

Transcript of the meeting of the Metropolitan Police Authority held on Thursday, 26 November 2009 at 10 a.m. in the Chamber, City Hall, SE1.

Present:

Members:

Boris Johnson (Chairman), Kit Malthouse (Vice-Chairman)
Reshard Auladin, John Biggs, Faith Boardman, Christopher Boothman,
Victoria Borwick, Valerie Brasse, Cindy Butts, James Cleverly, Dee Doocey,
Toby Harris, Kirsten Hearn, Jenny Jones, Clive Lawton, Joanne McCartney,
Neil Johnson, Steve O'Connell, Graham Speed and Richard Tracey.

MPA Officers:

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive), Jane Harwood (Assistant Chief Executive) and
Annabel Adams (Acting Treasurer).

MPS Officers:

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner), Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner) and
Anne McMeel (Director of Resources).

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Members of the MPA can I possibly ask you to take your seats and we will get going. Thank you very, very much. We will go round from my left so that everybody can identify themselves.

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): Catherine Crawford.

Jane Harwood (Assistant Chief Executive, MPA): Jane Harwood.

Annabel Adams (Acting Treasurer, MPA): Annabel Adams.

Steve O'Connell (AM): Steve O'Connell.

James Cleverly (AM): James Cleverly.

Richard Tracey (AM): Richard Tracey.

Toby Harris (AM): Toby Harris.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Joanne McCartney.

Jenny Jones (AM): Jenny Jones.

Christopher Boothman (AM): Chris Boothman.

Graham Speed (AM): Graham Speed.

Clive Lawton (AM): Clive Lawton.

Kirsten Hearn (AM): Kirsten Hearn.

Faith Boardman (AM): Faith Boardman.

Valerie Brasse (AM): Valerie Brasse.

Neil Johnson (AM): Neil Johnson.

Anne McMeel (Director of Resources, MPS): Anne McMeel.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Tim Godwin.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Paul Stephenson.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Kit [Malthouse] is away and I am Boris Johnson. Are there any apologies for absence?

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): We have received apologies, Chairman, from Jennette Arnold, Caroline Pidgeon, Reshard Auladin and Deborah Regal. Cindy [Butts] for lateness and Kit [Malthouse] for lateness.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Kit [Malthouse] will be coming, I think, in about an hour.

Male Speaker: I apologise; I have to leave early.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Any declarations of interests that Members wish to register? I hope that Members have had a chance to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

All: Agreed.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Very good. Thank you so much. It has been a busy time since we last met which seems all too recently. We have, this morning, launched a very powerful safer travel at night campaign to discourage people from taking unlicensed minicabs during the Christmas season. I think it is extremely important that we get that message across. I think it is going over, as I say, strongly this morning.

Since the October meeting several Authority Committees have met and we have had an opportunity to consider the business they have discharged on our behalf later in the meeting.

Several Members attended the Commissioner's Service Conference earlier this month and there was an important opportunity to discuss with MPS officers and staff the implications of leading through challenging times.

Victoria Borwick, who is not here, delivered a key note speech at the Association of Police Authorities (APA) Conference yesterday which focused on Met Forward, accountability and public redress. She also chaired a later discussion on facilitating protest highlighting the excellent work of the Civil Liberties Panel. The panel itself held a very successful public session here at City Hall earlier this month.

The Gangs Panel also met this month and we have had joint engagement meetings (JEM) meetings for Wandsworth, Islington, Merton, Hackney, Richmond and Barnet. I want to thank Kit [Malthouse] and James [Cleverly] and Steve [O'Connell] for chairing these.

Members of the MPA will be aware that our inspection begins on Monday and it will last for a period of two weeks. The scene setting meeting chaired by Kit [Malthouse] took place earlier this month.

Earlier this week Catherine [Crawford] attended the celebration of 90 years since the first female police officers joined the MPS and it is right to congratulate the pioneering women who joined in 1919 and to recognise the impact that female officers have had on policing London for the past 90 years.

Finally. I will be joining MPA Members and staff to honour officers who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty for the MPS and the people of London and I am sure Members of the MPA will want to join me in paying tribute to them this morning.

There was to be a petition. Can I invite the petitioner to introduce her petition? Hello. You are **Sarah McKinley**(?)?

Mary Honeyball (MEP): No. I am Mary Honeyball.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): You are Mary Honeyball. Fantastic. I gather that you are going to introduce your petition for five minutes. Is that right?

Mary Honeyball (MEP): Yes, I am.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Terrific. Thank you.

Mary Honeyball (MEP): Thank you. Since there seems to be a bit of confusion as to who I am, I am Mary Honeyball and I am one of the London Members of the European Parliament. I have come to present this petition to you because I and my London

colleagues became very concerned that the MPS was proposing to cut the funding for your dedicated unit that deals with human trafficking.

I took this up because, as a London Member of the European Parliament, I have been very involved in this and, as the Commissioner will know, the majority of women and children who are trafficked come from Europe, and a huge percentage of that number come to London. So I felt I had a real interest in this and wished to pursue it.

I set up a petition which, as of this morning, had 1,804 signatures so a considerable interest and I think all of you will agree that that is a good response to the petition and I hope, with that kind of support, you will be taking what those Londoners - they are, overwhelmingly, Londoners - feel about this and you will be taking that on board.

I wish to make just a couple of points really about the issue. First of all I would like to say that I think proposing to close the trafficking unit at this time, particularly prior to the Olympics in London, is really not a terribly good idea. I actually was in the European Parliament and worked on the World Cup when it went to Germany. At that time my impression, and also the official figures, showed that there was a huge increase in prostitution and, therefore, in trafficking of women around the World Cup in Germany. The indications are that, unless we take measures, the same thing will happen in London. I think that would be terrible; it would be terrible for the women involved and I think it would be very bad for our city. That is something, obviously, none of us want and I think we should take all measures that we can to prevent a re-run of the World Cup in German happening in the 2012 Olympics here.

Secondly, I would like to reply to the criticisms which are often made about the unit and, particularly, the low conviction rates. I am sure that one of the reasons you are making the proposal you are is because of that and, therefore I want to address it. As the police know - and I do not want to sound as if I am telling you your job - women and children who have been trafficked are, obviously, not in much of a position to come forward. We have seen a similar thing with victims of rape but, in terms of women who are trafficked, they come from other countries, they do not speak the language and they are often not even allowed to go anywhere very much by the criminal gangs who control them. So it is hardly surprising that not very much is reported and then, following that, that conviction rates are low, because there is not that evidence because the evidence never has a chance to get anywhere. So I would hope that Members of the Committee would take this on board; that this is a difficult crime to get conviction rates for.

The trafficking unit of the MPS is internationally recognised. It is known, I know, throughout Europe, and it has a fantastic reputation for the work that it does. I think that speaks for itself and we should be taking that on board and understanding and knowing just how good the unit is. It would be a real tragedy for the women and the children who are trafficked and, I think, for the police itself, to lose that level of expertise which does add to your own reputation.

So I therefore decided to run this petition because I do believe this is a significant issue for the police and for the people of London and I have had such a good response I hope all of you will take all of this on board. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you so much, Ms Honeyball. I am going to ask Catherine Crawford to respond.

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): Chairman, the question of whether or not to retain the dedicated human trafficking unit is the subject of a wider review of how the MPS responds to organised immigration crime which is being led by Commander Simon O'Brien. The MPS response currently operates over a number of command units and business groups. Included within this review is how the MPS approaches human trafficking in all its forms including for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and labour exploitation.

The focus of the review is to improve the MPS's response to all areas of organised immigration crime and the very important issues that emerge from the exploitation of vulnerable people, particularly women and children.

A significant amount of consultation has been undertaken and views continue to be sought from a wide variety of stakeholders.

At the last meeting of this full Authority the Commissioner gave a clear assurance that once the review had been considered by the MPS Management Board - and the date for that consideration is 8 December - a report will be prepared for the Authority.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Catherine [Crawford]. Commissioner, do you want to add anything?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Thank you, Chairman. Just briefly. I just want to confirm to you that we happen to agree; the issue of human trafficking is a very serious matter and we will continue, whatever the outcome of that review, to treat it as an extremely serious matter. I think we need to ensure, again for audit trails, that there is accuracy in this debate and, for the sake of accuracy, it is the Home Office that has removed its funding for that unit and that has actually been part and parcel of the reason why we have mounted the review.

Secondly, just for your information, the low conviction rate has not been a consideration as to why we have mounted that review. I happen to agree with that; that, actually, this is a very difficult area of policing and of law enforcement and, actually, the conviction rate would not be the natural performance indicator for such a unit. So we are on similar ground there.

We have undertaken that review and, actually, that review and the consultation has caused us, internally, to see a significant degree of duplication between what we are doing in that unit and what we are doing in other units. We are under a duty to make the

best use of the money we have got to ensure that we are getting the best outcome for the effort we are making and that duplication is not where we want to be.

On the other side to what you say, there is some confusion from partners as to who is doing what in the MPS. We are a very large organisation and, on occasions, we can confuse other people. We have human trafficking being done out of another part of the MPS.

The Chief Executive is quite right; we have given certain undertakings regarding that review and part of that is looking at how we maintain the very necessary specialist skills in whatever structures we put in place. We are discussing that at the Management Board on 8 December and, as Catherine [Crawford] has said, it is my intention to bring back a report to the outcome of our deliberations.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you very much, Commissioner. Does anyone want to speak on this? Jenny [Jones]?

Jenny Jones (AM): Very kind of you to give me the opportunity. I am a bit concerned that the senior management team is only deciding on this after we passed the budget and it does lead to anxiety because we are passing the budget today without knowing whether or not this team will exist in the future.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): If I can respond very briefly to that? The reason why we have delayed is actually to make sure we do all the consultation that you would want us to do, Jenny [Jones]. The consultation is actually very interesting and very useful. Of course, whilst we may be passing a budget, the idea that a budget is nailed in stone and that there will not be further discussion at this Authority of small areas of the budget, is not consistent with how we have done this before.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Commissioner. Clive [Lawton]?

Clive Lawton (AM): Can I just remind us that I think it was at last month's meeting that when the issue of the human trafficking unit was brought up, the point was made then that there are two different kinds of human trafficking. In this instance the accent is being laid on prostitution and there was a concern that if this matter goes to clubs and vice one will lose sight of the other aspect of human trafficking, which is for kinds of slave, or severely under-privileged, labour and that side of human trafficking needs paying attention to as well.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Clive [Lawton]. I am sure that point will be registered by the MPS in the course of its review. Joanne [McCartney]?

Joanne McCartney (AM): I just wanted to ask whether the MPA is going to be part of that consultation process? Obviously you will be looking at different options and I think both Jenny [Jones] and I and others would want to see what the options are and to perhaps discuss them with you before you come to your final decision in the Management

Board. Often once a decision has been made and it comes back here, there have been procedures put in place and it is very hard to change things. Can we be part of that consultation process?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Happily, Mayor. The people who are doing it will engage in any further discussions you wish. I would have to say, Joanne [McCartney], in terms of the engagement to this Authority in this area, it has been discussed at this Authority on a number of occasions and we are aware of some views. Quite happily, the people who are running the review, I will ensure they discuss it with you - and anybody else who wants to have it discussed with - before 8 December.

Joanne McCartney (AM): I raise it because, at the last meeting, Jenny [Jones] and I put down a motion and that motion was withdrawn on the basis that we were going to get some further information. One of those was we were concerned about the loss of expertise and those links that have been built up. We asked, at that stage, whether the human trafficking unit being moved into clubs and vice was still going to be retained as a discrete unit in that so that that expertise and those links would not be lost. We still do not know the answer to that because, if that is the case, that would alleviate a lot of concerns.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): I understand. Commissioner?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Tim Godwin will pick up those discussions with you but the one thing I would say, Joanne [McCartney], is my intention is that our focus should be on retaining the skills. What we should not be doing is talking about individuals. That is an entirely different matter.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. Toby [Harris]?

Toby Harris (AM): I just wondered whether you, as Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman, have given a steer to this process because I know how these things work and sometimes it is helpful for the Authority to give a steer to the MPS when it is considering these matters. I just wondered whether you have been able to give that steer on this occasion and, if so, in which direction you would push the, whatever it is called in nautical terms?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): My view is that there should be the maximum efficiency in dealing with the problem of human trafficking, particularly in the run up to the Olympics, and that the MPS should have a concern to deliver the most effective possible response.

Valerie Brasse (AM): Chairman, can I just check that we are talking about it coming back to full Authority which, of course, would be before the end of January?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Of course, Valerie [Brasse]. You will see from what Catherine [Crawford] has already said that the Management Board report will come back to full Authority.

Valerie Brasse (AM): To full Authority. Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): John [Biggs]?

John Biggs (AM): Thank you, Chairman. Just one very, very brief point which is that this is a very important issue. It may well be that we conclude that, through organisational changes, we do not need this unit. We may well decide that. But I would just emphasise the point that the symbolism of appearing to abolish something with a title that is doing something which is of great importance and topicality should not be understated and we need to be very, very sensitive to that, Chairman. That does not in any way trivialise the issue but we need to be aware of the signal that gives to people about Londoners' approach to this issue.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Seriousness. I understand that completely and I am sure that the MPS does as well. James [Cleverly], did you want to say something?

James Cleverly (AM): Yes, thank you, Chairman. I take completely a contrary view. Our priority, as the MPA, should be the operational effectiveness of the MPS. Symbolism is for others. This is not about symbolic or gestures; this is about doing what we need to do to ensure that the MPS is as effectively structured as possible to police human trafficking. Symbolism should not be what we consider --

Boris Johnson (Chairman): If I can try to resolve the two positions? I think possibly what John [Biggs] was saying was that sometimes a symbol can be part of the effectiveness of the operation.

John Biggs (AM): Absolutely.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): How about that.

James Cleverly (AM): And sometimes not.

John Biggs (AM): I am glad my Comrade Boris [Johnson] agrees with me. I am glad to hear that.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): I think, possibly for the sake of the good order of this meeting, we should probably thank Mary Honeyball very, very much for taking the time and the trouble to make this petition and I hope that you feel that your views have been heard by the MPA and by the MPS and that you will see a response to the concerns you have raised. Thank you very much.

Mary Honeyball (MEP): I believe I do get a minute or two to respond. I did just want to comment on what was said about the Home Office funding. Yes, I do understand that the Home Office is cutting the funding but it was always my understanding that that funding was actually granted on the basis that it was for a couple of years and that the MPS would pick it up in the end. I think it is actually quite important to make that point.

I look forward to seeing the report that is coming to you on 8 December and I would urge you all to take on board the points that have been made and thank you very much for hearing me.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you so much for coming. Thank you. We now go to the Commissioners' report and I think the Commissioner is briefly going to update us on how things are going.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Yes, thank you, Chairman. If I go straight to the issue of youth murders. Since the last meeting of the full Authority there has been a further youth murder; the sad death of Michael McCarthy aged 19, for which two men have been charged and for which, obviously for those reasons, I cannot say more about that particular incident. This year, so far, there have now been 12 such murders compared to 29 last year. I repeat what I always say, significantly down. We genuinely do believe that is a result of Operation Blunt and other initiatives. However, at 12, we would want them to be zero. So we are far from complacent on this matter but it is right that I report the further youth murder.

Could I move on to the issue of rape. There are real performance challenges here and recorded rape is now at its highest level for a number of years. For the year to date - and that is up to the end of September - we have seen a significant rise; something over 24% of offences of recorded rape. It is important we use that phrase. As usual, in terms of this particular offence, there are positives and negatives in that and it is trying to separate those things out.

The rise we think is partly attributed to the increased numbers of victims coming forward to report what we know is, traditionally, a very under reported crime. Of course, externally, there has been significant media attention and awareness around the issue; high profile trials, Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigations and the current Government review under Baroness Stern. I guess they have all contributed to raising public awareness and quite rightly so.

Included also are the specialist services offered by the MPS and the Havens to victims of serious sexual crime. In fact, the Havens have just recently been recognised, at the 2009 National Justice Awards, where we jointly received a partnership award. Awards are all very good but these are heinous offences and we have got to understand what part of this is due to increased reporting and what part of it is due to maybe an increasing problem.

The increase this month is set against a significant decrease in this month last year and trying to understand what happened in this period last year is part and parcel of what we are now engaged upon. It is a very challenging area. We need to maintain the focus and, as you know, we took a decision - a very difficult decision - of how we were to structure ourselves in dealing with these very serious offences. We have implemented that decision. The structure has been put in place. I always said that was a very balanced decision with lots of professional issues as to where its focus should be; should it come

from boroughs or should it come from a specialist unit at the centre? We made the decision we should specialise on this but we must keep that under review.

We are doing some further detailed work, some drill down work, on this area to make sure we do fully understand the figures and try to keep that focus on differentiating what is success in the figures and what is an increasing problem. We are doing some further work on that and I am assuming the Authority will want to see the outcome of that further work at an appropriate Authority Committee and even, maybe, this full Authority.

Chairman, if I may move on to burglary. I am not going to say a great deal here. I have discussed it at length in the past. We still have a problem round burglary. The rise has now stabilised. The success of Operation Bumblebee is that it is very encouraging in terms of enforcement. We have significantly increased the number of burglaries we are arresting and charging and that has come out of the increased focus on Operation Bumblebee. Part of my mission is to prevent crime but also detect crime and we are arresting many more burglars at this moment in time but we still have a problem and there is still pressure on the burglary figures.

If I do have a concern - and this is genuinely sharing something with you - that is what happens after we have charged offenders? There is a suggestion - and we are going to look further at this with our partners the criminal justice agencies - that some offenders are being bailed, by courts, for burglar offences when we feel there are grounds to keep them inside. There is some evidence that we have taken decisions not to grant bail and then it goes to court and they grant bail. That is perfectly within their powers and proper that they do so.

What we need then to understand is what are the consequences? Are the people who are being granted bail then going out and going on a spree? It is within my knowledge, over 34 years of policing, that when a burglar gets caught and charged and the burglar knows they are going to go to prison, perhaps because of previous convictions, there is not a lot to lose in that period between having been charged and having been sentenced. That, very often, is the period when we see significant huge activity by people who are engaged in burglary because they just continue to commit it in that interim period because they already know they are going to go down, if they think the evidence is strong enough to convict them.

So we are doing some further work around this area and, again, I will bring that back in my report to this Authority, as to where we see the issue of bail and how much is that contributing to our problem at this moment in time, because we do know that prolific burglars continue to burgle to a significant age, if that is their particular bent in life.

Can I just turn to Operation Minstead, referred to as various forms; the Night Stalker and various things like that. Members will be aware that we have arrested and charged a man for a series of offences. Those offences include 5 rapes, 6 indecent assaults and 11 burglaries and the operation name has been Operation Minstead. That is now *sub judice*

so it would be improper for me to say anything other than we believe the arrest and charges are significant. That goes without saying.

That has followed, in essence, a 17 year operation. That is how long we have been running Operation Minstead in various forms. I am aware of speculation around what has happened during those 17 years. Were there opportunities previously? Were there not opportunities previously? I am not in a position to comment further on that and it would be wrong for me to do so because it is *sub judice*. What we are concentrating on at this moment in time is actually completing the job that we are doing at this moment in time to ensure we complete that job and ensure that our responsibilities are putting the proper files and paperwork before the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and before the courts is done to the highest possible standard.

In due course we will look at lessons learned. The reality is I do not know of any major operation or any major investigation when we have not reviewed and there are not lessons to be learned. We will be looking at that and if there are any necessary referral to any other agency any time, rest assured I will do that. But I did think it was important that I mentioned Operation Minstead today. We do believe that is a very significant arrest and charge.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Commissioner. Can I propose that, in asking our questions, we try as much as possible to do them in clumps on the particular topic in hand rather than going back so that if you hear a question on the subject that you want also to come in on and you think you could amplify the question, and I think it would be a good thing if we took several questions in a row before going back to the Commissioner for an answer. I think that might work. Let us try it. I have noticed from Dee [Doocey] that she has a question about policing of shopping centres.

Dee Doocey (AM): Shopping centres. Yes, thank you, Chairman. It was about trying to understand the role of the police and who was paying for the policing of these very large new shopping centres and, in particular, the necessity to have airwave and the cost that would surround that and whether this burden was going to be on the MPS budget or whether it was going to be on the developers who are making quite a lot of money?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Very good question. You are aiming in at big developments. I understand. Commissioner?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Can I pass this on to the Deputy. Have we given you a written answer already on this, Dee [Doocey]?

Dee Doocey (AM): Yes.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Let us expand on that because I think it is an issue (inaudible) --

Dee Doocey (AM): I think it is an issue that we need to raise.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): We are always keen for somebody else to (inaudible)!

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The current policy of the MPS and the MPA is that if the policing requirement is inside a private premises, such as Westfields in Hammersmith and Fulham and all the rest of it, then that cost falls to the owner and operator of that shopping centre and not to the MPS. As a result Westfield, for example, in Hammersmith and Fulham, pays a certain amount of money to Hammersmith and Fulham Council who then have procured some additional police assets in terms of an additional neighbourhood team that polices that area and polices that shopping centre. But that is funding through the local authority who have got arrangements with Westfield. We have got other schemes whereby there are other town centres where additional police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have been bought.

So the rule is that, if it is a private shopping centre, then the shopping centre should pay for the cost of the additional policing. Often the best way of doing that, in terms of the funding arrangement, is through the local authority where we are more able to negotiate an agreement with the authority of the Chief Executive of this Authority.

In terms of airwave. We try to now make, as part of the Section 106 planning application, airwave requirements and other requirements within that part of that planning application before it goes through the local authority. Some of these big shopping centres, the planning applications were well in advance of that piece of legislation so there are some that we have had to pay for the airwave installation, but the ones that are coming through now, we are putting that through that planning application. There are some legal challenges to that and that is being worked through at the moment by our property services department.

Dee Doocey (AM): So, Chair, can I just assume then that for the privately financed Stratford development which is going to be in the Olympic Park, none of the costs of the additional airwave will fall on the MPA budget?

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is part of that planning application, the Section 106. It depends on the planning authority and it depends on the legal challenge that we are currently **suffering**(?).

Dee Doocey (AM): Because we could be talking about very substantial costs. That is fine. Thank you very much.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Your point is well made and I am sure it will feature substantially in the Section 106 negotiations. Good. Thank you. Any other questions on shopping centres, the policing of? Then I think we should go on to Dick [Tracey] who I think wanted to ask a question about helicopter noise.

Richard Tracey (AM): Actually I do want to ask one about helicopter noise, Chairman, but I have another one which is particularly pertinent to what the Commissioner was talking about; rape. I wonder if you could bring us up to date on the ongoing investigation into the way the Kirk Reed case was handled. I know that there was a serious investigation going on into that and I think it would be very helpful, particularly to my constituents who still feel pretty aggrieved about that.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Any other questions about that matter that anybody wants to raise? Or rape?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): What I have to say to you, Richard [Tracey], is, as far as I am aware, that is still with the IPCC and it would be inappropriate for me to comment on their enquiries.

Richard Tracey (AM): OK. May I ask the one about the helicopter noise?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): I do not see why not.

Richard Tracey (AM): As you know, I have raised this before and it is still being raised considerably with me by my constituents and, indeed, other members of the population of London who obviously somehow got into our discussion about it this last time. One thing is, Commissioner, can I ask why the police helicopters do not actually operate at greater altitude when I believe it is possible? The kit will still work if they operate somewhat higher than the currently do, especially when they are buzzing around over Wandsworth.

The other thing is to ask you whether any consideration has been given to muffling the tail rotors which, I believe, certainly American military helicopters have this equipment and I would have thought it was particularly pertinent to the police helicopters operating over London?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I have to say, Richard [Tracey], there are many things that 34 years in policing has qualified me to comment but I find myself at a complete loss and I apologise! If it is possible I am sure we will go away and look at it. I genuinely will go and ask the question.

As for their height. The one thing I think I can say, without getting completely outside my comfort zone, is we will be complying with Civil Aviation regulations and trying to balance that with the operational requirements and the operational purpose of them being there in the first place. I will genuinely go away and ask those questions of the experts who are complying with the regulations and actually trying to deliver the job that the helicopters were bought for in the first place. I hear what you say; that people say they could do it from a greater height. I wonder if that is the case but I will ask the expert.

Richard Tracey (AM): I do understand about Civil Aviation Authority regulations but, of course, the times particularly when my constituents complain, are operations between

midnight and the likes of 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. when, of course, there are no civil aircraft flying into Heathrow. Obviously Civil Aviation Authority rules would be, presumably, amendable at that time.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Again, I am significantly outside my comfort zone, Richard [Tracey], so I will answer your questions. We will come back to you directly.

Richard Tracey (AM): I am grateful.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you very much, Commissioner. Any other pre-notified questions? I do not believe there are. Joanne [McCartney]?

Joanne McCartney (AM): I had one on cautions that I did send in to the Commissioner. This came out of a question that I asked at the London Assembly's plenary meeting. I asked a question about the conviction rates of women that had been charged with firearm offences. In response to that I was sent, by the MPS, a table which caused me great concern. If I could state that out of a total of 367 firearms offences involving women, 108 resulted in charge, but 246 resulted in caution, which seemed to me an extremely large number of cautions for a crime that, on the face of it, possession of a firearm is extremely serious. I understand that the press picked this up and there was some liaison with the MPS and some of the reasoning given was that, in the vast majority of cases, these were relating to issues such as CS gas, as opposed to firearms as we would perhaps see them as guns. So I just wanted some explanation on that because, on the face of it, that was extremely alarming.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Before you respond, Commissioner, Clive [Lawton] and Jenny [Jones] and Graham [Speed] have all indicated that they want to speak.

Graham Speed (AM): Different question.

Jenny Jones (AM): Different question.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Different questions. I am sorry. Forgive me.

Clive Lawton (AM): It is not entirely different. It relates to the issue of cautions but maybe broadens that out. If I may? Sir Paul [Stephenson], I was tremendously pleased to see your comment about people getting off with cautions and the need to ensure that people who do crime come before the courts. I was just privately cheering when I thought, "Wait a minute, but it's the police who give out the cautions so that's in your hands". So what I wondered was, both on the specific issue that Joanne [McCartney] has raised and on the more general issue, what instructions, in fact, have gone out? Do you have internal targets as to how this is going to be reduced and how many more people are going to be brought to court or whatever?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. Commissioner?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Joanne [McCartney], your question first. The explanation is very much as you said. In all cases where cautions have been issued, females have been arrested in possession of either CS spray or a pepper spray. In all cases where females were charged it is because they were found in possession of a firearm that you would traditionally associate as a firearm. It is a broader definition in terms of classification. It is part and parcel of the discussion we have had before of how crime classifications do not necessarily make sense to the public, or, indeed, ourselves on occasions.

Firearms, wherever they have been charged, they have been in the possession of a firearm that is capable of firing live ammunition or found in possession of a firearm with the intent to endanger life. So there is a difference there. The cautions have been about CS spray and pepper spray.

That is not to say that we are saying it is all right to carry CS spray and pepper spray, but I think we would all accept there is a significant difference between those two types of offences and that explains the high number of cautions.

Clive Lawton (AM): I am sorry, Chairman, the issue was not cautions; it was fixed penalty notices. I am sorry. I am referring to the fixed penalty notices issued.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Are you content with the answer?

Clive Lawton (AM): The question remains but it is around fixed penalties. I am sorry. Not cautions.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): OK. Good. The Commissioner is just going to answer Clive [Lawton].

Joanne McCartney (AM): Then can I come back, Chairman, as well?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): You can.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Thank you.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Right. Cautions or fixed penalties. They are all issued under guidelines and under guidelines that are properly laid down, national guidelines, and we stick to those guidelines.

In terms of changing the balance - and I have spoken on a number of occasions - I do not think cautions *per se* should be ruled out. We all know we want to have the right sort of disposal, particularly for young children, that fits the offence. So the common sense policing that has taken place in the past ought to continue to take place.

My concern is where we are using cautions and fixed penalties for offences when it does not represent visible justice to the public and actually should go before the magistrate. But, to be able to do that, we have to have a system that is capable of coping with it. We have to have magistrates' courts that are sitting sufficiently often and outside the more restricted hours of between, maybe, 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Longer sittings. And we have to have a system to actually make the courts match fit so they could take those increases.

So we do operate under guidelines. We actually issue less than many other forces throughout the country I think it is right to say, Tim [Godwin]. We are taking further actions around fixed penalties in December. Once we get Royal Assent we are changing legislation where we intend to stop issuing fixed penalties for theft and for Section 4 and Section 5 of public order and other related offences. We can only do that if the courts are capable of taking them in front of them so we need to have a system that is doing it. Tim Godwin has been leading the change in the system both in policing, with CPS and the magistrates' court to enable that to happen. So we are piloting it.

Clive Lawton (AM): Chairman, may I just say - and obviously it is entirely anecdotal and based on my own Bench and a couple of other Benches to whom I have spoken - we are experiencing a severe fall off in business, we are being regularly cancelled and, where we used to run six full courts, we now run four in my borough. That is not because there are not sufficient magistrates and it is not because there is not sufficient capacity to handle more cases. They are not coming to us. While I think we are very interested in diversions in the Youth Bench, we are far less interested in the Adult Benches.

I accept that there can be more flexibilities but the current capacity is not being taken up and we certainly suspect that a significant amount of business that would have come to us before, is now being diverted into fixed penalties and cautions and, perhaps, as I think you suspect too, inappropriate.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Clive [Lawton], let us not forget that fixed penalties were introduced as a genuine attempt to try to give a quicker and less expensive disposal because the courts - part of the reason - are not available when you want to give those quicker disposals. If you are arresting somebody at 9 p.m. and you want a quicker and less expensive disposal, in an ideal world, we would want to put them before a court at 9 p.m. It is that sort of flexibility and negotiation that Tim [Godwin] has been leading on. Perhaps if Tim [Godwin] could give a slightly wider comment, Chairman?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Yes, please. Yes.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The whole issue is actually now being reviewed by the Office of Criminal Justice Reform in terms of cautions, conditional cautions and the use of penalty notices. We have got the Royal Assent in terms of the Act. We are waiting for the powers to be granted. We anticipate the granting of the powers about 14 December 2009, at which point, in Westminster, we will have a first appearance court sitting virtually from 9 a.m. until 7.30 p.m. As a result of that the

persons arrested in Westminster will be put before the court and the target time is to put them before the court within two hours of charge. At that point we will assess whether summary justice can cope with the volumes from Westminster and then we intend to roll it out on four other boroughs; Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark and Greenwich and then, after that, we will roll it out to the 15 charging centres. The first appearance court for that will be Camberwell.

Clive Lawton (AM): Chairman, I am sorry to come back on this but there is an issue of real principle here which I feel is slipping between two issues. On the one hand, obviously, everybody wants to see things done more promptly. If somebody is charged we want to see them brought before the courts. But we do want to see them brought before the courts and the magistrates certainly, and I would think most other people, are uneasy about certain kinds of cases being disposed of without being brought before the courts. The quicker that can be done, the more efficiently that can be done and all the rest of it everybody would like to see. But if there are cases that should be brought before the courts which are, instead, being dealt with by police officers only, that is something that really needs close attention.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Chairman, that is what I have spoken publicly about and I think the balance is wrong.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): I think that has been the force of the Commissioner's intervention in the debate. Whether you have virtual courts or the existing Bench, you need to get these people before the courts. I think that is common ground. Joanne [McCartney]?

Joanne McCartney (AM): Yes. I just wanted to come back because I think the figures that I had for firearms offences perhaps highlights, and you have said here what is actually the crucial thing here; that justice must be done but it also must be seen to be done. So I was extremely concerned that you seemed to be implying that perhaps you were not charging because you were concerned about a lack of capacity in the magistrates' court system.

I am just wondering in this, Catherine [Crawford], given that we have changing rules in December, whether we should not commission a report on the use of cautions and what is happening for our Strategic Operation Police Committee to look into that.

I would just like to ask, given that the question I asked about the firearms showed up an extremely high number of cautions, whether you think there is a need for a review as to how we have been using cautions, perhaps over the last year, so that we have a starting point upon which we can judge future performance?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Chairman, I am happy to bring back a further report on this matter. Might I suggest, in so much as we are entering into a pilot scheme now, what you might want is to commission a report that actually takes account of the outcomes of that pilot scheme, after a couple of months, something like that, at

least so you have got some data to work on and I am happy to widen that out into the use of cautions.

We do comply with the guidelines on this and we use this sort of disposal less than many other forces in the country. It is absolutely right to bring it back here and, as the Chairman, said, I raised the issue about the balance in the system.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): As for your point about whether we could consider it in the MPA I think that is a very good idea. I think the Strategic and Operational Policing Committee (SOP) would be the ideal --

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): Yes. Place to do it in detail. If we need to take a detailed look at it it would be better if it went to SOP than came here I think.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): OK. Everybody happy with that? OK. I think we should move on from cautions. I do not think I have any other pre-registered questions unless the system has --

James Cleverly (AM): I thought one was submitted but if we are still taking others then ...

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Let us go on to Jenny [Jones].

Jenny Jones (AM): Thank you. I have two questions. The first is on the Camera Safety Partnership. I am told that it disqualified 4,000 drivers last year - more than 4,000 - for various offences and its estimate is that 75% of them were career criminals, ie showing that if you have contempt for the law in one area you have contempt for the law in lots of areas. Can you confirm that?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I do not have the figures here, Jenny [Jones]. I do not know if Tim [Godwin] has them?

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): No. I would have to go away and check them.

Jenny Jones (AM): OK. My second question on which I think perhaps others might like to come in is on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report part 2, the sequel --

Boris Johnson (Chairman): That is enough on the London Camera Safety Partnership? Nobody wants to come in on that? OK. Good. Then we will go on to HMIC.

Jenny Jones (AM): Thank you. I just wondered, presumably you are looking at the recommendations now to see how they fit? Are you going to take them forward? It was

your request, was it not, to do it, so are you going to abide by the recommendations?
They do not go far enough --

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Anybody else? Thank you, Jenny [Jones]. Thank you very much. I know that several people will want to ask questions about this, the G20 and HMIC and I see Victoria [Borwick] and James [Cleverly] and Dee [Doocey]. James [Cleverly]?

James Cleverly (AM): Sorry. I wanted to come in on a separate question.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): It is a separate question. Who wants to ask about the HMIC? Nobody else? Victoria [Borwick] does. Victoria [Borwick] and Dee [Doocey]. Victoria [Borwick]?

Victoria Borwick (AM): I am sure, Sir Paul [Stephenson], perhaps you welcome the report because it shows the need of consistency across all the various police forces across the country. I thought the other point that it made was the fact that we have got the Olympics coming up and there will be a tremendous need to make sure that everybody is playing to the same high standards that, at the afternoon session I was at yesterday, were commented on, that the MPS has. So I think there are some good things to welcome in the report rather than just negative ones, but perhaps you would give us your view on those as well?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. Dee [Doocey] please?

Dee Doocey (AM): Yes. Two parts to my question. I was wondering if the Commissioner would care to comment on the idea that the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO's) role ought to be reviewed.

The second part to my comments also concerns the Olympics and, specifically, Sir Dennis [O'Connor] [Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary] was quoted in *The Times* today as saying that unless political and police leaders get a grip, policing the 2012 Olympics is going to be difficult.

My concern about this, Chair, is that the status of our recommendations -- I served on the Stockwell Panel which made a number of recommendations to the MPS. The ones the MPS did not like it simply ignored or, in its own words, it said, "Recommendation not adopted".

Also the Countryside Alliance march, which was over five years ago, the IPCC recommended that officers must always be identifiable. Now I know there is no question that anyone round the table does not think this should happen but the fact is that it has not happened and we are now in 2009 and have had the same problem and we get all sorts of excuses about budgets and pieces of equipment falling off and Velcro that does not work. The Head of Special Operations recently said to the SOP Committee that recommendations were just that; recommendations, and not obligations. So if we, as the

MPA, only have the right, having spent a lot of time and energy to make recommendations that are then ignored because they are not accepted, I just wonder how on earth we are going to be able to get a grip, as Sir Dennis [O'Connor] has said we need to.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Dee [Doocey]. Joanne [McCartney]?

Joanne McCartney (AM): Yes. First I want to ask whether you are going to accept the recommendations? Secondly, certainly after the G20 protests we had the separate climate camp during the summer where police tactics were very welcomed. Can I just ask, is that now going to be your default position? That is going to be the way you are now going to go forward and --

Boris Johnson (Chairman): The climate camp approach?

Joanne McCartney (AM): -- police demonstrations? Secondly, what are the two or three main things that have arisen from the report yesterday that you are going to put into place straightaway to give immediate reassurance?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. Any other questions about HMIC and G20? Thank you, Commissioner.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): OK. Well I think, as someone else has already said, I commissioned the report in the first place and, when I commissioned it, there were two broad areas that I asked and agreed with Dennis O'Connor they should look at. The first one was the tactic of containment and was it right and, if so, the way we practised it, could it be improved? Dennis [O'Connor] included that in his first report and I have accepted all the recommendations from his first report and we are implementing those. There is one recommendation, I think, out of the 12 that is a national recommendation and we are working on the national scene to do that.

I think, if I may say so, what we actually saw in climate camp was tangible evidence of the MPS working very quickly and accepting recommendations and putting them into action.

I wanted him to look at containment. But the second area we agreed he should look at was what I saw as the escalation of force; how we escalated that force, was that escalation right, look at the associated equipment and, critically, how we trained officers. That he has commented in depth on those areas neither surprises me or, I have to say, discomferts me. I would expect him to and it is largely in line with Dennis [O'Connor] and my originating discussion on this. So I do think it adds to our knowledge and I think it does take forward.

I will come back to the question of ACPO in a moment, Dee [Doocey], but the ACPO spokesman has said that this will be a significant report in taking public order policing forward. I entirely agree with that.

As I have mentioned, in terms of our response to the first report, it has been very positive. We are in the process of embedding all those recommendations that we can into our activity.

I think we have got to remember, and I think it touches on your point, Victoria [Borwick], that whilst the media have concentrated on the issues of negativity, there is actually quite some positive in there which I think we have already referred to at this Authority - and thank you for referring to it - the way in which we policed the climate camp.

It also comments on the fact that in normality, actually this sort of thing goes very well, and I think there is lots of evidence here in London, out of our 4,500 significant events every year, it is a tiny, tiny number actually, and not every year, where there are some significant difficulties. But that is what this report is about and how can we improve our response to that sort of difficulty. The report does recognise that the model we now deploy, since this first report, has been quite successful. In fact they use the word tangible success.

I think you are right; the second report focuses very much on the national and the issue about consistency of training across all forces, I think, is very important and I think you are absolutely right, it is important for the Olympics. If we are going to have to rely, to a greater or lesser extent - and we are still going through that process as you well know, Dee [Doocey] - on aid from other forces then we need to know that their training, their tactics and their preparation actually matches ours. That is not a criticism of other forces. It is a statement of fact. We do more of this than they do.

I would draw to your attention that HMIC did do an inspection of public order matters across the country, I think it was in January of this year, where, actually, the MPS came out as a green standard, which looked in the broad across public order. So we do need to ensure consistency and I am entirely supportive of that.

Striking the balance is always going to be difficult and there will, undoubtedly, some time in the future, be difficulties in public order. There will be difficulties. That is the nature of it. But if you ask me, "Is the way we policed climate camp the way forward?" Yes, it is. "Will we always achieve the same very, very good outcomes?" We will do our best to do it. Of course there has been public disorder throughout our history and we have to ensure that, not only do we deploy all those practices, tactics and improved communications to bring a satisfactory peaceful outcome where we protect the right of people to demonstrate - and a very important right - but, at the same time, protect the right of people to go shopping in Oxford Street, we need to make sure that we also do prepare officers for those eventualities when it does not go as well and we need to escalate the level of force used.

The issue of this report is how we escalate that force and how we get that delicate balance, when we escalate that force, of not going too early and not adopting equipment that actually inflames the situation.

So, from that point of view, I do accept the report. I think it adds to our knowledge. The evidence from the first report is we have already embedded those recommendations. This second report is very much about the national scene and we will be working very closely at the national scene to assist, guide and learn all in equal parts.

Turning specifically to the questions. I think I have answered yours, Jenny [Jones], and one of yours, Dee [Doocey]. Yes. We have implemented the first report and anything that is specifically for us to implement in the second report we will. But it is very much a national scene report as opposed to a MPS scene report and makes some complimentary comments about the MPS. Which I think deals with your question, Victoria [Borwick], if I may say so.

Dee [Doocey], I think I have dealt with to an extent your problem of national. This being important for the Olympics. I entirely agree. That is why, actually, I think we will work very hard with people to ensure these recommendations are implemented. But I do have some sympathy for much smaller forces. It is very difficult for them to grow and build capability in lots of areas of expertise when they do not enjoy the benefits of economies of scale that we might enjoy and also they are not deploying these tactics on a frequent basis. We do it a lot. Other forces will not. I think, nationally as these tactics are developed, the manual needs updating, the training needs to fit our intentions for the future but, in terms of training people across the range of skills and abilities, we need to ensure we are realistic about what we can expect from smaller forces. That is something we need to closely look at as we go towards the Olympics.

I will save ACPO until last, if I may, Dee [Doocey].

You commented on the fact that we have ignored recommendations. I do not think we have, Dee [Doocey]. I do not accept that. I do not think we have ignored recommendations. Dee [Doocey], we have not accepted recommendations. There is a whole deal of difference in language between not accepting and ignoring.

Dee Doocey (AM): Oh right.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I think there is a deal of difference, frankly. We have not ignored recommendations. There are some recommendations we have not accepted. Actually we have had that debate here before. Where it is an operational matter and our operational responsibility tells us that a recommendation - and I think it has been rarer than when we have accepted recommendations. Where we have a professional view that that is not the right thing to do, then it is right that we express it and under the legislation, as it stands, I am also accountable to the law for discharging operational matters. So it would be wrong of me to actually implement a

recommendation that we professionally thought was wrong and would lead to the wrong outcome.

So we do have the debate. We never ignore it. But there will be occasions when we have got to be honest about it and open about it and say we do not accept it. Under the legislation, as it stands, that is the appropriate balance.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): I think that is a fair linguistic distinction; between not ignoring and not accepting.

Dee Doocey (AM): Just so that we are clear. What we are talking about is the recommendation that officers should not confer, when writing up their notes, unless they were videoed or audio recorded. I absolutely agree that we should not interfere on operational matters. This is not an operational matter, just to be clear, so that everyone knows what we are talking about.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): To be absolutely clear, Dee [Doocey], of course there was action taken around that, that the IPCC has supported, where we have altered the procedure, whether we have gone to the full recommendation, but a huge amount of work had been done to change the national guidelines on this and we were at the start of that. So there have been significant parts put in place to make this better.

If I can turn to ACPO. I actually support Hugh Orde [President, ACPO] on this. I think Hugh Orde has a view that ACPO does need to reform its structures and the way in which it deals with matters. I have long had the view that ACPO is a very, very important body that I belong to and we need that level of consistence in professional voice. In doing so, there is a difference between that professional voice and having a proper governance if there is almost a temptation to get into pseudo discharge of executive functions. Hugh Orde is very aware of that, is conscious of it and it is his intention to look at that to try to ensure that ACPO properly complies with what it should be doing and ensures, where governance is required over the implementation of executive actions, that that sits with the right bodies. So I support Hugh Orde in his intention to actually look at what Dennis [O'Connor] is saying and I think he has welcomed what Dennis [O'Connor] has said about it; to actually look at ACPO's role.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): OK. Thank you very much. Any further questions on HMIC? No?

Jenny Jones (AM): Yes.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Jenny [Jones]?

Jenny Jones (AM): Could I just clarify; you are going to radically overhaul the training then for public order? Then other forces have to fall in line, do they not, basically?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): You choose the words radically overhaul. I am going to take the report and work nationally with everybody else to actually implement the recommendations. That is what I am going to do.

Jenny Jones (AM): OK. That is great. I would just like to say you have set your bar very high. This is not really for me to say; I would have thought one of the Conservatives would have said this for you. You set the bar very high when you say that the climate camp in the summer at Greenwich is actually going to dictate future policing because that was actually a very particular set of circumstances. I do not want us all coming back here and saying, “You said”.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): No, Jenny [Jones], I did not say that would dictate. I said, “Yes, that would set a way forward” but I also said we have got to recognise that, on occasion, that will not work and we have got to make sure we train officers for the situations where there will be disorder. We have got to make sure we do that in a way that is sustainable and in a way we can account for it and, actually, we come out on the other side of accountability saying, “We did the best we possibly could in a professional manner”. So it will not always work that way but we will try very hard, based on the recommendations, to get that sort of result.

Jenny Jones (AM): Great.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Good. Any more questions or points about HMIC? I am obliged. Who is next? Who wants to ask a question next? James [Cleverly]?

James Cleverly (AM): Thank you, Chairman. I want to ask a question specifically about a recent report. I mentioned it at Mayor’s Question Time but I would like, if possible, to get a little bit more detail here about the volumes of violent crimes and assaults at accident and emergency (A&E) departments at hospitals. It was something which was highlighted as a concern. There are two elements to this that, if possible, I would like to explore.

Firstly there was an implication that there was fairly systematic and dramatic under reporting of incidents at A&E and I was wondering if it was possible for you to see if there is anything we can do to get an accurate picture of the scale of the problem?

Also, particularly in light of the fact that we are moving towards the Christmas period where excessive alcohol consumption is often the norm, that we can look at getting an increased policing presence in those A&E departments to provide both reassurance to the national health service (NHS) staff but also reassurance to other people who might be using A&E departments that they are, in fact, safe and secure and they are not going to be overflowing with rowdy drunken people.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, James [Cleverly].

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I think I misunderstood the question in the first place. This is actually about assaults in A&E?

James Cleverly (AM): Assaults in A&E. Yes.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I cannot answer you about the figures about assaults in A&E. I will happily go away and seek the figures but the figures will be with the health service. They will be with me but whether we actually categorise them and can throw them out in that way. We will work with you to find out what the figures are.

I have said it - and I am not being flippant - but I said it at the last meeting that Christmas is not a surprise to anybody and should not be a surprise to any borough commanders in deploying their assets to deal with the problems we traditionally have. Yes, you are right; traditionally there is an increase in a certain amount of merriment that goes far too far.

We want to be able to ensure we can support, not just our professional colleagues in the health service, but actually deploy our asset anywhere where the crime is going to be so we can prevent the crime. We have also got to be very careful that we do not actually start using publicly funded police officers to be security guards when the health service itself has a responsibility to, first place, look after its own security. So it is that balance.

I will be very reluctant to commit here to deploying police officers in all the A&E departments across London to a greater level than we perhaps already do. Happy to look at it but I think we have got to be very careful in the way in which we make sure we spread the number of police officers we have got to give benefit to the whole community and make sure that all organisations, including public sector organisations, do what they should be doing responsibly to ensure that they are looking after the security of their staff. I am sure they are already doing that - that is not a criticism - but I would be loathe to make any commitment around it.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Is that OK, James [Cleverly]?

James Cleverly (AM): Yes. Understood.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): OK. Good. Thank you. I have got Valerie [Brasse] and then Graham [Speed].

Valerie Brasse (AM): Thank you. Two questions from me. The first one relating to burglaries. Clearly that is proving a tremendous challenge right across London and your own figures suggest that it has decreased by only 1.3% in the first six months of this year and that reduction is falling, as it were. In my Link Borough it is up, figures year to date - this is Hounslow - something like 13% which is horrendous actually and they are clearly throwing everything they have at it. But one of the interesting things to have emerged from their analysis of what is going on in Hounslow is that where we might think this is opportunistic and home grown burglars doing what they do and occasionally

there would be people coming from across the border, as it were, they are finding that there are a significant number of teams that are moving in from right across the other side of London. So there would be burglars appearing from Greenwich and from the east part of London.

I wondered whether this is a completely new phenomenon or whether this is par for the course across London and, therefore, how the reaction, how we are dealing with that and what support you are able to give the local boroughs in handling these export/import of burglary teams? They are obviously exporting their burglars too. So is this something new?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Valerie [Brasse]. Any other questions that people want to raise on burglary? Chris [Boothman]; on burglary?

Christopher Boothman (AM): Yes. It was not so much a question; it was more a comment. We actually heard at the JEMs yesterday about the situation in Barnet and I just wanted to thank the Commissioner for the additional support that is being provided in Barnet by way of Operation Bumblebee because I am aware that that is one of the initiatives that is being used to support, where there are local problems, to come in and provide additional support.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. Thank you, Chris [Boothman].

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): If I can thank Chris [Boothman] for answering part of Valerie's [Brasse] question for me! There is additional support through Operation Bumblebee, the task force, where we are trying to support those boroughs that are, if you will, at the highest end of the increase. We have been rolling them out across those boroughs at this moment in time and it has had an effect in those boroughs where we have put the task force in and when we have put the strong box operations in, it is having an effect. Certainly, it is significantly increasing the rate at which we are arresting burglars and charging them.

So that support is available but, of course, boroughs do have to look to this problem themselves and make sure their analysis of intelligence identifies to them what is the source of the problem.

I think I did discuss at the last Authority, Valerie [Brasse], the actual issue you are raising; the mobility of burglars. There are different problems in different boroughs. Is the rise in burglary in some boroughs, might part of the issue be down to the economy? Yes, it might, but not in whole. Might part of the issue in some outer boroughs be down to forces outside of the MPS upping their game and burglars actually travelling from outside the MPS into the MPS? That might be part of the problem. Are there burglars travelling across London? Yes, there always have been. So there is a different sort of problem --

Valerie Brasse (AM): That is not new and it has not increased in any particular way?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): No. It could increase because of the economy. We have seen an increase. We think --

Valerie Brasse (AM): I am not talking about the numbers. It is the export and import bit that I was getting at and whether that affects the way you do your intervention and support boroughs?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): What affects the way we do our intervention is our intelligence, which we then analyse, to say, "What is the source of the problem?" The increase in burglary will be down to a number of factors and what we should not do is try to apply one simple solution from the centre. Operation Bumblebee is about assisting boroughs, with some additional asset, but also with the ability to analyse their problems, be they problems from the actual committal side or problems from the way in which we are doing enforcement.

Valerie Brasse (AM): OK.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you.

Valerie Brasse (AM): I had a second question. Am I able to do that? This relates to domestic violence. There was a review I think, the ACPO led review, on whether or not to establish a register of domestic violence offenders. I think the upshot of that was a recommendation that there should be such a register and that details of that register would be released to people who only had a need to know, ie new partners. The press reporting around that suggested there was quite a bit of division, deep division, among ACPO ranks as to whether we should have such a register and I just wondered, Commissioner, what your view was on that?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Well, firstly, I am a huge supporter of the work that this Authority has done and the MPS has done, over a number of years, around domestic violence. To come from a position - and I can speak nationally about this - where the police did not have a good tale to tell, to a position where we have improved our game considerably but there is always more to do. We have spoken before about the effect on homicide rates of actually intervening around domestic violence and a better understanding of it. As you know, it is a very complex event where enforcement is not always the only answer.

As for the Chief Constable in another force, Brian Moore, led review, it is a lengthy document, it is a weighty document and we are looking at it and considering it, but it is not simple and straightforward, in my opinion.

It is for us to look at the problem, analyse the problem and inform the public debate when somebody is suggesting a significant change like this. This is not one for one police force to implement on its own, in my opinion, because this goes to the heart of the debate of the balance between civil liberties and security. It is for me to ensure that debate is

informed, with a professional view of how effective it might be, and it is for others to actually decide where the balance sits between civil liberties and security. On occasion, senior police officers have looked like they are trying to make the decision as well. Ultimately that is for Parliament and it should do its job and I should do mine.

I do not know where I sit on this debate at this moment in time. I see the need to ensure that where we have people who we know, through intelligence and previous reporting, represent a danger, then we have got to implement (inaudible). It is always dangerous sharing thoughts without thinking it through but I think we have got to be very careful that we do not implement a system that then sees some sort of general leakage into further databases and further reporting around people who have not been convicted and who have not, yet, come to a certain threshold where there might be certain other interventions. I think it is a balanced debate, I think it is an important debate and we should be able to have the debate without taking positions that are based on mere prejudice. Actually what I want to do --

Valerie Brasse (AM): I am sure this Authority will look forward to participating in that debate.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): -- is see the report.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you very much, Valerie [Brasse]. Graham [Speed]?

Graham Speed (AM): Yes. Thank you, Chairman. A comment first and then a question. First a comment regarding Operation Minstead. I am very conscious of the sensitive position of the proceedings but I think it would be remiss not to acknowledge the positive progress that has been made. There will, clearly, need to be a review, from which I would be interested to see lessons that can be learned but that, I think, is for a later date. I think it would be opportune to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the team that have been involved with his for many, many years and the success which this has brought, so far.

Moving on to a question. I think it is important to recognise the successes that have been achieved in respect of reducing knife crime and the figures that we looked at earlier acknowledge that. I think a large part of that is related to the work around Operation Blunt 2 and the associated works. I am interested to learn whether you feel that there is any displacement that is coming from this? This really goes in two directions. I think one is the dangerous dogs side of things where we have seen a significant increase in the use of dangerous dogs used as a weapon rather than a knife. I think that is being tackled as well as we can.

But my concern really is around gun crime. Are we seeing a displacement from knives into guns? It is not very scientific but if we look at the daily review that we get in terms of the events of significance over the previous 24 hours, it seems to me that we are seeing less incidents involving knives but more involving guns where guns have been evidently discharged and sometimes people have been shot. Not so much by way of fatality but it

seems to be being used, an increasing amount, as a weapon. Do you think that there is any link between the two? Is it a separate phenomenon? Are we succeeding in one area but now are being challenged in another? If that is the case, how might we tackle that?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Graham [Speed]. Commissioner?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Interesting. I know there is a *Guardian* journalist who has done a blog about this that I should be asked this specific question, “Is there any cross over?” This is an issue I raised with this Authority, I think, back in July and I think there was a conversation here about was there a link between the rise in gun crime - a natural question to be asked. Every piece of research we have done suggests to us there is no link, there is no passage of one to the other and that they are different phenomena, but we have always got to be alive to that possibility.

Giving an answer now and saying that applies for evermore would be a pretty dumb thing to do. We have got to constantly keep looking at the nature of these offences to see is the action we are taking in one area of policing, knife crime, having an effect on the other? At this moment in time we do not think so. We think the increase in gun crime is mainly due to that crazy respect thing that seems to go on and face, but also gun enabled robbery. That is not where we are saying the homicide knife crimes at one point; not in the main, there might be some. So we do not think there is a link there. We are keeping it under close review. We think what we are doing under knife crime is the right thing. What we have got to do is make sure that what we are doing about gun enabled crime is properly targeted at that.

If you remember, I think at the last Authority, whilst I fully acknowledge there is a problem on gun enabled crime and I am very concerned about it, trying to get a context around that is that the increase this year, I think, is slightly less than the decrease last year. If we look at a five year total we are still at - and we certainly were at the last Authority - the second lowest recorded total. That does not mean I am complacent but we have kind of lost the ground of last year on gun crime.

We are putting a lot of activity and a lot of operations in trying to combat that but it is a real problem to us and it is a concern, but I do not see a linkage at this moment in time, but we will keep that under very close review.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Graham [Speed]?

Graham Speed (AM): When I started to get involved more actively in policing, perhaps about five years ago, I remember attending any number of conferences and seminars and the issue at that time was gun crime and knives were not the significant issue that they are now. A lot of work went into that at that time, particularly related to Operation Trident and the success of that seemed to bear fruit. I guess we are looking at, perhaps, two trends that are operating over a much longer timeframe but not necessarily a displacement, but those people that are being discouraged from carrying one form of weapon may turn to others. Thank you for that.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. Any more on that subject? Chris [Boothman] and Cindy [Butts]?

Christopher Boothman (AM): I would just like to ask what effort is being put into reducing the availability of guns? I think I agree with you that the kind of people that carry guns are very different from the kind of people that carry knives. I am not sure how you get to people that carry guns, frankly. What I would like to be assured is that we are doing as much as we can to reduce the opportunities to acquire guns.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Chris [Boothman], I could not agree with you more --

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Can I just bring in Cindy [Butts]?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): My apologies.

Cindy Butts (AM): Graham [Speed] has actually raised the very two issues that I wanted to raise, namely Operation Minstead and the issue of gun crime. You talked, Commissioner, about not discovering any discernable link between knife crime and gun crime and I recall having asked you to do a piece of analysis at the July meeting and I wonder whether your response to Graham [Speed] that there was no link was as a result of the analysis that you did, because you said you would share it with me? So I am just wondering whether, or not, you had done that and that is what it revealed, because I would not mind having a look at that?

The other thing is on this issue of Operation Minstead. Of course it appears, at first glance, that that is a very positive step. Now what I wanted to ask was whether or not, in time, you could reveal to us whether or not DNA played any significant role in the arrest and subsequent actions that might arise from that arrest? I am very conscious that, for 17 years, the community of south London and, in particular, the black and minority ethnic community, had a lot of difficulties in the way in which that operation was conducted and I think it would be fair to say that, over time, I think the MPS worked very hard to try to ensure that those communities were on board and on side.

I think a significant demonstration of that community engagement was, in fact, a number of young black men who came forward, voluntarily, to give their DNA. I would be extremely interested to understand what part that played in that case, in particular, in view of the fact that the Human Genetics Commission issued its report, either this week or last week, which raised some concerns about the use of the DNA database moving from a database of suspects to a database of people arrested. I wondered whether you could comment on that quite worrying assertion?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Cindy [Butts]. Anybody else want to come in on Operation Minstead and DNA? No? Thank you.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Chris [Boothman], in response to your question, I could not agree with you more. The issue really is, whilst we can do something about people with guns, that is almost acting after the fact or after we have got the problem. Tackling firearms before they reach street level is, and should be, a significant priority.

Our best intelligence is that, despite what sometimes we might read, it is not as easy as people might suspect to obtain good quality firearms illegally. Of course some have the ability to do that and you do not need many to create a significant outcome in terms of shots fired, people injured and even fatalities. The Serious Organised Crime Agency certainly has a lead responsibility, I think it is fair to say, Tim [Godwin], in actually dealing with that on the national and international level but we are constantly looking at what more could be done around the availability of firearms before they actually get into the hands of criminals. So I think it is a critical point.

Cindy [Butts], is my response to the linkage based on the review? Yes. Ever since I raised it with this Authority and we had the discussion at this Authority and you asked for further work that is just an ongoing piece of work. Happy to share what we have got with you but I am very careful around this to say that, at this moment in time, we do not see the linkage but I would not come to a conclusion now that there never could be a linkage, or it could not morph or something we might be doing might create a linkage. To the best of our ability based intelligence information now, and our study, there is no linkage. I will happily share the various work we have done. Tim [Godwin], I will ask you to have a conversation outside here. Quite happy to do that.

In terms of Operation Minstead. We could have had a conversation about some of the issues you raise in more detail before that arrest and charge than we can now. I am incredibly cautious in fact. I know that you will accept this; this is no part of mine to do anything that could undermine whatever judicial process might follow now and I do not think we can, publicly, at this moment in time, have any conversation around that and certainly I will not engage in it.

But what I can give you an assurance is there is no major operation or major investigation that would not be reviewed, unlike this. This will be the subject of major review and I know this will be the subject of further discussion here and, at that stage, when we can do that, the questions you are raising are absolutely legitimate questions and they must form part of that review and the discussion back with this Authority.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Commissioner. I am going to go to Faith [Boardman] now.

Faith Boardman (AM): Thank you. I wanted to ask two questions; one around the confidence indicators and one around use of resources. On the first I would like to congratulate you for what is clearly quite a significant improvement in the confidence indicators which are obviously a critical target, but also to register that I am a bit puzzled because of the movements, which are either negative or volatile or stable, around other

satisfaction measures like victim satisfaction and confidence that people will be treated with respect. That just seems a little bit odd as a dichotomy. Could you explain it?

On the use of resources. I am aware that the HMIC is likely to release the value for money profile for the MPS in December. Having talked to colleagues in other police authorities who have already received their profiles it seems to me that is likely to provide some very useful information and is likely to raise a lot of questions, whether it will provide solutions I am not so sure, but in seeking to look at those questions perhaps we can find solutions. I would like to ask how you are intending to use that information within the MPS and alongside the Authority?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Faith [Boardman], I am going to choose to respond to the first part of what you raise personally. I will accept your thanks and then, for the rest of it, I am going to move it on to Tim Godwin. He can now trade and explain your confusion but also, in particular, the resources issue because that is coming under Tim [Godwin] and Anne [McMeel] at this moment in time.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Confidence indicators are going up in terms of not only the measures in relation to the police but in terms of the criminal justice system as a whole for London. We have the highest confidence in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in the country at the moment here. It is still just under 50%, at 49.8%, but it is nearly at halfway. There is nothing that we should be proud of in that; we should be a lot, lot better than that.

In terms of the satisfaction which is the point you specifically raise, that is a user satisfaction in relation to victims and normally that translates into traffic crashes where we do not respond to damage only and we push those to insurance companies. That is generally where the expectation of the citizens of London is that we will do more than that and sometimes it is a communication issue. But, in reality, we have been looking at the shift that we have just had and it is actually satisfaction of victims of violence that is actually slipped on this occasion, which concerns us greatly, so we have kicked off some more work. One of the things that we are conscious of is that we have got long listing times in terms of crown court trials now so sometimes the victim can be waiting for some significant months before they will see justice done and that is one of the things that we are raising through the London Criminal Justice Board. It is early doors yet but we are actually trying to unpick that to understand that better.

In terms of the value for money (VFM) profile, we have not had it yet. I am awaiting it from **Bernard**(?). We are slightly more challenging, being a regional force, with things like protective services and the counter terrorism and the serious crime that others do not have and some of the capital city functions which is why I know it is delayed. But as soon as we get that it is shared with the Authority as well so I am sure we will be having a debate around it.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. I am going next to Toby [Harris]. He indicated some time ago he wanted to come in.

Toby Harris (AM): Could I ask the Commissioner about the Human Rights Watch report which was published yesterday which alleges that British officials and agents appear to have been complicit in torture in Pakistan. I know that the former Chair of the Authority, Len Duvall, asked specifically for assurances, when these issues surfaced before, that no MPS officers were present, aware of or spoke to people who had been tortured afterwards without saying anything and so on. I think, from what I can see of the Human Rights Watch report, that this is a slightly more specific report in that it names four individuals and refers to a fifth case. At least one of the individuals I can recall being of considerable interest to the MPS. I am really asking the Commissioner, if not today but fairly soon, if he can give an assurance that no MPS officer could be deemed to be amongst the British officials and agents which it is being alleged were complicit in torture in those cases?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Toby [Harris].

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I have absolutely no reason to believe so but I hear your offer to go away and have a look at this and come back with an assurance. I will do that.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Kirsten [Hearn]?

Kirsten Hearn (AM): I was trying to be tidy about confidence. The thing that concerns me is, with Operation Minstead, obviously the issues have hit the headlines again, the terrible crimes against very elderly and very vulnerable people. I would like to know what you are putting in place to actually reassure older people that they are safe?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): The Deputy will answer that.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): One of the things of the ongoing operation is that we anticipate a number of other victims will come forward and the whole infrastructure is in place to receive that and to help with that, working closely with local authorities and others in terms of making those approaches. One of the other things that we have found, in terms of burglary, is that we have an increase - and obviously this operation was a burglary operation that involved rape - in burglaries that target some of the vulnerable. So all the boroughs are picking that up and working with local authorities to try to get those messages out.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Tim [Godwin]. John [Biggs]?

John Biggs (AM): It was, hopefully, just a quickie. A one and a half part question. I have asked this before about how we develop partnership working in boroughs. I was asking a question specifically about joint tasking. We got a briefing about examples of good practice but it did not really talk about whether we were developing a model for joint tasking and I would be interested to hear about that.

The other half thing I was interested in is how - and maybe a briefing on this would be welcome, just so we can understand the thinking - we might think through developing relationships between ourselves and the CPS on a local level. That is an interesting and, potentially, dangerous area. For example, when one talks in local partnerships, there is always an interest in whether there is consistency or appropriateness in decisions and recommendations to the CPS based on local circumstances, so something which causes great concern and anxiety in a particular neighbourhood or a particular borough and may warrant proceeding to prosecution, for example, an, in another area, may be relatively innocuous. There is an interesting interface between the criminal justice system and its impartiality and the fact that it is a tool that helps to facilitate safer and better conducted neighbourhoods. I was wondering whether the Commissioner had anything to say about that or could provide anything to us on that, or whether it was too dangerous an area to talk about, but I think it is a matter of continuing topical interest.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, John [Biggs].

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Chairman, if I can pass that to Tim [Godwin], particularly because of the criminal justice system. We will happily write back to you and give you the information but Tim [Godwin] might be able to provide some comments now as he leads on criminal justice nationally.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): The Crown Prosecution Service is creating a new position called the Community Prosecutor whose task will be to engage at Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) level and to actually pick up the key issues that are of concern in that community, that they can then take decisions based on the impact. They are being rolled out and their roles are being defined. There is a challenge in relation to the amount of prosecutors that we have. One of the things in terms of taking the decisions that we were talking about with Clive [Lawton] earlier, about putting more cases through the court, is you need more prosecutors in the court to actually do the prosecutions.

In terms of consistency of decision making they are just changing the whole charging system as well in relation to it being a CPS direct charging service so not a face to face other than for serious crime. So there is a lot going on in that world. One of the things that the Crown Prosecution Service is keen to do is to make that link with CDRPs. In developing a partnership model there are a range of good practices that often fit within local circumstance at CDRPs. That is one of the pieces of work that is going on within territorial policing as part of its review and reform in terms of what is coming around neighbourhood policing as well and we can certainly brief you on all those things.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Tim [Godwin]. I think we have had a pretty good go at the Commissioner's report and I propose we move on, therefore, to item number seven; budget and policing in London.

Annabel Adams (Acting Treasurer, MPA): Members are being asked to approve the budget and the business plan for 2010/11 before it is forwarded on to the Mayor

tomorrow. The budget is in line with the Mayoral guidance for 2010/11 but, for the following two years, we have a gap of £111 million and £145 million respectively. The business plan was discussed last week at a joint meeting between Finance and Resources (F&R) and SOP and a supplementary paper summarising the discussions has also been circulated for Members.

You should also have in front of you an amended business plan which has incorporated the changes which were also discussed at the joint meeting in relation to Met Forward. In essence, symbols reflecting the various strands of Met Forward are now incorporated throughout the business plan so that you can better see the linkages between Met Forward and the business plan.

Finally, I would just like to say that Members are also being asked to note my statement on the robustness of the estimates and the reserves and also to approve the response to the Mayor's draft confirming budget letter. I do not know if Anne [McMeel] wanted to add anything?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you.

Anne McMeel (Director of Resources, MPS): Chairman, it might be helpful just to remind Members that this is part of the wider process with the Mayor and, in fact, there will be more reports coming to the Authority in the New Year, once the Mayor has set the overall financial limit for the Authority in terms of finalising the overall budget and business plan and work will be continuing with MPA officers on the reports up until that point.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Anne [McMeel]. Any comments on the budget? Yes, John [Biggs]?

John Biggs (AM): At risk of being overly pedantic but it is quite an important issue for me I guess. I am the Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee which will have to consider the representations and budgets from all of the functional bodies and, in that role, I am very happy to note that this is a budget that appears to be consistent with the guidance that has been issued by your great Mayor, but I may want to reserve, for myself, individually - and maybe my Party group would as well - our discretion to explore other issues about policies and priorities and the guidance that was issued with which it is consistent.

So, in terms of a clean decision, I am very happy that the budget in front of us appears to be consistent with what you have asked the Authority to do. I played some role in discussions about that but I would not want to blunt my sabre, if you like, in later discussions on the wider policy issues.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, John [Biggs]. I am sure your sabre will never be blunted in these matters! Brilliant. I propose therefore that the MPA -- thank you, Jenny [Jones]?

Jenny Jones (AM): You are just waiting for us to ask questions are you now? Is this the moment?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Yes.

Jenny Jones (AM): I have got a slight problem with this and it does seem to me there are a lot of things we do not know. For me there are things I know that I do not like and then there are things I do not know that I probably will not like. This is no offence to Anne [McMeel] at all, whom I know is a fantastic officer, but it is more about we all have different interests and we all want to drill down into the budget and it is very difficult for us to do that, to actually find out. Plus, of course, even when we have voted it through, there is no guarantee that anything we care about will actually exist in there beyond the moment it is voted through.

For example, I care very much about losing the road safety work. I think that is a huge mistake. That is all about saving lives. It is all about catching criminals. That was the point of the question I asked you earlier; the fact that of the 4,000 disqualified drivers - this is what I am told by Marlow House - 75% of them are career criminals. So we are losing things that actually help us catch criminals and in a relatively painless way; for driving offences. I have, many times, said that there are ways that we can make up the money, that we can afford to pay for these things, that are relatively small amounts of money.

One of the issues that I have talked about a lot is overtime because I do think the overtime should have fallen quite a bit considering, over the past few years, we have gained so many police officers and yet the overtime still seems to ratchet up. I did look at some of the overtime and I cannot quite get the rationale behind who can afford the cuts, which unit can afford the cuts. For example, Central Operations can only afford a cut of 1.72% on overtime. So they seem as if they are rather protective and I am curious about that. Then the Resources Directorate, for example, is able to make cuts of nearly 9%. Good for them. How are they able to do that and others not? Then of course there is Public Affairs who have cut overtime by about 3%. Apparently that is one person. They are losing one member of staff. I do not know if these are press officers. Do we really need 75 people in Public Affairs?

I do not know what the rationale is behind who can make the cuts and I am only talking about overtime; there must be stacks of other areas that other people know about. When we are expecting boroughs all to give us 5% cuts and we have to answer to the communities out there when they start complaining about these cuts so we have to justify 5% cuts in the boroughs. For example, Tim [Godwin], your Deputy Commissioner portfolio, apparently you have only got 1% cut to your overtime. I am sure you all work very, very hard.

What is the rationale? How can we support this budget when we do not know what is happening, really happening, or how you will spend it afterwards, once we have passed it?

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): Jenny [Jones], to be honest, I find that --

Jenny Jones (AM): Depressing?

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): -- hard to take, given that I have stressed again and again that the Finance Committee is under weighted with Members. If you want to drill down and get answers to those questions then it is perfectly possible for you to sit on the Finance Committee that, month after month, grinds away at the numbers, looks at them in detail and does that kind of scrutiny. You had a Members' briefing --

Jenny Jones (AM): You might have all the time in the world, Kit [Malthouse], but I do not.

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): -- where it was perfectly possible for you to raise those matters in detail. The full weight of the finance department were there, ready with all their papers to answer those detailed questions, and --

Jenny Jones (AM): I have asked many questions.

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): -- this budget has been through several meetings which you are perfectly free to attend. So it is quite odd to turn up at the last minute and start raising questions saying that somehow all the other people who have been working on it have not drilled down into it. What I suggest, Jenny [Jones] --

Jenny Jones (AM): I do not think it is possible for any ...

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): -- is that you go on the Finance Committee and do some of the work.

Jenny Jones (AM): It is not possible for any number of people drilling down to cover everything because the budget is vast. It is vast.

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): The Finance Committee seems to have confidence in the budget otherwise they would not have put it forward. There was a joint meeting last week that approved it and put it forward.

Jenny Jones (AM): I would like to reiterate the point that whatever we agree --

Kit Malthouse AM (Vice-Chairman): Now if you are saying that other Members' work is defective then you should say that.

Jenny Jones (AM): -- is not valid beyond the moment of our agreeing it. It can be changed.

Steve O'Connell (AM): The Joint Committee last week pored through it and made recommendations. Jenny [Jones], we are under staffed on the Committee. You are very, very welcome to join our Committee.

Jenny Jones (AM): I would love to and I did try and you stopped me, Steve [O'Connell]. You would not have me on your Committee.

Steve O'Connell (AM): I would not dream of it. I am the most collegiate person I know. I would not have dreamt of doing such a thing.

Jenny Jones (AM): Do you remember? A year ago you refused to let me on your Committee last year.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Are you volunteering now to serve on the Finance Committee?

Jenny Jones (AM): I am not because I am on Strategic Operations now and I am involved in that work.

Steve O'Connell (AM): Come to Budget as well.

Jenny Jones (AM): You might have the time to do it but I do not.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Toby [Harris]?

Toby Harris (AM): Chairman, can I just clarify what it is that Jenny [Jones] is asking about?

Jenny Jones (AM): Well could you clarify the answers?

Toby Harris (AM): No. I would like to be clear because it seems we are getting hung up about there was an opportunity to ask questions and whether Jenny [Jones] availed herself of that. What it sounds as though Jenny [Jones] is concerned about is more a question of saying, "We agree a budget and then the MPS goes and spends the money on something else" because it is just agreed at a snapshot of time.

Now I understood there was very clear guidance in terms of the need to approve virement from one head to another. So could we just have clarity about arrangements for virement and the fact that then has to be approved by the Finance Committee rather than just say that there is a snapshot and then the MPS go off and spend money on something else?

Boris Johnson (Chairman): That is the question. What is the answer? How do we stop virement happening? Annabel [Adams]?

Annabel Adams (Acting Treasurer, MPA): I can help on that. The budget will go for final approval, I think it is either in February or March of this year and after that we do have monthly monitoring reports and all virements above £2 million have to be agreed by the Finance and Resources Committee. The monitoring report does also pick up on the budget movements that have happened.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Good

Jenny Jones (AM): For example, the human trafficking team is less than £900,000 so that would not get picked up in that way. Can I have the answer to the other part of my question which is the rationale for only having a 1% cut in some places and a 9% cut in others?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I do have to say I am quite happy to answer any questions but I think every business group has been through this Authority's scrutiny process and to answer that in isolation of the rest is just, frankly, impossible, Jenny [Jones].

Boris Johnson (Chairman): I really think that there has been ample opportunity for the MPA, in its various Committees, and Jenny [Jones] for you, to look through this and to make your points --

Jenny Jones (AM): I disagree.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): -- and really I would ask, for the sake of time and good order, that the MPA does now -- I will take one more question from Joanne [McCartney].

Joanne McCartney (AM): I want to make two points really. One is that I think, in this budget and, to some extent, last year we had two issues; road safety and human trafficking which are touch stones issues to many people because they do send out strong messages and they are units and work that people have fought long and hard for out there, both Members round here but also in the public. I just think there are still some unanswered questions.

I welcome what you have said today about engaging as in the options for the human trafficking and I think, with regard to the road safety, a lot of that is because Transport for London has pulled some partnership funding. I think both Jenny [Jones] and I are still concerned about whether this body is then taking the full scope and quality of that work back in-house. That is the concern and that is still the unanswered questions that we have. So I hope, over the next couple of months, we can get some answers to that.

I wanted to raise a third issue though on the MPA budget itself. I think some of us are getting calls and communications from the independent custody visiting schemes about their concern on the reorganisation. I have talked to Clive [Lawton]. I think we have to mention that today because it is part of the budget, that perhaps we should have some of

those representatives at our next Sub-Committee meeting to hear their concerns and we can take those issues there.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): OK. Well I am sure that will be possible. Thank you, Joanne McCartney. I think we should, if possible MPA, try to approve this draft draft budget in the knowledge that any future virement, Toby [Harris], will have to be taken back to us. All right? Thank you so much.

Jenny Jones (AM): I am voting against it. I am not going to vote for something that I still do not agree with.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): That is your privilege.

Jenny Jones (AM): Thank you.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you. We go therefore to item eight. Sorry, Clive [Lawton]?

Clive Lawton (AM): Chairman, you referred to the budget and, of course that includes the plan. Just before we move on from that may I just say, first of all, I applaud and appreciate that the plan has attempted to signpost the correlations between the plan and Met Forward. That is a very helpful step forward. But it seems to me it is still not quite there. I am not trying to reopen the discussion for now but it seems to me it is not quite there. The plan does not quite overlay. It makes reference to and cross-refers but it does not quite overlay the strategic perception and is ultimately unhelpful in terms of holding things to account and determining, "Did we do what we intended to do and does it fall under this heading or that heading?" So I hope that, as we plan forward into next year, we really do try to ensure that, in future, the plan actually enables us to determine have we done that Met Forward thing or have we not or how much resource have we devoted to that and why? There is an opacity because of the lack of correlation between the two articulations.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Clive [Lawton]. I thoroughly agree with that. Any more comments? No.

Item number eight therefore which is reports from Committees. Anybody want to raise anything with the Committees? There being no questions. I do not see. Any questions to Committees? Victoria [Borwick]?

Victoria Borwick (AM): I just wanted to mention briefly the Civil Liberties Panel because obviously, since we met, we had the open meeting and thank you very much indeed to all of you who attended, which was very interesting.

We are now, as a result of that, going to have a meeting with some of the press and the bloggers. I think they have put themselves at a lot of risk because they demand that the MPS observe their press cards at all times and yet I think sometimes do not realise the

risk they are putting themselves under. So I think that is going to be an interesting debate.

We are also due to have a further meeting with the HMIC and the Independent Police Complaints Committee. I did welcome the second part of the report because certainly, from my visit yesterday, up **in Nottingham**(?) on behalf of Kit [Malthouse]. It was very interesting to see the work that had been done by other police force similar to our own. The big problem did come up about the consistency, particularly, when we were providing mutual aid. So thank you very much.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): Thank you, Victoria [Borwick], for what you are doing on the Civil Liberties Panel.

Is there any other business?

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): Can I just remind Members - I am sure they do not need to be reminded - that the inspection team will be on site from next Monday and we have briefing packs for Members which we will hand out after this meeting.

Boris Johnson (Chairman): OK. Thank you. Look forward to the inspections. Thank you very much MPA.

The meeting closed at 11.44 a.m.