

Transcript of the meeting of the Metropolitan Police Authority held on Thursday, 25 February 2010 at 10.00am in the Chamber, City Hall, SE1.

Present:

Members:

Kit Malthouse (Chairman)

Tony Arbour, Jennette Arnold, John Biggs, Faith Boardman, Victoria Borwick, Valerie Brasse, Cindy Butts, James Cleverly, Dee Doocey, Toby Harris, Neil Johnson, Jenny Jones, Clive Lawton, Joanne McCartney, Steve O'Connell, Caroline Pidgeon and Graham Speed.

MPA Officers:

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive), Jane Harwood (Assistant Chief Executive) and Bob Atkins (Treasurer).

MPS Officers:

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner) and Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner).

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Let us make a start. We have got a fair amount to get through this morning. We have had a number of apologies for absence from ...

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): Reshard Auladin, Christopher Boothman, Kirsten Hearn, Deborah Regal and Richard Tracey.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Thank you. Can I have any declarations of interest for the meeting? No, other than those noted. Minutes of the last meeting: does anybody have any points they want to raise on the minutes? Can I sign those as a true record?

All: Agreed.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Thank you. Chairman and Vice-Chairman updates. The Vice-Chairman is not here but in the 21 days since we last met I have attended or chaired 46 meetings in my capacity and had a week's holiday. The next item is the Commissioner's report

Toby Harris (AM): Are we supposed to be impressed?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): No. I gathered that the number of meetings one attends is a sign of success on this Authority so I am happy to --

Jenny Jones (AM): It is the quality of meeting. Do you want to enlarge?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Is that right? That is not what it said on the press releases but there we are. Commissioner's report.

Jenny Jones (AM): Have you met with the Home Secretary, for example?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): No.

Jenny Jones (AM): Do I have to name everybody you might have met? Well, have you met the Shadow Home Secretary?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): I am conscious that Members seem concerned that it was the number of meetings one has attended rather than what they were about. I am happy in future to give an update that includes some of the meetings. The Oxford Policy Foundation Forum on Policing and Drugs; I chaired the Greenwich GEM; addressed delegates to the London Problem-Oriented Partnership Awards; addressed the Strategic Command Course twice; the Safer Westminster Partnership Executive; chaired the second meeting of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Gangs Panel; had my quarterly meeting with London Councils and with various police representatives. There were a number of internal and external meetings that were held on top of that too. That has been the activity in the 21 days.

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): Perhaps I ought formally to record, Chair, that you are now formally the Chair and that Reshard Auladin was also confirmed by the Assembly and we have had formal confirmation of that from the Assembly.

Jenny Jones (AM): Congratulations.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Thank you. The other small item business that we might actually deal with at this stage is to note that Tony Arbour has expressed interest in joining the Strategic and Operational Policing Committee and the Human Resources (HR) and Remuneration Subcommittee. Is the Authority happy to approve those appointments up until the annual meeting in June this year, please?

Jenny Jones (AM): I thought we had a problem with the Finance Committee. Shouldn't Tony [Arbour] go on the Finance Committee?

Steve O'Connell (AM): Both of us needed money.

Jenny Jones (AM): You do not want him either?

Steve O’Connell (AM): A very early welcome to Tony [Arbour] but, quite rightly, Tony has chosen where his areas of expertise will be best employed.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): We have tried but ...

John Biggs (AM): I did think we had too many people on Strategic and Operational Policing (SOP) which is one of the reasons I did not go on to it.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): We have rotated a couple of people off, John [Biggs]. This is going to be a constant theme, I think, for the next two years about who sits on what committees.

John Biggs (AM): So you have created an extra position for Tony [Arbour] for a particular reason?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): No, not for a particular reason.

John Biggs (AM): For no particular reason? OK.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Those are the committees. He has offered us a compensation to do HR and Remuneration Subcommittee which is another one that suffers in terms of numbers.

Faith Boardman (AM): On which he is extremely welcome.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): What I am suggesting is that we approve that through to the annual general meeting (AGM) and then we can have another argument about who sits on what committee.

John Biggs (AM): Could it be the same argument?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): It will be the same argument, yes.

Valerie Brasse (AM): Chair, can I also make the point that anyone who wants to go to SOP can do, and I do even though I am not a member of it.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Exactly. You are free to attend whatever meetings. In theory you are not actually a standing member, as I learned earlier this week. Yes, Jennette [Arnold]?

Jennette Arnold (AM): Chair, it is another matter.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes.

Jennette Arnold (AM): At your confirmation hearing you told that panel, confirmed that you had met with the Black Police Association (BPA). This is of particular interest to me and, I know, a number of other Members. I wonder if you could go into some detail about that meeting and just from personal interest I wonder if you are aware of a really excellent initiative that was launched and led by the BPA and that was young black BPAs. My memory is weird, we can go back to the exact time, but it ran for a number of years and I happen to know that we have now a number of black officers going through the system because of that programme of introduction of mentoring. It must be about four or five years because it was my privilege to meet someone who is looking towards becoming, if not yet, a superintendent, having been associated with that work.

I think that as well as that ongoing relationship with the BPA, which I would personally like to get your confirmation that you will be a key partner with, that we look at some sort of positive piece of work and I would suggest that we review that and maybe in future meetings that you have with them that you explore this.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Absolutely, yes. I have a very good and productive meeting with the BPA after they decided to re-engage following their recruitment boycott and that was a very useful meeting. We covered a number of matters, some of which are quite sensitive around individuals that I do not want to go into today, but nevertheless we are both committed to the same productive and friendly relationship that we have had in the past and we are looking at ways that we can work together with them, not just through the Metropolitan Police and the MPA but also here at City Hall, and how they can help us with some of our issues here. So you have got my total commitment to cooperation and good relations with them in the future.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Hearing about that scheme, I am sure that we could get you briefed up and I will be happy to meet with you to talk about that because it was a fabulous initiative and we can see the products of that now in the service.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I would take the opportunity, Jennette [Arnold], to endorse that. We think Project VOYAGE (Voice of the Youth and Genuine Empowerment) is an exceptionally good scheme and something that should be supported and continued.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Good. If we can be kept updated on that, I certainly would welcome that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Yes, Clive [Lawton]?

Clive Lawton (AM): Chair, it was a question I was going to ask your predecessor but he got out just in time and so I think you will probably do just as well.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Thank you.

Clive Lawton (AM): There have been reports - and I do not know the truth of them - that the Mayor had indicated in various different ways his lack of conviction that the MPA was a useful body in the sense that the Greater London Authority (GLA) did so much of it, so duplicatory and unnecessary and so on and so forth. I was going to ask him whether it was really tenable to continue to chair a group of which he seemed to be publicly saying he could not really quite see the point. You have not been quite so explicit yet but I thought I might ask you. There have been some indications that you have indicated your uncertainty about the usefulness of the Metropolitan Police Authority in this mode. I wondered if you would like to say how fully confident you were and pleased you were to chair the MPA and feel that it is a body that has good and continued purpose.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): I am pleased and feel it has good and continued purpose but I think that its functioning and its resilience could be improved. As I said at my confirmation hearing only a couple of days ago, I do think there is a fundamental problem with the constitution of the Metropolitan Police Authority in that we are a conflicted organisation and that causes problems for all of us in the discharge of our duties. That does not mean to say, as we are constitutionally set up at the moment, we do not diligently discharge our duties to the best of our ability. I absolutely think we do, but nevertheless there is that fundamental structural conflict which causes me concern. Is that clear enough?

Clive Lawton (AM): It goes some way.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Thank you. Right, the Commissioner's report then.

Jenny Jones (AM): We did not agree actually but I am happy to support his going on to those committees. We did not formally agree it.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Thank you. Sir Paul?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): If I just start with performance issues. Total notifiable offences down by 2.4%. That equates to over 17,000 fewer offences, which I think is good news. Homicide remains significantly down, 31 fewer murders than the same time last year and of course that is exceptionally good news. I will always say about homicide figures, I say it about youth crime figures: every one of those is a tragedy and we are never complacent, it is always too much, but it is quite a staggering

reduction and actually puts into context comparisons that get made with certain other police forces in certain other international jurisdictions. More serious violence is down by just over 1%, which is a reduction of 103 offences. Burglary is still up but the good news is it is not up nearly as much. It is now up by some 3.8%. If you recall a couple of Authorities ago we were talking about a rise of well over 10% so there has been a significant reduction on that rise. From December we have started to see a steady drop in the number of offences and we seem to be moving in the right direction.

Since Bumblebee started we have made about 440 to 450 arrests, including quite a number for burglary, as you would expect given that was the target of the operation. In those boroughs that we have targeted with the additional Bumblebee task force we have seen substantial reductions in burglary. So I am pleased with the action we have taken but of course I still would rather we were in a reducing figure. That is a statement of the blindingly obvious but we seem to have done something positive around that.

Challenging areas. Rape we have discussed before and it remains a challenging area. Compared to the same point last year we have an increase in reported offences of rape of just over 500. That has clearly got to be of concern to us and to this Authority. A number of reasons we have discussed before. Some of it is down to improved recording, there is no doubt about that, some of it is down to confidence, some of it is down to, if you will, some of the cause celebre incidents we have had and which has obviously increased. We have no evidence of an increase in actual offences but we would be stupid and complacent to rule that out. We have to actually look at it in detail and I understand there is a Member briefing on 4 March at which hopefully we can go into much more detail and start unpicking the offence of rape into the various categories and where we can do something and where it is more difficult. Also I think there is a paper coming to SOP in March on it.

Hate crime. Domestic violence is down slightly, about 374 offences, and racist crime is up slightly by about just over 230 offences. Homophobic crime, a much more considerable increase there. Again, maybe 236 offences but something like a 25.7% increase. I would point you towards the comments made by OutRage back in July 2009, I think it was David Allison who said that much of the increase is down to a greater willingness of gay people to report these crimes. That is good news but I will say the same about this as I always say with these iceberg crimes: we just know there is a lot of under-reported crime in the hate crimes and in rape crime. So our job is to increase that confidence, increase the reporting, but not be blind to the fact that sometimes there can be a real increase within that and we have got to unpick it and analyse. There is a lot we are doing around that and I think we had quite a lengthy discussion, either last Authority or a couple of Authorities ago, about that. We still remain concerned about under-reporting.

Youth homicide. Since last month, tragically we have had another youth murdered. **Karidif Farjimini(?)** was murdered a few days ago. Tragic, and that puts into context what I am going to say next because, of course, on the figures there are very significant reductions, of which we should be pleased, but again we have had somebody murdered recently. We have had 12 fewer deaths. We have had 10 for the year to date as against 22 in the same period the previous year but one death is far too many. Nobody has been charged for that offence yet. There have been some arrests but inquiries are ongoing.

Youth crime. The number of victims of youth violence and victims of serious youth violence have both reduced over the financial year, about 222 fewer victims. Knife crime also remains down, 122 fewer offences, but the trend, as I predicted, over recent months is that the reduction is getting much smaller. That is inevitable in some sense because we are now coming up against what one would describe as the hard yards because we are now coming up against the big reductions we started making at this time last year so we are not seeing the same levels of reduction. We do think it is largely down to our suppression activity, and we have had debates before about what our role is, around Operation Blunt. Since that started we have done 460,000 searches, arrested more 17,500 people and recovered many thousands of knives.

I have said it before and I will say it again, we are at that suppression end of the business. Of course I am always concerned that that tactic can have a limited shelf life. The reality about youth crime is it is what we do to prevent it. The Mayor's Time for Action, cross-government department cooperation, the issues around parenting, the issues around schooling, the issues around good intervention, they are the critical issues for reduction of youth crime. I know this Authority is concerned about this, I know there has been a lot of work been done, by the Mayor, by government, right the way across, but my worry sometimes, particularly with the media debate, is it is always around the suppression, quite right we should do our job, and not as much as it should be around how these crimes should be prevented in the first place. We do not lead on social engineering; we should support it. I think that is where our attention should be but you should rightly hold me to account for my end of the business on that suppression.

That gives me the chance to refer to something else and that is the way in which we record and report crime. Sometimes we can communicate the statistics and that can be quite misleading. I just want to talk briefly about intimidation. Within our knife crime figures and within our gun crime figures we have the issue of intimidation and whilst an intimidated weapon still causes huge amounts of fear, the fact that they are included in the general figure, unless we contextualise it, paints an inaccurate picture of the frequency of actual weapons being out there on the streets. In knife crime the research we have done is about somewhere between 15% to 20% of all knife crime is intimidation. On gun crime there is a similar concern. On robbery, 54% of robberies are intimidated without the weapon being present or visible.

I think somehow that goes into a wider debate that I have raised here at the Authority and it is the way in which we record and report crime. When you look at intimation as opposed to the actual weapons - and I stress intimation does cause real fear and trauma - it does not paint the accurate picture of London, of what is available and out there. Similarly, the way we record crime very often, frankly I do not think the recording of crime makes a lot of sense to the man and woman on the Clapham omnibus. I have said it to this Authority before, I have said it to successive regimes, and I really do think there is a need to look again - and this was supported by Sir Ronnie Flanagan, when he was Chief Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), in his report - at the way in which we capture and record crime and the purpose of that recording. I do not think we paint an accurate picture. I think we undermine confidence in the public in recorded crime figures, we mess about with them and change the definitions far too often and I do not think it makes sense to the public and I do not think it makes sense to me. I include in that the way we record detections. The phrase 'sanction detections' is not an easy phrase that trips off the tongue and I do not think it means a great deal to lots and lots of people.

So that is something I have been saying for many, many years, you would probably say not with a great deal of success evidently, but I will continue saying it, and it is something I wanted to raise with the Authority again. It is something you might want to look at and, interestingly, I think it is non-party political so I can make the plea, which is always a dangerous thing at this time of year.

Let us go on to what is real and not intimation and that is Trident gun crime. Trident gun crime continues to be a real concern. The good news, if you can call it good news, is actually the increase is starting to reduce but it is still a significant increase. We are talking about really serious offences here. These are where the firearms have been present and in many cases have been fired, and there were 133 more offences within that small area of our business over this time last year. We are continuing to focus our efforts; we are continuing to do things around Operation Verano. I understand there was a very good meeting, which is not the same but relates to around guns, gangs and knives and the Violence Board within recent days. So that is good news but I think that is an area of continuing concern for us. That is not intimation; they are real weapons and they are often being fired.

If I can just touch on the Olympics and the Vancouver Olympics. If I may say without sounding too patronising we can thank Dee Doocey for her intervention. There was, I think, some silly media talk around the utility or otherwise of a small number of police officers going to the Vancouver Olympics. These are the last Olympics before the next Olympics. You might think that is stating the blindingly obvious but it needs to be said sometimes. The Olympics is such a huge event and to fail to take the opportunity to embed some of our officers - and that is the really smart thing here - in their operation,

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with these officers almost certainly likely to have those roles in a much bigger, full Olympics event, would have been very foolish. We have embedded them and we have got huge learning out of this whole process. While it will not be reported to them, I think we owe a vote of thanks to Royal Canadian Mounted Police because it is quite unique what they have allowed us to do in embedding our officers in their command structure.

The learning coming out of it? Well, joint working. Again, it is stating the blindingly obvious but unless you do joint working the Olympics will not work. We have predicated all our plans on joint working but the reinforcement of that message is so obvious and stark. Live sites in Vancouver. They have attracted over 30,000 people per day. The sites in London, and I know currently there are four being planned, will be bigger and of course we have different security considerations. That is going to be a challenge.

The Cultural Olympiad, if you want the celebration of the Olympics that we want to be a part of then of course I look at the challenge at this moment in time but not always at the opportunity. The Cultural Olympiad, which will be a real celebration, with that what our officers see, and again you could imagine it but actually to see it and feel it comes an atmosphere in the city around a series of events that is not replicated in any other experience we have had. The city celebrates in a way that they do not celebrate for anything else and we have almost got to make sure we understand that scale, that dimension of change. Of course, the winter Olympics, huge event though it is, is about a quarter of the size of the summer Olympics. The complexities of handling the multiple events and the Cultural Olympiad, everything that happens around the Olympics as opposed to the Olympics itself, has impressed itself upon those officers who have been embedded. So I think it was a really good thing to do. I would say it and I think we would have been hugely complacent had we not done that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Thanks. We have got a number of Members who have submitted questions in writing beforehand so they, as usual, get preference. We start with Victoria [Borwick] and then Dee [Doocey]. Victoria [Borwick], not everybody has your question so if you would like to ask it that would be great.

Victoria Borwick (AM): My questions were concerning the DNA, of cut in budgets. What change in the policy on DNA resulted in the 65% budget reduction since its high point in 2008 - 2009 and what impact has this had on policing?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): The reduction in spend on DNA profiling comes from a number of factors. Firstly, the overall reduction in crime, which we should be jolly pleased about; reduced number of arrestees tested due to recidivism, which again talks about the system itself; more controls of samples that have low success rates, in other words there is little point in submitting samples for testing if we know at the start

that it has a less chance of producing a result that is going to be useful, in other words better managerial control before the samples are submitted. We have implemented that within the Metropolitan Police Service and that has reduced the numbers. Reduced prices through the establishment of more effective commercial arrangements with the DNA suppliers. In other words, we want more for less.

Victoria Borwick (AM): People are getting better at it, therefore the price has gone down, or do you think the complexity in technology has moved on?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Just competition and actually more effective management from us. We are saying we want a cheaper product for the same --

Victoria Borwick (AM): I am flagging this up because, as many of you know, it is the next topic for the Civil Liberties Panel so I thought it was important that we had the ground rules for the success that you are now working to start us off.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): A good example of an efficiency saving. You had a second question, or has that been answered as well?

Victoria Borwick (AM): This was what actions are not being carried out as a result and I think has been covered.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I think I can answer it. There has been no significant impact on our operational capability by those reductions. The reductions I think are in the good news camp, not the bad news camp.

Victoria Borwick (AM): That is fine. That was covered, thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Dee [Doocey], your question was also about DNA.

Dee Doocey (AM): Yes, it was. Just to summarise it was basically why have the MPS granted 23.5% of requests from innocent people to have their DNA records deleted and what are you doing to ensure the DNA records of innocent people are not retained? I think that summarises the question.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): It certainly does. The deletion rate of 23.5% quoted in the media was for calendar years 2008 and 2009 combined and not just for 2008/09. I can tell you the combined percentage deletion rate for 2008 and 2009 now stands at 27.2% and I expect that figure to rise as remaining cases are adjudicated on.

I have to say, Dee [Doocey], the Metropolitan Police Service, like all other forces, awaits changes to legislation before the proposals can be enacted and I think that is the right

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thing to do. I know that is frustrating for people but actually we should follow up legislation rather than interpret it and get ahead of it. I think it is important for Parliament to debate the issues and we should follow their adjudication on this matter. Of course, I have said many times, sometimes for frustrated media, it is not for the police to decide the balance between civil liberties and security. That is for Parliament to decide and we should make sure we carry it out properly.

We can only consider requests from individuals who contact us and therefore we do not review those that do not. We think to start removing the DNA profiles before the legislation, as I said, would be improper. However, I would say that the current situation of what is essentially a discretionary power to delete being carried out in different ways in different forces is clearly unsatisfactory and I do look forward to statutory guidance, statutory regulation that should, I hope, accompany the legislation.

Dee Doocey (AM): OK. First of all I do not share your view that we will necessarily get legislation through Parliament that will be helpful so I think you might have to decide without legislation what the Metropolitan Police Service's position is on it. The Mayor has said in answer to a question from me that he believes DNA records should only be kept in exceptional circumstances, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) are saying they should only be deleted in exceptional circumstances, and you are saying piggy in the middle. I think it is absolutely essential that this is resolved so I would like you to look at and perhaps come back to us. I take the point that we are looking at this very carefully but maybe you could at the same time look at it, which I think might be helpful, and say what it is that you are going to do and where you want to go if we do not get a clear steer from Parliament. Obviously if Parliament says, "We are changing the law and it is going to be A rather than B" that is clear. I am concerned about the fact that it must do untold damage to community relations, particularly with young people in areas where you are putting vast resources in to try to help.

I would like you to clarify also - and again you do not have to do it now - when you said, "We delete records from people who contact us", the figures that you have given are those deletions from people who have contacted you or are those deletions from 100% that you have got on the database?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I will happily consider your comments, Dee [Doocey], but my position is that it is for me to carry out the law, it is for me to follow the legislation. We are informed that there will be statutory guidance with the legislation. I think that is absolutely essential because unless that guidance is there what is a very contentious area will continue to be practised in a piecemeal and sort of postcode fashion. That is entirely wrong. I go back and say it is for the Police Service. If I am asked about DNA, including deletion, it is hardly surprising I will investigate opportunities, which I do and I know they are there and that is provable. My mission in

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life is to save life, prevent crime, detect crime, keep the Queen's peace. It is for Parliament to decide on the balance and I think we have got to be very careful that the Police Service does not go beyond that and start trying to decide the balance between civil liberties and security when it is Parliament's job. I will happily look again and I am sure it is something we will discuss.

Dee Doocey (AM): I am not suggesting for a second that you go beyond your powers but you do have the power to delete and my concern is that you are not deleting as many innocent people as you should do. I believe, personally, that every innocent person should be deleted from the database. That is my personal view and I will be making that very strongly but there is no point just blaming Parliament because you do have the power. So I would like you to look at it and come back to us and let us know what you are going to do if Parliament does not clarify it any more than it has at the moment.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I would say I am satisfied with the way we are exercising that power at this moment in time, Dee [Doocey].

Dee Doocey (AM): I am not satisfied at all but perhaps --

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Obviously this is the next subject for the Civil Liberties Panel (CLP) so it will be very interesting to see how you examine that, because you can examine it in more detail in that. It is an issue that we are all alive to and that is why it is next on the agenda.

Dee Doocey (AM): Will you come back with the final point about the percentages: is it percentage of all of the people who are held on the database or is it a percentage of those people who have requested deletion?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Happily. I think it is the latter, Dee [Doocey].

Dee Doocey (AM): Can I ask Sir Paul something on one of the other issues, or is that later?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): There are some others who want to come in on DNA so if we could just deal with DNA first. Joanne [McCartney], your question?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I am pretty sure it is the latter but I will confirm it.

Dee Doocey (AM): OK.

Joanne McCartney (AM): I would like to ask one but later on on a different subject.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Toby [Harris], you had something on DNA?

Toby Harris (AM): I would not want the appearance being given by what Dee [Doocey] has said to be that that was the wholehearted view of the whole Authority because I would also expect the Commissioner to be carrying out the law and using his powers, and the powers are that he can retain DNA from everyone who is arrested. I understand, and we have had statistics presented to workshops of Members demonstrating the value that that exercise has had.

I think the Commissioner's point about inconsistency in terms of applicability about when DNA samples are not retained or when a request to remove them is made is an important one. Given the sensitivities of all of this, I would be interested in - if not now at some point and I am sure the information will be provided to the Civil Liberties Panel - a statement of how the Commissioner ensures that there is consistency within the Metropolitan Police Service. It may all go through a single clearing house or there may be --

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): A single clearing house.

Toby Harris (AM): A single clearing house. That is helpful. Thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Good point. All done on DNA? John [Biggs], yes?

John Biggs (AM): It was just a quickie. I agree with everything that Toby [Harris] has said but I was nevertheless interested in the newspaper coverage which showed the very dramatic differences in percentages between authorities up and down the country. There may be very different policing circumstances that justify that but I think any analysis of this does need to burrow into that and explain not only to us but to the wider public why there is such an apparent inconsistency because I think there is a question of confidence.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Presumably, Victoria [Borwick], as part of your planning for the CLP review of this you might talk to some other forces about what they are doing.

Victoria Borwick (AM): We certainly did that with civil liberties and it turned out to be very useful. So I think that is a very good lead and steer to look at.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Great.

Victoria Borwick (AM): I take that advice, thank you.

Valerie Brasse (AM): Can I say one other thing following on from that? Given that our first topic was about facilitating peaceful protests, of course we did have that very interesting debate about facilitating peaceful which may not necessarily be lawful. So there is an area where we can move and deliver on this which does not fit necessarily within what is just lawful. So we have already walked away from that one. We may have to do it again when it comes to DNA.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): That may well be the case. It is my intention on the DNA database to follow up the legislation and try to interpret it in as consistent a fashion as possible.

Victoria Borwick (AM): I am sure we shall continue to have robust discussions then.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Jenny [Jones], is it on DNA?

Jenny Jones (AM): Yes. I actually wrote to the five forces that have got a very good record for removing DNA samples and one of the steps that they initiated was that they said that their police officers could tell people that they could have their samples removed and just letting people know that they could meant that they actually did remove more for innocent people.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I am guessing what they are saying is telling people they have the right to request it.

Jenny Jones (AM): Yes.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Good. Dee [Doocey], you had a second question.

Dee Doocey (AM): Yes. My second question was on rape and I wanted to ask the Commissioner. I was very disturbed yesterday by reports in the press, which may or may not be true, saying that rape has now become the weapon of choice for gangs and that they were not just raping the girls but they were also now raping the girls' friends and in some cases their mothers. I just wondered if you had any comments. Are you aware of this? Is it true?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I share your concern and we are talking to the author of the report. There was a report launched last night that I think you were at, Chair.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): I was there, yes, as was David Zinzan [South Central Area Commander].

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Looking at how we can improve our coverage of this area. I think we have had, if you will, not a detailed discussion but there has been reference to this before as a worrying development within gang culture and I do not think we should be blind to it. My personal view is I think there is a real issue. I think there is a genuine real issue there and we should be very concerned about it. It is an appalling tale. What we should be doing about it is improving our intelligence and our data collection on something that, had we been sat, as some of us were, five years ago, we would not have been discussing. This is a different sort of development for us. Reviewing our youth and violence strategies to ensure that we understand that when we are talking about strategies there are differences in gender and different pressures and different threats. That is not something perhaps we did with the same level of detail we are going to have to do in the future. What we are doing to make sure our new Sapphire structures integrate with other areas of our business to ensure that we are picking up on - I do not like calling it this new phenomenon - this thing that is obviously going on. Looking at the way in which we run Trident campaigns to see is there anything around that. There was a recent Trident campaign that we had which in many ways was very successful but was about the involvement of females. Does that put further pressure on? So I think there is something that is quite clearly of concern here. The one thing I could not say, Dee [Doocey], is what is the scale of it but I think we ought to be worried and concerned about it.

Dee Doocey (AM): Can I just have a quick follow up? I understand that you are aware of it and you are going to speak to the authors and I think that is great. Are you making sure that the officers at the coal face, like the Safer Neighbourhood teams, are aware? They all know where the gangs operate and that they are aware of this particular problem so that maybe they could be looking at it with different eyes or looking for different issues.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): We will be communicating throughout the force but what I am anxious to do is when we do communicate something, Dee [Doocey], we communicate something that is accurate and factual.

Dee Doocey (AM): Sure.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): It is a particularly difficult area that will require particularly sensitive understanding to try to get the facts.

Dee Doocey (AM): Yes, OK.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): We, in this building, picked up this issue some time ago and have been working with Race on the Agenda (ROTA) and Carlene Firman who authored the report and did the research. She is effectively embedded in our Violence

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Against Women strategy. She actually sits on the board, as do representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service. So her work and the research that has been ongoing, we have effectively been working with her on the report for the last, whatever, six months. As she has come up with conclusions and data that has been woven in the panel and strategy. So it is definitely there front and centre and, as I say, she is sitting there steering and I was at the event last night.

Dee Doocey (AM): It is just making sure it permeates down to the people who can actually do something about it.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Absolutely. One of the things we wanted to address in the strategy is this notion that often when we are dealing with crime the volume end is the male end and the female end becomes a kind of add-on at the end, and more and more that is becoming unsustainable. We are trying to embed that in all the stuff that we do and kind of gender proof the strategies that we take forward.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Can I just make one further point on that? It is absolutely right to properly hold me to account that we are understanding what this thing is, communicating it and making sure officers are aware and can deal with it. It kind of goes back to my comments about youth crime previously; that is not going to solve the problem and it is how we get to the base of this phenomenon, how we do all respect issues and all the other things that we can do to prevent. This is a classic area of very detailed inter-agency work with people understanding what their responsibilities are. This will not be a police solution.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Absolutely, and this is what the Violence Against Women Board in this building is designed to achieve. There will be lots of knock-on effects, not least we talked about rape just generally, and one of the issues that is identified in the report is that there is a confused sense of an understanding in young people around what is sexual violence and notions of consent, frankly. So there is quite a lot of work that is not police work to do that other agencies need to do and we are trying to drive that in this building as well. Joanne [McCartney]?

Joanne McCartney (AM): From my experience, when I have raised this and people tell me that it is happening in my local area, the answer I have from the police is that, “Well, we have got no intelligence and we will deal with it if something is referred to us”. You said earlier about prevention. It seems to me that piece is missing. There is no desire to go and look for it. I am glad to hear what you said but is about permeating down, as Dee [Doocey] said, to the coal face because simply to say, “We’ll deal with it if we get a referral” is not good enough.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): That is absolutely right. Jennette [Arnold]?

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Jennette Arnold (AM): Joanne and I; it is not clearly a north London phenomenon. It does concern me that the answer is, “We have heard something on the radio, we’re concerned about it”. My goodness, this has been flagged up over the years. Let me finish.

Toby Harris (AM): She is attacking Dee [Doocey], it is all right.

Jennette Arnold (AM): No, I am not attacking anybody, I am just talking about a bit of getting real in terms of our conversation around this table. I suppose, Kit [Malthouse], you have put your finger on it that this has been raised and the Metropolitan Police Service have responded in the way that the police service can and many of those times when you raise it is, “Oh, we haven’t seen the statistics. It hasn’t been reported. We will go back and we will look at the reporting mechanism and maybe our officers aren’t ticking enough boxes so that we can’t collate it, and if we can’t collate it then we don’t do it”.

Then we get a launch. Were you there at the launch, Cindy [Butts], when we identified that young women were getting more involved, were now part and parcel of gangs? In fact I remember when we brought up this whole issue of gangs we identified that there were some gangs of young women and we were told, “Well, we will go away and we will find out”. I am just saying let us just put some perspective in terms of the responses we are getting and let us get some details about what is happening in the partnerships that the board is looking to drill down to, because this is just yet another board with yet some more members meeting and it would be nice for us to get a reply like they are drilling down and we will be able to get some understanding into the location, into the particular parts of London.

There was an equally good report that came out two weeks ago that suggests that we can identify the locations in London, the families that are now into second generation gang criminality and that they are not widespread across London, so we should be able to actually get an outcome and say, “This is what is being done so far on this issue” rather than what you get is, “We’ve got a board, we’re having meetings, and aren’t we concerned”.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Jennette [Arnold], as you know, I am much keener on delivery than I am on meetings and I agree with you that a sign of success is not the number of meetings that you attend, or indeed how many meetings you hold, but the Violence Against Women board is the first one and it is inter-agency and it is going to be driving some activity. The key issue here is exactly what Joanne [McCartney] said, having a shared picture of what is actually happening, and where this report is for the first

time it does start to gather some of that frontline data around women which raise the profile.

Jennette Arnold (AM): Schools.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): So we are committed to getting something done. Notwithstanding, that does not necessarily, you are quite right, involve endless meetings.

Cindy Butts (AM): Can I just come in on this point, please?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Sure

Cindy Butts (AM): It is really just to support Jennette [Arnold] in her call for one perspective into having an evidence base. If there is one thing that the last Trident advertisement taught us is that, yes, while you may have these peripheral issues, as is the case in terms of young women getting involved, harbouring guns for their partners, we have to be really careful about public pronouncements and statements that we make because all too easily that could be taken out of context and can become an issue that really is not quite. So the whole Trident campaign, when the advertisement was brought out it generated a lot of interest and when people stood back and actually looked at the figures after the advertising campaign had happened they quickly realised that the figures did not support the level of interest and the very public nature of that campaign. So I think it is really important that we have perspective and that we build a response that is fundamentally grounded in an evidence base.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Thanks. Jenny [Jones]?

Jenny Jones (AM): It is true we spotted this trend some time ago but then you cannot anticipate how fast it is going to move, and it does seem to have moved. I wanted to ask a factual question which was the Commissioner said there was an increase of 500 reported rapes. I just wondered what percentage that was.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I have got it somewhere. I will look it up. It is a high percent. I think it is 28%.

Jenny Jones (AM): Yes, because 500 is a terrible figure.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I thought the figures painted the picture of horror more than the percentage.

Jenny Jones (AM): Yes. It is useful to have the percentage as well, though, so that we can get some sort of feeling for change.

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Kit Malthouse (Chairman): As I say, there is a briefing, which I would urge you to attend, where we are attempting to tease out what those figures actually mean. The story so far is it could be a confidence issue, women are more confident about coming forward, but then again it may not be. Also what we are doing some work into is what is driving the rise and therefore what are the preventative measures that we need to take. That might not be a policing solution and we may need to look to others to sort that out. Clive [Lawton]?

Clive Lawton (AM): I want to come back and reinforce and pursue the point that Joanne [McCartney] made about responding only when you know rather than seeking out the issue. What I am concerned about - and only very general reports - is that this might be another one of those areas that we have already experienced in terms of knife crime and gun crime which is that there is a culture within the group that says, "We are not going to report these crimes". That is to some level that within gang culture those crimes are 'our business' and so we over the years have created other strategies for finding them. What I fear is bad enough if young women are being raped and intimidated in this way but if there is a culture also developing that it is 'how we do things amongst ourselves' and therefore such rapes are not being reported it is a different reason for non-reporting than that which we are currently mostly concerned about. I am only speculating here and this may not be the case at all but it just seems to me that it is something that might be watched.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): That is essentially what we are trying to tease out and what we will be able to talk about in the briefing on 4 March. I think you are right and if that is the case then that is a wider cultural issue around, as I say, what notions of consent and understandings of sexual violence are amongst young people and that is not a policing solution to that. Valerie [Brasse]?

Valerie Brasse (AM): In relation to something you say in the report, Sir Paul, which touches on this but from a different angle. There is a paragraph here where you talk about the Serious Crime Directorate concentrating on maximising the number of serious sexual offence cases that result in charges and that then go on to reach trial. I can see why you might say that and obviously that is attractive in terms of bringing forward potentially people who would otherwise not report if they think it is never going to go anywhere but what immediately made me concerned about is the sort of two-tier approach to this; so where there is not going to be the evidence and often there is the case where people will have gone through something and the evidence is not there to support the trial. What happens to them and how are the police responding to those? They could be the majority, in fact almost certainly they will be. So I was just a little bit concerned what that actually meant in practice.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Do we have any other questions on this before Sir Paul responds? OK, Sir Paul?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): If I could just say I think you are absolutely right about the Trident campaign. We have got to understand the impacts and, secondly, make sure whatever we do is evidence based. Sometimes we get things very right, sometimes partially right, sometimes wrong, and we have got to learn from it. I also support what is in your question: we have got to make sure that we try to understand and state the problem for the size and scale that it is. That does not mean we are being complacent but what we should not do is actually expand it beyond what it is because it means that we take the wrong sort of actions and waste scarce public money. So I do support that.

I do not think you meant this, Jennette [Arnold], but if there is any suggestion that what we are doing from the police end is just waiting until it gets reported and it is a new phenomenon and we are all surprised by it, actually we are doing a huge amount around this because it is about what we have just been talking about at the end, it is about building the confidence of people to report. You mentioned VOYAGE at the start. Operation VOYAGE, which has been done by the Metropolitan Police Service and the BPA, has been huge about trying to build that confidence in some of those affected communities. If we look at what we are doing on Operation Kickz, 19,600 young people every week having engagement, it is about building the confidence so we can create the right sort of picture but we do know in policing, and there is no magic solution to this, there are a number of under-reported crimes that we know we struggle to get the most accurate picture of so we can then design the most appropriate response.

The one thing I am absolutely sure of: we, the police, have a role to play but I am absolutely sure there is a wider issue here and a wider solution and it is about how do we build the confidence to get the picture because then when you have got the picture sometimes, Valerie [Brasse], I think you are suggesting, a conviction is not necessarily the only measure and it is not necessarily the measure the victim wants. We do have to respond to what is clearly an accepted attrition rate to the criminal justice system that makes us feel at the very best very uncomfortable. Of course Baroness Stern [Stern Review into Rape Complaints], that is part and parcel of her work to assist with that.

Valerie Brasse (AM): For me it is what it means for the others where you are not going to get that conviction and what is the service that they can expect to receive from the police if we are talking about here managing the business and concentrating it from one end.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): That is part of Baroness Stern's work.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Richard Tracey submitted a question but unfortunately he could not be here so Victoria [Borwick] is going to ask his question. I have it. Do you want me to ask it?

Victoria Borwick (AM): Yes, thank you. I think it was the update.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman) (on behalf of Richard Tracey): Could the Commissioner provide us with an update on the handling of the Reid case, now that the IPCC have completed their investigation.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Yes, we have recently received a report from the IPCC. It is now being reviewed by Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS) and we have to respond to the IPCC. I would not want to respond now until we have done the review and find out what that response is, but no doubt it will come back to this Authority once we have done it.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Because obviously he represents that area and was extremely keen that we should raise it in this forum on his behalf in order that he can go back to his residents to assure the --

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): It is a separate issue, Victoria, if I may say so. Also, we have seen the question and clearly we would want to have a discussion in the margins with Richard, to make sure he is as properly (overspeaking) as he can be.

Victoria Borwick (AM): I am sure he would find that very grateful. I think that it is important to him that it is tabled here today, thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes. There is a process ongoing. OK.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): All right, Joanne [McCartney], you said you had a question on another subject.

Joanne McCartney (AM): Yes. I tried to contact you yesterday, actually, to say I wanted to raise this. This is about the House of Commons Select Committee, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Committee (DCMS) yesterday on the phone tapping allegations that we have briefly touched on before.

That report states a number of things. The first thing is that it criticises the Metropolitan Police Service for the way it handled the allegations in 2005/06 and it states that the

Metropolitan Police Service made a considered choice based on available resources not to investigate either their holding contract to give evidence, then says:

‘Nevertheless it is our view that the decision was a wrong one. These matters merited thorough police investigation and the first steps to be taken seem to us to have been obvious. The Metropolitan Police’s for not doing so seem to us to be inadequate.’

I just wondered, first, if you could just give your views on that, which appears at face value, to me, to be quite a damning statement of the investigation that was carried on at the time.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Thanks, Joanne. I am not dismissing it, obviously we do note their opinion, their views, on it. But I think it is also important to recognise that our inquiries were solely concerned with phone tapping, which is section 1 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, and that showed in the vast majority of cases there was insufficient evidence to show that tapping had actually been achieved. This is a very technical offence and now there is some suggestion of a change of legislation; that suggestion ought to be thoroughly explored. But it is a very technical offence and I think it was the first, or one of the first, of its kind.

The final indictment that was preferred by Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) was the subject of very careful deliberation, not just by the police, by the CPS and Queen’s Counsel, because of the technicality of the offence. It did do what we try to do, what the criminal justice system tries to do, and that is come up with an indictment that represents the full range of criminality that could attract the maximum sentence, if proven. That is what we do. I think, as you know, the indictments are put together to attract that range of criminality, which does not necessarily mean you will include every victim or potential victim.

Decisions taken in 2006 regarding the scope of the investigation were based on the available evidence, the likelihood of securing prosecutions, which is perhaps the CPS, and, yes, of course, we always consider police resources. It is absolutely essential. There is no investigation we ever do, we do not consider the resources and make sure they are proportionate to what we are investigating. That is a natural part and we should not resile from that.

I do have to say that since then there has been, in our opinion, no new evidence come to light to justify further investigation, and that is the view that has been endorsed by the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). So we are not just acting in a cavalier manner and ignoring other comments. I know that one newspaper has been very insistent around this and we note their views but actually, in terms of evidence, for us to now go back and

look at, we do not see any realistic investigative opportunities. We have always said if there was then we would properly consider it.

Do not forget, in January Goodman and Mulcaire were jailed for these offences. It was a successful investigation prosecution and Mulcaire also pleaded guilty to an additional five charges relating to similar matters. But there is a world of difference between what people might have suspected them of doing and what can actually be proved, certainly under this legislation.

Joanne McCartney (AM): I have two further questions and I am not clear about each of them, it may be that you cannot give me an answer today, but I would appreciate an answer.

The first is that the committee report also stated that, if I can paraphrase, they found that perhaps when the police had given evidence, they had not given the true picture because a later freedom of information request had disclosed that the police had found PIN numbers for 91 people and that the police only contacted the Select Committee when the information was about to be made public in that freedom of information request. I wondered if you can give us a comment on that and whether there should have been earlier, fuller disclosure to the Select Committee.

The second is that, from all the reports I have read, I still have not got to the bottom of how many victims there could have been in these occurrences. I noticed that Assistant Commissioner John Yates, when he made the public statement last July, said that the potential targets may have run into hundreds, but our inquiries showed that they had used the tactic against a far smaller number of individuals and that where there was clear evidence that people had potentially been the subject of tapping, they were all contacted by the police. That appeared at the time to indicate there had been a handful.

We have then heard in the freedom of information request that the police had found PIN codes for 91 people. I understand that the Guardian had earlier reported that 3 phone companies have stated to them that over 100 customers, from numbers that were passed to them by the police, whose voicemails had been called, had been contacted. So we gone from a handful to 91 PIN numbers to the phone companies appearing to say there was over 100 people that had had their voice messages hacked into. I just wondered whether you can give any further clarity on that?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): First of all, what I am very happy to do is have John Yates write to you or have a discussion with you, when you are both available to do that, because I do think there is a need to fully understand the technicalities of this offence. I am not going to try and go into it now, because he has tried to explain it to me on several occasions and I am not absolutely confident I could get it right without having

the law in front of me. But it is something to do with - and I really do want help for this, so it is dangerous stuff in the public forum - it is an offence to actually hack into someone's email prior to them picking the message up, but not after. Actually it is a very technical offence. We have had a debate around what we do around following legislation and that, I think, is legislation.

So there is a world of difference between the number of people who might have been targets and victims, and the number of people who we can prove were. The selection by Queen's Counsel and CPS of the people on the indictment, on the basis of the people we felt we could prove this difficult and technical offence, to try and attract the range of imprisonment, that is the purpose.

As for any misleading, I have absolutely no reason to believe that anybody did mislead that inquiry and I think John Yates made clear his views and what we did know in a letter to the inquiry, when that came up. But I am satisfied he answered all questions put to him and wrote to the inquiry subsequently.

Joanne McCartney (AM): That clarity would be useful because I am not clear whether it is --

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. It is obviously a highly technical area. Were there any other questions on this?

Toby Harris (AM): I am just going to make the point that I was in a meeting with the Information Commissioner yesterday and he says that the DCMS Committee managed to get themselves confused on the difference between the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and the Data Protection Act. So I think it may be that the committee did not fully understand some of the legislative implications of all this.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): That is helpful.

Jenny Jones (AM): I did ask John Yates about this actually, in this forum, and he gave a categorical answer on this. Do we still have our minutes written up? Do we still have a transcript?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes.

Jenny Jones (AM): I do not know. I just think sometimes we get categorical statements from police officers and then it is proved not to be -- all right, you can make a statement at the time which is true and then later you can find out it is not true, so there is no misrepresentation. But, I do not know, sometimes it is a bit depressing.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Yes, I am very happy, if there is an accurate record to produce that record. I have absolutely not the slightest doubt that John Yates has spoken absolutely the truth and there has been no misrepresentation.

Jenny Jones (AM): I am not suggesting he has not, it is just sometimes --

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): We are happy to circulate the transcript of what he said. OK, next, Neil [Johnson].

Neil Johnson (AM): Thank you, Chairman. I would like to turn to something that Sir Paul [Stephenson] was talking about in terms of reporting crime and the way that we do analyse that, because it seems to me it is a hugely important issue. This is probably the only output that is truly measurable if we are holding to account the Metropolitan Police Service. My questions really are; who actually sets the crime reporting parameters that we work within? How is that standard system arrived at? What is the process for reviewing that standard arrangement? And finally, what role can we, as the MPA, have in either encouraging that or doing it?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I will start off by answering this, because I am like a cracked record around this, and actually Tim [Godwin] has a huge amount of information around just how mad some of this is. It is the Home Office that does decide it.

What is the system of reviewing it? When you find out, if you would let me know, because I have been asking for some time of other people. But actually, at the end of the day, I guess to be responsible about this, the Home Secretary has to make its mind up as to what they think is right and wrong. I have spoken to some people about this and they have clearly disagreed with myself, and Tim [Godwin] amongst other people about what is right and wrong and recorded.

To be fair to the Home Office, there are differing opinions in policing, you know, different people. We have had the variability across **43-47(?)** DNA. We have been policing this for a long time and my concern is that crime figures do not do it for the public and they have stopped doing it for me, because they have become so arcane, so byzantine, so convoluted, that some of the definitions do not make sense.

I think I have got a pretty good idea what a man or woman on a Clapham omnibus or what a man and woman who I might occasionally have a pint with in a local pub understands about violence. It is not the violence that we record in recorded crime. I just think there is a world of difference. I think recorded crime, if it is going to be used as a performance indicator and to inform public debate - and that was not the reason for recording crime in the first place - that is not the reason for recording crime, if you have

got a particular use for it then it has got to be fit for purpose. The current way of collecting it, I do not believe is fit for purpose. I would support any efforts by this MPA, if this MPA agreed, to actually say that you do not see the sense in what we are doing and there is a need to review the way we record crime. But if I could ask Tim [Godwin] because he has some things that were --

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes. I think, just from the MPA point of view, as you will know, Neil, we now do publish the crime statistics on the website, extracted from a particular point in time at which the Home Office had a particular definition around crime, and what we have said is we will not change the way that we present the figures over the next however many years the MPA maintains its position, but we will not change figures. So you might not agree with the opening position but you will at least be able to see the trend without these sudden changes of movement. When knife crime includes being prodded with a toothpick, I think we are getting down to a ridiculous level, but, Tim [Godwin], you are the expert.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I think Paul [Stephenson] articulated pretty much the piece. What actually happened was when the crime recording standards were created through the Home Office, in negotiation with ACPO to be fair, it was actually to bring in a new way of using crime statistics, which was to use it as a performance regime to compare 43 police forces.

When you have a crime, you can have five different crimes in an event, and you have to make the case as to which is the most justifiable crime that is likely to go through the investigative process. Historically, all our crime recording was actually part of the investigative process and it was part of our intelligence process. As soon as you make it part of a performance regime, you change the make-up and the mix as to its purpose. As a result of that, everything has to default to the worst case scenario within an event, so we have crimes that go in as grievous bodily harm (GBH) that get charged as common assault. We have robberies that are actually domestic violence assault, and crimes like that. That distorts your intelligence picture and does not assist you in actually combating crime.

The problem that any government would have is that, and we have made lots of protestations to actually get that changed, they will be accused of actually fiddling the figures. So that if they changed the rules in term, then as a result of that you can actually end up getting all sorts of accusations. So that is why there is a reluctance to change the recording but I think there is an opportunity with whoever is in power in May to say, "Can we review it again?"

The other factor that has not been mentioned here is it is very expensive. We are recording lots of stuff that actually probably did not occur purely to cater for an audit

review of those crime figures and that is the case we will be making in May to whoever wins the next election.

Neil Johnson (AM): OK. Is there a case here, Chair, through you, since this is about the only management tool that we have in terms of real outputs from the Metropolitan Police Service -- is it too fanciful to think that we might actually decide what we would like to do and how we would like to measure the way the Metropolitan Police Service is performing in a way which is, in harmony at least with a deliverable set of statistics. Even if it means you have to double count for a period of time, you are doing the silly stuff but you are also doing the stuff that is meaningful, that might be a step forward.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Neil, that is a commendable suggestion but it could end up driving us insane, the reason being that, whatever happens, we will still have to collect the data under the scheme and we will set out to record and report it that way.

The one thing I do know, and I know you have a different view, if you have an alternative set of measurement criteria, then there is already massive debate about what is crime, what is not crime, and when it changed, within the media, and it may well, I believe, confuse the public picture even greater.

I would prefer to see the weight of this MPA behind a fundamental review of why we record crime, what is its purpose, how is it going to be used, and what then makes it fit for purpose. Just picking up on something Tim [Godwin] said there, because we should remember how this just does not confuse the public, it disappoints the public. There is a good moral argument for the way we record things at the high end but the inevitability of the criminal justice system will see it discharged at the low end. Hardly surprising that members of the public get very disappointed with a criminal justice system that is then excited to disappoint.

My belief is that we should be actually reviewing the way in which it is done and I would be concerned about coming up with an alternative diversionary proposal, because I have seen diversions in criminal justice before, and not least how we dispose of people, and it means that we have failed to put the effort into actually fixing the system.

Neil Johnson (AM): Yes. For clarity, I am not suggesting for a moment that we should try to add more mud to an already grimy pool. I think what I am considering, and perhaps suggesting, is that if we think we know what is better we should put it into a framework which can then be tabled, and we can say, "This is the way we think it should go".

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes. We have been having a series of conversations and meetings around exactly that and I think it is a very good suggestion that if we can reach a united position which we can then present that to Government and say, “Look, this is the way we would like to do it”.

Neil Johnson (AM): This is a fairly significant part of policing in the United Kingdom.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes, it is absolutely true, but there is a second part of that which is that, there is structural problem, in my view, at the Home Office, which is there is a department of civil servants permanently employed to review crime statistics and how they are collated and they are unlikely to say, “OK”, fold their arms and then do nothing. Part of the problem is that there is then a constant review and their only output is to keep changing the way we record things. So the first thing I would recommend to the Home Secretary is that, whoever is employed to do that, is employed on a temporary fixed term contract which then comes to an end and then they can go off and do something else, and leave it, then, like in New York, where the way the crime statistics have been compiled, you may not agree with them but they actually have not changed the methodology for something like 27 years, so people believe the trend.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): But, Neil [Johnson], if I could come back and say, I think I misunderstood what you were saying. If it is something we can distil out of what we already collect, this is an expensive piece of business, and then come up with something, that is fine, but for internal use and to use as, “This might be a better way forward”.

Neil Johnson (AM): “This could be a better way of doing it”, yes.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): But I would not want anything to take away from the force, the pressure, to actually, “Can we just get a more sensible national system?”

Neil Johnson (AM): I am the last person in the world to suggest paralysis by analysis.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Great. Caroline [Pidgeon].

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Yes, I have two areas of questioning. One follows on, really, a bit, from Neil’s, but it is around confidence targets. I think we are just under them, but I think when you actually look at the breakdown for the public attitude survey, there are huge contradictions, it seems, in terms of answers to a lot of the questions in there that the public give, and yet their answer to, “Do you agree the police and council are dealing with these crime issues that matter in your area?” there seem to be lots of contradictions. So I am wondering, first of all, what guidance you are giving to the boroughs who get

these huge reams of paper to try and analyse, so they can really understand the trend, because I think I was looking at it with my borough commander and it is very difficult to comprehend what the statistics are saying. Also, are you, and perhaps the Chair, making any representations to Government on whether you are having to focus far too much on this effectively centrally-dictated target rather than actually doing the policing and whatever? Because it seems so complicated and so contradictory.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Right. Let us go to the last point first. No, I do not think we are. I happen to think that the public - and I know you agree - confidence in the police is actually the ultimate aim in many respects. So something that actually allows to get some indication of progress, "Are we getting better or worse?" I think is the right thing to do.

In this I am at one with colleagues across the country, I think - and I understand why the Home Secretary has done this - is the way in which we do measure this I am not entirely convinced about. Whilst I can understand the desire to make sure the police are working in partnership, which we do and that is hugely important, a measurement that lumps us both together, I do not think is an accurate reflection of police confidence. I will leave you to decide what I think the result would be if it was police on their own as opposed to police and local authorities together, but I think the police on their own should be measured by confidence. However, I think working in partnership is important. So I do think we have argued that with the Home Secretary and we lost that argument during the debate.

I think it is right to measure confidence. I think it is a proper target and I think it is something we need to make progress on. We do give guidance but the problem is the more information we gather, the more difficult it is to decide. The good news is that we are making progress towards our target, we have improved our confidence from 47% to 51% and I think our target is 56%, but, Tim [Godwin] as to advice to boroughs, is there anything you could add?

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): Territorial policing actually having been putting out quite a lot. Betsy Stenko has done a lot of analysis in terms of what the key drivers are in terms of confidence, and those are keeping people informed, it is about the interaction that you have, it is not just always that you capture someone, it is about telling people what has happened as a result of that capture as well. Sometimes, where you actually have nine-month trial dates for some Crown Court cases there is a long time between the arrest and the eventual outcome and keeping people informed. I think the actual advent of the confidence target down at the borough level, where it can now be broken down to the borough level, has meant that the Police Service and the MPS have to think differently about, "How do we make sure that we have quality contact?" Because

previous it was all about how many people we captured, whether crime was going up or down. As a new dimension, I think it is a good thing.

In terms of what we are learning from that, the biggest piece is the variation between boroughs. There are some boroughs that are at 80% confidence rates and some at 20% confidence rates. When you actually pin that down, it can be an event, a single crime-type event where the confidence has been lost for whatever reason, and in other places it can be other events that have occurred in terms of connectivity through neighbour panels, etc. Tower Hamlets is a very good case in terms of reviewing what was going on in their borough with the Borough Commander there, Paul Ricketts, and as a result changed the way that the connectivity was through the neighbourhood panels, and as a result went steaming up in terms of confidence, and it varies by borough as a result.

In terms of giving you a more appropriate briefing, then Territorial Policing (TP) have got this firmly in their sights and I am sure they would be quite happy to talk through all the bits that we found from that and Betsy Stenko.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): I am not, obviously, arguing that we should not be looking at improving confidence in policing, but it just seems to me, when you look at the different sorts of surveys there are and actually breaking down the questions, they do not logically flow through, that if you feel your area is safe or whatever and then whether it is police or police and council, they seem to be contradictory and it is how you then analyse that to work out what you need to be doing.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): That is absolutely right. Equally, we have a new piece coming on, which is a rounded assessment through Her Majesty's Inspectorate, which changes the definition again, it puts other bits in, in terms of victim surveys and bits and pieces like that. So it is a confusing field and I think that will need to be settled down, but it is a learning journey in terms of it being a bit of a shift in terms of emphasis, in terms of priority, and we need to do it.

Confidence to us is so important. It has picked up the point about where the stuff we are doing on VOYAGE, the stuff we are doing on Kickz, and all the rest of it, is to build that confidence in young communities, for example, to come forward and tell us when things are not going right, so that we actually get a better picture of what is going on. Confidence is very important in order to encourage people to report crime and for us to do it, so it is the over-pinning target that we need to achieve. That is why it is important, but a little bit confused at the moment.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): OK. My other question is around special constables. In your report you say there are 2,892 at the moment and you have a target of getting to 6,600, I understand. How is the recruitment going?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): We got off to a slower start than we wanted but now we are being inundated with applications, so we are quite excited, I think it is fair to say, at this point in time.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): You say ‘inundated’; any rough idea of figures? What sort of volumes?

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): In our first recent effort, because one of the things I had to do was to sort out their accommodation and rules, etc, review of people in there. We needed to look at the exit interviews as to why we had losses, why were people leaving, because obviously retention is as important as recruitment.

One of the things there is where people turn up, do not get the kit that they need, the briefings that they need, so using the Olympics money, which was approved through the MPA, we have put sergeants out on every borough to actually make sure that they are dealt with and utilised properly as police officers. That is why the figure did not go up as much as it should, because we had some leaving and some joining and all the rest of it.

But in our first trial we have got 900 applicants almost straight off the bounce, and the current piece on that is that 36%, as I understand it, are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): It is looking exceptionally good, it is a really good story. John [Biggs], on this.

John Biggs (AM): I have been, I would argue, somewhat misreported in my position on the specials. So for the record I would like to confirm that I think they are a vitally important part of the MPS. What I am more interested in seeing, actually, is some metrics about retention and performance of specials, because although no one has quite said this, we are really into a position where there is pressure on police numbers and where specials clearly have a role to play in providing policing cover, but we need to be clear as an authority the extent to which that is a role which substitutes for lost fulltime police officers or, alternatively, what capacity gaps it does fill.

We should not be over-mesmerised by the Olympics thing. That is obviously a particular compartment of this, but the wider question is are there enormous disparities, for example, between boroughs and the numbers of specials they have who are prepared to perform? Then, of course, you could be in the perverse position where a borough which has lots of specials might perceive in the longer run that it is being punished for having such a high level of volunteering.

I would be interested to see, and maybe this belongs at the committee which I have fastidiously avoided being a member of, some performance indicators about this service.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Strangely enough, there is a report coming to the next meeting of Cindy's [Butts] committee on exactly this issue, which will look comprehensively at specials and the recruitment and the issues that you have raised.

John Biggs (AM): OK. Good.

Cindy Butts (AM): It is also an issue about the different ways in which boroughs utilise their specials, whether specials feel sufficiently embedded within the organisation. There are also issues, obviously, around retention, but I think there are issues that have emerged of late which is around the terms and conditions, the number of hours and things like that. So there are a whole raft of issues that we are going to look at and we will be happy to take on board your particular concerns.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): Have you circulated that report?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Absolutely. It is available to everybody, obviously, but we can notify when the papers come out, yes.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): That would be good, thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Tony [Arbour]?

Tony Arbour (AM): Again, on this point of specials. I find that the specials on my patch are very enthusiastic, love the job very much, think it is absolutely marvellous, but they have concerns about the paucity of actual accommodation there is for them. With this very explosive growth there is in the number of specials, just simple things: where do they put their hats, for example? I am told that this is one of the very few downsides that they see, that somehow or another we have not made adequate preparation for these people. What are we doing? Manifestly there must be very substantial pressure on space.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Part and parcel of the whole programme has been addressing this issue and, stating the blindingly obvious, sometimes doing the right thing is very difficult and accommodation is very difficult, but it is part and parcel of our programme to recruit more specials, to find that accommodation and do it in slightly different ways.

What you are saying, Tony [Arbour], touches on exactly what Cindy [Butts] was saying about specials feeling valued. The one thing that we do know in the MPS, in different

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parts of the MPS, over many, many years, there has been a variable rate of valuing special constables, and that is the biggest driver to keeping them in. That value is about, as Tim [Godwin] was saying, when you turn up, being expected, being briefed, doing a proper deployment, feeling as though you are doing a proper job, getting the right equipment and actually having somewhere to put your hat. It is a challenge, Tony [Arbour], but it is part and parcel of our programme to try and find appropriate accommodation. Is there anything I have not covered?

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): I think one of the key issues is a locker room. I think that somewhere in the region of 8% or 9% of our total estate is provided for lockers, and that is silly, if you think about it.

The other bit that we do know is that, if you walk round about 6.30pm, 7.30pm, a lot of our buildings do not have anybody in them, and that is actually when the specials normally come in, so it just needs a bit of imagination on some of that.

The other thing I did find is that some of our rules we have in relation to taking things like uniform trousers, shirts and jackets home, does not help in the sense that our lockers have to be about eight foot tall as opposed to the size of a hat. So all those things we are going through to actually achieve it within that, because, very conscious of what is coming in the future in terms of public sector in terms of fiscal pressures, we do have to reduce our estate, but at the same time we do need to accommodate all these additional specials.

We have got to remember that it was not that long ago that 500 specials was how many we had in the MPS, so to get to 2,800 in I think it is about 2½, 3 years, is actually pretty good, and we have managed to accommodate them. With the other rule changes, far better care through the sergeants on the boroughs, plus looking at the design of lockers and the permissions that they need in terms of other kit, I think we will get there.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Joanne [McCartney]?

Joanne McCartney (AM): A question for yourself, actually, it is about allocation of work. Whilst I consider that the specials report going to Cindy's [Butts] committee is valid, it is equally by coming to SOP, because it is about (overspeaking) meeting. I am just raising that, if it had not been raised here, I probably would not know it was coming, and having an interest in it and given that they are going to play a much more important role in operational terms, it is how we get that balance right. It is quite a difficult one, I appreciate that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): No, I understand that. Do we circulate the agendas for all the committee meetings to all the Members? We do. The agendas are circulated, so you can see the papers on there and they are obviously available.

Caroline Pidgeon (AM): No, we do not.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Do we not?

Toby Harris (AM): If you specifically ask for an agenda of a particular committee that you are not on then you get it, but otherwise not.

Jennette Arnold (AM): It is the best way to do it, surely?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. What we might think about --

Toby Harris (AM): Some of the agendas are emailed out - not the full documents - but not all.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK, we will have a look at that and make sure that everybody gets sight of everything. I have to say, if it is an email, I hope you will not object and then you can request proactively.

Joanne McCartney (AM): If the clerks, if they realise a paper is particularly relevant to another committee, could make a specific point just of emailing that committee to let them know that this paper is there. I do not know how much work that would entail.

Victoria Borwick (AM): We do a fortnightly briefing for members of --

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes, there is a fortnightly briefing of upcoming business, yes.

Victoria Borwick (AM): We try to flag anything.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes. All right, Steve [O'Connell]?

Steve O'Connell (AM): Just picking on specials, if I may? Part of a comment I made yesterday was about the additionality of specials, they do something like eight hours a week, they are often deployed on the Friday and Saturday nights for their eight hours, which is a time when that additionality is needed in our town centres.

Office space, which Graham will agree with, is an issue that the Estates Committee and others in our committee are looking at. Office space, with the additionality of uniforms

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in our town centres, the paucity of office space has come out and that is something we are looking that, which also will catch up with the extra numbers on specials. I commend, as a local authority person, 'Borough Beat' as Croydon calls it, which is the authorities working with the local commanders to encourage their staff.

Something that we are pursuing, that we are coming up against a bit of a stoppage, so whoever takes over the Government next year could do with a bit of lobbying, is an inclination to give council tax rebates to households of specials, something I would like to do. However, I am advised that there is some appalling piece of legislation that says you cannot give preference to certain groups about council tax, which is completely bonkers. Whoever happens to be in power after May needs to be lobbied, so we can do something about that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Thank you. Victoria [Borwick], on specials.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Can I move it on to cadets? Because I think the thing is, cadets may become specials. I want to welcome the number of cadets being recruited and I was very impressed by their performance at the pop awards that we went to the other day where they did all the good work looking after the various prize givings. On talking to your colleague who was there running it, was very impressed that every borough had had more prospective cadets than we could accommodate. Again, I just want to welcome that and I think that is perhaps something that, in fairness, is called career progression, is it not?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): The number of cadets is up from 1,000 last year, towards 2,000 now.

Tim Godwin (Deputy Commissioner, MPS): 2,000 now. It is all part of Project You.

Victoria Borwick (AM): So again, as I say, it looks all right.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I think it also goes to the recurring theme. It is about building confidence. A lot of those cadets are people who, without that effort, very often would not naturally be people who would want to necessarily associate with cops. It is a huge success.

Victoria Borwick (AM): Looking at them, they certainly fulfil all the criteria we lay down and I just wanted that to be welcomed.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): I think the cadets target is 4,000 by 2012, is it not? Yes. Fantastic.

Toby Harris (AM): You have got a total of 4,000 on cadets. The Mayor set a target in terms of specials of 10,000, I think, by 2012. Are you confident you will be able to make that? Is that still your target?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): To be fair, the 10,000 was an aspiration. There is a minimum target of 6,000-odd.

Toby Harris (AM): Ah, an aspiration.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): But, look, if we can get 10,000, great.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): We would love to have 10,000. We will do everything we can to get there. If we get 6,000 it will be a damn sight better than 2,000.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Was there anybody else on specials?
Graham [Speed]?

Graham Speed (AM): Yes, thank you. Really just to pick up on the points earlier. I think that there is a danger that, to use your own logic from earlier, we are focusing on numbers rather than quality. I think the importance about specials is quality and retention. Lockers is the other key phrase in this and certainly from the Estates Panel's and others' view of the estate, the thing that came up in just about every location we looked at was the issue of lockers or the lack of lockers or unsuitable lockers or the wrong size lockers or lockers in the wrong place.

I am very keen on the use of specials, and certainly from my experience at borough level and looking at specialist op queues I think there is a wide range of utilisation for specials. In some cases they are being utilised very well, in other cases there are morale issues and there are problems in terms of kit, in terms of training, in terms of what they are actually being used for.

I was very impressed recently to see specials being used on Friday and Saturday nights in a specialist op queue rather than simply TP in the town centre, which is vitally important as Steve [O'Connell] said, but there are clearly opportunities to use them elsewhere.

We can talk about 10,000 as an aspiration or 6,000 as a target, and we are at 2,700. To me it is more important that - whether it is 3,000 or 4,000 - they have been trained, they are being used well, they are motivated, and we are not losing the churn, we can have 900 come in, but if 700 go out it is costing us a lot of money and it is not actually achieving anything for us. So I think collectively we should be looking at equality and perhaps moving away from constant target chasing of this 6,000 figure.

We do have to look at the accommodation issues because it is a key problem. As Tim [Godwin] has said, we have buildings we are not using as well as we ought to, but that is not necessarily going to solve the problem of a special turning up with an expensive uniform, with all the equipment, but nowhere to put it and not feeling part of the MPS.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): That is a fair point and I think Cindy's [Butts] report is going to look into some of those issues around retention, use, value, quality, exactly that. We need to get it right, you are quite right.

Anything else on specials? No. OK, that is a good news story. You will be pleased to hear that Catherine's [Crawford] jujitsu belt-wearing, or holding, daughter starts her training as a special on Monday, and so wherever she is posted, look out!

Right, I am conscious we are coming into our last half hour. I have got James [Cleverly], Jenny [Jones], Clive [Lawton] and Faith [Boardman]. James, if you would like to go. Anybody else who wants to ask, please make yourself known.

James Cleverly (AM): Thank you, Chair. I want to just make reference to page 26 in our papers of the Commissioner's report on the disposal zone in Bexley. I know in this instance it is an all-round good news story, it was done very much with the full support of local residents and the figures as reported, I think, are excellent. I was wondering if I could broaden this out and find out how many other such dispersal zones are in place across the capital and whether we are seeing similar levels of results to these, or whether, if I am being a little bit cheeky, are we highlighting perhaps the best performing example of this? I am not suggesting anything there.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Would we do such a thing, James? It is a good news story, genuinely. What is happening is a good news story: 73% reduction in anti-social behaviour calls to police. From an average of 15 calls per week, now, in 3 months prior, down to 4 calls a week. There is good evidence that this has worked and it is happening across London but local decision-making ruling.

Dispersal zones are just one of the powers we have under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act and it is the police with the local authority to decide what they want to implement, based on their pattern, their profile and their intelligence. Also, we should not see the dispersal zone as, and I am sure you are not, the golden bullet. It is just one part of a range of solutions that actually can have a difference.

Of course, one of the questions always is, "Well, are you just going to disperse the problem?" Wherever we put dispersal zones in, it is part of the strategy to look at the

potential for not just sending it somewhere else, because we are really looking to using that with other solutions for long-term problem solving solutions and the ability to disperse but also engage in a different way.

It is happening across different parts of London but, it just has to be said, what has happened in Bexley is a resounding success.

James Cleverly (AM): One of the things that struck me about the Bexley example, and one of the concerns before the implementation was, as you say, that all you are doing is just moving the pieces around the board rather than actually dealing with it, but one of the things that really has come out is that it has helped to separate the sheep from the goats, as it were, and the small number of individuals who were habitually ignoring it and were being, I think, quite provocative in their actions, have actually been dealt with. It is not a case of just pushing it under the carpet and pretending it does not exist; there has actually been action that has been taken for the small number of problematic individuals. Again, is that a pattern that is being replicated across London? Because that, I think, is where the real success of this is. It is about separating the small number of individuals that are triggering these levels of anti-social behaviour and dealing with them rather than just hassling people, as it were.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): You have raised exactly the important point; the fact it is one of the range of solutions but also it should be the way in which we find a different way to engage and find a different way to, as you say, split the different people up and find different solutions. The London Anti-Social Behaviour Board ensures effective links between that board and practitioners, so we can, out of Bexley and anywhere else, know what is working, what are the various tactics that are working. Through that board we can spread the message.

James Cleverly (AM): Thank you.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Thank you. Jenny [Jones]?

Jenny Jones (AM): I wanted to ask you first about the Blair Peach report. I did raise this with Tim [Godwin] earlier. It is the report we all voted to be published by the end of last year and then the CPS intervened. If you could just give a quick update on that.

I am really happy to see, I think it is on page 27, that the road deaths and casualties have fallen, I think that is fantastic. It looks like a 9% drop and that is amazing. Is it time to revise the target down, perhaps?

I also wanted to talk to you about the traffic Operational Command Unit (OCU) because it has actually been hit by a double whammy because it had its 5% cut, like the rest of the

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MPS, but it also had to absorb all the work of the Commercial Vehicle Education Unit which seems a bit tough, and it is losing something like 20 officers. If we are going to keep road casualties down, then we really do have to be aware that traffic plays a large role in that, so I am concerned that traffic had a double cut of 10% not 5%.

The last issue I wanted to raise is this whole issue about corruption. I know that Kit [Malthouse] is thinking about this. There is a 1999 report, I do not know of a more recent one, from the Home Office that said that police corruption is pervasive and not bounded by rank; it can be financial or in the way that they use their powers; it cannot be explained purely in terms of a few bad apples, and the worst thing, reform tends not to be durable, and so it is something that constantly has to be re-thought. This report, I thought, was a bit disturbing and I would be keen to know if there are any new moves on the whole issue of corruption.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Right. On Blair Peach, as you know, raised at this authority before. I made my position clear that, unless there was an overwhelming reason why I could not publish, I wanted to publish. That still remains the case. I did say I would try and publish by December but, as I have said before, Jenny [Jones], we took counsel's advice and counsel advised that I should refer against the DPP to see if there were, finally, any further lines of inquiry that would be legitimate, proper and fruitful.

I think that was the right thing to do because I did not want to publish and then undermine any further opportunities. Keir Starmer [Director of Public Prosecutions] agreed, so it was not that they intervened. I asked Keir Starmer and he agreed to take it, he thought it was appropriate, and I discussed it with him only this week and his decision-making, his review of that, is ongoing. There is a large amount of historic material for him and his people to review. I am afraid that is the case and I am quite sure the DPP want to make sure that he gets such an important case right.

Jenny Jones (AM): So you do not have a date yet?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I do not have a date yet, Jenny [Jones], but I remain absolutely committed that, obviously wherever I can, subject to whatever DPP says and what comes out of that.

Is it time to revise a target down for traffic? I think targets are very good sometimes but you know, first, that I am with you, I am delighted to see the reduction in road death casualties and the trauma that every one of those brings. About a target down, I am not entirely sure it is necessary; I just want to see continuing reductions. Even if we get to the target, I am not really bothered, frankly. We just should be aiming for continuing reductions, full stop.

Jenny Jones (AM): It is way below the target figure.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): We should just continue to aim for reductions. Targets are very useful in motivating, on occasions. I suppose on a national basis these targets have been useful. I am not entirely sure we should concern ourselves too much about revising that target, but maybe there is a wider debate than that. But even if we were under target I would still say we ought to be trying to get better around it because of the trauma it causes.

On budget, I think it is an issue you have raised, certainly with previous commissioners. At the end of the day we just have to balance decisions on where we can actually find the money. We believe that decisions we are making on the budget with traffic are the right ones, we believe we are leading the right capability in place; it is about using it smartly. We have to make decisions right the way across the MPS. We have heated debates around child protection, around human trafficking, around safer neighbourhoods, and the more we ring fence the less opportunity we have to actually make sensible decisions.

The good news is, we are still reducing and they are still a very, very effective unit. We keep it under review and of course there is a budget process that comes through this authority, where we make proposals and there is quite a rigorous review of all these matters. We think we are getting it right on the basis of the money we have, but time will tell.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Certainly results seem to be on target.

Jenny Jones (AM): But the caps are happening now and the results are in the past, so this is the concern I have.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Yes, but we have had that debate before, where we make --

Jenny Jones (AM): But it is also 10%, not 5%, you see. It just seems a bit unfair.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I have not got the figures in front of me, but we think we are making the right decisions and that is what our job is to do, and we report those decisions through here, we bring it through the budget review process. We keep that on review.

On corruption, yes, anybody who thinks that there is an end date on the idea of corruption in policing is living in a completely different world than I live in, and I suspect that everybody here lives in. We should always be vigilant about the concern about

corruption. Let us be honest about it, out of 33,000-plus police officers, there will be corrupt officers. Our job is to make sure that our system of recruiting does everything possible to make sure we weed them out, if they have the wrong values and likely to corrupt in the first place, and then to have a robust and rigorous regime within policing to ensure we capture them as quickly as possible and get the right result, which generally is in front of a court and where they get a significant conviction and a prison sentence, because that is what corrupt officers should get.

We have that vigorous capability in the MPS. We retain the corruption command in the MPS. It is vigorous, it is about intelligence and it is about making sure we have all the opportunities for reporting. All the debates about how people have their conflicts reports externally with difficult issues are actually replicated internally. How do you make sure you give everybody the opportunity to ensure that the intelligence, the information, is right if there is any suggestion of corruption? Having the confidence of the force to report that, having the right line to the confidential nature of reports is absolutely critical for us rooting out corrupt officers. But I am far from complacent, it is a constant challenge. We will have corrupt officers; we have got to be vigilant about it.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): I suggested at my confirmation hearing that, as part of our work plan for the coming year, we might look as a group at whether we should perform a scrutiny of the preventative and detection structures, both actually within the MPA and the MPS, around corruption, not least because I think it is some time since they were looked at and it always a good idea to review these things. So we will be putting that in through the consideration of the work programme for the upcoming year as we move towards the AGM.

Jenny Jones (AM): Will it go?

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): That is what we will have to decide as a group. Normally these scrutinies are done as a separate --

Victoria Borwick (AM): Or it could be Professional Standards.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes, through Professional Standards. But we can talk about that when we talk about our forthcoming programme, if that is all right? OK, Clive [Lawton].

Clive Lawton (AM): Three brief questions. The first relates to this distressing criterion of the satisfaction gap between white and BME victims. I guess in terms of what we all aspire to, the very fact that such a criterion exists is rather depressing, and it is even more depressing that it appears to be endlessly stubborn. I noticed that a report is to go to SOP. I do not know, again, whether this is about our business management or your decisions,

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but we have a committee called Equality and Diversity, we have a committee called SOP. I am just puzzled as to why it goes to SOP. It is clearly an important issue. It just seems very, very strange. Your own report says at the end, with the equality impact, you recognise that there are two issues about women and rape and about this gap, and both of them are getting reports to SOP, even though they are clearly Equality and Diversity issues. It is just one point which seems strange.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): The reason it has been going to SOP is because it forms part of the policing plan and the concern that the policing plan --

Clive Lawton (AM): I understand that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): It may well be a good suggestion --

Clive Lawton (AM): So does everything.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes, it may well be a good suggestion for it to switch across, so we will talk about that at the next **BMG&C(?)** because I am keen to share things across.

Clive Lawton (AM): Well, SOP are overloaded and we just need to make sense of that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes, I think that is a good suggestion.

Clive Lawton (AM): The second thing relates to the resource allocation formula (RAF), which you are going to organise a briefing for, and I notice that your note says:

‘Currently in discussion (MPA and MPS) about how best to brief members on the structure and application of the RAF so that they are appropriately informed.’

Would we be justified, reading between the lines of that, that the RAF is arcane, incomprehensible and not the best example of accountability, transparency and all the rest of it? It was already bothering, I think, last month, when everybody kind of looked at each other uncertainly about how it works and what it does, and I really do think that this is urgent and important, not just one or the other, so I do hope that that briefing will move forward quickly.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): We will provide the briefing. I do not think it is an issue of accountability, transparency or anything else; it is a matter that you should ask of the MPA. You on RAF.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): It is our process.

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Clive Lawton (AM): OK. My third question relates, Commissioner, to your comments about the appointment of senior officers. I was trying to think of another civilian public body in which the senior officers are not appointed by the board, and I could not think of one. No doubt it exists. I just wondered whether your comments related to the principle of appointment by the board of senior officers, or whether it related to the scope and scale? That is, were you are saying, “I recognise that 10 senior officers should be, but not 40”, or what?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Thank you, Clive [Lawton]. I do not think anybody in the MPA or the Home Office should be surprised at my views around this. I did raise exactly these views in all three of my interviews to be appointed as commissioner. It is a view I have held for some time. I also raised it once in my speech to the Superintendents’ Association. I have not raised it proactively since then but, not unnaturally, it is an issue that journalists do ask when I do Crime Enforcement Association every month and various other things.

It is a position of principle. I have actually gone out of my way to say, on every occasion I have been asked about it, “This is not about criticising the MPA”, because if I did that I would be saying I was unhappy with my chief officer team, my senior team, and I am not, I am absolutely delighted by them and actually I have been consulted on that and I think the result is an outstanding chief officer team.

I do think that now that accountability is much clearer and sharper in focus, and let us be honest, my predecessor, however you describe his leaving, it was not clearly as voluntary as he would have wished, so now accountability is sharper and much more focused than perhaps it was in the past. If it is sharper and more focused, then I think the commissioner should have the chance to be a success, and the critical issue in being a success, for any chief executive, is the selection and development, and beyond that - and I will come onto this in a moment - of your chief officer team. I have always believed that, I still believe it. It is not just a matter here in London, by the way. I think it is not for me to argue for the rest of the country, they have their own problems, but this is a problem for all chief constables across the country, that is my view.

I think it is a position of principle and I think I should be in the position to have that final say, but all I am actually saying is, to reverse the balance. I am not saying that I should exist in some glorious isolation and I should not consult or anything like that, that would be silly. At the moment, you have the final decision and I advise, or I am officially a consultee since the 2009 Act. I think that balance should be reversed, that is what I am saying.

The other reason for saying it is, I think it is the gateway into an even more important matter, and I think that is important to know. Because I think I should be held accountable and therefore have the responsibility and therefore have the right for the discipline, conduct and performance of that chief officer team. At this moment in time, I do not, that lies with you. Again, I am making no criticism, but I do not think that makes sense to the public. There have been instances in the past where the public, and indeed people who should know better in government, do not understand why I, or the previous commissioner, have not taken action. I make no criticism of what the PPA do, but actually we do not have the power to take the action that people expect us to take, and I do not think that is a sensible set of arrangements.

That has been my view for some time and it will continue to be my view, and I think the balance should be changed, but I do think the conduct, discipline and performance issue is as important, if not more important, than the appointments issue, because, in other words, it is your job to hold me to account. I think governance and politicians have a hugely important role in policing; policing is too important just to be left to the cops. I think your role, politicians' role, is to set the arrangements within which I work: properly inform my authorities, have strategic oversight for the way in which we spend public money, and then hold me to account. But if you are going to hold me to account, do not allow me the opportunity to say, "I do the best I can with the mistakes you make on my behalf". Now, you have not made any mistakes but I want to avoid that. I do think I should be held accountable and then give the right to actually be a success.

Clive Lawton (AM): If I could just come back on that, yesterday we had this report of Stafford Hospital and its appalling collapse of services. There too is public body in which all the senior team will have been appointed by the board, clearly with the advice and support of the chief executive, no doubt, but appointed by the board. On a much, much smaller scale as a former head teacher of a school, my deputies were appointed by the governors. This seems to me to be a universal model of accountability and, while I would understand your challenging the scale and scope, I am not sure how this is sustainable in the face of the general model we have of public accountability and management of public organisations.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): I am not challenging the scale or the scope, I am challenging the balance.

Clive Lawton (AM): I understand that.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): And I am being very precise. I am just saying, "These are my views and this is how I think it should change". If you look across the vast majority of organisations that exist in the United Kingdom and the world, what I am saying is commonsense. The vast majority of organisations, I think, would actually

say, "This is a commonsense position". Of course, you may well disagree, or the MPA, and that is very legitimate. These are my views.

Neil Johnson (AM): Can I try and help, because I think if we are not careful we will end up dancing on the head of a pin on this. I think my position is very well known around this table and I have made it before. I have enormous sympathy with the Commissioner's view, however I think the issue is one of definition. Clive is using the term 'appointment', actually I do not have a problem with that; selection is what is all about. If you are going to hold the chief executive - or the Commissioner in this case - accountable for the way the business is run, he has to have the say in selection of the individuals. That then, classically, would go to nominations committee, which approves it, and they are appointed by that company, but if you do not give the top man the ability to select his own team, then he --

Dee Doocey (AM): Or woman.

Neil Johnson (AM): I am sorry, Dee [Doocey], of course, gender free. If you do not have that ability to select and appoint, then it is very difficult to see how you are held accountable. I am just utterly clear about that.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes. James [Cleverly]?

James Cleverly (AM): I think this issue is an example of - and it is not the only example - the inherent conflict between our role as a non-exec board which is part of the delivery side of things, and our role as a scrutiny body. It is the same with the budget setting process. It is one of a number of examples where we are culpable in the decisions that we then go on to scrutinise.

I think this is a classic example. Had we made what the Commissioner viewed was a catastrophic set of appointments and forced those on him, and then turned round and said, "Why is the organisation not working properly?" I think he would be completely legitimate to turn around and say, "Well it is not my fault, it is the team that are rubbish. The team that you made me do this business with". I think that ultimately is the inherent difficulty that we have. Same with the budget setting. We set the parameters within which the Commissioner works, and then that puts us in quite a difficult position for us to potentially criticise the delivery of the service, if one of the legitimate get out of jail cards is, "Well, the parameters that you set were inappropriate".

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. We have a number of people indicating and we have got some time to go, and it is obviously an interesting debate, but we are currently bound by legislation and Home Office regulations, which will take primary legislation to change, so just if we can bear that in mind as we have the debate. Dee [Doocey]?

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Dee Doocey (AM): I will be very quick. I agree with the Commissioner 100%. The very idea of running a £4 billion, nearly, organisation and not choosing a top team is just so off the wall it is just ridiculous. I wondered if the Commissioner felt, as I do, that there ought to be some more power given to borough commanders to choose their team?

Jenny Jones (AM): Yes, sauce for the goose.

Dee Doocey (AM): At the moment, if you are a borough commander in a particular area, as you know, Commissioner, and you want somebody who is a specialist in gang culture, you could well, because of the appointment system, get somebody who is very good at football crowd control. I just wondered if you also thought that was something that we ought to be looking at?

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): You would not expect me to have thought that one through, actually, Dee [Doocey], and I think it is a valid point. I think there is a legitimate role for borough commanders to be centrally involved in the selection of their team.

Dee Doocey (AM): There is.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): But under the current accountability arrangements, I am the person that is held to account, not the borough commander.

Dee Doocey (AM): No, I understand.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): So I do not think the balance should be changed, I think that is ultimately my decision, or my decision to bowl to the appropriate person. I do think there should be central involvement, and we do do that, and it is something we should constantly look at.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. John [Biggs]?

John Biggs (AM): Very briefly, I agree with you, it is a very interesting topic, we could discuss without producing much fruit. Many of the contributions I agree with. I think what is left, and perhaps from some of the new answers, is the recognition of the role of corporate governance in all of this. It is not just about my decision against your decision, it is about the partnership which we should have between the MPA and the management. So a commissioner will doubtless have some blind spots and the role of the MPA is to help to strengthen his team by helping to identify those in a private and partnership basis. Of course that means that we have a collective role in decision making and sometime we may make collectively catastrophic decisions, but if we work in that fashion we should

make fewer catastrophic ones less often. I would be very nervous about creating a framework in which we delegate absolute veto or authority over appointments. I think if you do that, that is as much a sign of failure as it is if you fail in your day-to-day duties as a board.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): I agree with that, notwithstanding the fact that I think that we need to be clear in these processes about who is acting and who is scrutinising. For me, I agree with the Commissioner that our role is to scrutinise any appointments that they may make. Sorry, Sir Paul.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Interestingly, I think there is one big difference, I do think I should have the final say in selection. That is just my view. But I am saying the balance should be altered, not there should be some sort of I sit alone, completely independent of anyone else. I do think the issue of corporate governance is an interesting aspect of how you then use corporate governance to deal with some of the concerns you might have if that balance changes.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Toby [Harris], finally?

Toby Harris (AM): I do not want to prolong this and the Commissioner and I have discussed this on a number of occasions, but I think we need to draw a distinction between the right and responsibility of the Commissioner to decide where and what he is doing with key people, which I think is an operational decision which is currently very clearly with the Commissioner. The Commissioner, very properly, consults the MPA about those matters and that includes in terms of borough commanders.

I think - and the Commissioner and I have discussed this point - that the final responsibility for making the decision as to who is selected for particular senior ranks, should rest with a panel appointed by the MPA for that purpose. However, it is clearly important that the Commissioner is very much involved in that process and the recent legislation gives the Commissioner the statutory right, which he did not have, astonishingly, before, to be consulted as part of that process.

I also think we are in danger of getting into rather silly semantic arguments about this because, by and large, panels of the MPA listen very closely to the views that are expressed by the Commissioner. When appointments that are slightly less good than others have been made, there is a shared responsibility for that and I think that should also be acknowledged.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Yes. I have not necessarily felt that level of shared responsibility in my experience in the MPA, but there we are.

Sir Paul Stephenson (Commissioner, MPS): Toby [Harris] and I have discussed this before. I think we disagree on that one point and we will just have to disagree and that is perfectly legitimate, but in doing so, what Toby [Harris] does touch on and I say it again, I am absolutely delighted with my chief officer team, so this is a point of principle. But I think it is interesting we have concentrated on what I started with and not discussed, I think, actually what is an even more important bit, and that is the issue of discipline, conduct and performance. That currently sits for my chief officer team, for all my ACPO ranks, with the MPA. I do not think the public understand that; I do not understand it. Interestingly, I think the final selection is consistent with changing that, because I think that is the gateway into me owning conduct, discipline and performance, because I think that would be odd for it not to sit with me formally.

Again, you can put rules in place around the governance board, etc, that deals with submissions, but that is my view, I think the balance is currently wrong and is not about criticising the MPA.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Thank you very much. Sir Paul [Stephenson], Tim [Godwin], thank you very much indeed for your attending. By the way, congratulations on what was actually an excellent set of performance figures. I know we have touched on some controversial issues, but we are, as always, grateful for your very hard work, and we will see you in a month.

Right, Members, if we could rattle through the rest, please, that would be helpful, I think, to us all.

Civil Liberties Panel, the report has been withdrawn. Victoria [Borwick], I think, has circulated the reasons why. The report is still undergoing legal review and we are proposing, because we want to get it published sharpish, that it should come to the next meeting of SOP, so it could then be published in public. Then, if we want, we can bring it to the next full MPA if people still require it to be examined, is that right?

Victoria Borwick (AM): I think we thought it was going timing-wise to the next full MPA.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Oh, right, OK, fine. I am happy for it to come to the next full MPA. OK.

The next item is the MPA calendar of meetings. Does anybody have any issues on that?

All: Agreed.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): Agreed? Happy? Content? All right, no complaints then, over the next 12 months, please.

Reports from committees, they have all been tabled. Any comments? Thrilling read.

All: Agreed.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Action taken under delegated authority. Any little secrets, Catherine [Crawford], to tell us?

Catherine Crawford (Chief Executive, MPA): No little secrets, Chair. All the paperwork is available to be examined in headquarters at Dean Farrar Street.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Everybody happy? All right. Any other urgent business? I have had no notification of urgent business.

All we have to do under Exempt is to agree the minutes of the last Exempt section. If you are happy for me to sign those minutes, then I do not need to ask everybody to leave.

All: Agreed.

Kit Malthouse (Chairman): OK. Happy?

Great, thank you very much indeed, another productive meeting, finished just about on time. I will see you in a month after, no doubt, plenty of meetings. Lots and lots of meetings to attend and take place over the next month.

Thank you.