

## Written Responses

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### **Question - Metal Theft**

#### **Valarie Shawcross**

*Are the thefts of copper & lead again an increasing problem as it seems to be? For one example the copper roofing on West Norwood Library have been stolen on eight occasions in the last year. How many instances have there been in the last reported year of stolen signal wires and cabling lost from trains and underground infrastructure in London? What are London's Police doing to detect and prevent these thefts – what programme does the Met have in place to tackle the 'fencing' and export of stolen material?*

### **Response**

- Following good reductions in metal theft in 2008 (from over 650 offences in April 08 to just over 100 offences in Jan 09) offences have consistently risen since January 2010.
- Offences in the MPS are at a peak level which correlates with near record prices for non-ferrous metals on commodity markets (Copper £5,550 per tonne, Lead £1,600 per tonne). Theft of Aluminium is expected to increase as demand is increasing. Predictions suggest rising metal prices until 2015 at least.
- In terms of what we are doing to tackle the problem, BTP are the lead force for metal theft and we have been working closely with them as part of the ACPO Conductive Metal Theft Working Group, contributing to a tactical and strategic review of the problem.
- ACPO are also calling for legislative changes to be introduced that would provide greater scrutiny of second hand scrap metal dealers to take it into a cashless business mode and allow greater due diligence.
- As part of ongoing work police have met with British Telecom & BTP to arrange training and intelligence paths. A best practice web site is being created to assist officers when dealing with scrap yards. The problem has been adopted within TP by the National Mobile Phone Crime Unit as an extension of their existing remit.
- Last month the MPS conducted Op Webster that led to the arrest of ten (10) members of an organised crime group that had systematically stolen cable worth in excess of £1million whilst disguised as official engineers.
- We are also working closely with industry to create a scheme to identify rogue workmen as well as assisting and advising with prevention measures such as alarming cables and using smart water.
- The Chair has been very supportive in driving work to tackle metal theft - 16th June 2011, he and Catherine Crawford met with the representatives from the BTP, BT and the Home Office to discuss the matter.