

London Assembly (Plenary) Meeting – 3 June 2015
Transcript of Agenda Item 4: Question and Answer Session – Policing in London

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): What I am going to do is I am going to ask us to move on to today's principal business, which is a question-and-answer session on policing in London.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you, Jennette. Shall I kick off with my opening statement, which I think --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, just a moment.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sorry.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I am just reminding people that the session will last up to two hours and I have agreed that the Mayor and Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, Metropolitan Police Service] should make an opening remark. Can I call upon you, Mayor, to give us your opening statement?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Thank you very much, Jennette, and I am grateful to you for inviting me today. I would like to remind the Assembly and assure the Assembly that the overall performance of our police force continues to be excellent: crime continues to fall; we are on target to see the fall of the seven neighbourhood crimes that we targeted by 20%; there are 200 fewer victims of crime every day in London compared to 2012. Overall in this mayoralty so far, crime is down by about 18%, as Members know. We continue to see impressive reductions in burglary, in robbery and in theft.

There are of course challenges, which we have discussed before around this horseshoe, particularly on the recording of violence with injury (VWI) and the rise in VWI. There is an issue now of theft of high-value car models and we are working with the motor industry, as we did successfully with mobile phone manufacturers, to design out the problem of this keyless car theft, which now seems to be cropping up.

However, overall, I am encouraged by many aspects of performance. In particular, I would cite the continuing reductions in murders and in homicides. This year's figures are in line with last year's, which, as you will remember, were at historic lows. Knife crime overall is down by about a quarter. Confidence is high and has been improving, although it is broadly flat at the moment at 67%. I draw the attention of the Assembly to some of the measures that we are doing to promote confidence. We are encouraging the public to take ride-along operations with the police, get out there with the police to see what they do and build a sense of trust in what officers are up to. Lewisham is doing that in particular and I support very much what Lewisham is doing to build confidence in the police.

One measure that I want to announce today will greatly assist that increase in public confidence in policing. I am supporting the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in pressing ahead with the rollout of body-worn video cameras.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Hear, hear.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I can announce today that the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is moving along with the procurement to select a provider for 20,000 cameras. This will allow

officers in neighbourhood and response teams to be issued with them. This will be accomplished before the end of the financial year, by April 2016. I really think that this is potentially game-changing technology for us in London and for the police. It will build confidence not just in the public but also in our police officers, men and women, themselves. They will know that what they are doing and saying is being recorded. I hope very much that it will continue to build up trust and to drive down crime.

As Members of the Assembly know, this kind of technology is not necessarily always cheap. We have to continue to find economies. We are in a tough fiscal environment, as everybody understands. We will continue to find savings. I will just point out that so far, thanks to the hard work of the MPS, we have exceeded our savings targets. I tasked the MPS with finding savings of £500 million in 2013, as you will recall. They have now exceeded that target and have saved £573 million. Clearly, as I am sure we are going to discuss later on, there are further savings that will have to be found and you can rely on us and rely on me to keep the foot to the floor and to keep going with that.

I welcome the Commissioner. I apologise to the Commissioner for any traffic delays he may have encountered, which are of course entirely my fault and for which I take full responsibility, although I remind him, as ever, that there exists a very good system now called the Underground, which is also available. That should in no way diminish the sincerity of my apologies to the Commissioner for the traffic difficulties that he has probably experienced, although --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Chair, I am sorry. To the London Assembly, I am sorry about the delay. It was traffic. I blame no one, being a police officer.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, you are quite right. I am grateful to Bernard. Carry on.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We are in a no-blame society.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is a no-blame society. I am grateful to Bernard for being gracious enough to cast no blame this morning, although unquestionably the blame does lie with me as Chair of Transport for London (TfL) and I will be finding out what particular traffic difficulties there were. Obviously, we are doing a huge amount of work on the road network at the moment and, I am afraid, particularly the huge amount of improvements going on notably to help improve cycle safety and that is a factor.

Members of the Assembly, we are pushing ahead but I should say I have explained most of the record of the last year or so, where we are and what the challenges are. I am just concluding with the point that we do think we can make further economies. However, obviously, with London growing at a huge rate, with colossal increases in population, with continuing challenges of all kinds, with a situation in London where we continue to face communities with very real deprivation and lots and lots of difficult issues, it is always going to be vital to go in and argue hard with the Government and with the Home Office for proper funding for policing in London. I am sure that is one of the many points on which the Commissioner and I are at one. Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Thank you for that. Welcome, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe. Are you able to make your short opening statement?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes, Chair. Again, just to repeat, my apologies. I am sorry about the delay for the Assembly. It could well be that the Mayor has covered some of this, but I am just going to restate just a couple of points and then of course take any questions that the Assembly may have.

We have achieved some significant reductions in crime overall over the last few years. That includes in the MOPAC 7 key neighbourhood crimes, those that are regarded as higher priorities. We have already achieved a 19.5% reduction in those against the 20% target that was set, which has another year to run. We have seen reductions in burglary and robbery and thefts from motor vehicles are at their lowest rate since 1973/74. We have done an awful lot of work, as you know, around gangs and we think that is contributing an awful lot to those reductions.

Despite that, we know that there are some recent pressures around some crime types. For example, in motor vehicle theft we have seen a slight rise because we have seen an increase in keyless thefts. We have operations running around two types of crime: one, keyless thefts, and also moped-enabled crime. That has been a big challenge over the last few months.

Despite that, we have seen some great improvements in the way that we deal with the volume of calls. We answer all our calls on time and we are the best in the country at answering our 999 and 101 calls. Then we are one of the best at getting to them and we get to 91.6% of our I calls, the emergency calls, within 15 minutes and then we get to nearly 90% of the S calls within one hour. That is good. Satisfaction has risen from 74% in 2011/12 to 80% and our confidence is stable.

There are areas in which we are having challenges. First of all, savings, but we are on track with those. We had to find £600 million of savings and we are well on our way to achieving those. As I keep repeating and trying to provoke the press to leak, we are the only force in the country to maintain our police officer numbers.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Hear, hear, hear.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Forty-two forces had a 15% cut in grant and reduced their police officer numbers. We did not and we think that is a great achievement and we are very proud of that.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is a huge achievement.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The challenges over the last few months have been around violence and particularly around knife-enabled crime in terms of stabbings of young people. We have seen a slight rise in that. Overall, over the last three years we have seen about a third reduction, but over the last few months we have seen a rise and we want to do something about that. There may be an inquiry that we are able to talk about. I notice that one of the questions is about knife crime in London. It is certainly a concern I have, but it is something we can look into and make sure that we resolve.

The three big pressures that we have in the system in terms of crime demand, really, are cybercrime, which is hugely under-reported; counterterrorism (CT), because of the growing number of operations in that area; and as you may have seen yesterday, serious sexual assault and sexual violence. The report I commissioned together with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) by Dame Elish Angiolini [author, *Report of the Independent Review into the Investigation and Prosecution of Rape in London*] was carried out over the last year and yesterday concluded and points us towards, firstly, how the police might improve, how the statutory basis on which rape is prosecuted might improve and also how the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) needs to put more resources in there. That is something we are going to have to sort out over the next few weeks, but it will mean moving officers from other parts of the organisation into the rape command because they have seen an 80% rise in the number of reported rapes over the last two years and they have been overwhelmed. We have to do something about that. However, if all we do is put more resources into that area, it will not

solve the problem. The CPS has to look at it. One of Dame Elish's recommendations in statute is that where a victim is affected by alcohol, generally, at a certain point, they cannot give consent. This is potentially a contentious issue but an important one. The problem is, if the juries and the courts do not convict in these circumstances, it affects the whole process; how police officers approach it and how prosecutors approach it.

For me, it is a serious issue and Dame Elish's work - when you are able to read it and we have shared it certainly with Joanne McCartney [AM] from the Police and Crime Committee - is a substantial piece of work that concentrates on London but has lessons for the rest of the country. That is why we carried it out. It is quite a large piece of work with 45 recommendations and all of them are good ones. As far as the police are concerned, we will implement them. I am able to take questions if anyone has them.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Thank you. Can I just remind Members that any questions on the opening statement not answered during the discussion will be taken at the end of the question-and-answer period? I have just had notice of an apology from Assembly Member Duvall. Can that be formally noted? Let us move, then, to the first question on the order paper.

2015/1562 - Knife crime in London

[Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM](#)

Is tackling knife crime a priority for the MPS?

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes. The Commissioner has already touched on it. Do you want to briefly add anything further to it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. Overall, knife crime offences have dropped significantly across London over recent years. From 2010/11 to 2014/15, total knife crime offences reduced by 27%, which means 3,645 fewer people affected as victims. Not only knife crime has come down but also gun crime has come down during the same period. We think that is down to targeted enforcement.

However, what we have seen is that victims of knife crime under the age of 25 have started to rise over the last few weeks. Despite that 30% drop between 2012 and 2014, we have seen a rise over the last year of around 21%: which is 286 more victims. It is still less than it was, but I do not like to see that change.

What we are embarking on is two things. First of all, the gang command that we started over the last three-and-a-half years has done some great work. We have to refocus it. What is happening is that they are starting to go into longer-term operations against drug supply, which is a natural thing in this type of investigation. They have to be refocused back to the violence to make sure that that is followed up.

The second thing is we have reduced hugely the amount of stop-and-search we have done over the last three years. That has led also to yet more arrests. We have done about 6% fewer stop-and-searches and we have ended up with 2,000 more arrests from those. Therefore, we are being more productive from less. However, in some areas, we are going to have to look at this and see whether we need to do more, targeted but not --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you for that. In just the last week, we have seen two stabbings in London in Lewisham, one at a 16-year-old's birthday party and one resulting, sadly, in the death of an 18-year-old boy.

We have started to see last year an increase in knife crime with injury offences. When you came before us last December¹ and I spoke to you about this, you told me not to over-interpret figures as knife crime is a “seasonal” problem. Do you still stand by that remark given that you acknowledge that knife crime has started to increase again?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Without seeing those remarks, it would be really odd for me to say that that was a seasonal blip and so I would like to check that. I do not dispute your integrity but I would like to check that that is what I said.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I would not bring a quote to you if it was not in the transcript.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): There are natural flows in every year but what you have to look at, as you do with everything, is when a blip becomes a trend becomes a problem. One month’s figures will rarely tell you whether you have a real trend. Generally, as you find with things like financial recessions, you look at quarterly data. The quarterly data shows that we have a trend of a rise and that is why we are reacting. It may be that at the time you asked the question obviously we were not sure if it was the start of a blip or the start of a trend. For me, after three months, I will want to see some change.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. I hope you will revise your words, perhaps, on that. I have previously been looking at these particular five London boroughs that all have rates of solving fewer than one in five knife crime cases. Weapons sweeps are one of the tactics you use. How effective do you think they are?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): They are helpful but they are not conclusive. Where they are helpful is where people are hiding knives nearby to places that they might meet to fight or where they might recover a weapon to go out and commit a crime. They are helpful in preventing that, but they are not conclusive. We are finding that in some areas they are preventing to help the storage of knives in open spaces. Where they are also helpful is in discovering guns because people know that if they are found with a gun, there is no excuse. You cannot have a gun without a licence, but of course you can have a knife without a licence. We often find that weapons searches are more powerful in finding guns than they are in knives, but both are important.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, but are you aware that the MPS do not actually record when it does a weapons sweep and does not record how many weapons are recovered? I did a Freedom of Information Act request (FOI) and you do not record any of that data, which seems bizarre as it is one of the key tactics you use.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I am sure the officers who carry them out record them. Whether we have the bureaucracy at the centre to pull all that together for the 32 boroughs may be a challenge. Of course, one of the dangers for an FOI is that every novel question will excite a great bureaucracy and so we do fight against that at times.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Do you think local boroughs keep it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We could always ask that question if you really need it, but the important thing is that boroughs are carrying these weapons searches out.

¹ London Assembly (Plenary) meeting, 9 December 2014

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: No, it is, but I am just surprised that you do not collect that [data] to know, “Actually, this is really working in this borough. We have managed to collect X number of weapons”. I would have thought that that was something you would be on top of.

Let me ask the Mayor now. I would like to move on. I have asked you, Mr Mayor, previously about ensuring accident and emergency (A&E) departments in London share non-confidential data with the police to help reduce violent crime.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I remember you saying this.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: After I questioned you last year, you wrote to all the chief executives of London hospital trusts to encourage them to adopt this model. I am wondering how satisfied you were with the responses you received and perhaps you can let us know now how many A&E departments are now sharing this data with the police?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Caroline, I would be very happy to. First of all, perhaps I could just say how very strongly I support what the Commissioner has said and his general approach is right. It is important to stress with knife crime that we are doing better than we were, but it is absolutely vital not to be complacent about this. There will be a lot of action now on this front to make sure that what the Commissioner described, rightly, as a blip does not become a trend and that we really get a handle on this.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: In terms of the A&E departments --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am sure that the Commissioner will be wanting to use the full panoply of measures that he brought very powerfully into effect with Operation Big Wing in 2011.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK. We are talking, firstly, specifically about the A&E departments.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): On A&E, another point about VWI is that the police figures that we are seeing are not necessarily being corroborated by the A&E statistics and by the numbers of victims presenting at A&E. That is an anomaly that we are trying to get to the bottom of. On your specific question about the number --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Yes, that is what I asked.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- of hospitals that have responded, I am afraid I do not have that data with me now. I would be very happy, Caroline, to get back to you on that.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, but given I do not think yet we have all A&E departments sharing this data and given knife crime at the moment is slightly starting to increase and we are concerned about it and given 1,000 people a month are victims of knife crime in London, will you now call a summit to get together at City Hall all the key hospital trusts and the partners to find a way forward on this? We have talked about this for years. We know the Cardiff model works. Sharing this data led to a 42% reduction in violent crime. It would be great if you could take a lead on this.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. As you know, we have written to them all and, if you had given me specific notice of that aspect --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I am surprised your office did not pick up on that.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- of the problem that you wish to be enlightened about, I could certainly have provided it. However, you are going to have to forgive me. I will get back to you later about the exact responses that we have had.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Will you look to pull together the key hospital trusts to try to sort this out once and for all? They are really not all playing ball here and, actually, this could really help the police in tackling violent crime in London.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I would be very happy, as I say, to get back to you with the details of the campaign that we are running with the hospitals and to make sure that they are being as helpful as possible to the police in providing details of those who are presenting as victims of knife crime.

However, I want to remind you that one of the anomalies I believe - and the Commissioner may confirm or indeed correct me - we are seeing is that the numbers of victims presenting --

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: You have made that point, Mr Mayor.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): -- at A&E does not correspond to the police's VWI figures.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: OK, Mr Mayor, you are filling time. Let me just ask you one final thing. The figures are, clearly, concerning, but I have been meeting lots of organisations that work with young people: such as the Ben Kinsella Trust, Peabody Young People Services, Art Against Knives and so on. What is clear and perhaps more concerning is there is a huge amount of knife crime and attacks going on that are completely unreported and, obviously, some of this does link to gangs.

A year on from your gangs strategy, do you have any sense of whether you think it is being effective? The Commissioner said he wants to refocus the gangs command. Will you be looking through MOPAC to fund some of these key charities that work with young people to help to try to tackle knife crime?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): There are several points there. The first is that of course no one in their right mind could say that the problem of gangs and knife crime in London has gone away. It remains a subject of real concern to us. What you can say is that the focus that the police have brought to bear on it has had results and the numbers of deaths have come down very substantially. The work that was begun, actually, by Kit [Kit Malthouse AM MP] in his former incarnation as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime a long time ago has ultimately borne a lot of fruit. However, you have to keep the pressure on and I am sure the Commissioner would agree with that. You simply cannot be complacent about this situation.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: What about funding? --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK, thank you very much --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am sorry. On the funding --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, I need to move on to another Member. Assembly Member Shawcross.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you very much, Mr Mayor. I am very glad to hear that neither of you feels complacent about this issue. There were 188 knife crime injuries in the two boroughs that I represent [Lambeth and Southwark] in the last year and so clearly something is happening. There was an increase in the injuries.

With the end of the old knife crime strategy, we all are looking for an initiative and a new pressure and a refreshing of the pressure on knife crime. The Commissioner talked at the Police and Crime Committee about the impact of drugs and alcohol and you mentioned it this morning, but there is a broader issue about youth culture and about gang crime. What we need is an assurance that there will be extra pressure applied to try to keep this problem down and actually to tackle it. If it is left, it does seem to rise. Commissioner, I do not know if you would like to --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I totally agree with that. One thing that obviously we are continuing to push for is that possession of a knife for a second time will automatically face a custodial sentence. That is a campaign that was led by Nick de Bois, the former Member of Parliament (MP) for Enfield North, and I am sure he has support from many representatives in this Assembly. That is something we want to see enacted in Parliament.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is certainly something I would support because I agree with what you have said. If we take our eye off this ball, it will get more serious. It is already serious at 1,000 people per month. In the 32 boroughs; it is about one per day per borough and any one of those is a bad thing. Knife crime can lead to murder and these are serious things. We need to send that message out through education. There are other things. Why are people carrying knives? Then we have to enforce the law as well.

As the Mayor said, the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 in section 28 legislated for the introduction of a mandatory custodial sentence for a repeat possession offence with a six-month prison sentence for an offender caught with a knife for a second time. I believe it is over the age of 18 and so this is not for under-18s. However, now, while it is on the statute book, the enactment of section 28 has not taken place and there is no enactment date set yet. Of course to some extent this was captured by the election, but certainly we have made our case to the Government that this should be enacted. One thing that this Assembly may want to consider is that what affects this city does not affect the rest of the country, but it is an issue here and it has been for a long time. We suppress it and we reduce it, but it always has the possibility of rising back.

I would argue that this would be a good power to enact and particularly to raise the issue that when we saw the minimum sentence arrive for firearms offences - anybody possessing a firearm will go to prison for a minimum of five years - it saw a reduction in the number of firearms offences. There is no clarity about the sentencing in this very serious area.

Therefore, I agree with you about the seriousness of it for the reason it was raised, but we have to put a lot of pressure on the Government to see whether or not it is prepared to support it by a legislative change.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Would we hope to see a much broader-ranging anti-knife crime strategy coming forward where we are not looking just at one or two specific issues but across the board at what the issues are? I appreciate that a focus on alcohol and drugs is very important, but there is more to this issue than that and, indeed, there is more to it than enforcement as well. What we need, as Caroline [Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM] said, is a broad refreshing of an attack on this issue.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I am with you.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We would welcome anybody who is prepared to support that.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: We could all get behind it, basically. We could all then get behind it.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Look, it is important in this conversation just to remember that recorded victims of knife crime, in spite of the problems that we are seeing at the moment, are still 30% down on 2012. Total knife crime offences are down 12% over the last three years. Therefore, we have had appreciable success.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Yes. Do not let it slip away. That is the message.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): What the Commissioner has told me is that he wants to keep going and step up some of the tools that you will be familiar with for suppressing this type of crime that the Commissioner launched in November 2011.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is right.

Valerie Shawcross CBE AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Malthouse?

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Yes. I just wanted to explore a bit more the interaction with gangs because you are right, Mr Mayor, that the anti-gang command or the new Trident Command, as it was, was launched at the end of 2011. Obviously, there would have been a bump in activity, arrests and convictions during the early part of 2012. Many of those gang nominals will have had, in my view, relatively paltry sentences and will be now re-emerging from the secure estate. What connection is there between them reaching the end of their sentences and re-emerging and this rise in activity, which may well be a reflection of them retaking their territory, if you like, and re-entering the gang world?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Interestingly, I asked that question only yesterday. Is there clear evidence of it? It is not information we gather generally because the release rate from prisons or young offender institutions is something we know about in individual cases but we probably could take more note of if there is a surge. It would be a ready analysis that said, "Yes, it could be this". I cannot be that precise, I am afraid, at the moment.

What has concerned me when I have started to look at our work around gangs - and I have already mentioned it - is about our proactive operations veering towards drug supply, which we know is drug supply from London to the southeast on what are called county lines. We have been doing a lot of work about that to stop the supply of drugs into those areas. Of course, if the fighting and knife crime is taking place in London, we have to concentrate particularly on that. We have to do a bit of both. My concern is that we have moved into longer-term operations and so we are now refocusing that. That is what I mean by that refocusing.

The second thing is that we have had a lot of success in doing two things: getting some of the people in prison who should be there and having judicial restraint. Judicial restraint can be an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO), a criminally related ASBO (CRASBO), an ASBO after conviction, a gang injunction, etc, but it is no good having an injunction that is not enforced. We have to focus down on that and make sure that we are checking that we are making best utility of the power we have been given. I have some concerns that in that

area over the last year that has dipped. That is the type of thing that we really have to put our foot on the accelerator with.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Just to probe that a little further, are you saying that the Trident Command would not be notified by the Prison Service that one of their previous nominals is being released?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): No, that is not right. If I left that impression, it was not the point. My point is that we are told about individuals, but whether or not we notice that a surge of repeat offenders has come out probably we could take more care about. However, I do not think we can be precise about that as the cause of this at the moment.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: All right. There is some work to be done around an analysis of who the suspects or the arrestees are in these and whether that is linked to previous gang activity?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The best analysis we have at the moment, given that it is broadly a 12-week period, is that we have seen more that is geographically linked - for example, we have seen quite a lot of crime around Hackney and Lambeth where gangs have been involved - to tensions between those gangs than we could argue is down to the prison releases. That is where our attention is focused. However, we are analysing to see whether there are deeper trends that we have not yet spotted.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: It seems strangely coincidental to me that the average sentence at the time was something like three to five years, which, given that most prisoners serve about 50%, would put it at about now.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is entirely possible. The problem is, of course, that we cannot ask them to keep them longer and when they come out --

Kit Malthouse AM MP: No. Well, you can, actually.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We can and we are. We are asking for that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): When they do come out, all they add is to our target list. It is a surge that may be causing this and it would be an easier thing for me to turn to, but I honestly cannot do it at the moment.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: OK. The other thing I just wanted to ask about was the difference between what was called 'Regina' crime and actual crime because, obviously, police activity generates some crime. I thought - and I may be wrong - that, as Caroline [Pidgeon MBE AM] said, when you do a weapons sweep or you find a weapon, it is actually recorded as a crime.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is. It is not a crime to find a weapon. For example, a carving knife found in a park is not a crime. It only becomes a criminal offence when somebody picks it up as an offensive weapon with an intent to injure somebody. That is what happens.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: A 'Regina' crime would be stopping and searching somebody and then being found in possession?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Otherwise, if you had not stopped and searched, there would not have been a crime.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It is where there is no victim.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Where there is no victim?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. You are quite right. Sometimes crime numbers can fluctuate by the amount of police work.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: All right. On that basis, although you say there has been a rise in knife crime and you did say there has been a rise in the number of arrests through your stop-and-search, how much of the rise in knife crime is attributable to the increased number of arrests that you have been making due to stop-and-search?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I was trying to be specific in my briefing. If I was not, then I apologise. What I was saying was that knife crime, as measured by whether a knife was perceived to be involved in an incident, has risen. Within that as well, you have seen that general violence has risen, which we put down to recording issues. However, the thing that is most worrying is those aged under 25 who have been stabbed.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: All right. The number of victims?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is, for me, the most worrying group because sometimes people are in a robbery in a shop and they may see something that they believe to be a weapon and it can be put down as knife crime, quite properly, but it may not be. It could be something else. It may not be a weapon at all. The things about which there could be no debate is where there is a wound and somebody has been stabbed, which is why, as Caroline [Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM] articulated, the information from the health service is vitally important to get the complete picture.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Get a real picture, yes.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): If people are in the gangs, we have two problems. Sometimes they do not report, which is the first problem.

The second problem is, even when they report, they will not help us. Our best chance of detecting this crime is when the victim tells us who did it or tells us at least the circumstances, describes the offender, says where it happened, etc. For this type of crime, sadly, too often young people seem to regard it as a badge of honour not to help the police and then get stabbed again later by the same offender. Going to Val's [Valerie Shawcross CBE AM] point about a cultural change, that is where these kids need to be told, "You can do that if you like, but the bullies will come back. That is why we need you to help the criminal justice process." It is a constant challenge around these gangs that sometimes they think more about their moral values in the gangs than they do about the moral value of helping the state.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Or indeed about the fact that they would like the perpetrator still to be on the street so that they can exact some kind of revenge because there is an element of tit-for-tat.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is entirely possible.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: I am sorry I am taking a bit of time. I just wanted to ask a little bit about guns. Obviously, there was always a MPS strategy to pursue the gun, to look for guns as much as to look for people who were using guns and to disrupt supply. I wondered how much progress you have made on that. One of the indicators always used to be that the rental value of a gun or the value of a gun would fluctuate. There was a market that fluctuated in response to availability. I did not know whether the price is currently going up or falling.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do not know if I am prepared for that question. I could have maybe provided it.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Sorry.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The other thing I would say is we can see high levels of --

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Can I just ask you to hold a moment?

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Sorry. Is there a future question?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I just remind Members that it would be best if we stayed to the topic as shown?

Kit Malthouse AM MP: OK.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Do you have any further questions about --

Kit Malthouse AM MP: The Commissioner did mention guns but I am happy to wait until later. I am sorry.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, that will be fine.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Sorry. Apologies.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Do you have another question on knife crime, Mr Malthouse?

Kit Malthouse AM MP: No.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Assembly Member Arbour?

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Mr Mayor, I do not like to kick a man when he is down, but I am always willing to make an exception in the case of the Liberal Democrats. You have mentioned Nick de Bois' attempts to introduce mandatory prison sentences for second offences of possession of a knife. Do you recall that it was in fact the Liberal Democrats who opposed that amendment?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do and I hope very much, therefore, that impediment having been removed by the wisdom of the electorate, that we will be able to get this through.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): I was struck, Sir Bernard, by your mention of enacting this legislation. Do you think that there is any other legislation - if we are talking about the current Government

being more robust on these matters - that it might consider introducing to reduce knife crime by strengthening your powers in this area?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have no direct proposals at the moment. The difficulty around knives is that, as I say, unless they are designed to injure - and of course a dagger and a bayonet are things that are designed to injure - generally they have wide availability. In a home, there is a knife. People use knives in their work. That has always been the difficulty around knives and offensive weapons. We do not argue for things like licensing because the problem is, even if we licensed every sale and restricted by age the number of people who could buy knives, at home they could still get hold of them. That has always been a dilemma for the legislature as well as for the police. We just argue that, if we get strict deterrence in there, people will know what the sentence will be if they are caught with a knife.

The other thing is to sentence as a preventative thing rather than on what they did with it. The courts are being asked to sentence on somebody being found with a knife regardless of their intent because we are trying to stop the casual carrying of knives. That is what we argue for, not, "Did they stab someone? Then they will go to prison". That is fairly straightforward. However, people seem confused about what will happen in a court should they be merely caught in possession of a weapon.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): I am right, am I not, that in fact the charge is possession of a bladed article?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is right.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): That of course gives rise to a difficulty in interpreting whether the thing is - I do not know - something for cutting up carpets or something of that kind.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): There are numerous reasons why somebody legitimately may have a knife in a public place. We all understand. Any one of us might be doing do-it-yourself and in a car and might find a knife in a car. That is not the problem. We are talking about very careful carrying of knives to either defend themselves or to attack other people. The culture change that we seek is that people do not do that. What we need as police is for people to tell the police when people do that. There will be people in their crowd, their sisters and their brothers who will know it happens. They will know that their brother carries a knife regularly and we need them to tell us because it helps improve our smartness around stop-and-search. We are doing it because we know they carry knives, not because we suspect it. That sort of information is vital.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It will save their lives. The brothers and sisters and mothers and parents who know their kids carry knives should realise that it is no defence and it is no protection. It is a dangerous thing for them to be doing. They are placing their own lives in danger.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Just to say, a lot of people say, "Surely, if you are arguing for a prison sentence as a minimum, why would a mother put her child forward?" However, this is on a second offence. What we are arguing for is, if you know about it and they have not been caught with it, tell us. There are other disposals that are possible on the first occasion but not on the second. They have had their warning.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Thank you, Chair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Tracey?

Richard Tracey AM: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Probably the point has been raised by Deputy Chairman Arbour, but I was quite bemused, I have to say, that the Liberal Democrats had asked this question when they seem to have tried to delay the mandatory sentencing of second offenders with knives in the last Parliament.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The Liberal Democrats have been rumbled by the electorate of continually saying two things at once and continually holding contradictory positions. That finally proved untenable in office and, as they periodically did in the last century, they have paid the price.

Richard Tracey AM: I hope you four parliamentarians will now be pursuing the early implementation of this, as the Commissioner is asking for. Thank you.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Of course.

2015/1563 - Cuts to Policing

[Joanne McCartney AM](#)

Since 2010 there has been £600 million of cuts to policing, with a further £800 million planned for the next few years, how will the MPS cope?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I will begin by saying that obviously, as I said earlier on, the police have done outstandingly well in exceeding the target of savings required. They are on target to deliver £573 million by the end of 2015/16, which is in excess of the £500 million target they were set in 2013. Clearly, as Sir Bernard has said on many occasions, there remains a very challenging target. Further savings will be needed of about £800 million by 2020. Plans are being worked on now to deliver those savings. They will involve technology. They will involve further rationalisation of the assets that the police have at their disposal.

However, I would stress that the MPS has shown that it can continue to cut crime whilst existing in a very tough fiscal environment. We have put 2,600 extra officers into neighbourhoods. We have increased the number of officers again to very nearly 32,000 at the moment and it will continue to rise. That is, as Sir Bernard said in his introductory remarks, an extraordinary achievement by comparison with what is going on in the rest of the country.

To get to the final point I made to you earlier on, of course, with the demands on London policing and with the growth in London's population, we will continue to fight for adequate budgets and adequate resourcing.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. My next questions are to the Commissioner, if I can. I want to raise a number of issues with regard to the future and the stress on resources.

Can I start, Commissioner, with Dame Elish Angiolini's review into the investigation and prosecution of rape in London? I will just say before I start my questions that she has agreed to come to the Police and Crime Committee later this month and so we will have a much more in-depth discussion with her there. However, I believe, Commissioner, that earlier on you guaranteed that all the recommendations outlined in her report would be implemented by the MPS despite the forthcoming cuts. Is that correct?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is correct.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK. Of course, I have read your response to the report and I was very pleased with your personal commitment in there, but obviously it does involve a great deal of extra resource. One of the extra resources that she talks about is extra specialist officers. Could you give us an indication as to how many extra officers you think are required to be put into the Sapphire units?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): First of all, just to remind people, this was a report we commissioned because I thought it was important.

Secondly, we will know within the third week in July. As a management board, we are sitting down to consider how we address those recommendations and how we find the resources - the people, in this case - and where they are going to come from. We could not decide that before the report was delivered and it was delivered only a few weeks before the election and so this is our first opportunity, now it has been published, to come to some agreement about it.

We have only two broad alternatives, as I said in the press yesterday: we either take them from the streets; or we take them from the detective cadre that we have. They are things we are going to have to do. At the moment, we should have just over 500 officers in this area. I do not know exactly how many more, but I said publicly yesterday that I suspect it is something in the order of a few hundred more that we will have to put in there.

We could argue that this is a great challenge and we would like to see some Government support for it. I said that yesterday and I will repeat it today. It would be really helpful if the Government were prepared to put money into this area because we think it is important and Dame Elish asked for it, too, not just us but the CPS as well. If that is not the case, then, out of our 32,000 police at the moment, we are going to have to find some more to put into this area because we have seen an 80% rise in the amount of reported and therefore recorded rape and sexual offences over the last two years and it is unsustainable to carry on as we are.

Joanne McCartney AM: If we are talking about a unit that has 500 current officers and you are expecting to put in a few hundred more, we are going to be seeing that unit at least increase by half again. Is that correct?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You said half but --

Joanne McCartney AM: Up to about 750 officers?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I am just trying to give my best open answer to a forensic question. I just know it is going to be probably a lot. I suspect it is something in the order of a few hundred. We also have to do things about making sure they are available 24 hours, not just, as Dame Elish points out, at certain times of the day. We have to look at their training, too. There is a big package and we are going to have to get it right.

One of the things that drove me to have this commissioned was that one of our Sexual Offences Investigative Techniques (SOIT) officers, the officers who look after rape victims after they have been attacked, was remarking just how far we have come in her time in that area, 20 years. The more she talked, the more I wondered whether or not we had. We have come far but we have an awful long way to go.

I wanted to set the target for the next five to ten years. We have victims waiting hours to be examined in our sexual assault referral centres, the health service part. When they get in there, they can be examined for a further four hours. The combined effect on a victim is pretty profound and there is every danger that they do not want to follow through in the criminal justice process. Then, when they get there, we know that 80% of

victims are vulnerable and it may be that they are affected - one in four - by alcohol or by psychiatric illness and so they are least able to provide best evidence. The whole system demands consistency and accuracy and, often, they are not able to provide it. That is why I wanted to look at the whole system in which the police are a vital element. If the system causes everybody to be very sceptical and challenging, there is a grave danger that the officers adopt that too and I do not want that. Of course, they are also burdened by a huge burden of extra work and the compound effect is quite worrying. That is why I thought we needed to set the target for the next few years.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. We will be, as I said, talking about this in much more depth at a later meeting. You said there that officers have to be increased and they have to come from somewhere. The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime has previously told us that there is no diminution in the demand around specialist policing and core neighbourhood policing as well.

That drives me to ask where these officers are actually going to come from. Previously, you have said that at the end of this next spending round the MPS will have suffered a third of its budget being cut and that much of that money will have to come out of some police officer reductions. You have said that the likelihood is that officer numbers are going to have to reduce after the election. At the last Police and Crime Committee meeting two weeks ago, you made the remark that, "When I first came to the MPS, we had 25,000 officers". It just struck me. What modelling have you done to see where on that line between 25,000 and 32,000 officers you think the MPS is going to get to by 2020, the end of this next spending review?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): OK. First of all, just to remind people who were not there, I first came to the MPS in 2001. That was when there were 25,000 and then we saw the growth that we have experienced ever since.

We have not yet been able to model very accurately because of course we do not know exactly what the extent of the loss will be. We believe it is up to £800 million, unless we get another bill, which is entirely possible. There are departments of state now that are suffering cuts in-year. We have already seen some departments that have been told they are going to lose 5% in-year and it is entirely possible that the Home Office will receive that type of cut, too. Therefore, we just do not know at the moment.

We are looking not so much at where we will not be employing officers. We are looking at where we will find the savings. We have started to look at how we can share services across, for example, the emergency services. I would like to see one control room for all our emergency services, which would give us savings and improve the quality of what we do. We are arguing - and I think the Mayor is arguing - for devolution of powers around criminal justice. At the moment, we all have our separate pots of money, we all invest separately, we all have our own information technology (IT) and - surprise, surprise - the system is a bit fractured. It is entirely possible to improve that and save money. We are looking at potential outsourcing or improvements in contracts. We are looking at contracts in the order of £500 million to see what savings we can get from there.

Only when we have done all that work will we consider that we will reduce our operational frontline and so, for me, that is the last call. However, of course, when you lose a third of the budget, there is only so much you can do by saving. We have done a lot already. Some of that fat has been taken out and now we have to look at what is next. Therefore, I do not know the precise number at the moment. I suppose what I can say in the context of what we are talking about is that it will not get easier to find hundreds of officers for this.

Joanne McCartney AM: Thank you. Can I just come to the end of this question, Mr Mayor, if I can? Lynda McMullan, the MPS's Finance Director, has said that she thinks that - and I am quoting her - "We think potentially about another £340 million is really what we can target in that area and then you will have to start

looking at the front line". It just strikes me that if you are working on the basis of £800 million in cuts as a worst scenario, you must have done some modelling on that figure to decide where you will be in terms of police officer numbers in the future.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Not really yet because, if we were to share any broad attempt at the moment, it would end up with lots of political speculation, which I am sure is not what you intend, but when we get more --

Joanne McCartney AM: It is about making the case to the Government and if we know where it is --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): What we are arguing together, as the Mayor indicated in his words as I arrived, is that we want more recognition of the capital-specific needs in our grant, which already we regard as underfunded and there is a grave danger other people are now attacking our budget or our grant formula because they need their help in their area. We have to work together on that because London, as the Mayor said, is growing and the demand, I suspect, over this next year will grow rather than diminish and yet potentially our resources will drop, particularly through the grant allocation formula. We have to work together on that.

I am afraid that at the moment I cannot be very precise about the numbers, but I have given my best steer. The likelihood is that with a third less budget - and although Lynda [Lynda McMullan, Director of Commercial and Finance, MPS] quite properly said we have about £340 million we think we can save that we have identified at the moment - we think there are still other options. Until we have reached the end of that, I would not want to start saying we have a precise number or even a ballpark figure about what those numbers would look like.

Joanne McCartney AM: To date, you have made significant savings by holding recruitment and police officer numbers below your target. Is that something you are looking at imposing in the future, perhaps a slowdown on recruitment?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): What happened was that over the last three-and-a-half years, to find the £600 million, we had to make savings. That took us about two or two-and-a-half years to identify them and then get them out of the system. As you know, we did two big things: 3,500 fewer police staff, fewer managers, and the sale of buildings, which gave us some revenue benefits. You cannot just turn that on and off. It took us two years to get the savings in the bank. Then, when we did that, it allowed the overall headcount for police officers to drop from around 32,000 to about 30,000. For two-and-a-half years, we were running 2,000 light police officer numbers, but then over the last six months our recruitment has taken us back to 32,000.

The second issue, which you may be referring to, is that we often have a vacancy factor, as any human resources (HR) department does in any organisation. What that means is that during the year you never recruit right up to the target and so you have a vacancy factor of 1% or 2% and you plan in your financial planning for that because it is prudent to do that.

Joanne McCartney AM: Mr Mayor, can I come to you now and could I just ask you? You are now back in Government and have the ear of the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary. Could I ask what you are doing as Mayor to actually make the case for London's policing?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Sure. First of all, just to go back to your question about the relationship between the rise in domestic violence and rape and the need for more police officers, which was a

very logical question, there is another aspect to it that is worth considering. In many cases, that phenomenon will need not just police officers; it will need Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs). It will need funding for Rape Crisis Centres, for The Havens and for all of those, actually. You are seeing a great deal of commitment by MOPAC and by the MPS. I will just remind you of the money we have put in for 40 more IDVAs in London. This is important. The point I am trying to make to you, Joanne, is that it is not just a question of frontline officers.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes, I appreciate that. I am asking a question about that later.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): There are a variety of expenditures that are necessary in order to deal with the problem.

On the position of funding for police in London, it is absolutely obvious that the MPS has done a great job so far of delivering substantial savings whilst keeping numbers high. I am confident that they can continue, as Bernard has said, for a certain while.

Joanne McCartney AM: The question is about the case you are making to the Government.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): However, obviously, in my conversations with the Government at all levels, I will continue and I have been over the last few weeks making the case for special recognition of London's needs. One thing that is very important to understand is that the MPS bears the brunt of so much of this. Whether it is phone-hacking or historic allegations against individuals for sexual offences of one kind or another, it is the MPS that bears the brunt. The MPS carries out a huge proportion of policing that might be considered as national in one way or another. Therefore, when you consider the growth in London's population and the national role that the MPS is increasingly called upon to perform not just in CT but in all these other aspects that we have seen over the last few years, it is vital that our police are properly funded. You can be absolutely certain, Joanne, that I am making that case.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You might think this is antagonistic, but something I have said before around sexual offence investigation is that because about a quarter of that 80% increase is down to historical offences, ie ones that are a year or older - some of them are very old and some of them are over a year - and the special challenges they pose, we have said that we would have to give a different priority to those offences in the future, probably. What we are saying is we will continue to investigate it, but we may have to take longer. The dilemma we have is whether we deal with a victim from last night quicker or the one who reported after 20 years a serious offence but often not with the same threat today. Those are the sorts of challenges that this type of public spending cut starts to cause us to make.

Probably what would be helpful in that debate is to have as much advice and guidance from a body like this about where our priorities should lie and about where the money should or should not be spent. Of course, Joanne, you asked me, "Where are you going to get the money from?" I might throw a question back to you: where would you like me to get it from? It will be an operational decision at the end of the day, but any help in that dilemma is going to be appreciated because there will be no no-risk options.

Joanne McCartney AM: You said that before about no no-risk options. One of the risks that I think all around this horseshoe are concerned about is what effect the budget cuts will have on local policing and local neighbourhood teams. The MOPAC Challenge meeting last month showed that outer London boroughs had a substantially higher rate of Taser use than inner London boroughs. The reason that was given by a superintendent at the MPS was that there were fewer resolution options available in terms of the other officers

arriving because in outer London boroughs the officer numbers are smaller. With reducing numbers of uniformed staff and the potential in the future for that, is that a trend that they are likely to see continue?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I have some figures here and it is a bit difficult to share a table obviously with colleagues, but the numbers I have here do not bear out that broad interpretation. If you look over the last two years, even where you see outer boroughs this year with a higher rate of usage, it is not the same for last year. I am not sure I can accept that.

Joanne McCartney AM: This arose out of the MOPAC Challenge and the figures that were presented there by the MPS and it was the comments from the MPS's own superintendent that that was the reason for that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Whoever that superintendent is, they are entitled to their opinion, but I am going to give you mine. I do not think --

Joanne McCartney AM: He is head of your firearms command.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Hang on a minute. Let me finish. I do not think that there is a clear correlation between the usage of Taser, which remains incredibly small, and the distance from the centre of London. The reason, if you remember, that I - against some opposition from this body - rolled out Taser to more of our officers was because the officers in the outer boroughs could not rely on their armed colleagues arriving in time. It was taking on average 50 minutes to get to an incident when they should have been there within five and so we have rolled it out to more officers. Despite that, last year in 2014, we only fired these things 175 times.

There has been some press reporting I have noticed about the ages of the people who were fired at. It is always a worry if a very young person or a very old person has a weapon discharged at them. However, when I have looked into these cases, in relation to what was termed two 14-year-olds, we have found that it was one 14-year-old who was Tasered. What happened was that it was in Tower Hamlets, he was riding a moped towards them following being challenged for a robbery and he was arrested for that offence. Yes, he was 14 years old. He happened to be on a moped, driving at officers.

We had two deployments, which means two officers firing, against an 85-year-old. This happened only in December 2013. The subject waved a large crowbar at his son and threatened him. The subject had then shown a police a kitchen knife prior to locking himself in a kitchen, showing the kitchen knife under a door and then refusing to come out and eventually refused any commands. Yes, a Taser was used, but this was a man who was armed with a knife, given all we have just talked about in terms of armed criminality.

Therefore, yes, there will be extreme cases when by age this weapon is used, but we should look at each those cases before we jump to the conclusion that age in itself is the only aggravating factor.

Joanne McCartney AM: Yes. Commissioner, that was not my question. My question was about the increased use of Tasers being fired in outer London boroughs compared to inner London boroughs.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Unless we can share the data with other people, my data does not bear out your conclusion.

Joanne McCartney AM: This was the figure that the MPS provided to the MOPAC Challenge meeting, which

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Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): No, you have repeated that, but I am saying I do not agree with you.

Joanne McCartney AM: OK. It was just that your Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime now as well said he was concerned about police --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): OK --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am deferring to the Commissioner's statistics here and we need to --

Joanne McCartney AM: OK, fine. We will have a look at them. Can I come on to another topic briefly? That is about CT. There was a stark warning given last month about the rising threat of terrorist activity in London by you and your Assistant Commissioner. In your professional opinion, Commissioner, are you satisfied with the level of funding that London's police are getting to deal with CT?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have certainly received some help, which has been appreciated, just before the last election --

Joanne McCartney AM: Are you satisfied with it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I am going to answer your question in a minute.

Joanne McCartney AM: Please do.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We certainly were pleased that we received some help, but we did ask for far more. Any help that we could get in this terrorism area - not just in London but right around the country - would be appreciated. I do recognise that for a Government at the moment, of whatever hue was to be elected, there is less in the kitty and there will be some hard decisions to be made.

In this area there are three big challenges at the moment: serious sexual violence, which we have talked about, cybercrime, which we have not, and then CT. We need to keep our guard up in this area and that means that we need to be prepared, finally, obviously, for the potential return of the people who went to Syria and may arrive back in a more challenging way.

Joanne McCartney AM: Is the extra funding needed for technology or is it for extra officers to conduct surveillance and operations?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The three broad areas that we asked for help and received some help - and, as I say, we appreciate that - were, one, around the protection of people and places. Secondly, around the recovery of digital evidence: we are finding in many of these cases we are getting huge quantities of digital evidence. We have to make an assessment within 14 days of the detention of a suspect and that can be quite a difficult thing given the volume that we are recovering. Thirdly, there is obviously surveillance: where there are more targets, we need to follow them more.

Joanne McCartney AM: You have said in the past that you do need extra officers in the CT unit and, again, similar to the rape and sexual offences Sapphire units, you have said that if you put officers in there they have

to come from somewhere. In both those cases, you have said they may have to come from visible policing on our streets. However, at the same time as we have that dichotomy, we have Assistant Commissioner Rowley warning that local policing and visible police on the streets dealing with community engagement are even more important now than they ever have been because of the threat of CT. He talks about wanting to maintain the capability of local officers.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): He is totally right.

Joanne McCartney AM: How are you going to square that circle, if you like?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): He was bringing two things together. The Government help we have already had has enabled us to recruit about another 150 people and that is over and above the people that we had before and so that is appreciated. I do not know if this is the conversation exactly that Mark [Mark Rowley, Assistant Commissioner, MPS] was involved in. Some chief constables around the country have said that as a result of the cuts that we are all facing, they do not see how they can continue with neighbourhood policing. I do not agree with them. I honestly think that is nonsense. However, I do think that it will put pressure on neighbourhood policing. There is no doubt that it will put pressure on detectives, etc, for the reasons we have already said. However, I do not accept that we have to withdraw from the streets and so we will continue. All Mark was saying was that that is just one of the reasons around CT we must stay there. We have to keep a visual presence. We have to keep in touch with the public. It will be challenging, but we will get through it. It was in that context that Mark was speaking. Let me be very clear on our position, which is that we will maintain neighbourhood policing.

Joanne McCartney AM: Can I ask both of you? If we maintain neighbourhood policing, is it going to be a different style of neighbourhood policing than we have had to date?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do not think so, really. As you know, we changed the model a few years ago. There is pressure around Police Community Support Officers. We have discussed that in your Committee. There is potential for that changing. However, the fundamental model of officers dedicated to an area will remain the same under the leadership of an inspector. I know that will not change. We will have to find the resources from elsewhere. It goes back to this: there will be no easy places to look but we can do it.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): The point that Mark Rowley was making is a very valid one, which is that in CT policing, you have to remember the value of neighbourhood policing and the value of having officers who know their communities and are able to see exactly what is going on. That is why. It is another of the ways in which London faces particular challenges and particular costs because so much of the terrorist threat or the risk of radicalisation and so forth is concentrated in this city.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Can the record show that I am formally handing over the Chair to the Deputy Chairman, Tony Arbour.

[Deputy Chairman in the Chair]

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): All right. Jennette?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. My first question is to Sir Bernard. Sir Bernard, I have quite a lot of information and so bear with me. On 22 May an article was published by *The Guardian* from Alex Stewart, an ex-police officer from Hackney, who had been awarded the MPS's highest prize for a recruit in

training. He has now left the force due to, as he says, disillusionment with the MPS following the previous rounds of cuts. He gave a stark account of the lack of morale and the huge strain that is on local policing teams at the moment. His comments are backed up - and I have done some research on this - by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and also by the MPS's own reviews. His account, it seems to me, gives an idea of the scale of the impact of the cutting back of local policing teams on officers. For example, on investigations, Alex Stewart said,

"The MPS is currently held together by the goodwill of the men and women on the front line, who make it work, regardless of the cost to them. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) office in Hackney was full of people working double shifts without pay just to keep up with the workload."

When you look at the MPS's own Local Policing Model (LPM) review, I found in there that the LPM says,

"[Our model] is predicated on a desire for neighbourhood officers to have greater ownership of the end-to-end process for investigating neighbourhood crime, contact with local victims and knowledge of local offenders."

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Will you come to a question?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, I will do. Sir Bernard, with this level of disillusionment, do you recognise that the borough teams are stretched and under-resourced and that, if we do not get it right at the local level, then we are really in trouble in terms of being able to deliver the quality of policing we want in this city?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): First of all, just to start with the first point about the article in the newspaper, obviously we have an officer who is resigning and has moved on to another career. He is entitled to his view. I do not necessarily agree with him for the reasons I am going to give, but he is entitled to his view. There is no doubt that some parts of the MPS will be under severe pressure. We have already talked about the rape command and people who are dealing with child sexual exploitation. I could list them. The gangs command is under great pressure for the reasons that we have talked about.

Where I disagree in particular in Territorial Policing is that of course I have already said that for a couple of years we were running 2,000 officers light and so there were some vacancies and that is what we have now remedied. Over the last six months, we have recruited back. There would have been a period when there would have been some vacancies. However, I am not sure that that is the same as saying that there was huge pressure everywhere. In fact, if you look at the workload of the response units, it is often not remarkable. Some of the specialists will attend a lot of incidents but not carry a huge workload. There will be places - and Hackney, as I already acknowledged when we were talking about knife crime, will be one of them - where there have been some significant pressures around knife crime, for example, and some of that will have passed through the CID and they will have had to work harder. I accept that entirely.

However, I am afraid that I suppose we come back to the basic problem: unless people are prepared to pay more in taxes to get to 32,000, we will have to manage with less. If your version of events or their version of events is accurate, ie there is lots of pressure, we can look forward to more of it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Sir Bernard, your own review recognises that the teams face a complex problem in that many student officers are in need of on-the-job training. That is linked to this whole issue of morale. Without senior officers, many of whom have been taken out of the service, we stand the risk of

returning to the bad old days of badly trained officers picking up bad habits and learning to cut corners from overstretched senior officers.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): That is mixing just one too many strands into an argument that I do not quite recognise. Yes, it is true that we have removed managers and, frankly, we were the most managed but at times the least efficient police organisation in the country. We have done a lot about that. I do not agree that having more managers means better management.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is absolutely right.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We have improved by having fewer managers. Of course we need the right leadership, but we have not reduced training. We have carried on with training and, as we have just said, we have had Dame Elish's report and we are having to look particularly at investigations of serious sexual offences. Are we training them well enough and could we do more? We will look at that. We have not abandoned training. We are still training people, yes, on the job and also in our training centres. That can be effective. Therefore, there was quite a series of things you put together there and I am not sure I agree with the final conclusion you reached.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, but if you do not have the capacity locally, how can you deliver on-the-job training?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We do deliver on-the-job training. I am not sure what your point is, really. Is your point that we have fewer officers and there will be more pressure? In that case, I agree.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We do our best to provide the best training we can provide with the resources we have from our training schools. Sometimes we use outsourced people, too, but that training continues. It has not been diminished. In fact, what we have found is that with fewer trainers at Hendon we have been getting through more work because, when we started to look at it, we found that some of their time was not spent in the classroom. We challenged whether we needed as many trainers because their time there was supposed to be spent in a classroom. By the efficiencies we have achieved, we have actually - I would argue - improved the training rather than reduced it.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I just ask, finally: are you saying that you are happy and can put hand on heart and say that across London, in all of your boroughs, you are satisfied with the on-the-job training because the capacity is there and that there are no issues and an honoured officer really had no grounds to be concerned about morale in the service?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You have put the bar very high or very low. I am not sure, Jennette. The bar that I would say is that I need to be sure that we have a professional level of training, which we do. I am always hungry and ambitious for improvements and so I am never going to be happy. That is just my general nature. I am never happy with things. I always want things to improve. Therefore, yes, do I want to improve it? I would like to double it. Realistically, there are two costs: one, spending on trainers; two, abstraction time. If they are being trained, they are not directly available. They are the two conundrums we are forever trying to get right. During my time here, we have actually invested more in training and each borough has at least one day a month when they do have training in the place they work so that they are still available in the area they work in. We have actually delivered that

locally. Therefore, we can argue we have improved training and spent less on it but, if you are asking me if I would like to spend more, yes, I would. The likelihood of it in the future gets more difficult.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): All right. Mr Tracey?

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you, Deputy Chairman. Commissioner, you have been quoted in places in the press recently about the possibility of a further need of police station closures. Could you be a bit more specific about that? Are you thinking about them?

The other thing is that there has been some discussion recently about co-ordinating the control of the major services. Of course, I do not imagine I need to remind you that there is a very large fire control centre in Morden, which has a lot of spare space. Would it be something that the police service would consider to make some further savings?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): In terms of the first point about police station closures, the discussions we are having - as I was saying - are about where we find the next dose of savings. Clearly, our estate is one of the things on the agenda. Of course, as you know, this is MOPAC's estate and not mine, but we have a combined effort about what we need operationally and what we can afford in terms of buildings. You will know that in fact we used to have over 600 buildings and our plan says that we are reducing to over 400 - about a third reduction or something in that order - and we expect we will probably have fewer buildings in the future.

However, we do not have the precision you might want at the moment. What we have a commitment to - and we will continue to - is to say we will always have a 24-hour operating police station in a borough that will provide front counters for people to attend when they cannot get to a police station. It is clear that we are going to have to look at the estate --

I will just remark on two things quickly. One is, of course, the benefit of closing a police station or building. Many of them have been buildings, not police stations. We have warehouses and we probably have more types of buildings than you could imagine we possibly have but we do have them. Where we close them it is the revenue saving we gain most. In the first batch of closures we gained a revenue saving of around £60 million per year. Given that we had to find £600 million per year that was a tenth of it obviously. It will increase in future.

The secondary benefit, which we are gaining in London that no other police force is, is that our capital estate is growing in capital for the reasons we know in London. You will see in the report that there are significant capital benefits there that we intend to invest in the estate we keep. Some of it is awful and Victorian and has not been invested in as an asset, in my view. I could name the stations. Also, we intend to invest in technology because that still requires that investment. I hope that will help, as well, to buffer us through some bad revenue years if we can get agreement to do that. They are the benefits I see.

Going to your final point, which was about joint emergency services, my starting point is regardless of the recession I have always thought it would be a good idea to have a joint control room with our colleagues in London Ambulance Service (LAS) and the London Fire Brigade (LFB). We go to the same jobs. We do not share our intelligence. If you looked at arson, for example, it is a common issue around antisocial behaviour and the way the police respond and the fire brigade respond. Surprise, surprise, we have similar hotspots but

sometimes we do not know that. Working together, we can really do something about that. Secondly, it is a great opportunity to save resources and improve our deployments.

Whether or not the particular building you mention is the right solution, I do not know. If you ask a policeman, it will always be a police building. Why would we go into someone else's control room? That is one of the things we are going to have to do: we are going to have to subsume our sovereignty to achieve a better future. Under the Mayoral aegis, that is going to be our best opportunity to do that. There is bit of a difficulty around the LAS in the sense that it is part of the health service and is an entry to health service where our other two emergency services do not have that same constriction. You could argue that the LFB could come under the Home Office. That happened once and so we might just about manage that. We might then get a common strategy. Of course, the building you refer to was a strategy of the Department for Communities and Local Government, regional fire centres, while the police were 43 forces with 43 control rooms. We all suffer the legacy of the past. There is a great opportunity for us. Whether the building is, where it is, I will not argue. We will have to look at the best value at the time.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Assembly Member Jones?

Jenny Jones AM: Thank you, Chair. One of my concerns with these terrible, savage, fast cuts to your budget has been that a lot of civilian staff have been lost, close to 4,000 since 2008. Do you know at the moment how many of those posts still exist and are being backfilled by police officers?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I do not think it is 4,000, Jenny. It is about 3,500.

Jenny Jones AM: I have the figures here, the MPS figures.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Which is?

Jenny Jones AM: It is 14,219 down to 10,249 and so it is exactly 3,970.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): All right, I will not argue. It is a lot. In short, we have made significant savings. I know why there is a difference, which is to do with temporary staff, and so my figure is right and your figure is right. We are using temporary staff because we cannot backfill with permanent staff where we suspect that post will not remain for the next one to five years. That accounts for our difference in numbers. Let's park the fact: it is a large amount of people.

At the moment I do not see evidence that we are backfilling with police officers. I have said to the Mayor and to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime that if I see evidence of that we have to stop it so far as we can in the budget because that would be false economy. We all agree that. At the moment I do not see that. You might say to me, "When does it happen? Is it at 8,500 it might?" I do not know. We will know when it happens. We will get feedback from our staff as well as from the police officers who are captured in those jobs they do not need to be doing. At the moment I do not see it. You know that we have police officers in some police staff roles already. In our control rooms, one in five is a police officer. When they withdraw their labour - as they are entitled to do from time to time, not often - we have to keep answering those 4.5 million telephone calls. Occasionally we deploy police officers where police staff could do the role, but we have to have a strategic contingency for some events.

Jenny Jones AM: I understand that. It does seem incredible that we can lose 4,000 posts and there not be any backfilling by police officers.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): You may not want to make this argument, but I argue that shows how much more efficient we could be and we have been.

Jenny Jones AM: I will continue to pester on this. Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Assembly Member Shah?

Navin Shah AM: Thank you, Chair. My question is about the 24-hour Night Tube service which is going to be operational from September on Saturday and Sunday nights. Can I first start with the Commissioner with a question as to what sort of pressures you expect this to have on MPS resources?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We are not expecting any terrible pressure. It is difficult to predict, obviously. It is quite a big cultural change for London so it is difficult to predict. Obviously, the British Transport Police (BTP), which polices that network, I am sure, is having to consider how it is going to police it. Of course, when they come out of the Tube, they will be available on the streets. In some areas it will reduce the pressure because what we will see is less people crowding into Tube stations and all the pressure on the transport network in the takeaway food areas where people tend to start fighting at times as they queue to get home. The fact there is less pressure there will be a helpful thing. I suspect we are going to have to wait and see to some extent. We all worried a great deal about 24-hour licensing coming in and nothing materialised in respect of that. I suspect this is going to be a positive thing but we cannot predict entirely what the impact will be.

Navin Shah AM: Commissioner, the concern one might have is that whilst I understand there are 100 police officers - a significant commitment that has been made in respect of this particular proposal - but you have 144 stations across London. You have a situation where obviously the focus in terms of safety patrolling and security would be with some of the major inner London stations. Therefore, there will be that additional pressure. Will you have enough committed resources to make sure that London remains safe, both for the staff as well as for the public?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I believe so. On the trains and in the stations, that is BTP's responsibility. I am sure even now that BTP is talking to its police authority about how they will deal with that change. I know that TfL is a major player within that. I am sure it is talking about within the stations. If the issues are on exit, our major test is not how many people are coming out of the Tube at any one time but where there is a need for police service. Are they attacked or have things stolen? That is what will drive our work. At the moment we do not anticipate any major change. It will be difficult to be precise until it occurs.

Navin Shah AM: In terms of resourcing, are you able to tell us whether both TfL and the MPS Transport Operational Command Unit will be expanded to cover those extra hours following the extension of the night service?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Perhaps I will just say that obviously we have been discussing this with TfL. As you know, Navin, TfL gives about £39 million to the BTP and about £20 million to the MPS to cover costs of transport policing, from memory. At the moment my understanding is that there is not a call for extra funding. If that changes I will certainly get back to you.

Navin Shah AM: Last question to the Mayor directly: Mr Mayor, do you have any concerns particularly about outer London boroughs, again on the same security --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As a result of the Night Tube?

Navin Shah AM: Yes.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not at the moment. Overall, looking at the picture of the safety of the public in London, most people would say that the chance of taking the safest metro system in Europe home rather than worrying about a cab or minicab is going to lead to improvements in people's feelings of safety and security. That is a good thing for the city. We are obviously concerned to make sure that no station will be unstaffed at any stage during its operation. That will be the case during the operation of Night Tube.

Navin Shah AM: Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Assembly Member Dismore?

Andrew Dismore AM: My question is for the Mayor. At Mayor's Question Time a couple of weeks ago I raised with you the intended far-right demonstration planned for July in Golders Green. You said you would investigate it but were reluctant to stop it due to free speech.

On Monday this week I sent you a link to their website advertising the event which reads like the Nazi's *Der Stürmer* newspaper with cartoons, caricatures and anti-Semitic libels. It is nothing to do with free speech but clearly designed to incite race hatred against the Jews. I have a copy of the website here in case you have not had a chance to look at it yet. It is very clearly anti-Semitic and inciting race hatred. The question to you, Mr Mayor, is: what have you done over the last two weeks about this event which poses a clear public order threat to the Jewish committee in my constituency?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thank you very much, Andrew, and thank you for your letter. I must say that having reviewed the contents of the literature I completely agree with you in what you say about the incitement and the very nasty stuff indeed that it contains. Obviously it is an operational decision we have. I have passed this, via Anna [Anna Greenly, Chief of Staff to the Commissioner], to you, Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM]. The police will have to take a decision on how to manage that. There are 5,000 demonstrations and protests in London every year. This one, I have to say, looks clearly very nasty in its intention. The operational decision about how to respond to these people without giving them extra oxygen and without giving them more airtime is a matter for the London police.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): The argument about extra oxygen, Mr Mayor, because the question should be about cuts. The question managed to raise the matter which was very clever in our view. Can we now go to someone who wants to actually ask a question about cuts?

Andrew Dismore AM: I will put it in the context of cuts if that makes it easier for you Chair. That is inevitably this will have an impact on police resources because there is going to be not just the demonstration itself but, of course, there will be a significant counter-demonstration which will impose a demand on police resources.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Chair, and Andrew, I perfectly understand that there is a legitimate way of posing this question in the context of a discussion about resourcing. As I say, the operational decision must be one for the MPS.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I just follow on with you, Mr Mayor? One issue you could look at is, for example, banning them from using TfL transport to get there. You could say, "They will not be allowed to congregate at the Tube station or on TfL land outside the Tube station", which may be their current intention. Will you do that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That is not something we normally do. It is difficult to ask our staff to ensure that such a ban were enforced. Just off the top of my head, it would put our staff under pressures and obligations they might find difficult to discharge. I will think about that suggestion, Andrew, rather than support it.

Andrew Dismore AM: Presumably they would be supported by the MPS outside the station and BTP within it. The other question, of course, that follows from this is: do you think this protest should be stopped?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I must say I agree with you about the offensive nature of the literature. Clearly the decision about how to proceed in this matter in the most sensible way in order to minimise disruption, offence and the risk of disorder must be a matter for the police.

Andrew Dismore AM: Could I ask Sir Bernard? Using the question of police resources, will you take action to prosecute those behind this website and what conditions are you planning to impose on this demonstration?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): First of all, in terms of the website, we are examining and taking legal advice on what potential offences may or may not have been committed. I am not able to confirm that here today.

Secondly, my biggest concern is that obviously people who live in that area are worried about this protest and what is going to happen on the day. I have had communication from you, from the Community Security Trust and from other people who are obviously worried about what might happen. We are looking at the intelligence to see whether what is proposed is likely to happen and in what numbers.

The legislation is very clear about what is possible. No-one can ban a collection of people gathering but a march could be banned if the conditions are fulfilled. The only person who can ban the march is the Home Secretary on my advice. We will always consider that. What we can do is to put conditions on either a march or a collection of people gathering. We will consider that before the day. Of course, we will not answer that here today as you might appreciate. If we think that is the best thing to do to prevent a breach of the peace or serious disorder, then you should be assured that is what we will do. I have to point out that one of the things you will be aware of is that the decision to ban a march is one that is rarely taken in a democracy. Any government is wary about banning political involvement.

During the time I have been here we have twice argued for English Defence League (EDL) marches to be banned and they both were by the Home Secretary. Prior to that I do not think the MPS had ever asked for a march to be banned on the grounds that we hoped we could maintain order. I have shown we are prepared to use the powers that exist, or call on the Home Secretary to use it, if we think it is appropriate. In this case if I believe that is the situation I will do that.

Andrew Dismore AM: Thank you. Can I move on to a different issue?

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): You are taxing my patience and the Assembly's patience.

Jenny Jones AM: And mine.

Andrew Dismore AM: I want to move on to the question of police stations and contact points, if I may, which is a question of resources.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): It is your own time. If you mention money and cuts, go for it. Waste your own time.

Andrew Dismore AM: The question of police station closures has already been mentioned, Chair, has it not?

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): All right. Go for it.

Andrew Dismore AM: The Mayor promised when he was elected that there would be no police station closures but there were 63 closed, which is a cut, is it not? Over the next few years I expect we are going to see rather more police stations closed in view of what Sir Bernard said. Perhaps I could ask the Mayor how many police stations he anticipates will have to be closed as the result of these cuts?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Andrew, you have heard what the Commissioner has said. The police estate is very large and very diverse. It just does not consist of police stations. It consists of buildings of all kinds. You will recall that the sale of Scotland Yard produced about £373 million for the taxpayer. Doubtless you would have opposed that. We will go forward with a sensible programme of raising value from the police estate. As Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM] rightly points out, one of the advantages London has is that while we may bear the brunt of so many national costs, the one thing we do have going for us is that the value of real estate in London is exceptionally high. Where you have buildings that are not being well used, you can get value.

Andrew Dismore AM: Would you be satisfied, Mr Mayor, if we have just one 24-hour police station per borough? Will you be satisfied with that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I have said there should be a minimum of one 24-hour station per borough. I see absolutely no reason to speculate any further about police stations. We had a very substantial programme of closures. Let us see where we get to in the next round of reforms.

Andrew Dismore AM: Can I move on to the question of contact points, then? The review of the LPM by the MPS revealed that contact points are hardly used, just on average 1.3 visits per week. Should they not be renamed 'lack-of-contact points'?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I am sure Sir Bernard [Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM] will have a much fuller answer than I can give on this. The interesting thing that struck me is the commitment that if you want to report a crime, the police will come to you. That is the right way forward. That is what the Commissioner announced several years ago. It is paying off. You are seeing the results in levels of satisfaction amongst those who come in contact with the police service.

Andrew Dismore AM: If that is your view, then - apart from a handful of exceptions where the contact points have had a greater footfall than the average of 1.3 visits per week, some have had none at all - is it not

time to get rid of this fig leaf that you introduced to cover the closures of police stations and actually redeploy those officers on the streets rather than sitting and waiting for nobody to turn up to see them?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As far as I understand the matter, they are on active duties the whole time. There is a system now in London that if you want to report a crime the police will come to you. That is what the public are making use of. That is the right way forward. Every officer is himself or herself a mobile police station. They have all the kit. They have all the ways of communicating. They can record. They can communicate what they need to. That experience is showing up in the levels of satisfaction that Londoners show now in their encounters with the police.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Have you finished?

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Goodness me. Mr Malthouse?

Kit Malthouse AM MP: Mr Mayor, you and I have sat in this horseshoe now for just over seven years.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It has been historic.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: During that time, the conversation and the questions from the other parties have never changed.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It has deteriorated.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: It has always been, "You are cutting. It is a disaster. Things are going to get worse", yet crime and the budget have inexorably fallen, together, in parallel. Do you think your victory in 2012 and the Government's victory not a few weeks ago illustrate that the public does not buy it anymore - actually, what they want is for politicians to work with police officers and others on how they can be more efficient with the resources that they have - and also that you have, with the Commissioner, fundamentally broken the idea that inputs equal outputs on policing?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): There is a large measure of truth in that, Kit. What the MPS has shown over the last few years is that it can do outstanding work.

I want to come back a bit on what Jennette [Arnold OBE AM, Chair] was saying. Every organisation and every profession produces great strains on people who work in it. Overall the men and women of the MPS are doing an absolutely unbelievable job. As I said just now, they are producing high levels of satisfaction in Londoners. They are driving down crime. We need to make sure they are properly resourced but Londoners will want to see that is in the context of cutting out waste. When people speak up for keeping unnecessary bricks and mortar and fetishising buildings that could be sold off to the benefit of the community, I think Londoners do accept your argument.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: I just do not understand why significant reductions in crime, at the same time as significant reductions in expenditure, are not a cause for celebration. If you are getting more for less, why is that not a cause for celebration?

There is one small thing there I wanted just to suggest which is about buildings. Obviously people do worry about police stations. That is because they sense they are a proxy for presence. People believe that if there is

a police station there will be police officers nearby. Given on your own estimate, Commissioner, you will go from 600 to 400 buildings. That is an average of 12 per borough. Do you think it would be a good idea to invest a little in signage if a building is a proxy for presence? Say, for instance: you have a socking great control room building behind Vauxhall Station. No one knows it is a MPS building because it has no signage on it. If you put a socking great billboard on the side that said, "MPS officers work here on a daily basis", it might be reassuring to people on the basis that they know there will be police officers around. Whether better signage across the estate --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The short answer is, yes, with two exceptions. Surveillance units, no. To be fair, like the Yard [Scotland Yard, former headquarters of the MPS], we have buildings where really we are not equipped to accept the public. We have buildings where we have people operating and, if they turned up, the officers and staff who work there are not going to be best placed to help them.

The broad point, yes. In fact, one thing we tried in Liverpool - which we never managed to get into London but we ought to - in the headquarters which you will remember along the Strand there, which is a building of about seven storeys, we had a screen that went from top to bottom. We put on the side of it changing messages about how well we said we thought the area was doing and the police were doing. Probably we should take more of that option. Your fundamental point, should we sign better, I suspect is probably right.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: You have a warehouse under the flight path into Heathrow, have you not? The roof --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): I could not possibly reveal that --

Kit Malthouse AM MP: -- presents an opportunity to advertise your presence to 50 million, "We are watching you as you arrive".

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You could stick a big blue light on top of it, Bernard, for the planes.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Can I interrupt this self-congratulatory fest? If they do it in Liverpool, it is OK. I am not sure it is to do with cuts, unless you are suggesting substituting signs for policemen.

Kit Malthouse AM MP: It was to do with police buildings. I am conscious, Chair, that although Andrew's [Andrew Dismore AM] question was important, you had extended an element of generosity to him that was not extended to me earlier and so I might have been taking liberal licence. Anyway, I will leave you with the suggestion.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Chair, could I just mention one very quick thing? If I do not take the opportunity I may forget. It is really going to back to Jennette's [Jennette Arnold OBE AM] point about whether our people are under pressure.

We have had a BBC documentary crew in for one year. They stopped filming around three to four months ago. Five one-hour programmes will go out on BBC One starting on Monday of next week. I encourage you to have a look. I am proud of my people already. I am prouder still as a result of seeing the pre-runs of those. It is, creatively, called *The Met*. That is about the best the BBC could come up with. It is a genuine attempt to

show a lot of what we have done during the year from the officers' perspective and some of the managers including myself and essentially the quality of the people day after day after day. It also shows the pressures, personal as well as physical.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): We look forward to lots of good publicity that you did not have to pay for. That will be good stuff.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Not directly.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): No, but neither did they pay us for the opportunity to film us.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Jennette?

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Chair, it is just that I have been named on a number of occasions. Can I go on record to say to our guests I believe I am one of the major champions of police officers? In the years of serving my boroughs I have been there on the front line championing the work of good officers. They are the best. That does not stop me raising issues about the evidence that shows that there are some officers who have a right to raise their concerns about their experiences.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): OK, thank you for that. Mr Cleverly?

James Cleverly AM MP: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Sir Bernard, I welcome the comments that were reported about your views on fitness standards within the MPS and policing in general. As someone who has to take an annual fitness test for the Reserve Forces twice a year, which I still find quite amusing, I welcome those.

Allied to that and linked to overall policing numbers and policing output from those numbers, the number of officers on long-term sick and restricted duties is still significant. Will you also apply the attitude that you have taken around fitness standards to those officers who - perhaps through no fault of their own - are unable to fulfil the full functions of a police officer and find a way of managing them out of the organisation appropriately, freeing up places for officers who can be put into frontline duty?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The first point, just to be clear, were reported comments which I stand by but which were a little partial in that they gave no context. The first point I would make is that all our officers are now taking, as they should have done for many years, an annual fitness test and 97.5% of them passed it. I did and so did the rest of the management board. In my view the standard should be higher. Generally we have fit people. Someone asked me the question in a *Radio Times* interview for the documentary I have just described, "How do I keep myself fit?" From that grew this point about you do not want to see fat officers waddling towards you. I stand by it. However, 97.5% are people who are fit. It is not condemning everybody. Where people need to be challenged I will always do that.

Your point about recuperative officers is a challenge. I do not think there are easy solutions at the moment. We are doing our best to manage it now. As you know, there are two groups: recuperative, those who can get better, and restricted, those who probably cannot with a long-term injury or whatever it happens to be. The tension is that by that definition you might give them a medical pension. No one wants to do that. If you cannot give them a pension, you have to find a job that they will be suited to. I would like more flexibility.

I made a speech about six or seven weeks ago now, which if people are interested we can share. One of the points I made in that is that we need more flexibility for the office of constable as though they were an

employee. At the moment there are many restrictions. I want to preserve the benefits of being a constable: that we are independent in the application of our powers; that we do not strike. They are all good things. Sometimes a constable gets the benefits of being an employee whilst still being a constable. There are lawyers in our misconduct process because allegedly the officers cannot get access to an employment tribunal. Actually, they can if they can show illegal discrimination; I do not blame them for that. However, why do we have lawyers in the system? I do not know how many lawyers there are here but they are rarely conducive to efficiency. They do not make things quicker. They may make things better but they rarely make things quicker.

The fact is that in these circumstances we talk about officers who may not have the full physical abilities to do all the job could be deployed to something else but would remain on the same terms and conditions. I find that rather odd compared to other colleagues who are running around Croydon or Lewisham and dealing with all those responsibilities. We may have a role for them but it may not be on the same terms and conditions. I would like to see more flexibility there. The way that we are interpreting things at the moment - around the country, not just in the MPS - means we are seeing too many people on recuperative duties because no one wants to give them a medical pension. You can cope with that to some extent when you are a big organisation and growing. As we are now becoming a slimmer, hopefully leaner, organisation I am afraid that that is going to get more and more difficult. We will need some legislative change to make some of the changes you identify.

James Cleverly AM MP: You have my support on that. Thank you.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Mr Qureshi?

Murad Qureshi AM: Thank you, Chair. My question is to the Mayor and comes back to TfL property strategy, which Richard Tracey and the Commissioner's exchange alluded to quite extensively. It showed that the Commissioner had some understanding of the costs and benefits of managing MOPAC's property assets. I want to know, Mr Mayor. To what extent are you conscious of the benefits of outright sales now or incurring an income from some of the assets the MPS and MOPAC still has in the property portfolio.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You will recall in the case of Scotland Yard, as far as I can recollect, in 2008 the building was not actually owned by MPS. The former Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Kit Malthouse, actually invested in it and decided to borrow in order to buy the freehold, which we were then able to dispose of at a massive mark-up. That, it seems to me, showed some initiative and enterprise. I hope very much we will show the same sort of creativity and flexibility when it comes to managing our estate.

Murad Qureshi AM: Mr Mayor, what I am really trying to get to is whether there are lessons to be learned from TfL's new approach to squeezing their assets and earning, they estimate, £3.4 billion over the next ten years in the funding of the MPS in the future? Sir Bernard [Hogan-Howe] did allude to some of the cost savings he is making.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Was it £3.4 billion to the funding of TfL in the future?

Murad Qureshi AM: Yes, over ten years. I want to be sure that is conscious in your mind when you are looking at these choices.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. If you are saying it can sometimes make more financial sense to keep the asset but rent it, I am sure that is being considered.

Murad Qureshi AM: Can I test your thinking? Paddington Green Police Station is a major asset. I suspect it can reap the receipts that Scotland Yard has. Are you likely to sell that off or sit on that?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Murad, I cannot give you any particular guidance on what is going to happen with Paddington Green Police Station.

Murad Qureshi AM: Sure, but what I am saying is that that is an instance where you can sit on something and earn an income or flog off and cover --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You are making a very shrewd point. That is a choice that the estates department will have to consider and make a call on.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): They are good possibilities. The other thing to keep in mind for the police estate, of course, is not too many people want to rent some of our estate for two reasons. One, some of it is pretty awful. Two, it has large blocks of space that are marked 'cells', which are rather hard for people to use. What I would not want us collectively to do is get distracted by managing a property portfolio when we are here to provide a police service. That is my other concern. The final thing is we are all taking the benefits in a rising market but it may turn. We will get stuck with property that has deteriorated in value and we are trying to rent it and we do not have a use for it. I would advise caution. That is all I would say.

You are right that to have a wide commercial outlook on it is a good idea. I am a little bit concerned if we get too distracted. That is all.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Mr Boff?

Andrew Boff AM: The review of rape services that you alluded to earlier, Commissioner, highlighted the importance of ISVAs to counselling those victims of rape and sexual assault. Are you committed to seeing an increase in the number of ISVAs?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes, we would like to see it, although we are not arguing to fund it.

Andrew Boff AM: It is quite important that those ISVAs are duly accredited and trained to deal with people who are in a very vulnerable state. Are you therefore in favour of those ISVAs being accredited and trained to an adequate level?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): To be honest Andrew I have not really given my mind to it and I was not sure what standards they have. It seems a sensible thing, without being an expensive bureaucracy. It would be a sensible thing because the danger, I suppose, otherwise is that good volunteers may not achieve the standards we need. To have some training accreditation sounds a good idea in principle.

Andrew Boff AM: I appreciate that I launched this question on you without any warning. I would also hope that it therefore follows on that The Havens themselves and the people dealing with people who have been sexually abused are also accredited. Would you assure me that you will take it on to assure that those Havens are being run by people who are duly accredited and trained in dealing with people who have been sexually abused?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): As you are aware, the health service runs these three Havens in London. You may not have seen yet but in Dame Elish's report she suggests we should have one, her principal reason being she wants to see high standards in one place rather than different standards in different places, and to get it to be a priority for the health service not a secondary issue. They are her fundamental arguments and I agree with her. It will be difficult to work out where in London you might put that one place.

I understand that the health service does try to achieve high standards in terms of forensic examination. Of course, we, when our officers attend, expect them to be trained. One of the things Dame Elish points out is we need to do more about the training for the first response officers, for the SOIT officers and for the investigators. That is the big lesson that we learned: that we need to do more in that area because she is not happy at the moment that there is enough.

Andrew Boff AM: Thank you, Commissioner.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Dr Sahota?

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Thank you. Commissioner, during the last year there were 1,000 incidences when patients were transferred to the hospital using police cars. Do you see this as an increasing trend?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): It was until probably 15 or 18 months ago. My team became concerned about the number of people we were taking to hospital who should have travelled by ambulance. If you excuse me because I did not expect the question, but we were taking something like 180 to 200 people a month to hospital. These ranged from very minor things which is fine, but it could be people in childbirth, diabetic comas and the whole range to cardiac arrest. My concerns were that we were not equipped nor trained to deal with that. Of course, sometimes it might be a horrible event where someone died and our officers would have it on their conscience and we might have to explain it.

As a result of that we worked with the LAS and we have now a triaging system which has reduced it but not entirely removed it. As you will know the ambulance service has been under huge pressure over these last two years because demand appeared to rise dramatically and its ability to respond to fell. Over the last few months we have seen about 1,200 Australian paramedics arrive. That, I am sure, will feed its way through the system.

It is something we constantly monitor. It seems to be for some reason that is not really understood that more and more demand has come into the system. We are still taking some but nowhere near as many people to hospital. Of course, *in extremis*, that is fine. If somebody's life is at risk and you have to move them, that is OK. Any member of the public would do that.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: You are not trained for it and this is a reflection of the pressure the ambulance service is under. In the plenary session in December 2014 you said,

"We have to work across borders in a way that we have not before seen. When I say across borders, I mean across emergency services. With other local authorities we have to be more radical in some of our ideas, not just stick to arrangements we have currently."

What sort of cross-border approach do you think we should be now approaching in the context of this current problem?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Off the top admittedly, there are probably three areas we could work together.

For example, we are looking at now whether we could put a defibrillator in every one of our police vehicles, which we do not have. I have discovered that our officers, in their first aid training which they receive at the moment every year, are trained to use a defibrillator. Now, as you know, it does not take a lot of training. You cannot hurt somebody but you can save somebody with a defibrillator. It is a capital cost but I also believe there is a charity that is prepared to pay for this. That would be one way we could work together.

Secondly, there is some discussion around whether the ambulance and fire services could deploy independently to someone who has a medical problem, which we have seen in other parts of the country.

Certainly something we did in Merseyside which was very effective was we had a joint antisocial behaviour squad with the fire brigade. Two-thirds of the squad of about 90 officers were dedicated to antisocial behaviour and another third were fire officers. What happened was that the police went in and restored order around antisocial behaviour where it had become really difficult. Then the fire service came in afterwards and did diversionary activities to try to get the community itself to combine together, get leadership identified and make sure the good people did well. That did really well for us. It is not something we have tried here but I give it as an example of things we can work together on.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. On that note, Labour is out of time. I looked forward to that.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Impartial chairing there.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Let me take back the chair.

[Jennette Arnold OBE AM in the Chair]

2015/1564 - 21st Century Bobby

[Tony Arbour](#)

With the MPS needing to make £800 million in savings, it will become increasingly vital that it can deliver more with less. What role does technology have to play in providing London with a police force fit for the 21st century?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes. Thank you very much, Tony. A very important question. You have heard some of the answers already this morning. It is not just the body worn video cameras, which will make a huge difference to policing, to confidence and to justice. It is also, of course, the use of tablets. We are spending £100 million over the next five years on mobility technology of all kinds to enable the police to do form-filling and so on while on the move. We have some real evidence from a trial in Hammersmith and Fulham that that is starting to cut time and therefore liberate officers to continue with their work on the street with the public. We are continuing with automatic number plate recognition (ANPR). As you will know, I recently said that TfL's cameras could be made available to the police. That is particularly important given the pressures on borough funding for closed circuit television (CCTV). Overall there has been a substantial increase in the amount of coverage by CCTV in London. That clearly has a big effect in driving down crime.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): Can I tell you how much we welcome your statement this morning about rolling out the body-worn cameras? Can I ask you to ensure that the latest technology is used on this?

You will know that this week my colleague Mr Boff [AM] suggested that Bluetooth technology be used to link the video cameras with Taser use. Will you ensure that the rollout includes this?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Yes, I understand the point completely. If a police officer is going to use a Taser, for the reassurance of the public, it would be a good thing if that episode were to be recorded. I do not see why that should not be possible, although, obviously, I expect Sir Bernard will want to comment on that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): The principle is a good one. Whether it is a Bluetooth or whatever I take advice on.

The first point is that we are going to equip - I hope by the end of this calendar, at least financial, year - 20,000 officers with body-worn video. That is a great step forward. It is not the only thing in our IT strategy. There is a lot more that we are planning to do. The great benefit, and perhaps the reason that Andrew [Boff AM] argues for it, is transparency and being open and accountable. That is the thing it does. If officers are being deployed to incidents, as is clear they probably would have been if they are going to use a Taser, we expect them to switch it on and make sure they record what is happening.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Is there not a show called *Police Camera Action* already?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Possibly. I am never home.

We have a pilot running at the moment. We have about 1,500 officers using this equipment now. We took a little longer with our firearms officers for slightly different reasons. Where the body-worn camera went, when they aimed with their weapon, they would block the image and so we had to find a different way of doing that. The same may be true of Tasers for the same reason. Fundamentally, it is a good idea.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): We are very concerned that this is clearly the way you can make your frontline officers infinitely more efficient. This morning, Mr Mayor, you described the policeman on the beat as a mobile police station. In some respects he is very much a 19th-century police station. I understand new police officers are still issued with notebooks and pencils.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As I said just now, a pilot has been underway in Hammersmith and Fulham where we have had 560 officers deployed with iPads. We are going to have 5,000 of these so-called 'Digital Dixons', as the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh, calls them. By next year they will have tablets and they will have body-worn video and smartphones. The level of connectivity of the police force is going to be mounting rapidly.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): We are pleased to hear that. I am particularly interested that we do use the latest developments and we see what colleagues are doing in other police forces, not just in the United Kingdom but abroad. I understand that Cambridge, for example, has been working on a paperless police force for some time.

I would like to ask about a couple of specific proposals which have been made. You will recall that again our in-house technologist, Mr Boff [AM], suggested new ways in which rape could be reported by using automated teller machines (ATMs) and mobile apps. Is this something that is actually being progressed? Have you discarded that idea?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, we have discussed this. The crucial thing is that obviously people want to be able to report these very sensitive crimes confidentially but there has to be some element of interaction with a live human being, with an officer, in order to really establish what has taken place. The usage of apps we are looking at. We are not quite there yet in terms of understanding how it would work. The use of ATMs similarly.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): I would like to progress to ask Sir Bernard about particular matters in relation to this. It may be that you do not know the detail of this. Currently the MPS has in excess of 35,000 desktop and laptop computers, which run on Windows XP. Support for Windows XP ended in 2014. I understand that a deal has been done whereby there is going to be support to bridge the expired system to the new system to be provided. No one has revealed to the Assembly, although we have sought very hard to find out, how much this is going to cost. I wonder if for reasons of transparency you, Sir Bernard, will authorise your staff to reveal the cost of this bridging when clearly this is something that preparation should have been made for many years ago.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Yes. A lot of it should have been made under the old [Metropolitan] Police Authority, as it happens. What we faced was a legacy that was difficult to unpick. This is one of the symptoms of it. We had a very large contract, which you will know the supplier of, which was extended. We are now going to retender by the end of this year. That is a very significant amount of our spending. This was a contract based on the ability to spend our money. We believe in our new strategy that in fact we will have parts of the contract grouped together so that people are incentivised to save our money, as we have found has worked very, very well on the estate side.

Secondly, the infrastructure - you mentioned the 20,000-odd desktops - was pretty ropey. That has also had to be sorted out. That has cost us about £10 million, an amount that we could not at that time afford, although now capital-wise we can.

The third layer is we have then to decide what we want to do with our strategy for the future. We have a fundamental strategy there, which was first of all about change of contract and secondly about something - that I am not going to bore you with but I could - about our robust strategy around IT.

This is my point, really. To transfer from the old to the new, there are transition costs because we cannot do it as quickly as I would have liked. One of the consequences of that is old licences are extended. I suspect in this case that is one of them. I will have a look. Unless there is some commercial sensitivity, I will be quite happy to share it. I see no reason not to.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): It is important because the track record of the MPS really from the very beginning is that the contracts which have principally gone wrong in relation to equipment have always related to IT. Indeed, in your first incarnation here I recall you talking about that.

One of the difficulties about us not actually having any information on costs is we know that these sorts of things have happened because these are international suppliers. They have had to make a transition abroad. We know how much the costs have been. For example, I have got the figure here so when the police force in the Netherlands switched over we know how much it cost. We believe it was actually a similar sized contract to yours. If it is being kept a secret it is going to be exceedingly difficult for us to compare whether or not we are getting good value or a monopoly supplier, once again, is holding us to ransom.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): In principle, I agree with you. There should be no secrecy. The accounts are open. This is a very small part of a budget that is worth hundreds of millions.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): It does tie us into a single supplier. That is really the point, is it not?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): Actually, all it is doing is extending an existing tie to an existing supplier until we change our system. As I say, we have to change a contract, the outsource people who manage it, and obviously all the things that went with that. That is the knitting we have been trying to unpick for two-and-a-half years. We are now nearly at the end of it. It will enable us to make best use of, as the Mayor was saying, tablets, body-worn video and all those things that other forces - smaller, often - have and to be in a better and more flexible position to move more quickly on.

Tony Arbour AM (Deputy Chairman): OK. I have the point. Thank you, Chair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Assembly Member Borwick?

Victoria Borwick AM MP: Thank you. While we are talking about the 21st century and taking things forward, I would like to bring your attention to the residents of Knightsbridge, particularly, in central London, who are suffering from the people who drive amazing supercars that make the residents' lives hell. I do not know, Mr Mayor, if you would like to join with me in raising this concern with the Commissioner. Some of these cars are, of course, without insurance. They get shipped in at quite significant cost. They drive around the streets at 2 o'clock and 3 o'clock in the morning, racing through the streets, often without insurance, often without being properly licensed. Could I bring this to the MPS's attention? You know something about it, but how are we going to use all our modern technology to try to stop making our residents' lives hell?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): You might equally have brought up this excellent point, Victoria, under the cost-cutting measures. After all, it seems to me it is perfectly within the powers and the competencies of the MPS to impound these vehicles and to flog them off, which is what the MPS have already done in at least a couple of cases and which it continues to do.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): We only had short notice of this question, but the information I have is that there is a group called the Piccadilly Boy Racers and various other individuals who are certainly causing some noise and safety concerns. We have taken certain action against them. We are looking at antisocial behaviour legislation to see whether or not we can put more restrictions on them. As the Mayor said, if they are not insured, they will get the cars taken away. They also can have them taken away for other reasons too under the Road Traffic Act. We are actively considering that.

The sad reality with some of the people who are driving these very expensive vehicles is that financial deterrents do not work, nor does the loss of their car because they just go and get another one. However, we are hot on their heels to see what we can do to resolve it, particularly as summer comes along, when sadly we see more of it because we get more visitors and the weather is worthy of them racing. Anyway, it is not very good. That is my broad point because they should not be doing that on the streets of London.

Victoria Borwick AM MP: I am not sure you have the cars to compete in this. We have you as fast a car for getting around London --

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): No, but they will never go far in our traffic, will they? They will have to stop one day.

Victoria Borwick AM MP: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Still with the 21st-century Bobby, Assembly Member Tracey?

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you, Madam Chair. Commissioner, I was quite surprised to read in *The Times* yesterday some comments you had made about not being able to track people on iPhones. It was particularly relating to Uber, where they can track somebody who calls up for a cab. It is rather strange given what we see on American television and police that you in the MPS do not seem to be able to track anybody who has called in on a phone where it might be very, very helpful if they are in some danger.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM (Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis): This might have been more pertinent to Baroness Jones's [Jenny Jones AM] question but I will do my best to answer it.

The point I was making was there is a proper debate about the new legislation going through Parliament about communications data. Baroness Jones [AM] would like to talk about that particular sphere. In a debate that London First arranged about a week ago, I was being challenged, "Why do the police need all these powers?" As one of the arguments that I deployed, I merely made the point that you actually have far more intrusion in your life as an individual by commercial entities than you will ever have by the state. You trust Google, Tesco and Uber. Point two: where you choose to, you can actually put apps on your phone to see where your daughter is tonight to make sure she is safe and yet we do not do that. I was merely contrasting that if we do not trust the state, for some reason we seem to trust commerce with some very private information.

The final point to mention because it is pertinent in particular to this is about Uber. If you ring for Uber or you text, they know where you are and where the nearest taxi is to put you in touch. It is a great commercial service. If you ring me in our control room and say, "I have just been stabbed", but you cannot get the words out, I do not know where you are. It will take a while. Interestingly, when I went to Qatar, they can. They regard that as a victim-based service, not as intrusion into public life.

There is a debate to be had and I understand that. Generally I would always trust the state, in my view. I am part of the establishment; I realise that. There are some great benefits from this technology. We would be foolish to lose them for the concerns. It would be better to regulate it than it would be to lose it. That is my point.

Richard Tracey AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK. Thank you very much. The Conservative group is now out of time.

2015/1565 - Draft Communications Data Bill

[Jenny Jones](#)

If the Government proposes a 'snoopers charter', will you ask for it to empower the police to target domestic extremists?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): Thanks, Jenny. Of course, the answer is that what we are trying to do, to pick up the point the Commissioner was making in response to the last question, is to try to give the MPS the ability to keep pace with technological developments. Yes, five or ten years ago it was basically possible for the police to use mobile phone data to solve a great number of crimes. This was one of the reasons that sanction detection rates went up in respect of murders and many other crimes of that kind. It was

basically because of the police's ability to use mobiles to locate people, to corroborate stories, to prove that they had been lying and so on and so forth.

We are now in a situation in which technology is developing very rapidly. As I understand the matter, there are apps and ways of communicating now that make it hard for the MPS to have the same kind of accuracy and the same kind of success.

Jenny Jones AM: Could you answer my question? I admit it is not very well written and it sounds as though I want you to empower the police to target domestic extremists and I, of course, definitely do not. If you could answer my particular question?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): We do not want to target anybody in particular. Obviously that leads to --

Jenny Jones AM: I personally think the police should be targeting criminals.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not think the police want to target anybody in particular. What we want to do is to solve crime, to deter crime and to deter terrorists.

Jenny Jones AM: All right. Let me ask you another way, then. Are you aware at the moment the MPS averages 59,000 requests for surveillance of some sort under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)? That seems quite a lot. You are a libertarian: do you feel there should be judicial oversight of those powers?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It may be that the reason for the huge and growing number of requests is just that the police do not currently have the powers to conduct the kind of monitoring they were able to do before because of the changes in technology. It may be that they are now having to seek special powers and records that are perhaps not available to them under the current data protection law. As you know, the Government is trying to change the data protection law in order to give the police these powers.

Jenny Jones AM: Chair, could I ask that you get the Mayor to answer the question that I asked? He keeps going off at a tangent. Can you answer this question: will you tell the police or will you advise the Government that there should be judicial oversight of all their requests under RIPA? That means they have to go to a judge. They just cannot turn to a policeman in the team next door and ask.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): General judicial oversight is a good thing. I am not certain at what level of monitoring by the police you would need to go to a judge for, certainly to look at somebody's phone records. As we have discussed before in this place there might be some professions - journalists, for instance, where it is important in exposing whistle blowers that they would need to feel confident. It might be of value to have some sort of judicial protections there. Generally speaking, what we are trying to do is to ensure the police are able to keep pace with technological developments and stop criminals getting away with it.

Jenny Jones AM: You know that the police have actually tightened up now the definition of domestic extremist. It does contain the phrase about 'serious criminal activity'. Surely they should not really be asking to put somebody on surveillance if they do not have a belief that they are up to some serious criminality. In your case, for example, the journalist is not up to serious criminality. There are also --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): As I - and I think you - have argued before, it may be a case where there might be professions where some sort of provision for judicial oversight was a good idea.

Jenny Jones AM: Politicians, for example?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): That would obviously be a matter for Parliament to consider. In principle, you want to make sure the police have the tools, given the great advances in modern technology. For example, all the apps that are now available. With WhatsApp, for example, people can effectively make communication which then disappears. The police need to be able to keep in touch with it and to monitor people who might mean us serious harm.

Jenny Jones AM: You are being a bit wishy-washy on this, I feel. You are hedging your bets. I am trying to put you on the spot and you are absolutely dancing around like a pro.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): I do not know what spot you are trying to put me on, quite frankly. Your question was so vague as to be unintelligible.

Jenny Jones AM: It was absolutely specific, Mr Mayor. Let me give you another specific question, then. You have the power to tell the police that for certain professions they must get judicial oversight and will you --

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): No, that is a matter for Parliament. I am flattered that this session is finally catching fire.

Jenny Jones AM: They could voluntarily do that and could actually start going to a judge for these requests. Also, will you tell the MPS that they should not be using these powers on people like peaceful protestors?

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): All right. Two things. First of all, I am flattered, obviously, Jenny, that you continue to ascribe to me these dictatorial powers. I cannot tell the MPS to do this or that in the way you describe. It is a matter for Parliament.

Jenny Jones AM: I have heard stories about you and police commissioners.

Boris Johnson MP (Mayor of London): It is a matter for Parliament to decide whether certain professions should have judicial control before their phone records are released to the police. Yes, of course, we do not want to see these requests for monitoring used to target anybody, such as you. I know that you were very concerned to discover that you are on a list of domestic extremists or something. As I understand the matter, you were not actually personally designated as a domestic extremist. You have not been trying hard enough, Jenny. You were not actually identified as a threat to society, quite rightly in my view since you are an adornment to society and an ornament to our democracy. I understand your concern that you were nonetheless on that list. Having been briefed extensively about this, it is certainly not the intention that these reforms should be used to target peaceful protestors or innocent people of any kind. The intention is allow the police to keep pace with technological change.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): On that point, Assembly Member Jones, the Greens are out of time.

Jenny Jones AM: Thank you.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It leaves me to thank the Mayor and the Commissioner for their attendance here this morning.