearings. Although written consultation showed that Operation Trident was the most recognised anti-gun crime initiative among the consultees it was felt that the focus on a single community was no longer helpful. Although gun crime still disproportionately affects the black community boroughs described emerging gun crime problems in other communities. The scrutiny therefore recommends that consideration is given to widening the remit of Operation Trident to include gun crimes on all minority ethnic communities.

4. A separate piece of research was commissioned by the scrutiny panel to look at the link between guns and drugs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that guns are used as a tool of the trade by organised criminals to protect drug markets and that tackling drug crime would reduce gun crime automatically. Most of the respondents to the written consultation questionnaire highlighted

drugs as the root cause of gun crime. The research project and other analysis showed that there is some relationship between the spread of drug markets and gun use but that the exact nature of the link could not be quantified using existing information. The panel has recommended that the MPS response to drugs and gun crime, which are at present kept separate, should be more closely co-ordinated.

5. Diversion activities for young people were identified during research gathering as crucial to reducing gun crime long-term with a desire for image and status given as the most popular reason young people carried weapons. However, the lack of long-term financial support for community projects was highlighted as a major concern. The scrutiny panel has decided to build on a proposal originally made by the *Not Another Drop* team in Brent and work with the Disarm Trust to create a charity capable of co-ordinating and supporting the response to gun crime in London and cross the country.

6. A clear message arising from consultation with interested groups and individuals, as well as many police officers was the need for a complete ban on all replica weapons capable of being mistaken for the real thing. The scrutiny panel does not believe that new Government legislation goes far enough in restricting the danger posed by replicas – evidenced by the fact that nearly 60% of consultees said that replicas were easy to obtain in their communities. The MPA will therefore be strongly urging the government to consider an outright ban on replica weapons.

Implementation

7. The recommendations within this report have been amended following consultation with the MPS and the individuals invited to give evidence to the panel. The MPS will be asked to complete an action plan to record how implementation of the recommendations, along with other gun crime initiatives are being achieved. Recommendations for which the MPA is lead will be added to the progress report. The joint implementation plan will be monitored by the Co-ordination and Policing Committee and will be publicly available on the MPA website at www.mpa.gov.uk

Process of the scrutiny

The Metropolitan Police Authority

8. The MPA is a statutory body made up of twenty-three members, twelve of whom are drawn from the Greater London Assembly, along with seven independent and four magistrate members. The MPA is responsible for ensuring an effective and efficient police service for the people of London. One of the ways in which the MPA achieves this is by running independent scrutinies of areas of particular concern to members.

9. On 7 February 2003 Co-ordination and Policing Committee chose gun crime from a list of potential subjects for scrutiny, prompted in part by the growing trend in gun crime and the increased frequency with which replica guns were being carried in London. Two previous scrutinies covering rape and MPA involvement in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) have already been carried out. A further scrutiny of stop and search is currently ongoing. Scrutinies are directed and controlled by a panel of members, working under the overall direction of the relevant MPA committee. Key papers are published on the MPA website.

The scrutiny panel

10. The chair of the scrutiny panel for the gun crime scrutiny was Cindy Butts and the vice chair was Reshard Auladin. The other members on the panel were Jennette Arnold, Richard Barnes, Peter Herbert, Nicholas Long, R. David Muir, Abdal Ullah and Rachel Whittaker. Nicholas Long subsequently withdrew from the panel due to other commitments. Panel meetings were held in private with the exception of evidence hearings which were advertised in advance on the MPA website and which members of the press and public were invited to attend.

Terms of reference

11. The terms of reference were drafted following initial research and consultation with senior MPS officers and other key stakeholders and were approved by Co-ordination and Policing Committee on 19 May 2003. The terms of reference referred to recent increases in firearms offences and considered issues arising from a consultation event called *Stand Up and Stamp Down on Murder* held by the MPA in February 2003.

12. The objectives of the gun crime scrutiny were to:

- clarify absolute and comparative levels and trends of gun crime in London as well as performance in subsequent criminal justice processes;
- describe the management structures used in, and resources available to, the MPS in relation to gun crime;
- assess the extent to which Special Notice 5-02 was implemented and, where implemented, the extent to which outputs / outcomes were cost-effective;

- assess the extent to which recommendations from local inspections of Operation Trident (SCD8) and the Flying Squad (SCD7) have been implemented and have been cost-effective;
- consult with key partners, communities and individuals in London to inform the approach that should be taken by the MPA and/or MPS.

13. It was decided that the scrutiny would not address the issue of whether or not the police should be armed and would not focus on the operational response to a gun crime but would consider the strategic response overall. A number of key interfaces which might have an impact on the scrutiny process were identified and a plan for the remainder of the project was set out.

Methodology

14. The gun crime scrutiny adapted the methodology employed in the previous two MPA reviews. The scrutiny commenced with a period of research gathering. Other public organisations carrying out work on gun crime were identified through the internet, publicity and contacts. The most significant work that was explored included the thematic inspection of gun crime recently begun by HMIC, the all-party parliamentary group chaired by Diane Abbott, MP and the anti-gun educational initiative planned by the GLA as well as a significant report completed by the MPS. Meetings were held with those of most relevance and the scrutiny panel agreed to collaborate with other organisations to ensure that recommendations made by the separate groups were joined up.

15. The scrutiny began by baselining the current position with regard to gun crime within the MPS. A report was commissioned from MPS Internal Consultancy Group (ICG) to set out the management structures, key policies and procedures, staff, budgets and performance indicators used by or available to the MPS. The main finding from this report was that gun crime was dealt with by a variety of central units and boroughs depending on the location and seriousness of the offence, type of weapon used and ethnicity of victim and offender.

16. The key policy document referred to was Special Notice 5-02 the *MPS Guide for operational activity to tackle armed criminality 2002/03*. In addition the scrutiny found that local inspections of Operation Trident and the Flying Squad (SCD7) had recently been carried out. It was decided to ask senior MPS officers to assess how well the Special Notice and the inspection recommendations had been implemented and how cost effective they had been. A self-assessment form was designed which asked recipients to identify areas of the current policy which were working well and should be continued, areas which were not working well and should be stopped and new ideas, projects or initiatives which could be introduced in the future. Copies of the questionnaire were sent to all borough commanders, to Operation Trident (SCD8), the Flying Squad (SCD7), Force Firearms Unit (SO19) and the intelligence unit (SCD11) and a list of twenty five key players provided by the Serious and Organised Crime unit. A total of seventeen responses were

received, with some interviews being carried out to gather additional information.

17. An external literature review was then carried out using the internet and police reference libraries to identify academic research and best practice from across the United Kingdom and internationally. This research identified significant work that had been undertaken in the United States on the link between guns and drugs and successful policing strategies and community programmes designed to tackle gun crime. Other work on guns and gangs in Manchester, as well as some London based projects working with young people were highlighted.

18. An analysis of MPS firearms performance information over the last few years was completed, to compare the trends in gun crime over time. Information on location and time of offences, age and ethnicity of offenders, types of weapons used in different offences, and differences between boroughs were reviewed. Comparable figures on gun crime across the country or internationally were available. The analysis showed that gun crime accounts for around 0.4% of total notifiable offences and has increased by 93% between 1998/99 and 2002/03 although the increase in 2002/03 was down to 3%.

19. A parallel theme running throughout the scrutiny was the link between guns and drugs. A project to explore the relationship was commissioned by the MPA but was completed by an independent academic researcher using existing information from sources around the country, as well as data from the MPS. Statistics on drug and firearm offences were compared to determine whether any link could be proved. This report is attached as Appendix A.

20. A key objective for the scrutiny was to carry out consultation with key stakeholders. This consultation was carried out in two stages. A written consultation questionnaire was designed and sent out to three hundred and sixty three individuals and organisations. The main groups consulted were community and faith groups, representatives from education and youth services, health, and social services as well as arts, media and entertainment companies, academics, other police forces and governmental and political groups. The MPS' Internal Consultancy Group ran the survey on behalf of the MPA. The response rate was 23% although some additional questionnaires were received after the deadline date and were too late to be analysed. Questions were asked in various areas and the findings have been presented in the main sections of this report.

21. The initial consultation work identified a number of key themes that were then explored in a set of evidence hearings with key witnesses that were open to the press and public. Two borough commanders and an academic researcher gave evidence, along with a senior headteacher and two representatives from faith groups working with young people on gun crime. A local authority community safety manager and an outreach worker were also interviewed, along with an MPS officer from Operation Trident, and officers expert in witness protection and support for boroughs. Written submissions

were received from a GLA representative with experience of the Trident IAG, from the Force Firearms Unit (SO19), from the project manager of the Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy and from an academic currently researching gun crime in London. Young people were accessed through the MPS Youth Independent Advisory Group. Ex-offender organisations were also contacted but it was not possible to set up a focus group within the timescale of the scrutiny. The responses of all consultees, including those who attended to give evidence have been used anonymously in this report. Some respondents to the consultation questionnaire provided contact details for copies of the final report to be sent to them at the end of the scrutiny. These details have not been used to identify individuals or organisations and all evidence is non-attributable.

22. The final report was drafted using the findings from the evidence hearings and other consultation, best practice from other sources and conclusions drawn from performance statistics. All key witnesses and senior officers from the MPS were sent copies of the draft final report and were invited to challenge its contents. Amendments to the report were made based on the comments received during the consultation period.

Structure of the report

23. The main body of the report has been divided into four themes – roles, responsibilities and resources, drugs, diversion and national issues. The relevant findings supporting each recommendation have been set out in each section. The academic report on the link between drugs and guns has been included as Appendix A to this report.

Roles, Responsibilities and Resources

Roles and responsibilities - background

24. The first task of the scrutiny was to establish where the responsibility for dealing with different types of firearms offences rested within the MPS, and to clarify the relevant policies and procedures in place. A key objective for the scrutiny was to describe the management structures used in, and resources available to, the MPS in relation to gun crime.

25. Initial consultation revealed that the key policy document was Special Notice 5-02: *MPS Guide to Operational Activity to Tackle Armed Criminality* published in April 2002. The scrutiny aimed to assess the extent to which Special Notice 5-02 was implemented and, where implemented, the extent to which output/outcomes were cost effective. Inspections of Operation Trident and the Flying Squad had also been carried out recently and it was decided to establish to what extent the recommendations from the inspections had been delivered and how cost effective they had been.

26. ICG was commissioned to carry out a short research study to determine which units were responsible for what, to list the budgets available to them and the number of staff they had compared to their budgeted workforce total. A self-assessment questionnaire was sent out to all borough commanders and to the commanders of the pan-London units involved in gun crime as well as a number of other key players. The questionnaire asked the respondents to identify areas of the current policy that were working well and should be continued, areas that were not working well and should be stopped and new ideas or initiatives that they thought could be implemented. During this research the Specialist Crime report *Tackling Gun Crime in London* was published. The recommendations of this report directly contributed to the recommendations of the scrutiny.

Findings and recommendations

Terms of reference

27. ICG's report revealed that a number of central units, as well as boroughs, were involved in responding to firearms incidents along the lines set out in the Special Notice.

28. The Specialist Crime Directorate are responsible for investigating all shootings, except where the offender is the holder of a firearm or shotgun certificate and where offences are of a minor or domestic nature. The Homicide Unit (SCD1) investigates all non-Trident shooting related murders. The Flying Squad (SCD7(5)) investigates all allegations of robbery within a defined list of commercial premises where a firearm is produced or intimidated. SCD7 also has a shootings team dealing with non-Trident shootings and non-fatal shootings and a projects team investigating large-scale firearms trafficking. Operation Trident (SCD8) was set up in March 1998 to investigate crimes committed against the black community, by the black community. Trident also has a shootings team investigating 'conventional' shootings, as

well as those where the motives are unknown and where there are no injuries and where shootings have occurred but no victims are present.

29. The Force Firearms Unit (SO19) provides the MPS with an armed response to individual firearms incidents according to a menu of options. SO19 are also responsible for all aspects of firearms licensing. The armed response to firearms incidents was specifically excluded from the remit of the scrutiny and this aspect was not covered in any detail.

30. Boroughs are responsible for investigating shootings where the offender is the holder of a firearm or shotgun certificate and the offences are of a relatively minor or domestic nature. Boroughs also investigate all incidents involving imitation firearms and air weapons, other than those incidents covered by the remit of the central units and deal with allegations of the discharge of weapons.

31. Two other central units are involved in gun crime – SCD2(2) is a Co-ordination and Tasking Unit providing tactical support to boroughs and SCD3(2) the Partnership and Crime Reduction team identifies methods of gun crime prevention.

32. Intelligence on firearms and armed criminality is also managed by a number of units. The intelligence unit (SCD7) undertake research within their own terms of reference as well as create intelligence logs and submit them to the force Intelligence Unit (SCD10). Operation Trident has a separate firearms intelligence unit. SCD10 have a central Firearm Focus Desk responsible for collating and distributing data and developing strategic and tactical assessments for the force. SO19 has its own intelligence unit to disseminate information received from licensing and firearms operations. Boroughs also have intelligence units, which are used to develop information for proactive borough units like Operation Bantam, where these exist. Hotspot boroughs have firearms focus desks producing tactical analyses.

33. The budgets for each unit were identified but it was revealed that Operation Trident and parts of SO19 had significantly less staff than their budgeted workforce total.

34. *Despite the fact that this exercise was carried out by an internal MPS unit the information presented above was difficult to come by.* The process of working out who was responsible for what had to be pieced together from different sources and checked with experienced individuals although MPS senior management chose not to comment on the accuracy of the report. The quality of information provided by the different units was variable – the terms of reference for Operation Trident, for example, were well presented with clear flow charts and contact points for users to follow. The same could not be said for other units. *The impression created was that it would be difficult for anyone unfamiliar with the organisation structure of the central units to know who to contact following actual or alleged incidents.*

35. During the self-assessment process a number of officers, particularly on boroughs confirmed that some confusion existed around the terms of reference. Referring to the Special Notice one borough comments

'It refers to who does what, rather than how'. [There are] 'too many changes across the organisation. Difficult to keep up with and causes breakdowns in communication'.

36. The evidence for this view was based on

'My own experience of trying to keep up with who does what, when and who maintains responsibility and where do BOCU staff fit in'.

37. Two of the key witnesses were of the opinion that while the MPS' response to national and international gun crime was good the response to cross border and local issues was less focused and required further development. Borough response to gun crime was not thought to be as effective as that of central units due to this loss of focus – this was thought to have created a serious gap in the MPS' proactive response to gun crime.

38. Boroughs who dealt frequently with the central units had a good understanding of their relative roles but the same was not true in non-hotspot boroughs. One of the key witnesses described the difficulties in deciding which unit should be dealing with an offence - *'If somebody is wounded, seriously, or murdered, then we look at – is it a Trident issue? Is it a shootings team? Is it a murder team? So we get into these negotiations'.* Although the witnesses were keen to point out that the operational handover from one team to the other was managed quickly and professionally the confusion of overlapping strategic terms of reference is clearly not helpful.

39. The distribution of responsibility was not consistent across the boroughs. For example, Hackney had chosen to invest resources in a pro-active unit (Operation Bantam) to develop intelligence and carry out operations. While the local community saw this unit as a positive step it raises questions about the capability of central units to meet the needs of boroughs in specialist areas. A key witness from another borough felt that a lack of resources to analyse intelligence had hampered his ability to provide a proactive response. In addition, one borough was carrying out an investigation on behalf of one of the central units due to a lack of resources within that unit. It appeared that while the organisation structures set out in the Special Notice has been implemented, questions remained as to how these structures should work in practice. One key witness felt that although the Special Notice was a good strategic document, it was not achievable at borough level, leading to a mismatch between community expectations and the ability to deliver.

40. Local inspections of Operation Trident and SCD7 (then SO7) were carried out in 2002 under the MPS' local inspection programme. It is significant that the inspection team recommended that that better objectives and targets should be set for Operation Trident and that lines of responsibility for

producing management information be established. The terms of reference for the OCU were to be clarified and the unit was encouraged to pursue a growth bid to ensure sufficient resources were available. Intelligence requirements were also to be clarified. The team inspecting SCD7 recommended that the terms of reference for the OCU be reviewed and that a more cohesive approach to gun crime should be taken in conjunction with the rest of the then Serious Crime Group. The OCU was tasked with developing a closer relationship with the departments with which it regularly dealt. The MPS inspectorate reported that progress has been made to implement these recommendations six months later. However, the concerns highlighted by the scrutiny indicate that some of the problems identified by the inspection teams are still outstanding.

41. The *Tackling Gun Crime in London* report points out that

'The current approach to tackling gun crime is disparate and difficult to co-ordinate. This approach is fragmented because work is carried out in different areas of the organisation in different ways... Generally, the investigation of firearms offences has now become a complex business involving a number of MPS units, according to factors such as nature of any injury, offence type, locations and ethnic origin of the assailants and victims'¹.

42. One of the three recommendations of the report is to 'Develop a Gun Crime Directorate along the lines of the Diversity Directorate (DCC4)².' Although evidence collected by the MPA indicates that this position may have changed after the production of the report the fact that the recommendation made supports findings from other parts of the scrutiny.

Recommendation 1

The MPA recommends that the MPS clarify the roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of central units and boroughs in tackling gun crime and drafts a working guidance manual covering operational procedures by June 2004.

43. Current work underway on an MPS wide gun crime policy and a good practice guidance manual is likely to address this recommendation although the message received by the MPA throughout the scrutiny is that a practical operational manual would be most welcomed by officers. Any strategy needs to be a working document that can be updated in response to different situations, rather than a glossy publication that is largely ignored. The MPA also recommends that both boroughs and central units should be consulted on the content of the strategy at an early stage.

¹ *Tackling Gun Crime in London* Page x Version 2.2

² *Tackling Gun Crime in London* Page viii Version 2.2

Analysis of gun crime

44. During the scrutiny the MPA has been keen to seek out best practice in tackling gun crime. One of the most frequently cited examples is the *Not Another Drop* initiative in Brent. This project began as the Harlesden Targeted Policing Initiative, funded by the government and containing three strands – community, diversion and police activity. A wide range of projects formed part of *Not Another Drop* including the introduction of Automatic Number Plate Recognition, a community problem solving panel, the Young Black Male project and the involvement of the BEARS youth service along with a highly publicised advertising campaign, including graphic posters.

45. Some of the elements of this work appear to have been more successful than others but many lessons have been learned from the project. Senior MPS staff from Brent and two representatives from the community safety team gave evidence to the MPA during the evidence hearings. Both groups emphasised the importance of local research in developing problem solving strategies. The importance of context in tackling gun crime was emphasised. The *Not Another Drop* campaign seems, initially, to have caused a fall in gun crime in Brent although the exact effect cannot be demonstrated. The key witnesses were keen to point out that a solution that was successful in Brent might not necessarily work elsewhere. Techniques aimed at reducing crime on a particular self-contained estate might not be applicable to a community based gun crime problem spread across several boroughs. Brent has recently commissioned an academic research study of the social, cultural and criminal significance of guns in the local community to set out the Brent context in more detail. The importance of evaluation is also highlighted by the example of *Not Another Drop*. The project was set up with government funding and has been centrally evaluated, although the evaluation was not encouraging. However, lessons learned through the evaluation will be applicable to other boroughs, authorities and community groups in finding out ‘what works’.

46. Another example of best practice, but from outside London is the Manchester Multi Agency Gang Strategy, funded by the Home Office’s Crime Reduction Programme for a limited duration. This piece of work involved a research project that looked in depth at the causes of the gang problem in south Manchester. MMAGS is similar to the Boston Gun Project’s Operation Ceasefire, which applied community and problem oriented policing principles to combat the rise in youth homicide in Boston between the late 1980s and early 1990s. The original project itself was based on an analysis of data on gang related violence by researchers at Harvard University.

47. The results of the Manchester research project were published in 2002 as *Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 13 – Shooting, Gangs and Violent Incidents in Manchester: developing a crime reduction strategy* by Karen Bullock and Nick Tilley. This paper analysed the trends in crime, serious violence and firearms offences in Manchester including information on victims, offenders, guns used, location of shootings and injuries sustained as well as a breakdown of the various gangs involved. The paper also gave a best estimate figure for the costs of gang related shootings for the police, probation, prison service and health services coming up with a total figure of

around £236,600 out of a total of £8.1m per year. The research project was used to develop a strategy to tackle gang related violence in specific areas of Manchester. The evaluation of MMAGS, like that in Brent, has revealed some problems with the implementation of the original aims of the project.

48. The importance of having access to adequate data when designing local solutions to gun crime was raised as a linked issue within the MPS. Without information on the actual level of offending resource allocation across the MPS becomes extremely difficult. *The scrutiny revealed that very little capacity exists at a corporate level to analyse trends in gun crime across the MPS.* The scrutiny found that the department producing the information – Performance Information Bureau – was reporting data for Trident and hotspot boroughs using a different set of boroughs than that recognised by the Serious and Organised Crime unit.

49. Even the definition of what constitutes a gun crime is unclear. The MPS uses ‘gun related violent crimes’ and includes the offence classifications of violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, burglary and theft and handling where a firearm feature code has been added to the crime report. The MPS does not include offences of conversion, supply and importation as gun crimes and does not include offences in which guns are used such as kidnapping, affray and violent disorder. The Home Office definition is different – ‘gun crime is where a firearm has been used to further an offence, but does not include possession’. The Home Office include replica firearms, ball bearing guns, CS gas sprays but not airguns in its definition of a firearm and counts by the number of incidents rather than the number of victims. As one of the key witnesses pointed out:

‘... if somebody was to say to me what is your strategic response to gun crime, I would say actually, what are you talking about? Because we go from the lowest level of an individual or young boy with a ball bearing gun, or an air weapon, which in certain circumstances are legal to the other end of the spectrum which is a criminal use of firearms and eventual death – murder’.

50. *The definition of gun crime used by the MPS should be clarified as soon as possible.* Some boroughs highlighted the conflicts between central and local target setting in relation to gun crime. Gun crime was not perceived as a high corporate priority and some boroughs were finding it difficult to justify the resources they were expending on it in comparison to street crime, for example. Several witnesses supported this view, with one commenting

‘In the absence of gun crime on the borough, I will be focusing on burglary and street crime. If my intelligence starts to indicate that I have got individuals on the borough...the only way I can manage that is to move some resources from street crime, burglary, whatever to make an impact. And it is a continual balancing act.’

51. There was concern that the new gun crime policy would place even higher expectations on boroughs without resolving the problem of resources. It was also pointed out that performance indicators were used to identify hotspot boroughs, triggering a higher level of support from central units. One witness pointed out that boroughs not identified as hotspots might benefit from some of this support to prevent them meeting the hotspot criteria. *The objectives and targets used by the MPS on gun crime require urgent clarification and should include links to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership strategies where appropriate.* This would help quantify the borough contribution to gun crime performance indicators with bespoke targets set in some areas as necessary. Resource allocation would then become less problematic.

52. The contribution of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to reducing gun crime was raised as an issue on boroughs. The scrutiny found that although some CDRPs did include gun crime targets within their strategies, this was not a uniform position across London or even across hotspot boroughs. The MPA has been a statutory partner in CDRPs in April 2003 and will be using this position to suggest that relevant boroughs do consider gun crime targets when drafting the next round of strategies in 2005.

53. Gun crime in London has yet to be comprehensively researched. Areas where firearms offences are highest are currently designated as hotspot or Trident boroughs using either a geographic or community based categorisation. These boroughs are required to produce additional information and are given a measure of extra support. However, until recently, little work had been done to clarify emerging trends in gun crime, to try to predict where increases will occur next. Any detailed analysis of the problem should also reveal areas in which a geographic solution is appropriate and areas in which a response focused on a particular community may be more effective.

54. It is likely that the full introduction of the National Intelligence Model will rationalise the way in which the MPS deals with gun crime, particularly around the analysis and actioning of intelligence and performance data. A tactical assessment of gun crime covering the whole of the MPS was produced in December 2003 and may meet the need for information recognised by the scrutiny panel. The MPA is keen to ensure that a long term view is taken of the emerging trends, which is updated on a regular basis and that this is linked to resource allocation. The introduction of NIM should ensure that this recommendation is embedded into MPS management procedures.

Recommendation 2

The MPA recommends that the MPS tactical assessment is supplemented by a continuing long term analysis of emerging trends in firearm offences, that this should become a fundamental part of any threat assessment and should be linked to the allocation of resources by December 2004.

55. The MPS has recently won funding of £200K from the Government Office for London (GOL) to carry out a survey, which will satisfy part of this recommendation. The study, to be carried out by Communities that Care will comprise a risk and protection audit of a small number of neighbourhoods in London with a high incidence of gun crime and a survey of young people. The exercise is designed to establish the

*'... extent to which firearms and other weapons are available and in use within the...audit areas and to identify the factors which contribute to the development and maintenance of a gun culture. The exercise will also explore, in depth, the relationship between guns and gun crime; other forms of criminal and anti-social behaviour and drugs use.'*³

56. The aim of the research is to inform a strategy that communities can use to tackle gun crime. The study should also be used to inform the MPS gun crime policy, any reorganised response structure and the statistics necessary to monitor trends in firearms offences.

Gun crime in minority ethnic communities

57. Operation Trident was set up as an intelligence based initiative in March 1998 in response to a number of shootings in Lambeth and Brent. Trident was rolled out London-wide in August 1999 after the shootings continued and is now a fully functioning permanent operational command unit. The mission of Operation Trident is to

*'Reduce the incidence of firearms related violence within our black communities ...Provide a dedicated professional response to investigate incidents where firearms are used against members of our black communities and arrest those responsible for such crime.'*⁴

58. Trident met a recognised need for a response to an increase in gun crime within the African/Caribbean community which, despite making up less than 5% of the population of London, was disproportionately represented in the number of victims and offenders. Operation Trident has undoubtedly been successful – in a survey carried out as part of the scrutiny Trident was revealed as the most recognised anti-gun crime initiative in London. The links with the community built up through both the central and local Trident Independent Advisory Groups have enabled the MPS to draw on the knowledge and experience of a pool of community leaders. The voice of the black community is now heard at a senior level within the police.

³ Section 1.4 page 1 *Mobilising communities to tackle guns and gun crime* outline proposal by Communities that Care in conjunction with the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge

⁴ Trident mission from *Operation Trident* intranet page

59. However, the number of firearms offences has risen by 93% since 1998/99⁵ and not all of this increase has been confined to the black community. Tensions between the Turkish and Kurdish communities in the Haringey area escalated into an armed brawl in November 2000 in which one man died. The MPS set up a unit to deal with crimes in the Turkish community as a result. The Chinatown unit are investigating the fatal shooting of a Chinese man in a bar in June. Recent feuds within the Tamil community have used swords as the primary means of injury, rather than guns, and a Tamil Task Force has now been set up.

60. Working closely with specific minority ethnic communities has increased confidence in the police and encouraged more potential witnesses to come forward. It may also enable the police to gather a greater range and quality of intelligence. However, during the self assessment process it was suggested that the association between gun crime and the black community created by Operation Trident might no longer be helpful. There is a perception that 'black on black' crime is marginalised by the media as it is seen as simply 'bad on bad' – the implication being that no one cares if black drug dealers are shooting each other. The extended focus on black gun crime may be demonising the black community and fostering a belief that everyone who is shot is automatically a criminal. Diane Abbott said, in a gun crime debate in January 2003:

*'In the past, there may have been a sense among certain authorities that, because this was a crime confined to certain communities that involved criminals killing other criminals, they could perhaps afford not to give it their full attention' ... 'We need not think, as a society, that it is confined to particular communities, and use that as an excuse to look away.'*⁶

61. The message received from nearly all the key witnesses supported this view. One commented:

'Operation Trident is set up to investigate and deal with black on black violence...we get stigmatised. So I don't think we should run away from the truth that there may well be a disproportionate number of black people involved in this but it is only a tiny proportion of the black community...I think there is a real danger that more and more people start internalising that and resenting it, and instead of being signed up to the agenda, they get alienated by the process.'

62. Collectively, the MPS does not have an overall response to gun crime that encompasses all the communities at risk in London. It seems to be the case that a task force or unit will be set up once a gun crime problem has become established. The audit of gun crime trends covered in recommendation 2

⁵ From PIB firearms package – some of this increase will be accounted for by changes in counting rules.

⁶ From transcript of gun crime debate in Westminster Hall on 29 January 2003

would create the basis for an amalgamated unit with a proactive capability. Expanded from the existing Trident team, this unit would tackle gun crime in whichever ethnic communities were identified as having an emerging problem. One of the key witnesses did point out, however, that gun crime in other minority ethnic communities was often linked more closely to serious and organised crime, rather than the respect issues associated with chaotic crime within the black community. It was felt that the distinction between gun crime and other forms of violence crime might not be clear-cut.

63. The MPA took evidence from a variety of key witnesses, representing different parts of the community, and asked them if they thought there would be support for widening the Trident remit. The majority of witnesses thought that there would be support from some sections of the community '*... a bullet knows no colour, it knows know ethnicity...If somebody is using a gun then I think Trident should be looking at why that is ... so the remit should be widened, I agree*'. The MPA would resist any attempt to scale down the level of resources directed at the African/Caribbean community but believes that other communities should be provided with a level of focus appropriate to the scale of gun crime problem they are experiencing.

64. However, work underway in Brent by academic researcher Gavin Hales questions the categorisation of crime based on the ethnicity of offender and victim. This piece of work is exploring the cultural, social and economic significance of guns in the borough. The early '*Discussion Paper: Tackling Gun Crime*' posits that

*'... the only feature common to all crimes involving the use of guns ...is the guns themselves. The 'gun crime' debate as it stands extrapolates this point to suggest that guns define the offences....To argue that sexual offences, robberies and status killings all involving guns are in some senses culturally and instrumentally the same is seriously misleading. The same is also true...in relation to the suggestion that all offences involving guns and black people should be dealt with in the same way.'*⁷

65. The paper goes on to argue that offences should be categorised by type rather than by the weapon used. This approach suggests an organisational structure in which all murders, for example, would be investigated by the same team using the same methods, whether the offence was carried out using a firearm, a knife or physical violence. This sort of re-organisation might damage the deterrent factor that the Trident brand has created but it is worth bearing in mind that the concept of gun crime is not one that is universally accepted. Another key witness pointed out that her organisation '*... knows of no study which systematically asks the important questions establishing the existence of a 'gun culture' in the UK.*

⁷ Discussion paper: *Tackling 'Gun Crime'*, Gavin Hales 18 June 2003

66. In January 2004 Operation Trident will take on the general shootings team currently part of SCD7 and mentioned earlier in this report. There is no intention to brand this as a Trident team and there are no plans for resources from Operation Trident to begin investigating crimes in other minority ethnic communities. When consulted on these proposals the Trident IAG were keen to ensure that there would be no detrimental impact on the work of Operation Trident. However, the evidence received by the scrutiny panel suggests that expansion of Trident to encompass gun crime in other minority communities should be considered. The message from the scrutiny consultation is powerful – Trident is the strongest gun crime brand in London and its impact must be retained in any new organisation structure. The expansion of the Trident brand will need to be managed carefully if the emphasis of the unit is to be shifted without losing the support it has at present. *The expertise built up by Trident must not be lost in a rebranding exercise.*

67. The best practice developed through the central and local Independent Advisory Groups should also not be lost. Any extension of Trident principles to other minority ethnic communities should be underpinned by the expansion of the IAG structure, including the Youth IAG. As one key witness commented:

'The success of the Independent Advisory Group model has shown the usefulness of having community representatives as the main drivers of the project. It is essential that the criteria that have made Trident a successful model are identified to transfer to another community rather than relying on the charisma of community representatives as the success of an initiative'.

Recommendation 3

The MPA recommends the MPS consider expanding the remit of Operation Trident to cover gun crime in other minority ethnic communities. The MPS should consult with marketing experts around the expansion of the Trident brand and IAG structure should be extended in tandem with any changes.

Intelligence

68. During the drafting of the report setting out the MPS' gun crime management structures it became clear that quite a number of intelligence units were involved in receiving, developing and passing on intelligence about gun crime. The incident at Turnmills nightclub in Clerkenwell in April highlighted the importance of proper intelligence handling and decision making. The problems inherent in co-ordinating intelligence were recognised in the *Tackling Gun Crime in London* report. The report states that

*'Different units operate intelligence cells that have little infrastructure for co-ordination of effort and analysis and therefore the contribution to building a strategic picture for the MPS is difficult'*⁸.

69. This report also points out basic problems in recording intelligence. All intelligence units are responsible for making sure the correct coding is used on CRIMINT entries involving firearms. This intelligence is coded QQFIREARMS or QQTRIDENT to enable the central units to identify it more effectively. However, a recent survey showed that only around 35% of entries are correctly coded, making analysis of intelligence very difficult. SCD11, the unit responsible for developing strategic assessments has also experienced difficulty in gathering information from the numerous intelligence units. On a national level, intelligence sharing does not appear comprehensive. *Tackling Gun Crime in London explains that the protocol agreed with HM Customs and Excise does not work in practice, that the MPS has little awareness of National Crime Squad work in London and that the NCIS firearms desk simply recycles information fed to it by the Met.*

70. HMIC recently carried out an inspection of the MPS and noted that

*'The Inspection team found an increasingly complex and potentially disjointed intelligence structure with a proliferation of intelligence units across TP and SO....Her Majesty's Inspector was concerned that the current structure appears to have developed incrementally and in response to the identification of intelligence gaps by individual units'*⁹.

71. HMIC recommended that the MPS

*'... continues to review and develop its approach to intelligence-led policing in line with the NIM and the issues identified in this report'*¹⁰.

72. One of the respondents to the self-assessment questionnaire also mentioned the potential duplication of intelligence resources.

73. There appears to be an MPS-wide issue around intelligence that needs to be addressed. The scrutiny panel considered making a recommendation in this area but was assured that work had already begun to explore the subject and therefore no recommendation has been made.

74. A more specific concern was raised around the sharing of intelligence following operations on boroughs carried out by central units. During the self-assessment process, and in evidence hearings, some officers made the point that the communication between boroughs and central units could be improved. *The level of communication from some central units was described*

⁸ *Tackling Gun Crime in London* Page x Version 2.2

⁹ MPS Inspection Report by HMIC Page 72-73 2002/03

¹⁰ Ibid.

as *poor*. These units did not trust boroughs enough to share information with them. One witness also raised a specific point around risk assessments which need to be carried out prior to operations by officers with a knowledge of the local area likely to be lacking in staff from the pan-London units. Borough commanders felt they were not always informed of operations in their areas and intelligence gained during these operations was not always fed back. Information flow was described as depending on personal relationships, rather than on any consistent procedure. The point was made that if operations by central units are mishandled the borough commander is still held accountable by the local community. The MPS appears to be missing opportunities to share intelligence and demonstrating an overly secretive use of information in some areas.

75. The MPA considered recommending that a protocol for information sharing prior to operations and after operations on boroughs be developed in accordance with the National Intelligence Model. However, the scrutiny panel has been assured that briefing protocols have already been developed as part of the implementation of NIM and therefore no recommendation has been made.

Resources

76. One of the objectives of the scrutiny was to define the resources available to the MPS in tackling gun crime and to assess how cost effective the implementation of Special Notice 5-02 and the local inspection recommendations had been.

77. A local inspection of Operation Trident was carried out in March 2002 while SO7 (now SCD7) was inspected in September 2002. The MPS inspection team produces six monthly progress reports on the action taken in response to the recommendations. Neither the original inspection reports or the progress updates make any comment on the cost of each recommendation or what savings or performance benefits they might be expected to produce. Timescales, responsibility and milestones for completion of each recommendation are not specified. Learning from previous best value reviews and scrutinies suggests that this is not best practice. In the absence of documented evidence on cost effectiveness it was decided to ask all borough and specialist unit commanders to assess the cost effectiveness of the actions contained in the Special Notice and the local inspection recommendations.

78. None of the seventeen respondents to the self-assessment questionnaire was able to assess cost effectiveness. Most either did not comment on this aspect at all or said that they did not have enough knowledge to give any judgement. One referred to an improvement in performance as a result of the Special Notice and a few cited their experience in the MPS as evidence of the points being made. It is therefore not possible to achieve the scrutiny objective and assess how cost effective the Special Notice or inspection recommendations actually were. It is difficult to assess value for money without an awareness of what has been delivered by the operations and initiatives run by the MPS in comparison to what was expected. Investment in

a particular type of operation may have resulted in a reduction in fear of crime, an increase in gun seizures, or a reduced number of shootings. Without evaluation of the impact of a project, decisions on whether or not to fund it again can only be based on anecdotal evidence or educated guesswork. Research carried out as part of the scrutiny suggests that the follow up evaluations of the *Not Another Drop* and MMAGS initiatives, are isolated examples.

79. Problems with evaluation were highlighted during the self-assessment process, with particular reference to diversionary activities. It was suggested that a performance indicator around rates for re-offending should be used to measure the effectiveness of diversionary schemes. Creative evaluation emerged as a requirement throughout the scrutiny. During a GLA consultation event as part of the anti-gun crime initiative this subject was debated extensively. Use of simple statistics to record changes in the level of offences following new programmes was not felt to be particularly useful, except for funding bodies that tended to use such information to justify allocating budgets to different projects. It was felt more worthwhile to begin to record changes in attitude among young people, before and after diversionary programmes and over a more extended timeframe than currently used. Such evaluation criteria could be built into projects at the outset and recorded through interviews or questionnaires.

80. Boroughs are allocated an amount of funding from the central Territorial Policing budget each year. Some hotspot boroughs appear to be spending a relatively large proportion of this funding on gun crime, as well as using the resources of the central units more heavily than other boroughs. One witness said, discussing a particular operation:

'I can tell you that that tactic in terms of disruptive activity has cost about £132,000 cash on police overtime. A lot of it is around unplanned activity...therefore we have got to pull resources away and push it into that disruptive tactic...It is hugely resource intensive, hugely expensive and I am getting to the stage now, within my financial constraints whether I can actually continue that sort of activity on the borough'

81. The use of overtime extends to the central units *'That tactic costs a lot of money because the only way we can get SO19 resources is on their overtime, because they have limited resources available to them'*. In practice, resource allocation is often determined by the relative level of priority given to different sorts of crime. The recent focus on street crime for example, has seen *Safer Streets* boroughs receive higher levels of support than non-*Safer Streets* boroughs. Corporately, the MPS should make sure that gun crime receives a sufficiently high status when resources are divided between boroughs, to ensure that hotspot boroughs are able to tackle it effectively. Consideration should be given to ring-fencing budgets for gun crime hotspot boroughs. As has already been noted, one of the key witnesses commented specifically on the issues of balancing competing priorities. The analysis of gun crime trends

in recommendation 2 will enable the allocation of resources to be made on the basis of factual evidence. An assessment of costs and the potential impact on performance should be built into the planning stages of major new operations along with a period of evaluation and a mechanism for sharing best practice.

Recommendation 4

The MPA recommends that the level of serious firearm offences is considered as a factor in the borough budget setting process and that a process to assess the cost effectiveness of new gun crime operations is developed by December 2004.

82. Resources were raised as issues in both local inspections. The Trident inspection encouraged the unit to pursue a growth bid to ensure sufficient resources were available. SCD7 were directed to carry out an urgent cost and needs analysis on equipment and accommodation and look at ways to enhance income generation.

83. The resource demands on Operation Trident were highlighted by several of the boroughs. Borough commanders did not feel that enough resources were available to provide a consistent level of support. The information supplied to the MPA in the management structures report revealed that in June 2003 SCD8 had a police officer staffing level of 89% of its budgeted workforce total with 75% of its civil staff allocation. A recent study of overtime within specialist crime and pan-London units showed that the Trident OCU had the highest ratio of overtime to total police pay at 20%.¹¹ In June 2003 the OCU was still awaiting the growth allocated in 01/02 and was planning to introduce the 24 hour response capacity that had not been previously possible. One of the key witnesses highlighted the need for more proactive resources within Trident to act on intelligence received, particularly around individuals supplying and converting weapons. This witness also mentioned the need for the OCUs supporting Trident to receive additional resources – for example, the lack of resources in SO19 means that armed support is not always available when required. Increasing the number of witness protection and family liaison officers was also felt to be beneficial.

84. During the scrutiny Operation Trident appeared to have a specific problem with resources although consultation on the final report revealed that this position had altered by December 2003. Although the number of staff working in the OCU had improved to the point that they were able to review older, unsolved cases the shortage of equipment such as covert vehicles and radios was still an issue. The decrease in Trident related incidents had also

¹¹ Information taken from page C1 Operational Support policing service improvement review stage 2 report

contributed to a greater availability of resources. The local inspection in March 2002 made a number of recommendations about the level of resources

'The OCU should pursue their growth bid and ensure their financial funding for the forthcoming year is adequate ... There is also a need to consult with SO senior management to negotiate a realistic BWT, which would meet the needs of Trident'.¹²

85. HMIC, in carrying out the MPS wide inspection, also commented on the staffing level of Trident

'... resourcing has been a major problem for the OCU since its inception...and current workloads raise considerable health and safety and welfare concerns.'¹³

86. Although the resourcing position for SCD8 appears to have improved potential changes to the remit of Operation Trident present the MPS with an opportunity to explore how the OCU should be resourced over the coming years. The MPA welcomes the increased resources now available but expects this position to be maintained in future. *The MPA will be monitoring allocation of resources to ensure that any increase in BWT is achieved within a reasonable period and that current staffing levels will be sustained.*

Recommendation 5

The MPA recommends an assessment of the resources available to Operation Trident both currently and taking predicted demand into account is carried out by June 2004.

¹² From SCG Trident (SO1(5)) local inspection report published March 2002

¹³ MPS Inspection Report by HMIC Page 87 2002/03

Drugs

Background

87. During the early stages of the scrutiny it became clear that the link between guns and drugs was of crucial importance. It was suggested at one point that guns were simply a tool used by the organised drugs trade and that the real focus of the MPA's work should be on drugs – to focus on the cause, rather than the symptom. However, research revealed that very little work had been carried out to prove or disprove this view and contact with other organisations revealed that none was planned. A senior MPS officer suggested that the MPA could make a valuable contribution to the response to drug crime by quantifying the drugs/guns link. Consequently, the MPA contacted other funding bodies to try to secure funding and support for a joint research study across London. No additional resources were located and the scrutiny panel decided to appoint an academic researcher to investigate existing external literature and analyse MPS performance indicators. The study was limited to information currently within the public domain and no extra consultation or survey work was commissioned. The results of this academic study are presented at Appendix A. The MPA has picked up some of the recommendations from this report along with findings from a separate analysis of performance information and relevant documentation.

Findings and Recommendations

88. The survey of over three hundred and fifty individuals and organisations carried out as part of the scrutiny asked respondents to define the root cause of gun crime. An overwhelming majority of respondents said that drugs caused gun crime. One respondent commented

'I don't believe there is a root cause of gun crime as I believe it plays an integral part in organised and drug crime, especially at street level and middle markets. There are close links between drugs and gun crime'.¹⁴

89. Asked to define the root cause another said *'Drugs – guns are used to enforce drug crime by offenders'.¹⁵*

90. When asked what the police could do to tackle gun crime in London the majority of respondents (34%) opted for 'address drug related crime' from a list of options including tackling organised crime and working with the community.

International comparisons

91. One of the only pieces of academic research to link firearms offences with drugs is Dr Benjamin Bowling's work *'The rise and fall of New York murder'*. This article suggests the increase and decrease of fatal shootings in New York can be explained by the fluctuations of the drugs market, rather than by successful policing tactics.

¹⁴ MPA Gun Crime Scrutiny consultation, final report page 20

¹⁵ Ibid.

92. Between 1990 and 1997 there was a 66% drop in the number of homicides in New York, with the biggest decreases in firearms related murders. In common with the situation in London, New York has areas of deprivation where the standard of housing and other public facilities is poor, where many people are unemployed, where opportunities and expectations are low and where there is a proportionately high concentration of young people. Bowling suggests that these environments can become violent if a market for drugs providing access to wealth is established and if guns are freely available.

93. During the late 1980s the murder rate in New York rose by 63%. The increase coincided with an explosion in the use of crack cocaine, as it was repackaged into a new form creating a newly profitable market for drugs gangs. The police force at this time was demoralised and in places, corrupt. By the early 1990s crack had gone out of fashion. The number of new users of crack cocaine declined as shown in a urine testing analysis of arrestees. The analysis showed that *'Detected cocaine use was highest (78 per cent) among arrestees reaching 18 in 1986 at the height of the cocaine epidemic in New York City, subsequently declined to a low of 10 per cent among arrestees reaching 18 in 1993'*¹⁶. The use of crack began to decline at the same time as the market changed shape. Drug dealers began to consolidate into smaller organisations to feed the declining pool of users and moved their business away from the streets to attract less attention. At this time a number of community initiatives began to take effect in some of the most deprived areas of New York. Led by local people but funded by charities and voluntary groups, as well as the local government, these groups had the effect of changing attitudes. Young people and families increasingly moved away from condoning crack dealing as a popular means of earning money.

94. Within the context of this change Bowling contends that the more aggressive tactics introduced by the police at this time did not affect the reduction in murder alone. The interaction between more active policing and changes in drugs markets both contributed to the decline.

*'Research by the National Institute of Justice suggests that the main reason for the decline in homicide in six cities – Detroit, Washington, Atlanta, Miami, New Orleans, Indianapolis – was the reduction in the use of crack cocaine.'*¹⁷

95. One of the tactics used by the New York police was the application of widespread 'stop and frisk' policies aimed at anyone suspected of carrying a weapon and drugs. This tactic is credited with reducing the willingness of young people to carry guns routinely, thereby reducing the chance for unplanned, chaotic shootings. A similar tactic is being used in Brent at present under the provisions of Section 60 although, as pointed out by one of the MPA's key witnesses:

¹⁶ From Benjamin Bowling – The rise and fall of New York murder, page 540 British journal of criminology Vol 39 No 4 Autumn 1999.

¹⁷ Ibid pg 548

'... whilst my community might support that measure at the moment, it is high visibility, highly impactful and one of my police officers only has to get it wrong once and that starts to erode the confidence that my community have in the policing style.'

96. Targeting locations where drug dealing was taking place may have contributed to driving the industry away from the streets. Bowling's view is that many of the fatal shootings involved young men on the outskirts of the drug industry getting into arguments and shooting each other with the guns they always carried. With a smaller drugs trade happening away from the streets and people less willing to carry weapons, the number of shootings fell. Bowling also questions whether the aggressive policing tactics that contributed to this fall could be applied in Britain without a counter productive impact on community relations, as the key witness from Brent suggests.

97. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the research commissioned by the MPA and *'The rise and fall of New York murder'* for the gun crime problem in London. *First, there is a clear need for an analysis of the drugs market to be carried out to determine whether the increase in gun crime over the last few years has been driven by an increase in crack cocaine use.* This analysis should also focus on the socio-economic background and criminal profile of drug offenders. This research may suggest that gun crime will decrease naturally in line with the decrease in the drug market over time. *Second, firearms policing tactics can help to speed up the decline but action should be taken to curb drug use if the gun crime problem is to be tackled effectively.* Analysis of gun crime hotspots will be vital if stop and search style tactics and the sort of increase in targeted patrolling that has been used in Brent is to be implemented across London. *The third point is that changing community attitudes is crucial in reducing drug and consequent gun crime and that funding should be increased to provide support to community groups.*

National comparisons

98. So what does existing research reveal about the drugs market in London? NCIS issued its *United Kingdom Threat Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime* in August 2003. NCIS suggests that the structure of organised crime networks take one of two forms. Some criminal groups have permanent members with defined roles within an established hierarchy while others operate in loose networks and temporary structures, coming together to carry out particular activities. *Home Office Research Study 22: Middle market drug distribution* classifies the drugs market into 'importers, wholesalers, middle market drug brokers and retail level dealers'. Drug trafficking is the area of crime most likely to be combined with other areas – this means that drug dealers are likely also to be involved in immigration offences, money laundering, smuggling etc. This document identifies drugs trafficking as the greatest threat from serious and organised criminals faced by the police. Demand for drugs is strong and *'... in the case of crack cocaine*

*the market appears to be both growing and spreading to new areas*¹⁸. NCIS estimates that the majority of cocaine powder users are in paid employment and can buy their supplies using their legitimate earnings. There is also a trend for the use of more than one drug and some crack dealers have targeted the heroin market by selling both drugs together.

99. The UK consumes between 35 and 45 tonnes of cocaine a year, sourced mostly from Columbia, Peru and Bolivia. Last year, ACPO carried out some work around Caribbean gun crime in the UK. This work suggested that the spread of crack cocaine throughout Britain has coincided with the spread of Jamaican groups, who move into areas with established class A drug markets and drive off competition, often using converted air weapons. Criminal gangs move into different areas of the county, often identifying vulnerable prostitutes with existing drug addictions in untapped areas and using them to sell crack. Gangs will then begin to move into these areas, particularly if they are within or near to an established law-abiding Caribbean community, conflict with local gangs usually follows along with an increase in gun crime and other violent offences. The MPS has worked with the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) for many years to address the transfer of criminality between the two countries. MPS officers are currently on secondment to the JCF and consideration is being given to creating a permanent secondment position for an officer from the JCF within the Operation Trident team. The drugs and guns report recommends that the visa system currently operating with Jamaica should be reviewed as it discriminates against the majority of law abiding citizens of Jamaica. The relevant authorities may wish to consider this factor when assessing the effectiveness of the system.

Drug crime in London

100. The link between the drugs market and gun crime in London is not clear cut. Since 1999/00 MPS drug crime has fallen 10%, then increased by 11% and then increased again by 27%. Over the same period gun crime has increased by 2%, increased sharply by 34% and then showed a smaller increase of 3%. It is currently not possible to analyse how crack cocaine use ties into this pattern over time. In 2002/03 crack cocaine was the most frequently occurring class A drug but was involved in just 6% of offences. The NCIS and ACPO reports imply that a time lag should exist between an expansion of the drugs market and an increase in gun crime but the statistics do not show this overall pattern clearly in London. The figures will have been altered by the increased focus on gun crime in 2002/03 which may have restricted a large rise in parallel with the drugs market.

101. The British Crime Survey (BCS) is the main measurement tool used by the Government for recording the amount of drug misuse among the population with a focus on young people. There are, however, numerous other sources of information on various parts of the drug industry including police data, customs seizures, lifestyle surveys, offender statistics etc. The findings from the BCS 2001/02 survey showed that use of class A drugs

¹⁸ Home Office research study 227: middle market drug distribution by Geoffrey Pearson and Dick Hobbs

among young people aged between 16 and 24 has not increased much since 1994. Cannabis remains the most widely used drug with around three million people having used in the last year. In 2001/02 it was estimated that around 58,000 had used crack over the last year compared to 622,000 admitting the use of cocaine. However, the BCS shows that while there were significant increases in the use of crack and cocaine among the total adult population between 1998 and 2000 the figure appears to have decreased slightly in 2001/02. Drugs offences from the BCS are collated every two years. The number of firearms offences within the MPS rose by 40% between 1998 and 2000 and continued to increase sharply in 2001/02, while increasing only slightly in 2002/03. This might suggest that the number of firearms offences is mirroring the increase in drug use but with a one year time lag. If the use of crack/cocaine peaked in 00/01 and is now in decline then the relatively small increase in firearms offences could reflect this. This would indicate that the link noted in New York is also at work in London. It is not possible to prove or disprove this theory using the information currently available.

102. The BCS makes the point that the levels of possession and trafficking offences currently recorded are thought to represent only a small proportion of those actually committed.

103. Analysis of figures on a borough level is interesting. The table below shows the increase in firearms and drugs offences over the years for which complete statistics are available for each of the Trident boroughs:

Table 1: Comparison of firearms and drugs figures in Trident boroughs

Borough	Increase 01/02 on 00/01		Increase 02/03 on 01/02	
	Drugs	Firearms	Drugs	Firearms
Lambeth	27%	41%	83%	-6%
Southwark	-20%	82%	21%	-2%
Brent	20%	18%	5%	7%
Hackney	2%	51%	30%	6%
Haringey	43%	58%	72%	3%
Newham	63%	6%	4%	18%

104. These figures show some correlation although the relationship between the types of offence is not close enough to use for decision making. The fall in drugs offences in Southwark is mirrored by a slight fall in firearms offences the following year. A small increase in drugs in Hackney in 01/02 is replicated in a small increase in firearms offences the following year. A large increase in drug offences in Newham shows up in the largest increase in firearms offences in 2002/03. However, drug offences in Haringey seem to be growing at an alarming rate with no corresponding increase in gun crime. This could be caused by a focus on drugs leading to more arrests or a concentration on reducing gun crime. The relationship between guns and drugs in Brent seems to be closer with similar increases in both offences over the last two years. The impact of the Lambeth drugs pilot is probably distorting the figures for this borough. *Overall, there are some signs that links exist but the MPS simply*

does not record enough information at present to be able to determine with any clarity what these links are. As highlighted in the academic research, it is not possible to link firearms and drug offences together using the MPS' crime recording systems. Without this technology it is almost impossible for the MPS to determine how operations focused on reducing drug crime might impact the rate of firearms offences.

Recommendation 6

The MPA recommends that a feasibility study be carried out to explore the costs of linking the IT systems used to record drug and gun offences and should be reported back to the MPA by June 2005.

105. The top ten 'hotspot' boroughs for drug crime and firearms offences in 2002/03 were, in order:

Table 2: Drugs and firearms offences

Total drug crime	Total firearms offences	Crack cocaine offences
Lambeth	Lambeth	Lambeth
Westminster	Hackney	Camden
Haringey	Southwark	Kensington & Chelsea
Camden	Haringey	Haringey
Southwark	Brent	Brent
Tower Hamlets	Newham	Tower Hamlets
Wandsworth	Waltham Forest	Croydon
Hackney	Tower Hamlets	Southwark
Hammersmith and Fulham	Islington	Hackney
Croydon	Enfield	Ealing

106. Some conclusions can be drawn from this single year snapshot. There are serious policing issues to be addressed in Lambeth. Problems with crack and other drugs in Camden, Wandsworth, Westminster, Croydon, Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea are not linked with a similarly high use of firearms. A close correlation between the relative amount of gun and crack cocaine offences seems to exist in Brent and Haringey. All the Trident boroughs with the exception of Newham and Brent are represented in all three columns, as is Tower Hamlets, which is a hotspot rather than a Trident borough. It is significant that most of the boroughs with gun crime problems also have issues with drugs. It would be useful to monitor the gun crime levels in Camden and Kensington and Chelsea for next year to determine whether the use of crack cocaine is fuelling firearms offences. Links do seem to exist between guns and drugs but further analysis would be needed to determine how the drugs market was expanding or contracting in each borough and what impact this was having on gun crime.

Recommendation 7

The MPA recommends that an analysis of the links between the drugs and guns markets should be carried out by November 2004.

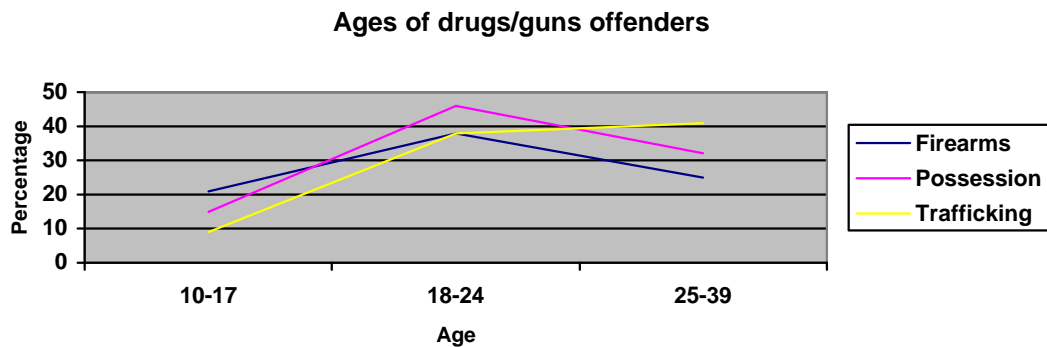
107. The MPA supports the work recently commissioned by the MPS exploring the age, ethnicity and drug offending history of people convicted of firearms offences and looks forward to receiving a summary of this work in due course.

108. The fact that Westminster has the second highest level of drug crime in London is indicative of the problems faced when trying to analyse the available information. As suggested in the drugs/guns report, the nature of crime recording means that fluctuations in statistics may be linked to the application of MPS policy rather than real increases in crime. For example, one of the divisions with the Westminster borough has a significantly higher level of drug crime than the other four. Explaining this would require an analysis of the type of offences, location and profile of offender, an understanding of the drugs and policing policies used over the relevant year. Strategies to reduce the level of crime would need to be based on an intelligent understanding of the drug problem. *Research for the scrutiny suggests that the resources that would be needed to carry out this research do not currently exist.*

109. The age of offenders and time of firearm and drugs offences has been compared. Complete information on drug crimes is only available for the period April 2002 to March 2003. The MPS uses different classifications in some areas, making comparisons difficult. Boroughs are grouped by geographical cluster for drugs offences, rather than by hotspot area. Drug offenders are grouped into different age classifications and there is a heavy emphasis on judicial disposals within the drugs information. The judicial disposal rate for firearms offences in 2002/03 was 21% compared to drug offences at 80% over the same period.

110. An analysis of the age of offenders is instructive although the age brackets used by the MPS are not consistent, making the figures not directly comparable. The age profiles for possession and for firearms offences show quite a similar pattern while the relative age range of people arrested for drugs trafficking is older.

Chart 1:



111. These figures would suggest that young offenders on the streets most likely to be caught with drugs are also most likely to be involved in firearms. Trafficking in drugs, which includes importation, exportation, production, supply and possession with intent, seems to be carried out by a higher number of older people, perhaps more involved in the business aspect than in using the product. Perhaps the distribution of drugs is handled by younger operatives using guns to protect themselves in the marketplace, more likely to be convicted of holding drugs than running supply networks. *Further work should be done to determine whether the same young people are represented in both these sets of statistics.* An increased focus on arrests for drug offences, for example, might reduce the proportion of young people using guns.

112. A survey of drug use among arrestees in England as part of the New English and Welsh Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (NEW-ADAM) programme was published in 2000. This report showed that 69% of arrestees tested positive for drugs with 20% of these testing positive for cocaine. These figures are significantly lower than the percentages recorded in the similar US study at the height of the crack boom but are higher than the figures recorded after the American expansion was over. 36% of arrestees said that they had owned or had access to a gun at one time and 24% said that this was over the last year. Around ten percent of the people questioned had owned weapons through legitimate channels. Some of the people with access to weapons as part of criminal activity said that '*... a gun offered protection when buying or selling drugs*'. An analysis of the motives for Trident incidents in 2002 revealed that drugs were related to 13% of shootings, although the motives were unknown in 25% of cases. Shootings were also analysed by the nationality of the victim – 25% of shootings of Jamaican born victims were drug related compared to 8% of shootings of victims born in Britain. The most recently published figures (July – September 2003) show that drugs was a motive in 2% of incidents, although the 'unknown' figure had risen to 45%.

113. Research for the scrutiny showed that most firearms offences occurred in the summer, in the street. In 2002, 3567 firearms offences occurred in the streets compared to 733 in flats, 295 in terraced houses and 84 in licensed clubs. In contrast, most drug offences occur in the winter months, particularly October and November although another peak does occur in June and July. Bowling's report suggests that while drug dealing was street based many

'drive by' type shootings occurred. The increase in shootings over the summer probably reflects the increased chance of routinely armed individuals coming into contact on the streets while dealing. It appears that drug dealing moves indoors during the winter and consequently random shootings are less common.

114. The guns/drugs picture in London is confusing. Some sort of link does appear to exist between guns and drugs statistically, as well as anecdotally, from the experience of the public and officers on the ground. If the link could be quantified on a borough level it would be possible to target drug operations with the overall aim of reducing firearms offences. One of the key witnesses commented that the MPS' response to cross border drug crime is limited by a lack of resources. *The service was described as being in a 'reactive cycle', without resources to develop a proactive response.* The MPA believes that the apparent under-resourcing of the cross border, National Intelligence Model Level 2 response to drug crime will need to be addressed within the near future.

Recommendation 8

The MPA recommends that the MPS ensure its response to drug crime is co-ordinated more closely with the response to gun crime and that consideration is given to setting up a joint focus desk by June 2004.

Diversion

Background

115. During the scrutiny many suggestions were made as to how gun crime could be disrupted or investigated more effectively. However, a significant theme revealed through consultation also concerned the prevention of gun crime. Many respondents felt that the most effective way of stopping firearms offences occurring in the first place was to divert young people away from crime. A substantial body of research was identified, analysing the reasons young people become involved in crime and looking at best practice from diversionary and developmental schemes around the country. This work is extensively reported elsewhere and this scrutiny report will only draw on a small element of the knowledge available in this area. Very few diversionary or educational schemes specifically related to gun crime were located.

Findings and Recommendations

116. Police respondents to the self-assessment process overwhelmingly felt that diversionary activities represented the best long-term strategy for reducing gun crime. Some boroughs referred to the importance of working with CDRPs and other partnerships and Barnet felt that the anti-weapon programme delivered by their schools officers was a cost effective diversionary activity with future benefits. One witness did point out though that:

'The sheer number of news articles devoted to gun crime may have created something of a 'moral panic', and may have the public believing that a large proportion of young people in London carry and/or use guns regularly, but crime statistics do not support this notion'.

117. The current organisation of diversionary activities for young people was criticised due to the short-term nature of funding provided by some local authorities. One respondent to the self-assessment said

'Police have little control over activities, relying on generally the local authority. Most activity is by way of short-term funding for projects, which leads to a lack of commitment by staff involved, knowing funding is short lived. Too often good outreach staff bounce between projects and lack continuity as they chase 'secure' roles in their profession'.

118. One of the key witnesses pointed out the limited amount of time which is often given to groups to develop bids for funding in the first place.

"... often people come to you and say, we have got money to spend, or there is this funding stream, but you have to have [the bid] in by a certain time...or sometimes, even, tomorrow'.

119. On some boroughs the only projects run are for offenders leaving no provision for youngsters at risk. While it is important to support young people already involved in gun crime, to provide them with a way out, some respondents felt that more resources should be put into diversion activities, particularly around drugs. One key witness commented

'I think these diversionary activities are very, very important and it is sad to report that over the last ten, fifteen years or so there have been significant cutbacks within local authorities...That was due to the fact that local authorities went through an extended period of severe cutback in their funding and ...often youth clubs that I knew in and around these urban centres were closed down.'

120. It was felt to be important to provide a range of diversionary activities, and activities that provided young people with opportunities to develop their own skills, rather than simply entertaining them. One of the key witnesses said:

'I am in favour of 'developmental' rather than plain 'diversionary' activities for two reasons. First simple diversion does not address the underlying attitudes and behaviour and secondly, there can be negative public perceptions associated with devotion of funding to 'problem' people or groups for what is seen as reward for bad behaviour. In terms of developing a comprehensive case action plan, the offer of developmental activities can be crucial and sometimes the only option open.'

121. Another witness pointed out that research in the US has shown that diversionary activities employing a skill-building component have been generally more successful than those providing entertainment alone *'... one should attempt to teach young people skills for avoiding guns and violence as part of these diversionary activities'*.

122. The Youth IAG felt that publicity around activities for young people in London is lacking and that young people may be unaware of the schemes that are open to them within their own area. It was widely felt that diversionary schemes could be run by a range of providers to appeal to different groups of young people. Church and faith groups were felt to play an important role, along with schools and local authorities as well as voluntary groups. The incorporation of police officers into some schools was identified as a particularly positive move, allowing young people to question the police within a non-threatening atmosphere.

123. The scrutiny found that diversionary activities in London appear to be badly co-ordinated, poorly funded, run over short periods of time and barely advertised.

124. Much of the MPA consultation carried out with external individuals and organisations related to young people's involvement in gun crime. The answer most mentioned as the top reason behind young people's involvement in gun crime was a desire for a certain image or status with 48% of respondents choosing this. Involvement in the drug trade was next, selected by 18% of consultees. Involvement in organised crime and self protection were joint third in importance with 7% each. 6% of respondents chose either the influence of elder siblings, the desire to intimidate and the effectiveness of guns in committing crime as the most important factor. One respondent commented:

'A number of young people feel vulnerable on the streets of London and often travel 'tooled up', either with knives or guns, if they get access to them. There is a big job to be done to educate young people that it is not 'cool' or desirable'.

125. One of the key witnesses responded directly to a question about the prevalence of a gun culture in schools:

'It is something that is becoming quite pervasive within the local community and that has led some, a minority of young people to be emboldened by that and to begin to start mimicking some of the actions, attitudes, dispositions of some of the older members of the community. I am not suggesting bringing guns into the school, although colleagues of mine report youngsters bringing replica guns into school, colleagues report youngsters bringing in those little guns that fire tiny pellets like air guns ...'

126. The Youth IAG highlighted boredom and lack of activities in their local areas as one of the reasons young people become involved in crime. It was felt that some of the funding allocated by central government did not reach the streets and that youth services were generally underfunded. The use of guns for protection, especially in relation to rivalry over drug territory was also mentioned. The young people felt that children who had been excluded from school or who were not allowed to progress to higher education were particularly vulnerable to involvement in crime. The IAG suggested that detached workers and mentors needed to approach young people directly and spend more time working with them. Influencing children early, by providing lessons in primary school was felt to be an effective way forward. The IAG sent a clear message that young people were far more likely to respond to other young people and community leaders giving out anti-gun crime messages, than teachers.

127. Research carried out prior to the development of the Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy showed that young people between the ages of 16 and 25 experienced 53% of all firearms related crime and were most likely to be victims of such crime. In incidents where age was recorded 7 out of 13 murders, 19 out of 32 attempted murders and 48 out of 98 serious woundings were of young people. The Manchester figures on suspected firearms

offenders showed that their average age was 21, most were African/Caribbean, eight had been shot and three were shot dead later, ten had been tried for homicide and ten had previous convictions for gun offences and the average number of arrests for each offender was 14. The attributes of young people as gun crime victims and offenders in Manchester are strikingly similar.

Influences behind involvement in gun crime

128. Academic research has identified a number of risk factors that work together in various combinations to encourage young people to commit crime. David Farrington's 1996 report *Understanding and preventing youth crime* as well as the research published by the Youth Justice Board in 2001 sets out such risk factors in detail. The *Youth Crime: Diversionary Approaches to Reduction, Research Report 5*¹⁹, carried out as part of the national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities scheme published in July 2003, condensed these factors into the following list:

129. 'Risk factors which predict offending and anti-social behaviour:

- Teenage pregnancy
- Smoking, drinking or drug taking in pregnancy affecting low birth weight, small height and low school attainment
- Early hyperactivity and impulsivity and aggressive behaviour
- Low intelligence possibly affecting through inability to manipulate abstract concepts or through school failure
- Poor parental supervision, harsh or erratic parental discipline and passive or neglectful parental attitude
- Broken homes, especially where mother is not affectionate, and parental conflict, unstable living conditions
- Family history of criminality and attitudes that condone offending
- Socio-economic deprivation – low family income and poor housing
- Peer influences – co-offending and association with delinquent friends
- School influences – going to high delinquency rates schools is a predictor of later convictions but the mechanism is not clear. Truancy and exclusion
- Community influences - socially disadvantaged areas may have breakdown of community ties and neighbourhood patterns of mutual support and produce anonymity
- Situational influences – opportunities for crime
- Lack of training and employment
- Drugs and alcohol abuse'

¹⁹ Adamson, Sue *New Deal for Communities – The National Evaluation, Youth Crime: Diversionary approaches to reduction* Research Report 5 July 2003 page 5

130. This list makes depressing reading. It should be emphasised that there are a number of protective factors, mitigating the impact of these risk elements that have been found to be effective. These included having a positive outlook, an affectionate relationship with at least one parent, having parents who are interested in the child's education and who create discipline, are present to supervise their children and who have 'pro-social' beliefs. It should also be noted that there are an increasing number of local projects working with vulnerable young people to reduce the impact of these risk factors. The Boyhood to Manhood Foundation working in south east London provides education and support for youths involved in gangs by providing self development programmes, helping them to address the issues have an impact on their lives directly. The Dalston Youth Programme in Hackney worked with 11-14 year olds has reported some success in reducing offending with positive feedback from mentors and young people.

131. The point was made during consultation that risk factors like those listed above do not just apply to young people getting involved in gun crime. Gun crime can be seen as part of a wider problem with disaffected groups of young people which manifests itself in the recent increases in street crime and anti-social behaviour. Tackling youth crime would indirectly reduce armed criminality since young potential firearm offenders are also likely to be involved in these less serious offences. One witness said:

'Gun crime is one issue and I think if you start to just go down the one tack of gun crime you are missing an opportunity. Gun crime is one element of it and so when we are in the schools it is about, you know, citizenship, it is about crime with the emphasis perhaps on guns.'

132. These comments were raised during the developmental stages of the MPS' gun crime policy and it is anticipated that the links with other offences will be considered within that document.

133. One of the reasons young people may begin to use weapons is through their involvement in gangs – a development of the 'peer influences' referenced above. Research in Manchester suggested that

'The gang may have provided a refuge for some, where they could be free from domestic pressures. It also offered a source of respect as well, of course, as an apparently relatively rich and glamorous lifestyle, notwithstanding the risks'.²⁰

134. Young people become aware of gangs in their area at a young age and may be related to some of the members. Although association with gangs may begin with a desire to emulate influential figures within the gang fraternity and lead to low-level drug dealing before full membership, many young people find it difficult to withdraw from gangs once involved.

²⁰ Bullock, Karen & Tilley, Nick *Shootings, Gangs and Violent Incidents in Manchester: Developing a crime reduction strategy*, Crime Reduction Research Series paper 13 Pub. 2002 page 28

'But, unlike in the United States, offending by larger gangs of youths remains uncommon. While there is no doubt that negative peer group influence encourages young people to commit crime, it is also clear that antisocial peer groups come into being because of the tendency for antisocial children and young people to gravitate into each other's company'.²¹

135. In 2002 Operation Trident estimated that there were at least 8 gangs active in north London consisting of usually between 6-12 people although some have memberships of up to 20. Most gangs in north London consist of British born males of Jamaican descent in their late teens or twenties. These gangs are influenced by Jamaican nationals in their late 30s to early 40s, who are already known to Trident. A gang problem also exists in south east London and four Turkish and three Asian gangs have also been identified.

136. As work in Boston has shown, there are policing tactics that can be used to tackle recognisable gangs. The analysis of the gun crime problem in London in recommendation 2 would identify particular concentrations of gangs from all ethnic groups which could then be tackled using a modified form of the strategy used elsewhere. Gangs could be contacted directly and through well-publicised advertising campaigns to warn them that crackdowns would follow use of guns by gang members. Once an infringement of the limits set by police had occurred gangs would be subject to action by all relevant agencies, including the police, probation service, the Crown Prosecution Service, schools and social services, the DVLA and TV Licensing. All minor violations would be punished with the maximum sentence possible and the convictions of offenders and the long gaol terms they received would also be publicised as a warning. In the words of one of the witnesses *'... people have got to have an absolute belief that if you do get involved in this action, this is the consequence.'*

137. It should be noted that the evaluation report from the Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy highlighted differences in the interpretation of 'crackdown' between the police and other statutory bodies. A learning point passed on by a key witness advised those intending to set up similar projects to:

'Recognise and accept that whilst all the agencies are likely to be agreed on the intended outcome i.e. a reduction in shooting, there are likely to be divergent views, sometimes polarised even, about how to achieve that. It is vitally important that any staff you bring into the project acknowledge they may be expected to work in areas they do not understand, agree with or feel comfortable in'

138. If the MPS decided to adopt the crackdown principle, officers would need to engage more closely with the community to secure support for crackdowns

²¹ Communities that Care in conjunction with the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge *Mobilising communities to tackle guns and gun crime* pub. 2003 page 30

and to try to change community tolerance of weapons. Gang members themselves, and particularly young people just beginning to be involved would be offered diversionary and development activities, including employment and training opportunities, counselling and building of positive social skills. The decision on whether to introduce this style of policing would rest with the MPS but the MPA would wish to be involved in a debate on action to take following the completion of the research gathering phase.

Influencing young people

139. Consultees were asked to identify which groups of individuals or organisations could have most influence on changing young people's attitudes to using weapons. 38% of consultees thought that peer groups could do most to influence young people's attitude to guns with 17% choosing parents as the strongest influence. Celebrities and role models were each chosen as the top influence by 15% of respondents. In contrast, churches and faith groups were mentioned by only 5% of respondents with one respondent commenting – *'The only 'faith' is that of the gun and gun law'*. However, key witnesses invited from faith groups had a different view:

'... generally speaking, a lot of the young people that come to church, the families, they know other young people, other families that are caught up in this situation. So in that sense that is how we influence them to go and influence other people.'

140. These witnesses felt that one of their major roles is to send a message of hope from the pulpit – to show people an alternative path. They also felt that faith groups had much to offer statutory bodies and should be engaged more routinely. A key witness wrote:

'In my view criminally active youth gangs are highly influential, and represent powerful negative influences on some young people unfortunate enough to be born and raised in areas where they have a strong presence. Their access to firearms and willingness to resort to extreme violence makes them very potent indeed, not just in relation to young people but also the wider community that is fearful of challenging them.'

141. The consultation also asked respondents how they thought young people could be discouraged from getting involved in gun crime. The following table shows these factors in order of preference:

Table 5: Factors to discourage young people from involvement in gun crime

Influence	Consultees ranking this top
Ban and crack down on gun and replica possession	37%
Anti-gun education at school	20%
Targeting help at potential offenders	12%
Greater parental influence	11%
Activities run by local authorities	9%
Celebrity endorsement	6%
Activities run by church/faith groups	1%
Anti-gun initiatives in young offender institutions	1%
Anti gun initiatives in drug/alcohol rehabilitation centres	1%
Removal of criminal supply of guns	1%
Ensure young people engaged with education	1%
Total	100%

142. One of the best ways to influence young people's attitudes towards guns is to reach them at a young age through schools and youth groups, and the Greater London Authority is currently developing an anti-gun crime educational package which should meet this need. The Home Secretary has lent support to the concept of a pan-London approach and the project is being funded by GOL. The target age range for the project is 11 – 25 although the project expects the wider population will be reassured that something is being done through the publicity surrounding the initiative. The package will be targeted at hotspot areas and will contain a music CD-ROM, film shorts, lesson plans and articles and a website. It will be delivered by trained volunteers in a variety of locations and will be accompanied by advertising over its two-year lifespan. The Youth IAG pointed out that people with experience of drug and gun crime might send powerful anti-crime messages and suggested the development of short videos as a means of communication. Both the MPS and MPA are engaged in developing this work and the scrutiny therefore fully supports this GLA initiative. The MPA believes that the educational package will challenge attitudes towards carrying guns and will deliver the improvements that would otherwise have been the aim of additional scrutiny recommendations.

143. Much has been written in the media about the influence of music on young people. The consultation carried out for the scrutiny showed that of all the people who replied only two specifically mentioned music as contributing to gun crime. However, several of the key witnesses thought that music could have a negative impact. In the experience of some witnesses, young people were able to recite the lyrics of such songs without paying much attention to the meaning of the words:

'... it is more about the style and the lyrics and about the whole music thing. Not actually giving any consideration to the content of the lyric and that is one of the things that I believe that young people need to do...listen with a deeper ear'

144. The representatives from faith groups described a conference held to gauge the influence of music on young people at which certain artists were identified as producing music with negative and 'destructive lyrics'. In the view of another witness with regular contact with schoolchildren, music did not play a significant role in increasing crime.

'It provides a background vibe ... Some of the language is absolutely appalling. Some of the intentions behind the language (are) absolutely appalling, but it is a minority of people who I think would be strongly influenced in that negative way'.

145. Music may however, be instrumental in changing attitudes and positive role models from the music industry can be influential figures in young people's lives. Initiatives such as the Disarm Trust, campaigns like Peacewatch on Choice FM and events like 'Increase the Peace' in Hackney can help to challenge cultural acceptance of weapons. A respondent to the self- assessment questionnaire said:

'Police statements and encouragement to desist are likely to fall on deaf ears; as to ignore it reinforces the desired image. The reality is that a change in this behaviour will only really occur when the relevant role models indicate that guns should not be carried'.

146. Young people themselves were divided over the influence of music. Some felt that if parents and authority figures set out the boundaries of right and wrong for children that music would have little effect. Others pointed out the controlling influence of peer pressure and the media which could encourage children to get involved in dangerous activities. The scrutiny panel believes that more should be done to present positive role models to young people to promote an anti-gun crime message on a national level.

147. One of the key witnesses also made the point that role models need to come from the local community, as well as from the media spotlight:

'We want to find nurses who are role models who have grown up on that community, we want to find housing officials who have grown up in that community, gone through the school. We want to find ordinary people who are their role models. Because they are accessible ... you can be that. I think David Beckham is a really interesting person but very few people can be David Beckham. Lots of our people could be nurses, lots of our people could be teachers etc. And I think we want to mine our community for real role models that look like us'.

Recommendation 9

The MPA urges the Government to provide sustained resources for a national publicity campaign to provide young people with alternative role models both on a national level and through a programme of active development of role models within the community.

148. These initiatives will not tackle many of the social and economic factors that contribute to youth involvement in crime including deprivation, poor parenting, under achievement at school and lack of aspiration. As an oversight body for the MPS it is not within the remit of the MPA to tackle these issues directly. However, the MPA maintains direct links with the community and can provide assistance for community groups working to reduce crime.

149. The MPA asked consultees to identify key factors making some community partnerships successful in tackling gun crime. Surprisingly, although 23% of people said that access to funding was important, the key success factor was support from the wider community, cited by 34% of respondents. Of next importance was a vision or plan at 17% followed by the involvement of a wide range of partners chosen by 12% of people. Publicity came in only sixth behind the importance of having a leadership structure.

150. Plenty of research has been carried out to ascertain why some partnerships succeed and some fail. The *Youth Crime: Diversionary Approaches to Reduction, Research Report 5*²² builds on work by David Utting in 1996 and more recent research to give the following list of success factors for youth diversionary activities:

- 'Ensuring that schemes have **clearly defined outcomes and clear mechanisms** by which it is intended offending by young people will be reduced;
- Use of **multi-agency working** between both statutory and voluntary agencies;
- **Integration** of schemes with other aspects of young people's lives, including school attendance, training opportunities and job-search;
- Considering the **needs and capabilities** of young people when drawing up educational programmes. Problem young people frequently do not react well to structured training courses but can be engaged in alternative curriculum schemes
- Building on **existing resources**. Where there is an existing resource such as a sports centre or youth club, diversionary schemes can tap

²² Adamson, Sue *New Deal for Communities – The National Evaluation, Youth Crime: Diversionary approaches to reduction* Research Report 5 July 2003 page 12

into existing pools of young people who can be encouraged to undertake new activities;

- Implementation by **qualified youth workers** with the skills to build relationships of trust with young people. It is important that staff understand the problems faced by young people, and are willing to spend time in trying to solve them. However staff, while relating well to young people, should nevertheless be able to maintain a distance in the relationship and set boundaries;
- Use of **staff who already have contacts with the young people**. Where there are staff attached to pre-existing facilities, these may have already built up a relationship with young people and be in a position to encourage participation in new activities. Voluntary staff in pre-existing organisations may have a fund of useful expertise;
- **Consistency** in dealings with young people and to maintain continuity in workers;
- Use of **local people** as staff. Schemes have felt benefits where local people have been trained as youth workers to work on the projects because of their knowledge of and contacts in the area;
- **Careful targeting** of the young people and identification of contact methods;
- **Involvement of the young people themselves**. This may take the form of setting up of a youth forum to ascertain what the young people really want and need and whereby young people can have a say in the running of activities and setting the rules for behaviour. It may also involve giving young people paid work on the projects as assistants to the youth workers or getting young people to design and build their own youth shelters;
- **Flexibility** of approach. Norwich, for example, when premises were not available, developed a travelling road show;
- Including **follow-up work** with participants in their communities.'

151. The MPA is keen to support projects displaying the success criteria listed above over a long-term basis, to reduce the lack of continuity highlighted by self-assessment respondents. When asked what support the MPA and other organisations could give to community partnerships 28% of people mentioned provision of adequate resources or sponsorship '*... it is sometimes just about having some space, somewhere to do things*'. Access to other resources, such as admin, legal expertise and financial help was listed by 21% of respondents, closely followed by greater involvement by the police with 20%. 8% of people thought that being more aware of best practice would be most useful with MPA involvement in partnerships selected by 7% of people. The Youth IAG pointed out that involving young people in the design and delivery stages of projects aimed at other young people would make these projects more successful.

152. From this research it would appear that the role of the police authority should be to facilitate access to funds and other resources and increase the role of the police in community groups, rather than become directly involved

itself. The MPA already sponsors the Choice FM 'Peace on the Streets' anti-gun crime campaign, having paid £25,000 in sponsorship over a six month period. The Choice FM campaign grew out of a three-day event in March 2003 that involved the police, community representatives, music industry figures and victims of gun crime. Regular programming includes reports on successful convictions and feedback from Operation Trident to reassure the public that something is being done to tackle gun crime. Appeals for help with specific crimes are also aired.

153. However, the MPA does not wish to contribute to the plethora of funding streams that voluntary and statutory agencies must sift through in the search for budgets. As one witness pointed out:

'I would not be in favour of another funding stream sponsored by the police authority. Firstly there are probably too many as it is, and in my opinion the neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Building Safer Communities Fund and Home office Gun Crime Team Funding need rationalising. Secondly, funding provided directly from a police source may have a negative connotation attached to it by the community'

154. One of the clearest messages from the research carried out for the scrutiny was that there is no single source of information about approaches to gun crime in London. Although there are a variety of projects running, including those working with young people, there is no central point through which best practice can be shared. No strategic body provides advice on securing funding, no one evaluates outcomes or publicises results - as a key witness pointed out '*... there are good projects out there, there are also bad projects and there are also bad delivery mechanisms and if there are, then you have to identify them*' In addition, there is no pan-London multi-agency policy to tackle gun crime.

155. The MPA received evidence from representatives of the *Not Another Drop* campaign covering an unsuccessful funding proposal that had been made to GOL to extend the principles of the project across the country. The proposal had suggested that a national charity should be set up using the *Not Another Drop* banner and that areas around the UK wishing to run gun crime schemes or use the principles piloted in Brent could be set up as separate franchises. Each franchise could use the Brent logo and would be subject to quality control from a central scrutiny panel on regular basis. This was explained:

'... we kept a certain standard of project, of responsibility to the logo because the integrity of the logo is very strong at the moment and anybody that damages that logo would then need to answer to a central body'

156. Initiatives could be developed and piloted in Brent if necessary but one of the primary aims of the charity would be to share best practice. The charity would also act as a funding channel to bid for funds on behalf of the

franchises, with a bank of schemes ready for funding when money becomes available, even at short notice and to distribute resources once awarded. The charity should also be responsible for collating the performance of each franchise using a variety of indicators to demonstrate what had been achieved with the allocated funding. The creative evaluation mentioned earlier could be put into practice '*... you can't say that this has worked because there are no outputs ... measurable outputs ... well sometimes there aren't measurable output ... they are anecdotal ... how do you measure a change in attitude?*' By building evaluation in at the beginning of project the charity could capture some of these more qualitative indicators of success.

157. Publicity put out by the charity would be nationwide to present the community with good news stories through the media, through a national website etc. It would be important for the charity to be independent containing representatives from all the key agencies. As a liaison point the charity would share information on the timing of initiatives between agencies to allow consistent planning and greater co-ordination of activity. The MPA feels that the concept of the charity developed by the *Not Another Drop* team is a valuable idea that could add greatly to the effectiveness of the response to gun crime in London, and across the country.

158. An independent charity set up to combat gun crime does already exist in the shape of the Disarm Trust. To date Disarm has concentrated on arranging a set of anti-gun concerts involving the contributions of various high profile musicians as positive role models. Disarm received some funding from government sources to organise these events although as a charity it is capable of raising independent funding. The MPA has no remit over charities and can only urge the Disarm Trust to take up the role outlined in this report. However, to demonstrate the authority's commitment to reducing gun crime the MPA is prepared, if requested, to consider what resources it can provide to work with the Disarm Trust and the *Not Another Drop* team. The priority would be to develop the findings of this scrutiny and the original Brent proposal into a workable organisational model and to secure funding for a continuation of the project. The MPA supports the views of the Government Office for London as expressed in consultation on the final report to the effect that before Disarm could take on a broader remit a set of clear objectives and outcomes, the support of key strategic partners in the development of an action plan, a committed high level steering group and a funding guarantee of at least three years would need to be in place.

159. The new national charity structure would require a period of development before becoming fully effective. In the meantime different agencies within London will continue to implement separate anti-gun crime initiatives as one of the key witnesses points out:

'Everybody is going off doing different things at different times and the impact isn't there but the money must be being spent collectively'

160. The scrutiny panel believes that the current gun crime strategy under development within the MPS should be used as a mechanism to engage partner organisations within London. There is an urgent need for a pan-London gun crime working group to share information on initiatives planned or underway. The group would contain representatives from the statutory agencies, as well as faith and community groups at a practitioner level. The group would ensure that the current potential for duplication of resources is reduced that that information is shared between groups, to facilitate the development of a pan-London anti-gun crime strategy at a point in the near future. The MPA would encourage the MPS to take a lead role in setting up this working group, as an expansion of the consultation process for the gun crime strategy. This group might eventually become a steering group for any London *Not Another Drop* or Disarm franchise group.

Recommendation 10

The MPA urges the Disarm Trust to expand its remit, becoming a national body co-ordinating a multi-agency response to gun crime as soon as possible. If requested, the MPA will consider what resources it can provide to support this work.

Recommendation 11

The MPA recommends that the MPS facilitate the development of a pan-London gun crime working group as an expansion of existing work on the MPS gun crime strategy by June 2004.

National Issues

Background

161. During the scrutiny a number of suggestions were raised around legislation, sentencing and a number of national schemes. As a police authority, the MPA has no remit over these matters but can use its position to influence the relevant bodies to take action in these areas. The panel felt that it was important to capture the issues raised during the scrutiny and in some cases, to add the MPA's voice to that of other groups campaigning for change.

Findings and recommendations

Replica weapons

162. A significant amount of firearm offences in London are committed with replica and converted weapons. Legislation surrounding the classification and use of such weapons is complicated. In general, a firearm is defined under the relevant firearm acts as a 'lethal barrelled weapon of any description, from which any shot, bullet or other missile can be discharged' and includes prohibited weapons. Imitation firearms fall into two categories – those that can be converted into Section 1 firearms and those that can't. 'Section 1' refers to the Firearms Act of 1968 which defines different classifications of weapon. Section 1 weapons (except prohibited weapons) are liable to control by firearms certificate and include rifles, pistols, revolvers, especially dangerous air weapons and large magazine smooth bore guns.

163. Replica weapons that can be converted can only be held with a valid certificate and are defined as '... anything which has the appearance of being a firearm... whether or not it is capable of discharging any shot, bullet or other missile'. Replica weapons include air guns, blank firing guns, guns propelled by carbon dioxide and ball bearing and black powder firing guns which can be sold to anyone under the age of 17. The Firearms Act 1982 applies to imitation firearms that look like Section 1 firearms. Prohibited weapons are illegal and include handguns, self loading and pump action smooth bore revolvers and rifle guns, rocket launchers, cartridges with bullets that explode on impact and weapons firing gas. With the exception of prohibited weapons and shotguns that are held under different certificates any other weapons can be legally held on firearms certificates providing that a good reason can be given.

164. Only the most powerful air weapons are subject to certification. Air weapons work by pushing out pellets using springs or compressed gas when the trigger is pulled. Various age controls are imposed on the possession and use of air weapons, which are generally available to anyone over 17. Children under 17 can hold shotgun and firearms certificates and can receive gifts of shotguns and firearms. Children under 15 can possess assembled shotguns if supervised by a person over 21 but cannot purchase or hire shotguns or other firearms until they are 17.

165. Blank firing weapons can also be separated into those that do or do not require a certificate. Some blank firing guns just bang when the trigger is pulled and do not need certificates to be possessed lawfully. Weapons which are otherwise 'real' firearms but which have been converted to only fire blanks can only be held with a certificate. Replica weapons can generally be purchased from magazines, over the Internet, from sports shops and gunsmiths and have increased in quality over the last few years. The law makes no distinction between toy guns sold in children's shops and uncertificated replica weapons that often closely resemble the real thing. No reliable information is available on the number of replica weapons in the United Kingdom.²³

166. Many replica weapons, including blank firers can be easily converted. Conversion usually involves blocking up vent holes designed to let gas escape and removing the blockage within the barrel. One of the most popular air guns is the Brocock, an air cartridge system fitted inside a quality replica weapon, designed to look like the real thing. The *Tackling Gun Crime in London* report states that

*'Since the ban on real handguns in 1997, Brocock guns have become a weapon of choice for criminals in cities across Britain. The company admitted that their entire range of airguns...could just as easily be turned into lethal weapons.'*²⁴

167. Deactivated weapons are also a concern. The Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 created 'deactivated' firearms, which are weapons that have been put out of use, stamped and certified by one of the Proof Houses. Deactivated weapons can be bought or sold without restriction but the standard of deactivation required by the 1988 legislation was not strict and can be reversed by anyone with access to a drill and some engineering skill. This legislation was tightened in 1995 but NCIS estimates that there are around 120,000 weapons in circulation, which were only deactivated to 1988 standards. The *Tackling Gun Crime in London* report judges that the reactivation of such weapons is on the increase. Problems have been encountered with registered firearms dealers reactivating weapons, cloning deactivated guns or selling deactivated guns with instructions on how to convert them. The report describes the potential for registered firearms dealers supplying the illegal market as 'a significant risk'.

168. MPS statistics show the extent of the problem with air weapons. The table shows the percentage of offences in which air weapons and handguns have been fired over the last three years:

²³ All firearms legislation information from MPS website.

²⁴ *Tackling Gun Crime in London* Version 2 page 17

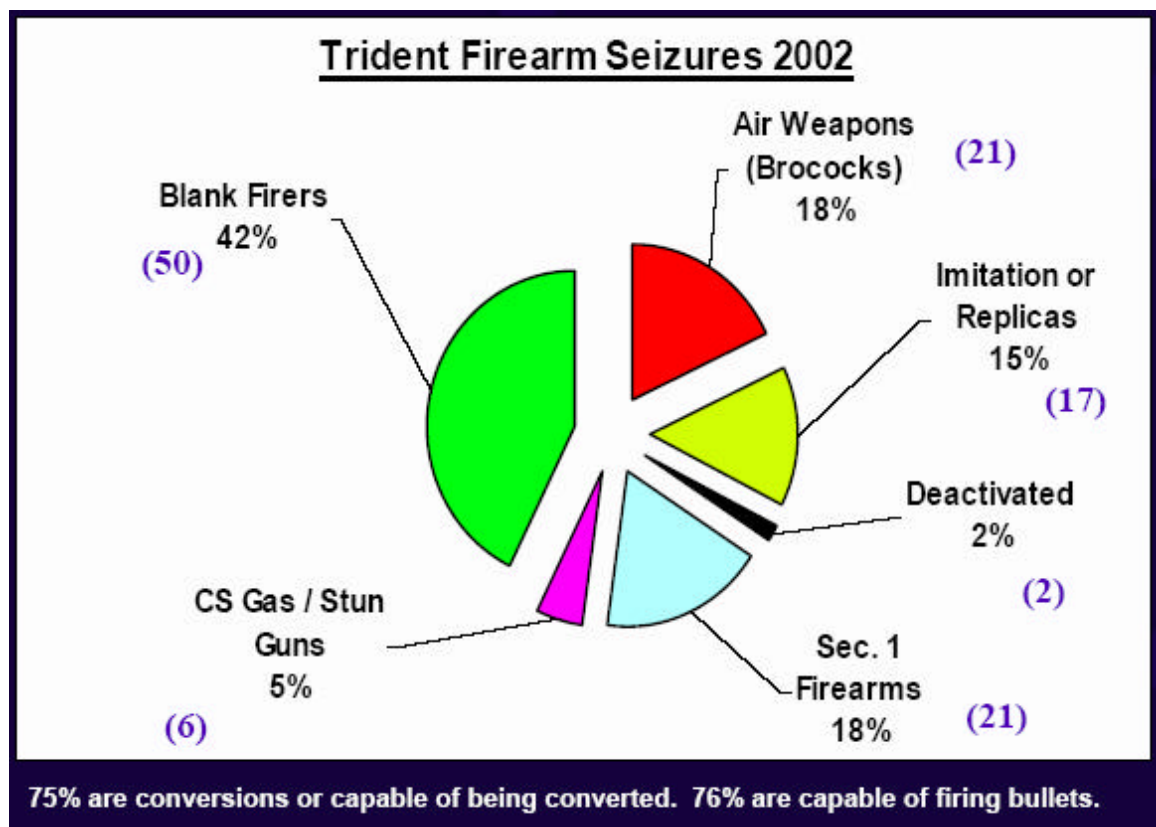
Table 6: Air weapons and handguns fired

Weapon	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Airweapon fired	13%	9%	10%
Handgun fired	7%	8%	8%

169. Airweapons are consistently fired in more offences than handguns. However, in 2002/03 handguns were carried in 57% of firearms offences, a significantly higher percentage. 21% of weapons used were unknown. The use of air weapons in lower level crime is clearly apparent. In 2003 air weapons were fired in 47% of common assaults compared to handguns fired in 0.5% of such offences. Airweapons were fired in 51% of offences of actual bodily harm compared to 1.8% of handguns fired in similar offences. No air weapons were used in murders. Due to recording problems and difficulties in spotting the difference between different types of guns this data may not be entirely accurate. However, the prevalence of air weapons in 'lower level' crime is still clearly visible.

170. The following chart shows firearms seizures made by Operation Trident in 2002²⁵:

Chart 2:



²⁵ Alan Brown, Chart from presentation to *Capital Crime Conference* MPS website April 2003

171. A related issue, which arose during the scrutiny was the level of information recorded by the MPS on recovered firearms. Evidence suggests that the figures for recovered weapons may be distorted by problems in either identifying the types of weapons used or collating the information within the MPS. A key witness stated:

'It is acknowledged within some parts of the service that there are discrepancies in the figures as different branches are collecting different information and that SO19 intelligence unit or the Firearms Desk at SCD10 are not receiving all details about recovered weapons.'

172. Between September 2002 and June 2003 1,727 firearms had been recovered of which 254 were lethal barrelled weapons, 123 of these weapons were converted, 890 of the total were imitation weapons and the remaining group was made up of CS sprays, stun guns and antique firearms. Evidence presented to the scrutiny panel showed that the key document used to record all firearms or ammunition coming into police possession was not being filled out correctly or was mislaid in some cases. All boroughs received extra guidance and facilities for handling and storing firearms prior to the amnesty and once entered correctly into the system such weapons are subject to rigorous audit prior to destruction. *Given the identified problems with communication the actual number of imitation and lethal barrelled weapons recovered by the MPS over the last year cannot be determined.*

173. The PCA report on police shootings and recent high profile cases reveals how difficult it can be to tell the difference between real and imitation weapons. The *Review of Shootings by Police in England and Wales from 1998 to 2001* showed that of the twenty incidents in which investigations were completed

'Of the 20 who had something that resembled a weapon, one had two metal tubes in a plastic bag, one had a table leg wrapped in a bag and eight others had imitation guns (albeit one of these was capable of firing CS incapacitant canisters). Of the remainder, four had edged weapons (two knives, an axe and a sword respectively), and six had a shot-gun, air rifle or rifle. However, for all of the imitations, it would not have been possible for the officers to tell that they were not real at the time of shooting'.²⁶

174. Experienced officers accustomed to handling weapons are frequently unable to tell the difference between real and imitation firearms. It is clear that the fear created by guns, or even the resemblance of a gun, is a powerful force. One of the key witnesses commented:

'... if you were being robbed in the street or you were a shop owner, or someone was threatening you with any one of

²⁶ PCA report *Review of Shootings by Police in England and Wales from 1998 – 2001* Page 9

those weapons, they are so realistic these weapons, that you would believe that this person has a Section 1 firearm'

175. Consultation carried out for the scrutiny was particularly worrying. Community groups were asked how easy it was to get hold of an unauthorised firearm within their community. 58% described it as fairly easy or very easy. The same question was asked about replica firearms and 83% of respondents described obtaining replicas as fairly or very easy. Only 4% of people described it as difficult. The definition of what constitutes a replica weapon may be inflating this response. As has been noted replica weapons can range from children's toys to easily convertible, sophisticated pieces of machinery.

176. 87% of respondents supported a ban on all replica firearms. Several police respondents to the self-assessment questionnaire proposed tighter restrictions on air rifles, imitation and converted weapons. Some boroughs thought that trading in deactivated weapons should be made an offence and inspection of firearms dealers should be carried out more regularly.

177. Any gun that can be mistaken for a real weapon can be used to commit crime, and can increase the fear of crime beyond its capacity to do harm. Replica weapons which are toys, need to be clearly marked as such, either by making them out of brightly coloured plastic or by making them obvious in some other way. All other weapons, capable of firing any kind of gas, pellet, shot, cartridge or bullet should be treated as capable of being used in offences. The importation, manufacture, sale and private possession of all weapons should be banned. The legislation currently proposed will only place additional limits on the possession of weapons in public places and on the air cartridge system, rather than imposing a blanket ban. The MPA proposes that a total ban on all replica firearms is implemented as soon as possible.

Recommendation 12

The MPA strongly urges the Government to consider an outright ban on all replica weapons capable of being mistaken for real weapons as a matter of urgency.

Witness protection

178. Gun crimes are often not reported to the police. Where crimes are reported it is often extremely difficult to find witnesses willing to make statements to the police and then follow these up in court. In a speech to the Police Standards Unit conference in March Bob Ainsworth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for Organised Crime, Drugs and Firearms Policy said that *'In Manchester, over a two and a half year period, from April 1998 to September 2000 there were witnesses to 140 shootings.*

Only one witness gave evidence in court as a result of those 140 cases²⁷. Witness protection was not the focus of the scrutiny but was raised on a number of occasions.

179. Respondents to the consultation questionnaire were asked to specify how confident they or their communities felt about reporting gun crime incidents to the police. Very few respondents (6%) replied that their community felt 'very confident', while 25% estimated that their community felt 'not at all confident'. Altogether 30% said that their community were very or quite confident and 62% said that the community was not very or not at all confident in reporting gun crime incidents to the police. These statistics indicate just how much work needs to be done to increase community confidence in the police.

180. Consultees were also asked what more could be done to encourage witnesses to give evidence. Most people (42%) said that effective witness support was most important, followed by increased likelihood of sentencing for offenders, chosen by 23% of respondents. Both greater awareness of cultural issues and longer sentences for offenders were selected as the top priority by 11% of respondents. One respondent said '*Confidentiality of witnesses (is important). Witnesses are scared of repercussions to themselves or their families, even jurors. The system needs to be changed for gun crime offences and trials*'. In the words of two of the key witnesses giving evidence:

'If we want people to give evidence, if we want people to support us in the fight against crime, we are going to have to meet them...if your life is at risk then I reckon everything should be done to support you.'

'I don't think the community really hates the police or anything like that...it is just that they just want to know that they are going to stand with them.'

181. Consultees were also asked what sort of support should be provided for the families of victims of gun crime. The most popular response was dedicated family liaison, chosen by 54% of respondents followed by regular updates on the progress of the investigation, selected by 34% of people.

182. The panel felt that a lack of confidence in the ability of the police to protect witnesses and their families from intimidation was making the process for securing convictions more difficult. The sustainability of the witness protection arrangements currently used by the MPS is also a matter of some concern. The MPA supports the witness mobility scheme recently launched by the GLA to provide alternative housing across the country for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. However, the scrutiny panel believes that witness protection and the financing of current arrangements should be a key issue for the MPS to probe in more depth.

²⁷ Police Standards Units *Tackling Gun Related Criminality* conference transcript 26 & 27 March 2003

Recommendation 13

The panel recommends that a review of the long-term viability of witness protection following the introduction of the mobility scheme be carried out by the MPS and reported to the MPA by December 2005.

Sentencing and legislation

183. The government is proposing new legislation to amend Section 19 of the Firearms Act 1968, making it an offence to carry an air weapon in a public place or any other firearm (loaded/unloaded) together with ammunition suitable for use in that weapon or an imitation firearm. The proposed mandatory minimum sentence is 5 years. Consultation showed that 85% of people were in favour of the minimum sentence although some did express reservations:

'I really don't have a view on length of sentence for illegal possession. As far as I'm concerned the key thing is to stop people committing gun crime in the first place and as nobody commits a crime thinking that they will get convicted in the first place, I'm not sure that it will make a difference'.

184. During the scrutiny, overall support for some form of minimum sentence was apparent. Some key witnesses did think that a ten-year tariff would be more effective. Several respondents to the self-assessment questionnaire felt that tougher sentences needed to be imposed in other areas. A borough suggested sentences longer than two and a half years should be given to repeat offenders caught carrying weapons on the street. The use of publicity to inform the public and potential offenders about the length of sentence received was suggested, once new legislation was in place. This form of advertising was a key method used by authorities in the United States to deter potential firearm offenders, to make them reconsider being routinely armed. However, the actual deterrent factor of the five-year minimum sentence was questioned, since it was felt that in practice offenders might be out within two and a half years. Advertising on minimum sentences should also focus on the resources available to the police in catching firearms offenders such as the ANPR, CCTV, enhanced witness protection etc.

185. Current firearms legislation in relation to ages and types of weapons was not felt to assist the police. Clarification of the Public Order Act was requested to confirm that Section 60 authorities apply to firearms. One borough thought that search powers should be used to target individuals likely to be carrying firearms. Those found in possession of weapons should be sentenced quickly and the sentences received should be publicised. However, a different borough gave an example of difficulties experienced by officers in proving possession of firearms. For example, if a clean firearm is recovered from a car containing three people and none of them admit to ownership it is likely that

none will be sentenced. Police officers suggested that the offenders should be required to prove that the weapon does not belong to them, rather than requiring the police to prove which individual it belongs to – a process often complicated by the difficulty of recovering forensic evidence from guns. A copy of this scrutiny report has been sent to the Government so that the issues raised during the scrutiny can be fed into their deliberations around new legislation.

Recommendation 14

The MPA urges the Government to consider a publicity campaign following the introduction of the minimum sentence, to deter potential offenders by pointing out the lengthy sentence they can expect and the new techniques open to the police to catch them.

Personal safety initiatives

186. Most firearms offences occur in the street over the summer. However, a significant proportion of other offences are related to nightclubs. In 2003 13% of Trident related offences occurred in nightclubs. Work on the Safer Clubbing initiative was already underway when the scrutiny began but links were established with gun crime that could usefully be incorporated into the scrutiny. Safer Clubbing includes a number of projects:

- Providing a menu of options for boroughs to use when in receipt of intelligence suggesting a threat to a nightclub in their area;
- Linking boroughs, the Clubs and Vice Unit (CO14) and local nightclub owners through a consultation forum;
- Improving the safety of travel home for the public including policing of illegal minicabs, use of a telephone number for secure cab firms, and introduction of cab offices within clubs;
- Advice for club owners on reducing the threat of terrorism and violence, for example by increased use of scanners.

187. The introduction of a voluntary system for nightclubs supporting the Safer Clubbing scheme to sign up to. Increased scanning of clubbers and CCTV would go some way towards deterring criminals from bringing guns into clubs. Budgetary provision for security measures at clubs is being considered – in future club owners could bid to receive funding for enhanced lighting and other security features. Some nightclubs create situations in which the routine arming of individuals is accepted, leading to chaotic 'disrespect' type shootings. The Safer Clubbing initiative, which has yet to be formally launched, might help to break this culture.

Recommendation 15

The MPA supports the Safer Clubbing Initiative and urges the MPS to continue to develop it and report progress to the MPA.

188. The MPA is also involved with the charity Miss Dorothy.com, a personal safety package aimed at children around Key Stage 2. The charity uses the adventures of a nine year old girl called Dorothy to engage children and was developed by TV news presenter Sharon Doughty. The charity's main outlet is a website which guides children on safe use of the internet but Dorothy also appears in her own soap opera and a number of fun, educational books. A support pack has also been provided for teachers. The charity aims to raise children's awareness of a full range of personal safety issues and will not conflict with the gun crime educational package being developed by the GLA. The Home Office has provided some funding to develop the work of the charity. The MPA considers that the MPS could work more closely with the charity to disseminate positive messages to younger children, particularly around youth crime, including guns and drugs.

Recommendation 16

The MPA supports the charity Miss Dorothy.com and urges the MPS to consider working with it more closely in future.

Other initiatives

189. There are currently many initiatives underway in the gun crime arena. The scrutiny panel has no wish to complicate the MPS response to these improvements by proposing contradictory recommendations. In particular, the MPA endorses the findings of the HMIC gun crime thematic and urges the MPS to implement these recommendations in tandem with improvements proposed by the scrutiny. The scrutiny panel would prefer that the Co-ordination and Policing Committee receive regular updates on progress towards implementing all gun crime initiatives, including the GLA education initiative, work underway with Communities that Care, the progress of the forthcoming gun crime strategy, changes required as a result of legislation as well as the scrutiny recommendations in a single report.

Recommendation 17

The MPA recommends that the MPS report progress made on implementing the scrutiny recommendations, as well as other gun crime initiatives, to Co-ordination and Policing Committee every six months.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The MPA recommends that the MPS clarify the roles and responsibilities and terms of reference of central units and boroughs in tackling gun crime and drafts a working guidance manual covering operational procedures by June 2004.

Recommendation 2

The MPA recommends that the MPS tactical assessment is supplemented by a continuing long term analysis of emerging trends in firearm offences, that this should become a fundamental part of any threat assessment and should be linked to the allocation of resources by December 2004.

Recommendation 3

The MPA recommends the MPS consider expanding the remit of Operation Trident to cover gun crime in other minority ethnic communities. The MPS should consult with marketing experts around the expansion of the Trident brand and IAG structure should be extended in tandem with any changes.

Recommendation 4

The MPA recommends that the level of serious firearm offences is considered as a factor in the borough budget setting process and that a process to assess the cost effectiveness of new gun crime operations is developed by December 2004.

Recommendation 5

The MPA recommends an assessment of the resources available to Operation Trident both currently and taking predicted demand into account is carried out by June 2004.

Recommendation 6

The MPA recommends that a feasibility study be carried out to explore the costs of linking the IT systems used to record drug and gun offences and should be reported back to the MPA by June 2005.

Recommendation 7

The MPA recommends that an analysis of the links between the drugs and guns markets should be carried out by November 2004.

Recommendation 8

The MPA recommends that the MPS ensure its response to drug crime is co-ordinated more closely with the response to gun crime and that consideration is given to setting up a joint focus desk by June 2004.

Recommendation 9

The MPA urges the Government to provide sustained resources for a national publicity campaign to provide young people with alternative role models both on a national level and through a programme of active development of role models within the community.

Recommendation 10

The MPA urges the Disarm Trust to expand its remit, becoming a national body co-ordinating a multi-agency response to gun crime as soon as possible. If requested, the MPA will consider what resources it can provide to support this work.

Recommendation 11

The MPA recommends that the MPS facilitate the development of a pan-London gun crime working group as an expansion of existing work on the MPS gun crime strategy by June 2004.

Recommendation 12

The MPA strongly urges the Government to consider an outright ban on all replica weapons capable of being mistaken for real weapons as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 13

The panel recommends that a review of the long-term viability of witness protection following the introduction of the mobility scheme be carried out by the MPS and reported to the MPA by December 2005.

Recommendation 14

The MPA urges the Government to consider a publicity campaign following the introduction of the minimum sentence, to deter potential offenders by pointing out the lengthy sentence they can expect and the new techniques open to the police to catch them.

Recommendation 15

The MPA supports the Safer Clubbing Initiative and urges the MPS to continue to develop it and report progress to the MPA.

Recommendation 16

The MPA supports the charity Miss Dorothy.com and urges the MPS to consider working with it more closely in future.

Recommendation 17

The MPA recommends that the MPS report progress made on implementing the scrutiny recommendations, as well as other gun crime initiatives, to Co-ordination and Policing Committee every six months.

Implementation

190. Before publishing the final report the MPA consulted with the MPS as well as all the key witnesses who had given evidence to the panel during evidence hearings. Feedback from the consultation was built into the later versions of the final report. Discussions were also held with the MPS regarding implementation of some of the recommendations in the report.

191. A template implementation plan has been drafted and will be completed by relevant officers from the MPA and MPS. The plan sets out the actions to be taken and identifies lead officers, timescales and milestones to be achieved. Progress on the implementation of the scrutiny will be reported back to Co-ordination and Policing Committee at six monthly intervals using the template plan.

Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition Systems
BCS	British Crime Survey
BOCU	Borough Operational Command Unit
BWT	Budgeted Workforce Target
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CO14	MPS Clubs & Vice Unit
DCC4	MPS Diversity Directorate
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
GLA	Greater London Authority
GOL	Government Office for London
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
IAG	Independent Advisory Group
ICG	MPS Internal Consultancy Group
JCF	Jamaica Constabulary Force
MMAGS	Manchester Multi-Agency Gang Strategy
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NCIS	National Criminal Intelligence Service
NIM	National Intelligence Model
OCU	Operational Command Unit
PCA	Police Complaints Authority
SCD	Specialist Crime Directorate
SO	Specialist Operations
SO19	Force Firearms Unit

Contact details

If you would like further copies of this report or information about this scrutiny, please contact:

Sally Palmer
Gun Crime Scrutiny Manager
Metropolitan Police Authority
10 Dean Farrar Street
London
SW1H 0NY
Tel 020 7202 0212
sally.palmer@mpa.gov.uk

Further information about the MPA can be found on our website:
www.mpa.gov.uk

**MPA Gun Crime Scrutiny –
Exploring the Link Between Guns and Drugs**

(Version 1.1)

Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
2. REMIT, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND LIMITATIONS	6
3. INTRODUCTION	8
4. Correlation of Drug and Gun Demand	13
5. Correlation of Drug and Gun Supply Routes	17
6. Organisation and Structure of Criminal Groups	19
7. Operation Trident	22
8. Correlation of Drug and Firearm Trends	23
9. Combating Drugs	25
10. SUMMARY	27
11. RECOMMENDATIONS	1

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 There is not enough information available to say any more about the nature of the relationship between gun crime and drug crime. In the absence of such information one should insist on keeping an open mind as to what sort of relationship might hold between the two.

1.2 High levels of drug crime do take place in the absence of higher levels of gun crime: note; Camden and Westminster. And high levels of gun crime do take place in the absence of high levels of drug crime: note; Brent (cf. §4.19.)

1.3 In other London Boroughs, however, there does seem to be a correlation between drug crime, violent crime against the person and gun crime: note; Hackney, Lambeth and Southwark.

1.4 The evidence is simply not available in the detail required to say anything more concrete, anything more detailed with regard to what form the relationship takes or anything more generally applicable over time and across geographical location.

1.5 The reasons for the poor levels of information are discussed in the report; if there is one overriding lesson to be learnt from the commissioning of this report, and *TGCL*, it is that changes need to be made in order that the current lack of information regarding the criminal use of firearms does not continue to hamper efforts to understand that use.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that research is commissioned to explore how the process of crime recording can be altered to encourage the inclusion of factors outside securing a conviction when compiling crime reports. These factors would be used when considering future policy and strategy.

1.6 Focus upon the activities of one ethnic group who are currently prevalent in both drug and gun crime should not lead one to assume that that group's current prevalence tells us anything intrinsically about that ethnic group and their future role. Trends are more likely to be indexed to socio-economic background, access to 'tools of the trade' and access to markets.

1.7 In addition to the problems detailed in the report regarding the legitimacy and perspicuity of using ethnicity as a category, reference to culture and ethnicity fails to account for the huge numbers of people who putatively share an ethnic background and do not become involved in a life of crime. Culture and ethnicity also fails to account for the number of different ethnic groups that are involved in these crimes. These two points should help

to guard against seeing ethnicity and culture as a significant category in this context. These categories simply fail to fulfil the criteria demanded to be explanatory.

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that the remit of Operation Trident be broadened to include all gun crime and that a sub-division is set up to investigate gun crime relating to the drug industry. Research should be commissioned on the socio-economic backgrounds of those involved in drug offences. This would help offset the current bias towards categorising in terms of ethnicity.

1.8 Focus on gun trafficking routes, at present, tells us little about the use of firearms in the illegal drug industry. What evidence there is ought to direct our attention to widespread use of converted replica and air weapons. This indicates that current measures to prevent widespread trafficking of firearms into the UK are working. It also indicates that current restrictions on replica and air weapons are ineffective.

Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that a thorough investigation of current legislation around replica weapons is carried out with a view to banning all replicas and air weapons capable of being converted. The benchmark might be this: if it is easier to convert replica X to a functioning firearm than it is to manufacture a firearm from scratch, then replica X should not be legally available in this country, and preferably not in the EU.

In addition, all parcel handlers bringing packages into the UK should have to fulfil minimum requirements for screening their parcels.

1.9 Groups of which we have intelligence are proving difficult to combat. This is particularly evident with regard to Jamaican/Caribbean groups. Their ability to acquire forged passports led to the introduction of a visa scheme. This has been ineffective for obvious reasons. If forged passports are easily secured then why not forged visas also?

1.10 Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the deportation of Jamaican nationals found guilty of offences is ineffective. They often return under different names.

Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that the visa system introduced for Jamaican nationals be reviewed. It is ineffective with regards to those Jamaican criminals coming to the UK and discriminates against the majority of law abiding Jamaicans who visit the UK to visit family members resident here.

Instead there should be research into the possibility of cooperation between Jamaican and UK immigration whereby passport numbers can be checked and verified via data link at point of entry.

1.11 A better understanding of the appeal of guns to young people from certain socio-economic backgrounds is required. There seems to be at play a distorted 'warrior ethic', whereby young males believe status comes from being willing to engage in, and / or exhibit willingness to engage in, extreme acts of violence. This might have a number of sources:

- a. Other options for gaining status are, or are perceived by them to be, closed to them;
- b. Certain influences in British society and culture support the view that status comes from a willingness to engage in extreme violence; and
- c. Lack of a suitable education on the dangers of drugs, the dangers of being involved in violent crime, the links between the two, etc.

Recommendation 5:

It is recommended that an overview of recent research on the appeal of violent criminal activity to Britain's youth should be commissioned. There is much recent research in Criminology and Sociology which would help remove the current lack of understanding in this area.

In addition, it is recommended that bespoke research be commissioned in the form of a qualitative sociological study of the appeal of crime, violent crime and gun crime culture to the young.

The report recommends ethnomethodological studies be commissioned in this area.

(Contacts can be provided by the author of this report, if required)

2. REMIT, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND LIMITATIONS

2.1 This research project has been commissioned to “test the hypothesis [*sic*] that increasing gun crime is symptomatic of increasing drug crime and that reducing drug crime will, therefore, reduce consequential gun crime [*sic*].”

2.2 This document was commissioned in accordance with the following remit: *“The research project will use information on gun supply and demand gathered during the production of the MPS report Tackling Gun Crime in London. The project will not cover any other areas included in the overall scrutiny terms of reference. The project will not be expected to analyse the effectiveness of current MPS performance on drug crime. The project will not be expected to carry out any consultation and further data collection or research activities.”*

2.3 The report was commissioned on the proviso that it would “use only existing information available within the public domain.” Therefore, the report does not draw upon “bespoke research.”

2.4 The objectives and scope of the report were outlined by the MPA under the following seven headings:

- a. Outline the demand for drugs in London and correlate this with demand for guns in terms of ethnicity, geographical location, gender and age;
- b. Outline the supply routes for drugs into London and correlate this with supply routes for guns in terms of ethnicity, geographical location, gender and age;
- c. Analyse current information on the organisation and structure of organised criminal enterprises supplying drugs to indicate if, how and by whom guns are used to manage the business;
- d. Analyse a sample of investigations carried out by Operation Trident to determine any pattern linking cases involving in murder, assault or the discharge of firearms with the drug industry;
- e. Clarify the overall trends in drug crimes and correlate this with the trends in firearms offences and violent crime, with particular regard to ethnicity, geographical location, gender and age;
- f. Examine examples of successful programmes to combat drugs in London and nationwide and explore links with number of firearms offences and judicial disposal rates for such offences to identify areas of best practice; and

- g. Summarise findings and suggest areas which could be developed into recommendations for improvement or would benefit from further study.

2.5 The report, therefore, takes these seven headings for its chapter structure, and thus will be divided as such (a = §4, b = §5, and so on). In addition there will be an Introduction (§3) which will include some remarks on method and some questions regarding the wording and scope of the seven headings. The Introduction will also examine the 'hypothesis' to be tested.

2.6 As stated in the remit this report draws heavily on the MPS *Tackling Gun Crime in London* report (hereafter *TGCL*, all references to this report are to Version 2.2). This report is available to the MPA it seems, therefore, an inefficient use of resources to merely reproduce much of the information in that report.

2.7 This report draws upon statistics in the public domain. Therefore, the *TGCL* report and the publicly available statistics have been taken as the basis for the considerations below. This report will challenge some of the assumptions and support some of the conclusions of the *TGCL* report. Where appropriate this report will also challenge some of the categories employed in the compiling of statistics. This report and *TGCL* should ideally be read as companion pieces. Where the latter gives emphasis to reporting current intelligence and statistics, this report scrutinises the use of such information, questioning what such information might actually tell us.

2.8 In short, this report does not serve as a mere summary of findings found elsewhere, but rather scrutinises those findings.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 This report is primarily concerned with testing the following hypotheses, as outlined in the MPA's 'terms of reference': "Increasing gun crime is symptomatic of increasing drugs crime and that reducing drugs crime will, therefore, reduce consequential gun crime."

3.2 The above quotation from the MPA terms of reference contains one hypothesis and one tautology which has the superficial appearance of an hypothesis. Hypothesis 1. Increasing gun crime is symptomatic of increasing drugs crime. 'Hypothesis' 2. Reducing drugs crime will reduce consequential gun crime. The second 'hypothesis' is a tautology owing to the inclusion of the word 'consequential', i.e. if gun crime is a *consequence* of drugs crime then a reduction in the latter could not fail to lead to a reduction in the former.

3.3 We ought, therefore, to pay some attention to what we wish to gain from the 'testing' of the 'hypotheses':

- Hypothesis 1. Increasing gun crime is symptomatic of increasing drugs crime.

What we wish to deem from the testing of this hypothesis is not merely whether increasing drugs crime is a symptom of an increase in drugs crime. That is to say, we do not merely wish to conclude the study with a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Rather, if there is a relationship, we want to understand what form that relationship takes. Put another way, it may not be the relationship implied by the wording of hypothesis 1, and the analogy which that wording invokes; i.e. one of the relation of symptoms of an illness to the illness. The symptoms of an illness are a necessary part of what it is to have the illness, and therefore the relationship between an illness and its symptoms is what is termed an 'internal relation'. That is to say, they are related in virtue of being part of the same phenomenon. We might find rather, that an increase in drug crime and an increase in gun crime stand in a causal relationship to each other, this form of relationship is termed an 'external relation'. That is to say, it is a relation between two distinct phenomena. Alternatively, we might find that the relationship is symbiotic, that is to say that the two sides of the relationship sustain each other in a relation of mutual dependence, this form of relationship is a species of 'functional relation'. Indeed, we might find that the relationship is 'fluid': what are now best characterised as symptoms could in the future become causes and pass through periods of symbiosis. Indeed the change in the relationship does not have to be over time, it could be different across different geographical locations.

What we wish to gain, therefore, is an understanding of the prevalent relationship between drug crime and gun crime.

- ‘Hypothesis’ 2. Reducing drugs crime will reduce consequential gun crime.

The above remarks should indicate that ‘hypothesis’ 2. does not fulfil the criteria for a testable hypothesis. However, gaining an understanding of the nature of the relationship between drug crime and gun crime will provide us with an understanding as to how we might best tackle both types of crime.

In light of our understanding of the relationship between drug crime and gun crime what would be the most suitable approach to reducing drug related gun crime? i.e. should they be tackled, for purposes of crime reduction, as independent or as one?

3.4 What follows from the brief discussions above is that rather than setting out to ‘prove’ a hypothesis, this report takes the statements which comprise the ‘hypotheses’ as guides to an investigation. This investigation seeks to understand the nature of the relationship between drug crime and gun crime and the way in which we might address both.

3.5 The next point of note will also impact upon the content of the report. Of the seven headings, a (§4), b (§5) & e (§8) make reference to ‘ethnicity’ as a category. This is, to say the least, a problematic term when used in this context. As a term of classification it implies and draws together such sub-categories as: geographical location from which the person or their family originate; a shared culture or value system; shared levels of skin pigment; and, furthermore, implies a unity between members of the putatively ethnic group. This final implication, at the least, needs more of a case making for it than is generally the case if it is to be invoked. I will address the other sub-categories in turn.

3.6 While knowledge of a person’s links to others in a particular geographical location might help us to understand how they came to possess firearms or deal crack cocaine, we can best understand such information and its implications by talking of their connections to said geographical location, rather than of their ethnicity. The same can be applied to the insight gleaned from knowledge of a shared culture and value system.

3.7 Both, however, – links to others in another geographical location and identification of a shared culture – still leave much to be investigated and should not be invoked as reasons for a particular individual’s involvement in gun or drug crime. Such information can help us understand why many people with links to others in a particular geographical location are involved in a particular crime; e.g. crack dealing. For example, the main drug route to the UK passes through the country to which they have strong links. However, this should not lead us to the conclusion that this is *the* or even a reason for their involvement in crack dealing and distribution in the UK. What such information shows us is that it is *easier* for criminals with such links to become crack dealers.

3.8 A link to others in another geographical location which figures prominently as a supply route does not constitute a sufficient condition for that

person's involvement in the dealing of the illegal goods (drugs or guns). Indeed, neither does it constitute a necessary condition. Rather, it is merely a contributing factor in their involvement.

3.9 We should also be cautious of an easy invocation of a unity between members sharing the same 'ethnicity'. For example, a report commissioned to assess the impact of Caribbean gun crime in the UK states: "The use of firearms is clearly a significant feature of Jamaican criminal culture. The propensity to use firearms appears to be a characteristic shared by UK based and born Caribbean criminals." The section then goes on to state that the Jamaican political culture is "encouraging and suffering from violence" and that there has been a 30% rise in murders between 2000 and 2001. The section offers no evidence that *all* these murders involved firearms, nor does it provide information as to what percentage of the murders did involve firearms. Furthermore, the report does not specify how the political culture might "encourage" violence and, most importantly, it does not tell us how and if the political culture encourages violence *involving firearms*, or even whether *this* is what is being encouraged. *TGCL* makes similar assertions regarding "gun culture" on page 27. In short more precision is needed when talking of "a culture of ...". Indeed, precision should prevent us from using such terminology unless *all* the evidence supports such use.

3.10 Furthermore, the quotation seems to be at risk of putting the cart before the horse. If someone becomes involved in a life of crime, that could be for many reasons. However, it might well be the case that once involved in the criminal world the conditions are such that they turn to the use of guns owing to the current nature of that world. That is to say; they do not arrive in that world as an armed criminal owing to their culture or ethnicity.

3.11 Finally, levels of skin pigment are not relevant when discussing crime, its prevention and detection. The reasons for this are so well established and beyond refute that they need not be rehearsed in any detail here. It may well be the case that there are greater numbers of people involved in certain types of crime who share similar levels of skin pigment – one would assume this statistic accounts for the existence of Operation Trident. This does *not* mean that skin pigment has anything to do with a propensity for crime. Indeed, we should look at what other things such criminals have in common, such as socio-economic background and shared lack of hope, whether that be for future social status or (legally achieved) economic gain. Once we acknowledge the spurious nature of using skin pigment as a category it should flag serious problems with the use of ethnicity as a category.

3.12 The use of ethnicity as a category carries with it a predication of shared levels of skin pigment and / or membership of a 'race.' Categorising people according to their levels of skin pigment and / or their putative 'racial' origins is judged to be a spurious form of categorisation; for good reason. If the term 'ethnicity' invokes the spurious sub-categories of shared levels of skin pigment and / or 'racial' identity, whether intentionally or not, then it should not be used. Instead, we ought to think of what it is we are trying to identify when we feel inclined to use the term 'ethnicity.' If we wish to draw attention to links

to others in a particular geographical location, then we should say so. If we wish to draw attention to a shared commitment to a particular set of beliefs, then we should say so. If we wish to draw attention to a shared socio-economic background then, once again, we should say so. In short, ethnicity as a category of analysis is:

- a. Problematic because of the spurious sub-categories it implies;
and
- b. Imprecise because of the motley of sub-categories (valid and spurious) that it implies.

3.13 Another point of note to be borne in mind when reading what follows is something that will recur throughout when attempting to address the questions raised. It will also feature prominently in the conclusion of the report as a matter in need of addressing.

3.14 The information available in the public domain (and one is driven to conclude, available anywhere) is not of the level required to fulfil the remit of the report. Consider *TGCL* p.5, para.2, p.6, para.3, p.9, para.1, p.10, para.2, p.11, para.2, p.14, para.3, p.16, para.4, p.21, para.3, p.22, para.2&3, p.29, para.3, &c. Almost every topic covered in the *TGCL* report begins by proclaiming the lack of reliable intelligence in that area.

3.15 Consider also what an unnamed source at PIB5, says:

The Met decided, about 2 or 3 years ago, to look in a lot more detail at drug crime. To look at what they call Hot Spots. So each Borough would designate a particular Hot Spot. We spent a lot of time and energy looking into this. The Met had an idea that all crime, 30% was down to drugs. This was based on some gut feeling, think tanks etc. There were signal codes which would be filled in if a person had been examined by the police doctor, or had been carrying drugs on arrest. So, for example, if someone was arrested for shop-lifting and they had syringes on their person that would be linked to drugs. It turned out that we didn't get any figures higher than 10%. So the Met decided that these figures must be wrong. And they decided the low figure must have been down to police officers not correctly marking the reports.

(unnamed source PIB5)

3.16 Drawing conclusions regarding the type of relationship between gun crime and drug crime is seriously hampered by the current way in which crimes are recorded. While statistical evidence can provide us with apparent correlations, evidence for establishing a relationship is limited. Knowledge of what form that relationship might take – internal, external, functional etc. (see 3.2) – is often unavailable or severely limited owing to the lack of information available in the crime reports. This is not necessarily a criticism of police practice. The *modus operandi* for writing up a crime report is informed by the

primary concern: the pursuit of a successful conviction of the individual charged with the offence. It is not, therefore, the purpose of a crime report to provide information which might inform future strategy and policy formation. Thus, analysing crime reports from Operation Trident is not necessarily going to offer insight into the subject matter of this report. The problem we face in understanding the relationship between drug crime and gun crime, if there is a problem (i.e. I will not pre-empt such a judgement at this stage), is not with how crimes are investigated but how they are recorded.

3.17 Therefore, this report does not take up the invitation, as laid out in section d. (§7) of the MPA terms of reference, to analyse a selection of cases investigated by Operation Trident. Such an analysis demands that our data is complete; otherwise any conclusions drawn will be based on misleading premises. (I say more about this in §7).

4. Correlation of Drug and Gun Demand

Outline the demand for drugs in London and correlate this with demand for guns in terms of ethnicity, geographical location, gender and age.

4.1 Intelligence is very poor as regards both the number of illegal firearms in the UK and the number of crimes involving the use of firearms in London. While there are statistics available for firearms offences in the MPS region these are not broken down into Boroughs. Furthermore, it is questionable as to how accurate these statistics are. This is, in large part, owing to the way in which crimes are classified in the UK; i.e. in respect of the injury caused to the victim and the intent ascribed to the perpetrator (Wounding, ABH, GBH, etc.) rather than in terms of the weapon used to perpetrate the crime. Information over and above this is then included in a report at the arresting officer's discretion.

4.2 An unnamed source at PIB5, also has misgivings about the accuracy of the figures available:

In terms of categories, the way the Home office counts firearm offences and the way PIB5 [MPS] count them are completely different. For example, in the last financial year they [Home Office] had 5.5 thousand firearms offences and the MPS had 3.5 thousand. They came to me and asked why. I [unnamed source at PIB5] said that the Home Office count all offences where there is a firearm code. The MPS count five categories only; where a firearm is discharged or used in the perpetration of a violent crime... we [MPS] miss a lot of firearms offences every year
(unnamed source PIB5)

4.3 Furthermore, we should also be cautious when attempting to identify levels of demand. Neither drug dealers nor dealers of illegal firearms are in the business of producing sales figures, takings and profits. This makes the identification of levels of demand purely speculative.

4.4 In short, any figures issued regarding numbers of firearms offences or levels of demand for firearms are little more than unreliable.

4.5 Major inquiries into illegal firearms have been hampered by the lack of intelligence. The public inquiry into the 1996 shootings at Dunblane concluded with Lord Cullen stating that he could offer no answer to the question "how many illegal firearms there are in the UK". In 2000 the Home Affairs Committee could not reach a conclusion on the issue. Figures estimated by 'expert' witnesses to the committee ranged from 200,000 illegal firearms to 10 million (Source *TGCL* p.11).

4.6 Neither does an examination of crime statistics help. The MPS statistics for London Boroughs has no category for crimes committed with the use of a firearm, illegal or otherwise. Rather, the closest one gets to such information is under the category 'Violence Against the Person'. However this

category is broken down into sub-categories of the following headings: Murder; GBH; ABH; Common Assault; Offensive Weapon; Harassment; and Other Violence. Therefore we have no reliable source of information on crimes committed in London Boroughs with a firearm.

4.7 In short, when statistics are produced as to the number of firearms offences they should be treated with *extreme* caution. Such statistics are based on information that is included in crime reports at the arresting officer's discretion and, thus, are not reliable as indicators of the extent of firearm offences. If a firearm is recovered at the crime scene, or there is evidence of a firearm being discharged at the scene, then it is an easy task. If, however, there is no firearm recovered but merely reports of the use of one then problems arise.

4.8 Intelligence regarding the demand for drugs in London is also problematic, but for different reasons.

4.9 The nature of drug related crime is such that many crimes which might well have drugs as their cause or be drug motivated are not recorded as such. A source at PIB5, states that drug crime statistics are hampered by the 'proactive nature' of drug crime enforcement. Hence annual fluctuations in statistics are more likely to be indicators of MPS policy rather than increases or decreases in criminal activity. The nature of drug crime is such that the 'victim' is not likely to phone the police to report the crime in which they have been involved.

4.10 In addition, poor information on drug crime does not, as it does with firearms offences, stem from the criteria applied when compiling a crime report. A crime may well be motivated or even caused by drugs, whether that be through intoxication with drugs, protection or establishment of a drug market or theft to feed a drug habit. However, if no drugs are in evidence on arrest, any role drugs have played in bringing about the crime will not be recorded.

4.11 It is then important to be aware of the way in which the nature of drug crime differs from the nature of gun crime. The nature of gun crime is such that at some point the firearm will likely be used to commit a violent crime involving or impacting upon another individual. That person is likely to inform the police (if able). It is therefore part of the 'logic' of gun crime that individuals other than those that choose to be involved in the trafficking and use of firearms are likely to become victims. And further, that those individuals act as we would expect victims to act and notify the police.

4.12 Drug crime on the other hand *can* exist with no or little impact on those who do not choose to take or deal drugs. This is a delicate issue, and it is important not to down-play the sense in which those who become addicted to drugs are not in a significant respect victims of crime. However, it is best to see the nature of gun crime and the nature of drug crime as analogous to one another rather than identifying them with each other. The usefulness of seeing

them as analogous is that we note their differences as well as their similarities.

4.13 Another way of highlighting this point is as follows: as a society we invest public money in advertising campaigns designed to persuade people that certain crimes are *not* victimless. Drug crime is one of the crimes that features in such campaigns. It features because it is recognised that there is widespread public perception that drug crime is victimless. In contradistinction gun crime would never feature in such a campaign, it would not do so because we can make no sense of victimless gun crime, however libertarian our political philosophy.

4.14 A particular impact such considerations have is on the allocation of public funds. Police policy is heavily influenced, via the Home Office, by public perception of the dangers in the social environment. Home Office policy is influenced by such documents as the *British Crime Survey* (BCS) which among other things surveys and presents public perception of crime. If one crime is seen as impacting in the main on those who choose to become involved, while another is seen as having impact on all, whether choosing to be involved or not, then the latter crime will have greater impact on the public perception as to where resources should be allocated.

4.15 The above preamble should, therefore, engender caution when interpreting the following information. What we can do is compare what figures we have at hand and examine any correlation.

4.16 Ten London Boroughs are designated gun crime hotspots by the MPS: Lambeth; Southwark; Hackney; Brent; Tower Hamlets; Newham; Haringey; Lewisham; Croydon; and Waltham Forest. (Source: *TGCL* pp. 33-34)

4.17 The ten London Boroughs which have the highest levels of violent crime against the person are (in descending order): Westminster; Lambeth; Southwark; Newham; Croydon; Tower Hamlets; Ealing; Hounslow; Greenwich; and Hackney.
(Source: MPS Offences by Borough, financial year 02/03)

4.18 The ten London Boroughs which have the highest levels of drug offences are (in descending order): Lambeth; Westminster; Haringey; Camden; Southwark; Tower Hamlets; Wandsworth; Hackney; Hammersmith & Fulham; and Croydon.
(Source: MPS Offences by Borough, financial year 02/03)

4.19 Of the Boroughs listed Lambeth, Southwark, Hackney and Tower Hamlets feature in all three lists of ten (Newham features in two and comes in at eleven on the drug offence list). We cannot draw much from this other than to say there is some correlation in those four Boroughs. Needless to say this is hardly useful information.

4.20 Points of note before reading too much into the correlations are:

- a. Westminster has high levels of drug crime (2nd highest) and violent crime against the person (highest), though is not recognised as a gun crime hotspot;
- b. Brent has high levels of gun crime but does not feature in the lists for violent crime against the person or drug offences; and
- c. Camden has relatively high levels of drug crime (5th highest) but does not feature on either of the other two lists.

4.21 This shows that according too much significance to a number of correlations should be guarded against. It might well be that drug crime and firearms offences are related (internally, externally or functionally) in one Borough at one period of time. We should, therefore, be willing to entertain the thought that other factors particular to the Borough have enabled such a relation. We should be very cautious of assuming this relation to be universalisable or of even taking it as the current norm (across Boroughs and over time). The evidence, such as it is, does not warrant such an assumption.

5. Correlation of Drug and Gun Supply Routes

Outline the supply routes for drugs into London and correlate this with supply routes for guns in terms of ethnicity, geographical location, gender and age.

5.1 Once again the lack of quality intelligence limits the scope of response to the final part of this question. However, what we do know is that where drug crime and gun crime are related, in the dealing of crack cocaine, this is predominantly the domain of Jamaican and Caribbean groups. Much of the cocaine¹ which comes to the UK does so via Jamaica. However, it would be an assumption to conclude that guns are also trafficked from or via Jamaica, there is no evidence for this. Such intelligence as there is shows us that Jamaican and Caribbean groups that use illegal firearms tend to use converted replica weapons, such as converted starting pistols and air pistols. This is not to say this will not change if genuine weapons become more easily sourced in the UK. (Source: *TGCL* pp. 5-6)

5.2 An increasing source of illegal firearms in Europe is the Western Balkans, following the years of conflict there. There is also evidence of an emerging market in disguised firearms (also thought to be sourced in the Balkans), such as firearms disguised as mobile phones. However, the NCIS concluded in 2002 that there is little evidence to support the notion that weapons from these regions are being smuggled in to the UK in significant numbers. Indeed, research suggests that the Netherlands is the principle source of illegal weapons in the EU. (Source: *TGCL* pp.6-7)

5.3 It is, however, important to keep in mind that what intelligence has been gathered points to a large number of converted replica weapons and converted air weapons being used, as opposed to illegally imported firearms. This would suggest that comparing drug trafficking routes and gun trafficking routes in search of a correlation might not be the most fruitful way of making inroads into our understanding of drug related gun crime.

5.4 There is one caveat. Turkish groups, who have historically controlled drug distribution in a number of areas of North London, do seem to have access to, and be increasingly choosing to use, illegally trafficked firearms sourced in the Balkans. This would suggest a couple of possible future trends which should be anticipated:

- a. It is becoming easier to traffic illegal firearms; and
- b. An increase in the use of genuine firearms (as opposed to those that have been converted) might serve to increase demand as rival groups seek to 'keep up' with each other in terms of weaponry.

5.5 In respect of (a), there has been a significant increase in parcels from overseas entering the UK, for the most part resulting from an increase in

¹ Crack is made from cocaine once it has been smuggled into the country.

internet shopping. At present UPS and DHS do not screen parcels entering the UK. Only Parcel Force screens all parcels entering the UK. This, at least *prima facie* appears one likely route into the country for these weapons. (Source: TGCL pp. 9-10)

6. Organisation and Structure of Criminal Groups

Analyse current information on the organisation and structure of organised criminal enterprises supplying drugs to indicate if, how and by whom guns are used to manage the business.

6.1 Where there is evidence that guns are used to support the illegal supply of drugs it is in the main centred upon Jamaican and Caribbean groups. This might well be because recent research has been commissioned to study these groups' activities, not because they are the only groups that use illegal firearms to support their drug activities in London.

6.2 There is evidence that Turkish groups are involved in the supply of drugs particularly in North London, there is also evidence that Turkish groups have an established supply of relatively (relative to other groups) sophisticated weapons. There is also evidence that other groups are willing to exhibit extreme violence in sustaining their drug markets, though at present these groups do so with weapons other than firearms. These groups fall outside the remit of this report because they have not, historically, used firearms.

6.3 Two points should be noted:

- a. Violence inflicted by whatever means is a serious crime. We should not let the remit of this report give the impression that violence perpetrated with the aid of a firearm is more morally reprehensible than violence perpetrated with the aid of a machete or meat cleaver;
- b. Groups who have historically not used firearms in their violent activities may come to do so as they feel under threat from other groups who do resort to the use of firearms.

6.4 With these points in mind one needs to be cautious when drawing conclusions in this area. Put another way, the scene is open to change, the recent rise to prominence of Jamaican and Caribbean groups may well transpire to be a transient feature of a broader trend. That is to say, to focus upon ethnicity from the point of view of long term policy formation might be misleading. The groups that move in and become dominant, seizing power from existing groups, are most likely to be those groups that primarily have:

- a. Access to drug routes from source to market;
- b. Access to weapons of greater number and/or better quality than the existing group; and
- c. The organisational infrastructure to execute a takeover at each location: source, en-route 'ports' and markets.

6.5 Regarding the organisational structure of Jamaican groups, they have a 'flat' organisational structure and are generally small in size. The lead figure will often be 'hands on'. This is in contrast to the Turkish groups that have a hierarchical structure. However, the trend here seems to be toward a less hierarchical structure.

6.6 A pattern that emerges initially is that the dominant groups have overseas links and often links to a 'host' community in London, this has obvious benefits with regard to organising the smuggling of weapons and / or drugs in to the UK. While one might see the recent rise of Jamaican and Caribbean groups based on their control of the route most cocaine takes to the UK (i.e. via Jamaica), the emerging strength of Turkish groups seems based in their ability to smuggle sophisticated firearms into the UK and a recent change in 'group policy'. Originally Turkish groups reserved the possession of firearms for the older members in an attempt to retain power within the group. Recent intelligence suggests that the possession of firearms is now more even across the whole of each group.

6.7 It is also worth noting that there have been recent reports of cooperation between Turkish and Jamaican/Caribbean groups. This might indicate a number of factors:

- a. The access to more sophisticated weaponry enjoyed by Turkish groups is deterring the Jamaican/Caribbean groups from attempting to take over their markets; and
- b. Where one group is dominant in a particular area it is difficult for others to get a foot hold.

6.8 The recent attention given to Jamaican/Caribbean groups might well lead one to imagine they control the majority of the UK cocaine market. This is not the case. Though there is evidence to support the claim that Jamaican/Caribbean groups control the majority of the UK crack market. This is yet another reason for not giving too much significance to the role of ethnicity and links to supply routes outside the UK. Crack is made from cocaine once it has entered the UK, having links to the points in the cocaine supply route does not, therefore, explain why Jamaican/Caribbean groups are prominent in the distribution of crack in the UK.

6.9 Indeed the difference between the dealing of crack cocaine and the dealing of cocaine is in terms of the socio-economic group who serve as a market for the drug and the profit margin. In respect of crack cocaine the market is usually based in a low earning, low status, social group. The profit margin for crack is also higher than it is for cocaine. These factors might better explain why some groups deal crack cocaine rather than cocaine; i.e. they have easy access to these markets and gain greater profit from less initial investment.

6.10 The use of weapons by Jamaican/Caribbean groups falls into the following pattern, which can be split in to two stages:

- a. The taking over of an existing market and/or establishment of a new market for cocaine and crack; and
- b. The consolidation and/or defence of that market.

6.11 The general pattern is that a small number of group members (as few as two) will move into a new area. They will typically use local prostitutes to begin dealing and thus create a demand. If there is no existing market the group members will serve to ensure payments are received and other groups do not move into the area. If the area moved into is an established cocaine and crack market the group members will exhibit an extreme show of force intended to give the impression of complete ruthlessness, this will include the liberal use of firearms so as to drive any existing dealers away.

6.12 Once a group has established a market or consolidated their control of an existing market, the use of firearms is in the main reserved for retaining control of the market, i.e. scaring off members of other groups who might be attempting to move into the area or for settling a 'border dispute'. Firearms might also be used to settle internal disputes.

6.13 The recent evidence showing some cooperation between Turkish and Jamaican/Caribbean groups might well indicate that the ability of Turkish groups to secure sophisticated firearms means that the usual strategy employed by Jamaican/Caribbean groups when moving into an area would not be viable in an area with a resident Turkish group. The control Jamaican/Caribbean groups have over the supply routes of cocaine gives them bargaining power when brokering such deals.

6.14 One problem that emerges with regard to policing the Jamaican groups is that many are known by street names. Forged documents (passports etc.) seem easily secured in Jamaica – at least for group members. Thus when arrested and deported the same group member can return under a different identity. Also there is a large problem with people not showing up for return flights to Jamaica. Group members then gain access to the UK in part by showing their return airline ticket. This serves as evidence that they are on a short visit, they then do not use the return ticket.

7. Operation Trident

Analyse a sample of Investigations carried out by Operation Trident to determine any pattern linking cases involving murder, assault or the discharge of firearms with the drug industry.

7.1 As intimated in the *Introduction* this is an invitation which will be declined here. There are a number of reasons for this decision.

7.2 That there is a weak correlation between some drug crime and some gun crime is established. What is required in order that future policy is better informed is an understanding of what form of relation this correlation will transpire to indicate. Such information will only be forthcoming when crime reports include the relevant details. As noted above, in the case of crimes which are suspected to be drug motivated, it is made more difficult by the nature of drug crime. Unless the perpetrator or victim has a conviction for drug related offences (or there is existing intelligence to suggest involvement in drug crime) there will be no suggestion that the offence was drug related. In other words, any conclusions regarding the drug industry based upon an analysis of firearms offences severely risks underplaying the influence of the former on the latter.

7.3 Operation Trident's remit is to target 'black on black' gun crime, or in the words of the Operation Trident web-page "Operation Trident is a special Met Police initiative to tackle gun crime amongst London's black communities. It has a particular focus on drug-related shootings." Indeed, the use of the term 'black communities' is problematic, implying that these 'communities' are self contained and should be dealt with as such, and that the problems 'within' these 'communities' are the problems of those 'communities' and not of society as a whole.

7.4 Those who are involved in gun crime are so regardless of their levels of skin pigment. Those who traffic and deal drugs do so regardless of their levels of skin pigment. The relevance of a focus upon those crimes investigated by Operation Trident, therefore, is to say the least limited. Indeed, having specific focus upon cases investigated by Operation Trident will lead to a bias which is simply not constructive, but rather contributes to the already ethnically biased research in this area and reinforces the notion that one can talk of black communities as if they were separable from the rest of UK society.

7.5 This section (§7) will no doubt serve to leave the report as a whole open to criticism. I'll merely say here that in lieu of more complete crime reporting; i.e. recording of factors other than merely those that will secure a conviction, it is not acceptable to draw inferences from a small number of 'ethnically' biased cases, particularly when those inferences might well contribute to the reification of illegitimate categories and promote a negative perception of one group in society.

8. Correlation of Drug and Firearm Trends

Clarify the overall trends in drug crimes and correlate this with the trends in firearms offences and violent crime, with particular regard to ethnicity, geographical location, gender and age.

8.1 Recent trends in drug crime have seen a slow decline in the heroin market and rise in the crack cocaine market. While this does seem to have gone hand in hand with a rise in drug related gun crime one should not be too hasty in drawing conclusions from this basic information.

8.2 The decline in the heroin market owes something to a number of different factors:

- a. The impact of the war in Afghanistan on both the production and trafficking of heroin;
- b. The increase in the availability of crack cocaine and the methods used to establish crack markets (cf. §5); and
- c. The stability of supply, trafficking and distribution that comes with trans-national groups. That is to say, crack cocaine is frequently both smuggled into the country and distributed within the country by the same or very closely connected groups. Heroin supply and distribution does/did not enjoy such trans-national continuity.

8.3 One ought to keep an open mind regarding the relationship in play here; i.e. the rise in gun crime could be either a cause or an effect of the demise of the heroin market, *or* the relationship might well not be causal at all.

8.4 Once again Jamaican/Caribbean groups are prominent. Where crack cocaine markets emerge they do so through a show of force which includes the overt use and display of firearms. While some literature talks of a gun culture in Jamaica this notion (explanation) should be treated with caution (or even suspicion). As with the vast majority of Londoners, the vast majority of Jamaicans never come into contact with firearms. Talk of a gun culture is misleading to say the least. It is more likely that guns are a means to an end for gangs that have drugs to sell and wish to establish markets for those drugs. Guns then provide a way of establishing power quickly in new markets, for those already committed to illegal activity.

8.5 What such activity does do, however, is set a precedent. Those wishing to resist the takeover of their market will feel pressure to arm themselves accordingly.

8.6 The evidence shows it to be the case that the vast majority of cocaine coming into this country comes via Jamaica which contributes to the prominence of Jamaican/Caribbean groups in the distribution of crack cocaine. It is, therefore, an illegitimate inference to put the prevalence of

firearms in a number of small Jamaican gangs down to the existence of a putative Jamaican gun culture, for which there is no evidence.

8.7 Once again, saying more is difficult given the nature of the evidence. This has been discussed above. Suffice here to quote an unnamed source; and a long-term employee of the MPS at PIB5.

*[We] can provide you with all sorts of information on firearms.
[We] can provide you with all sorts of information on drugs. But
when you try to link the two, and we have talked about this, it is
nigh on impossible.*

(unnamed source: PIB5)

9. Combating Drugs

Examine examples of successful programmes to combat drugs in London and nationwide and explore links with number of firearms offences and judicial disposal rates for such offences to identify areas of best practice;

9.1 Once again the quality of any response is dependant upon quality information and intelligence; this is lacking.

9.2 What is counted as a successful program is open to interpretation. Our only guide is when drug crime has fallen. Needless to say this is not, necessarily, a reliable guide (cf. §4.9).

9.3 As to the exploration of “links with number of firearms offences and judicial disposal rates for such offences” this is fraught with the difficulties referred to throughout this report, regarding how crimes are recorded and the impact this has on attempting to say anything of significance about firearms offences. (cf. *Remit, Terms of Reference and Limitations*, §3.13, §3.16, §4 *passim*, and §5.1).

9.4 Programmes to combat drugs fall in to two classes, as outlined in the MPS – Drugs Action Plan: Appendix 1.

9.5 These are as follows:

Reducing supply activities

- i. Intelligence
- ii. Targeting
- iii. Forensic Science Support
- iv. Criminal Justice Process
- v. Financial Investigation

Reducing demand activities support

- i. Education
- ii. Reducing harm
- iii. Co-ordination
- iv. Intelligence and Problem solving
- v. Diversion

Further details can be found in MPS Drugs Action Plan Appendix 2 & 3

9.6 In lieu of quality information regarding the results of the implementation of these ten strategies it would be unwise to surmise as to which would be the most effective. However, it should be noted that whatever information we might deem in the future it will most likely inform the emphasis given and resources allocated to some of the ten over others; rather than to rule out some in favour of others.

9.7 One point that can be deemed from much of the research conducted by sociologists and criminologists over the past forty years, both here and in the USA, is that the appeal of guns to young people is prevalent among those from certain, lower, socio-economic backgrounds.

9.8 Young people from low socio-economic backgrounds who become persistently involved in violent crime, carry and use illegal weapons, seem to endorse a perverted form of the 'warrior ethic'. These young males, and increasing numbers of females, believe status comes from being willing to engage in, and / or exhibit willingness to engage in, extreme acts of violence often involving an illegal weapon.

9.9 Such an ethic is a code to live one's life by. The person incorporates the 'virtues' of that ethic into their character. One facet of this perverted version of the warrior ethic is that it involves a life of risk and therefore one might well assume that if other ethics were seen as viable and as offering reward to these young people then they might well forego this distorted, and misguided, version of the warrior ethic.

10. SUMMARY

10.1 It seems to be no more than stating the obvious to say here that reducing drug crime will reduce that gun crime that is committed in the service of drug crime. That in saying this we do no more than reaffirm the tautology in the MPA's original 'hypothesis' does not detract from the insight gained.

10.2 There is not enough information available to say anymore about the nature of the relationship between gun crime and drug crime. In the absence of such information one should insist on keeping an open mind as to what sort of relationship might hold between the two.

10.3 High levels of drug crime do take place in the absence of higher levels of gun crime: note; Camden and Westminster. And high levels of gun crime do take place in the absence of high levels of drug crime: note; Brent (cf. §4.19)

10.4 In other London Boroughs, however, there does seem to be a correlation between drug crime, violent crime against the person and gun crime: note; Hackney, Lambeth and Southwark.

10.5 The evidence is simply not available in the detail required to say anything more concrete, anything more detailed with regard to what form the relationship takes or anything more generally applicable over time and across geographical location.

10.6 The reasons for the poor levels of information have been discussed and if there is one overriding lesson to be learnt from the commissioning of this report, and *TGCL*, it is that changes need to be made in order that the current lack of information regarding the criminal use of firearms does not continue to hamper efforts to understand that use.

10.7 Focus upon the activities of one ethnic group who are currently prevalent in both drug and gun crime should not lead one to assume that that group's current prevalence tells us anything intrinsically about that ethnic group and their future role. Trends are more likely to be indexed to socio-economic background, access to 'tools of the trade' and access to markets.

10.8 In addition to the problems detailed above regarding the legitimacy and perspicuity of using ethnicity as a category, reference to culture and ethnicity fails to account for the huge numbers of people who putatively share an ethnic background and do not become involved in a life of crime. Culture and ethnicity also fails to account for the number of different ethnic groups that are involved in these crimes. These two points should help to guard against seeing ethnicity and culture as a significant category in this context. These categories simply fail to fulfil the criteria demanded to be explanatory.

10.9 Focus on gun trafficking routes, at present, tells us little about the use of firearms in the illegal drug industry. What evidence there is ought to direct our attention to widespread use of converted replica and air weapons. This

indicates that current measures to prevent widespread trafficking of firearms into the UK are working. It also indicates that current restrictions on replica and air weapons are ineffective.

10.10 Groups of which we have intelligence are proving difficult to combat. This is particularly evident with regard to Jamaican/Caribbean groups. Their ability to acquire forged passports led to the introduction of a visa scheme. This has been ineffective for obvious reasons. If forged passports are easily secured then why not forged visas also?

10.11 Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the deportation of Jamaican nationals found guilty of offences is ineffective. They often return under different names.

The following recommendations have been reflected in the main report as appropriate and will be progressed accordingly.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that research is commissioned to explore how the process of crime recording can be altered to encourage the inclusion of factors outside securing a conviction when compiling crime reports. These factors would be used when considering future policy and strategy.

Recommendation 2:

It is recommended that the remit of Operation Trident be broadened to include all gun crime and that a sub-division is set up to investigate gun crime relating to the drug industry. Research should be commissioned on the socio-economic backgrounds of those involved in drug offences. This would help offset the current bias towards categorising in terms of ethnicity.

Recommendation 3:

It is recommended that a thorough investigation of current legislation around replica weapons is carried out with a view to banning all replicas and air weapons capable of being converted. The benchmark might be this: if it is easier to convert replica X to a functioning firearm than it is to manufacture a firearm from scratch, then replica X should not be legally available in this country, and preferably not in the EU.

In addition, all parcel handlers bringing packages into the UK should have to fulfil minimum requirements for screening their parcels.

Recommendation 4:

It is recommended that the visa system introduced for Jamaican nationals be reviewed. It is ineffective with regards to those Jamaican criminals coming to the UK and discriminates against the majority of law abiding Jamaicans who visit the UK to visit family members resident here.

Instead there should be research into the possibility of cooperation between Jamaican and UK immigration whereby passport numbers can be checked and verified via data link at point of entry.

Recommendation 5:

It is recommended that an overview of recent research on the appeal of violent criminal activity to Britain's youth should be commissioned. There is much recent research in Criminology and Sociology which would help remove the current lack of understanding in this area.

In addition, it is recommended that bespoke research be commissioned in the form of a qualitative sociological study of the appeal of crime, violent crime and gun crime culture to the young.

The report recommends ethnomethodological studies be commissioned in this area.