

Water Cannon: Responses to Consultation

Between 17 January and 28 February the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime conducted a period of public engagement about the Metropolitan Police Service's desire to purchase water cannon for use in the most extreme situations of public disorder, widespread destruction and violence.

During the consultation a range of views were expressed and concerns were raised by people who responded to the consultation and by the Police and Crime Committee of the London Assembly. The Mayor takes these concerns very seriously and has sought assurances from the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The principle concerns and the assurances received are set out below.

Despite some concerns raised during the engagement process, the Mayor is clear that the majority of Londoners support the police having access to this tool in limited circumstances and would have more confidence in the MPS' ability to respond to serious disorder with this option available. This support cuts across all sections of society in London and the Mayor is encouraged that the more people know about water cannon the more supportive of their limited use they were.

The Mayor has written to the Home Secretary setting out his support for the Commissioner's request for funds to be made available. She will now make a decision about whether or not to licence the use of water cannon on the UK mainland, taking consideration of all the evidence available to her. This document should be read with this letter.

This document sets out the summary findings of a recent poll carried out for MOPAC by TNS, the main areas of concern received from members of the public and others and the assurances received. Appendix 1 contains more detail on the responses received and Appendix 2 provides a fuller overview of the poll results.

Summary of Poll Results

A poll of 4,200 Londoners age 16 and over was conducted between 18 February - 3 March. This was during the last two weeks of the six-week consultation period, when comment on the proposal had been covered in the media, but not in the aftermath of any public disorder like earlier surveys.

The results are strongly in favour of the introduction of the availability of water cannons to the MPS in the event that they should be required.

- 60% agree that the MPS has shown itself capable of responding well to serious disorder in London (17% disagree).
- Most Londoners know something about water cannon, over half (52%) say they know a little and 13% know a lot. Just over a quarter (27%) feel they don't know a lot and 8% know nothing at all.
- Londoners are uncertain whether water cannon are already available for use – 36% think they are, 41% don't think they are and 24% don't know.
- 70% agree that water cannon could fill a gap in the MPS toolkit if faced with serious public disorder (12% disagree).
- 60% feel water cannon would be useful for policing London (18% don't feel they would be useful).
- 68% agree there is a 'small limited role' for water cannon in dealing with the most serious public disorder in London (17% disagree).
- Over half (52%) would be more confident in the MPS' ability to respond to serious disorder/rioting if they were able to use water cannon. 27% don't think the water cannon would make any difference to their confidence in the police and 13% feel water cannon would make them less confident in police ability.

Consultation Responses

In total, the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime received 2,606 responses to the consultation. Of these, the vast majority raised concerns, while some were supportive.

In addition, 37,000 people signed a change.org petition addressed to the Home Secretary and the Mayor making arguments against the purchase. Just over 5,000 people signed a further petition to the Home Secretary which was handed to the Deputy Mayor at the public meeting on 17 February. This will be passed to her, along with the change.org petition. We also received two email petitions, each with 2,000 signatories. There was a degree of crossover between people signing these petitions.

The public meeting with the MPS, hosted by MOPAC, was attended by around 180 people and was also broadcast online. The video and transcript can be found on the London.gov website and the comments have also been taken into consideration, in addition to those made at three further meetings. These meetings involved other stakeholders, borough representatives and Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords.

Benefits

Those people who were in favour made the following points:

- **Police officers have the right to defend themselves, the public and businesses**
- **Water cannon would be a useful option for well-trained officers to use as a last resort in extreme circumstances. Police should have all possible tools available to them to deal with disorder. Some respondents referred to public disorder in London in August 2011, stating that they felt the police lost control and that water cannon may have been useful. However, water cannon should only be used when operationally justified, that is, when there is violence or a threat to the public - not as a default position. Water cannon should not be used against peaceful protesters.**
- **Water cannon are a preferable option to other tactics such as live ammunition, tear gas, Tasers or horses.**
- **Water cannon will make it easier for those who want to protest peacefully to do so and deter those who want to cause trouble.**
- **If it is the professional judgement of the Commissioner that water cannon would be of value then we should accept this as the view of the most senior officer in the country.**

Concerns

Those people, including the Police and Crime Committee of the London Assembly, who expressed concerns made the following points. The Mayor is content that the assurances that the MPS have provided in response to these points are sufficient to address the concerns raised:

Operation

- **Water cannon would be used on protestors or would deter peaceful protest.**

The MPS have been clear that they will not use water cannon to respond to protest and that this would not be permissible under the criteria for use. These criteria restrict water cannon to only those situations of serious public disorder where there is the potential for loss of life, serious injury or widespread destruction.

The police will not routinely deploy water cannon proactively, rather they will be deployed when needed following a rigorous assessment of the situation. Any deployment will require the prior authority from an officer of at least Assistant Commissioner rank who is not the senior officer for the operation.

The MPS have reassured the Mayor that they take their responsibilities under the Human Rights Act very seriously, including their duty to ensure the right to peaceful protest is not infringed.

- **Water cannon are indiscriminate.**

Some concerns were raised that water cannon cannot be targeted on individuals acting violently and that innocent bystanders, including journalists, can be affected by them. In describing the professional practice that they will follow the MPS have been able to provide assurance that the

use will not be indiscriminate and, whenever possible, will be preceded by warnings and focusing jets on the ground.

Given the very high threshold of violence required before water cannon can be used it is also unlikely that those not involved would be caught up in the response. The police have been clear that they would only use water cannon in areas where people could move away from the water and ample warning will be given. So, for example, they have assured the Mayor that it would not be used in conjunction with containment tactics.

It is clear that water cannon can be more discriminating, and less dangerous, than horse charges, which are a permitted tactic to respond to serious public disorder.

- **Water cannon would escalate violence in response.**

A few respondents to the consultation, and some of those attending the public meeting, expressed their view that the presence of water cannon would incite violence. The criteria for the deployment of water cannon require serious public disorder with the potential for loss of life, serious injury or widespread destruction. As such, significant violence will already be likely before water cannon is used.

- **The financial cost of purchasing water cannon is too high, or purchasing an interim solution now guarantees future procurement.**

While we expect water cannon to be rarely seen and rarely used, we consider that the reduced cost offered by the second-hand German models means that the cost-benefit is reasonable. The devices being bought are in good condition and should be operational for at least five years, although with good maintenance this life could be extended.

Decisions about future funding of future water cannon will be taken as part of the ongoing national discussions with the Home Office led by ACPO. Procuring these vehicles now does not guarantee future funding.

- **This is being rushed through to respond to anticipated riots this summer.**

The MPS have been clear that there is no specific intelligence to suggest disorder this summer, nor are they requesting water cannon to deal with a particular event, as some suggested at the public meeting. Rather, since the riots a number of requests have been made by the police and this process has been in response to those.

Some people questioned what had changed in policing that meant water cannon were being considered when we haven't had them before. The MPS have said that as well as their own review of the August 2011 riots, the review by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary recognised that there is a role for water cannon to deal with the most dangerous and violent situations.

The MPS continues to be focused on ensuring the human rights of those being policed, which has meant looking for ways to reduce the amount of force in response to serious, violent disorder. As water cannon can be less harmful than a metal baton at close range, far less dangerous than firing baton rounds and more discriminating than horses charging into a crowd of people, their use would, actually, be to reduce force, not increase it.

Deployment

- **Water cannon are not sufficiently responsive to disorder and wouldn't have been useful in the riots or would be unsuitable to the geography of London.**

One common misconception throughout the engagement process has been that water cannon are large, unwieldy vehicles which move slowly and cannot respond quickly to events. The MPS have explained that the ones they are looking to buy are very similar to fire engines. They would be able to go to any location in London a fire engine could attend and at around the same speed. This has also reassured the Mayor that they would not be visibly on standby at events, as they could be deployed swiftly only when required.

Other concerns were raised about the capacity of the vehicles, often commenting that if used at full power, continually, the device would empty after ten minutes. The police have assured the Mayor that they would not use them in this way as it would be both disproportionate and ineffective.

The Police and Crime Committee and others have expressed concern that, particularly in the riots which were characterised by disparate groups acting across London, it is not clear where the limited vehicles would be deployed. While this is true, the Mayor does not consider this an argument against their purchase. It is merely a statement of the fact that senior officers must make decisions about where to deploy any limited resources, as they do on a daily basis. This decision is made by senior officers who have been clear that they would deploy the devices to wherever they would be most effective at preserving life or preventing serious injury or widespread destruction.

- **Water cannon can cause serious injuries.**

Many people expressed concern about the potential for injury when water cannon are deployed. As with all less-lethal tactics, there is some risk, which the ACPO briefing document acknowledged, associated with deployment.

The police have been clear that they are likely to be less harmful than a metal baton at close range, far less dangerous than firing baton rounds and more discriminating than horses charging into a crowd of people – all tactics that the police can lawfully use now.

Some responses referred to water cannon producing clouds of water droplets that would suffocate people. The models being bought from Germany do not have this diffuser function available to them.

Officers will be trained to assess and mitigate risks. The MPS have assured the Mayor that any use would be graduated, with the use of warnings, giving people opportunity to leave an area. The standard operating guidelines will be the same as those in Northern Ireland where there have been no reported injuries following the use of water cannon. The Independent Police Complaints Commission has also said that they will monitor any complaints against the police that would emerge from any use of water cannon.

During the public meeting Dietrich Wagner, a German man who was partially blinded by a water cannon, raised his concerns about their use in London. The police are confident that the protocols they will have in place would minimise this kind of risk. Mr. Wagner also explained that officers in Germany are being prosecuted because their use contravened their own legal requirements.

Role of the Police

- **Water cannon would damage trust in the police or reduce policing by consent and change the nature of British policing.**

Evidence shows that when the police failed to respond adequately to the disorder seen during the August 2011 riots confidence in them plummeted. While the just use of police powers is an important driver of confidence, so is their ability to maintain order – a duty that is core to their mission.

At times, to respond to extreme disorder, it is necessary for the police to use force. The Mayor has been assured by the police that water cannon will only be used very rarely in the most extreme cases when other tactics have failed or would be unlikely to work.

Some respondents commented that by having access to water cannon the police would change their style to copy the approach taken by other jurisdictions with access to water cannon. The police have explained that different tactics are used all over the world using the same equipment that the police in the UK have access to. The most important thing is not the tools available, but how they are used and what criteria for use are applied. The criteria in the UK is very strict and follows that used in Northern Ireland where there have been no reports of injuries.

- **Water cannon are militaristic weapons.**

Water cannon are civilian vehicles. Unlike those used in Northern Ireland, the ones being purchased are not armoured.

- **That once the MPS had access to water cannon they would use it on an increasingly frequent basis.**

This concern was raised by a number of people, but the Commissioner has been clear that it is not the case. As an example, the police have referenced the use of AEP, or baton rounds, which are approved for use by the MPS but have never been fired.

The criteria for use is so strict that the Mayor has confidence in the Commissioner's commitment that water cannon will be rarely seen and rarely used.

Engagement

- **The MPS are running ahead of the national programme and any national debate about water cannon.**

The MPS and MOPAC continue to be represented on the ACPO project board which is working to develop a long-term solution. The current proposals are for an interim solution that meets the Commissioner's request for water cannon available in London sooner rather than later.

The Mayor has a duty to consider the needs in London. The Home Secretary will take account of the national discussions that have been taking place when she makes her licensing decision.

- **That the engagement period was not sufficient or people did not have an opportunity to have their views heard.**

Some people, including the Police and Crime Committee raised concerns about the length of the engagement period. A large number of people were able to submit their comments and a well-attended public meeting was held at City Hall. We are confident that all those who felt strongly were able to contribute. Liberty agreed that it has been a good and useful consultation process.

In addition, the largest poll on the issue was conducted which gave an unprecedented number of Londoners the opportunity to make their views known and showed their broad support.

- **That the MPS/ACPO argument was confused or contradictory.**

Throughout the engagement process the MPS have referenced a number of occasions from the past where they might have considered the use of the water cannon because the threshold had been met. At no point have the police said that there are any events where they definitely would have deployed water cannon, just that the criteria might have been met. Any deployment decisions would be made by operational commanders on the ground with the evidence available to them.

Where they have referenced certain protests, such as the Countryside Alliance march or the student protests of 2010, the police have set out that it was not the whole event that might have met the criteria for deployment, but that specific violent breakaway factions who targeted certain buildings might have done so.

With regard to the 2011 riots, while the HMIC and MPS reports into the policing response agreed that water cannon would not have been a panacea, there could have been a limited role for them if they had been available.

Governance

- **That, once purchased, the Mayor would have no oversight about when it was used.**

The Met and senior leadership are legally responsible for making deployment decisions. They have been clear that any deployment would be discussed with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, in the same way as any major response to a serious public order situation in London.

After any deployment the Mayor would expect to discuss this with the Commissioner, who would also expect to be scrutinised by the Police and Crime Committee.

The final decision on licencing water cannon is for the Home Secretary. The decision the Mayor has taken is to provide funds for the MPS to purchase them.

Safeguards

- **Respondents gave some views around how the use of water cannon should be managed/governed if introduced. This included: risk assessments for the public and officers; the public to be given clear information around how water cannon will be used and managed; vehicles carrying water cannon to be equipped with PA systems to give dispersal warnings prior to use, and CCTV to record how the device is used (to be scrutinised afterwards by the police, MOPAC and**

neighbourhood policing boards). People also referenced the need for clear protocols and authorisation guidelines, with the public told why cannon were used in each case.

The police have accepted the need for these types of safeguards. For example, the vehicles will be equipped with CCTV and speaker systems and flashing lights to enable clear warnings to be broadcast prior to their use. MOPAC and the Mayor will scrutinise any use.

There are strict rules for the use of water cannon and these include the need for authorisation from an Assistant Commissioner. Operational officers on the ground will need to make the final decision and will be informed by the assessment of an officer not directly involved in any deployment to provide greater perspective. The public will be informed about any decision following deployment.

Poll Findings

In addition to the detailed findings at Appendix 2, the poll challenged a number of preconceptions that were repeated during the engagement period.

- **Support across age ranges**

There is broad support for the police to have water cannon, across all age ranges. The consultation heard from those who asserted that water cannon would be more likely to be used against the young, who might be caught up in a protest that turned violent. But almost two thirds (62%) of young people aged 16-34 thought water cannon would be useful for policing the capital city of London, and the same proportion (62%) agreed that there was 'small, limited role' for water cannon.

- **Knowledge of water cannon**

The consultation also heard from those – including elected representatives – who claimed that public support for water cannon was largely uninformed, and that the more people knew about water cannons and how they are used, the less supportive they would be. The survey rebuts this assertion. In fact those people that say they know about water cannon are more likely to support its use than those who say they don't. Overall, 5% more of those who claimed to be aware (a lot, or a little) of water cannons agreed that water cannon could fill a gap in the police's toolkit (75% v 70%) and that it would be useful for policing the capital (71% v 66%). Two-thirds (65%) of young people 16-34 and similar levels of older respondents aged 35-54 and 55+ claimed to know either a little or a lot about water cannon. 58 % of those who claimed to be aware of water cannon would be more confident in the police's ability to respond to serious disorder if they had water cannon, against an average of 52% of all respondents, or 43% who knew a little or nothing about water cannon.

- **Diversity**

White and BAME groups had consistent levels of knowledge, and views on water cannon. The large size of the survey allowed over 900 BAME Londoners to be polled – almost as much as a standard public attitudes survey sample. Despite having lower general levels of trust in the police, black Londoners by a margin of more than 3 to 1, are more likely to think water cannon would be useful in policing the capital city of London than not (61% against 19%). Black Londoners were more likely to agree that there was a small, limited role for water cannon than Asian or Chinese Londoners (63% v 59% v 50%). This majority was broadly in line with the

average for all respondents. Asian and Chinese respondents were more likely to think water cannon would be useful than white Londoners. Almost two-thirds of black Londoners agree that there is a 'small, limited role' for water cannon and 42% would be more confident in the police's ability to respond to disorder if they had water cannon available. For a third of black Londoners (35%) it would make no difference and 14% would be less confident – in line with white respondents.

- **Geography**

There was broad support for water cannon across London. Boroughs that had experienced large amounts of rioting during August 2011 did appear to agree less that the Metropolitan Police had shown itself capable of responding well to serious public disorder. Half (50%) of respondents in Enfield/Haringey GLA constituencies agreed compared to 60% overall. The vast majority (80%) of respondents in Bexley/Bromley and Havering/Redbridge agreed that water cannon could fill a gap in the police toolkit, against 70% overall.

Respondents in Croydon/Sutton and Havering/Redbridge were the most likely to think that water cannon would be useful in policing the capital city of London – 76% and 77% against a London average of 66%. These two areas were also most likely to agree that there is a small, limited role for water cannon (78% and 84%) against a London average of over two-thirds (68%). Support for water cannon was lowest in West Central (58%) and Enfield/Haringey (61%) but in both parts of London, supporters outnumbered opponents by more than two to one.

Water Cannon: Responses to Consultation

Appendix 1: Headline findings from email responses

This short paper presents headline findings from email responses to the MOPAC water cannon consultation received between 10 January and 28 February 2014.

There were **2,606** consultation responses received via the water cannon email inbox. In addition there were **4,048** email petition responses received. See appendix one for full breakdown of emails.

Methodology

The first 530 email consultation responses received between 10 January and 14 February 2014 were analysed in full. All email responses received after this date (Saturday 15 to Friday 28 February 2014 inclusive) were reviewed to ascertain the 'theme' of the response (i.e. oppose or support introduction of water cannon) and 10 per cent randomly selected from each day and analysed in full.

Key themes from respondents who **support** the introduction of water cannon in London

59 respondents supported the introduction of water cannon in London stating that:

- Water cannon would be a useful option for well-trained officers to use as a last resort in extreme circumstances. Police should have all possible tools available to them to deal with disorder. Some respondents referred to public disorder in London in August 2011, stating that they felt the police lost control and that water cannon may have been useful. However, water cannon should only be used when operationally justified, that is, when there is violence or a threat to the public - not as a default position. Water cannon should not be used against peaceful protesters.
- Water cannon will make it easier for those who want to protest peacefully to do so and deter those who want to cause trouble.
- Water cannon are a preferable option to other tactics such as live ammunition, tear gas, Tasers or horses.

Appendix: Water Cannon

- Police officers have the right to defend themselves, the public and businesses
- There may be additional benefits to water cannon use including helping to extinguish fires or dye/Smartwater added to the water to help identify suspects.
- Despite supporting the introduction of water cannon some respondents also highlighted the need to address the causes of public disorder, logistical problems around using water cannon in narrow London streets, and ensuring that they are not directed at individuals at close range.
- Respondents gave some views around how the use of water cannon should be managed/governed if introduced. This included: risk assessments for the public and officers; the public to be given clear information around how water cannon will be used and managed; vehicles carrying water cannon to be equipped with PA systems to give dispersal warnings prior to use, and CCTV to record how the cannon is used (to be scrutinised afterwards by the police, MOPAC and neighbourhood policing boards).
- Some respondents stated how the use of water cannon on each occasion should be authorised including: by an ACPO rank officer, by a group of people from different backgrounds (e.g. police, government, members of the public), a vote in the House of Commons, a tripartite agreement between the Mayor, MPS commissioner and Prime Minister/Home Secretary. The reasons behind each deployment of water cannon should be declared to the public. There should be strict guidelines on use of water cannon and use should be based on strong evidence and best practice from other countries.

Key themes from respondents who **oppose** the introduction of water cannon in London

Key themes emerging from the 2,547 respondents who **opposed** the introduction of water cannon in London were:

- Concern about the indiscriminate nature of water cannon (affecting ‘innocent people’ and those ‘causing trouble’), the injuries they can cause and, to a lesser extent, damage to property. Frequent reference was made to eye injuries sustained by Dietrich Wagner.
- Respondents felt that water cannon would deter people from protesting, thereby impacting on democracy and the right to peaceful protest. Some respondents stated that they were proud of living in a democratic country where police are unarmed.
- Concern that the use of water cannon may be inflammatory, escalating violence at protests and creating additional tensions between the police and public. Respondents referred to the notion of policing by consent and felt that the presence of water cannon suggested a failure in consensus policing. Confidence and trust in the police is already low due to concerns about how the police use their current powers. Some respondents felt that the use of water cannon would alienate the public, further damage confidence and trust in the police, government and Mayor, and create divisions between police and public.

Appendix: Water Cannon

- A number of respondents commented on the militaristic nature of water cannon and felt that they were features of oppression, fear and a 'police state'. Some respondents objected to water cannon being referred to as 'tools', stating that they were weapons.
- Some respondents felt that water cannon would not be effective, either for logistical (e.g. difficult to use in contained spaces or narrow London streets, inflexible, slow to deploy, time consuming to refill) or operational (e.g. many referred to previous literature/police/government/Mayoral speeches stating that water cannon would have been ineffective during public disorder in London in August 2011) reasons.
- Concern that water cannon would be used inappropriately. Respondents felt that guidelines around use would be open to interpretation and were concerned that water cannon would be used unnecessarily pre-emptively or increasingly used (rather than just in 'extreme circumstances') as they were embedded in policing and 'normalised'. Some respondents mentioned low confidence in other policing tactics (e.g. Tasers, section 60 stop and search powers, kettling) and how these had been introduced as a 'last resort' measure but had been more frequently used.
- The financial cost of purchasing water cannon was mentioned by some respondents who felt that this was an unnecessary outlay during times of government cuts and that the money could be spent on other areas. This included engagement with the public, police training, education, welfare, diversionary activities and keeping fire stations open. A few respondents also commented on the need to preserve water.
- Some respondents felt that the police and government should tackle the root cause of protests (e.g. improving living standards, education, public engagement, investment in communities, improving public services in general). Some referred to a comment made by ACPO around the need to control continued protests "from ongoing and potential future austerity measures".
- There was a feeling from some respondents that water cannon were unnecessary as serious public disorder is rare in this country and the police have dealt with problems in the past with current powers/equipment.
- Some references were made to negative use of water cannon in other (perceived to be undemocratic) countries.
- Some respondents expressed concern about the consultation and whether their views would be taken in to consideration. Some felt that the consultation was inappropriately focused on *how* water cannon should be used, rather than *whether* they should be used at all – and felt that this indicated that a decision had already been made.

Appendix: Water Cannon

A number of respondents who submitted their response later on in the consultation period:

- Mentioned the change.org petition with over 37,000 signatures.
- Made reference to decisions made by other forces (Greater Manchester, Thames Valley, Merseyside and West Midlands) not to use water cannon, previous comments made by Theresa May and Boris Johnson stating that water cannon would not be necessary/useful, and that 20 out of 25 London Assembly members voted against plans to introduce water cannon.

Email petition responses

There were 2,005 responses via the 'Boris: stop the water cannon' email petition opposing the use of water cannon and outlining the following points:

- Water cannon are serious weapons and unfit for policing in London.
- Reference to ACPO comments that it does not predict significant increases in public unrest and that water cannon would not have been a viable solution during public disorder in London in August 2011.
- The London Assembly largely voted against plans.

There were 2,043 responses via the 'No to water cannon' email petition opposing the use of water cannon and outlining the following points:

- Water cannon are serious weapons which can cause injury or death.
- Reference to ACPO comments that water cannon would have been of limited use in 'dynamic situations' such as public disorder in London in August 2011.
- Concern about water cannon impacting negatively on tradition of policing by community consent.

Water Cannon: Public Opinion

Appendix 2: Headline findings from public survey

Londoners' views on the use of water cannons

Background

- TNS were commissioned by the GLA to carry out an online survey of Londoners aged 16+ years.
- The survey ran on the TNS OnLineBus – a monthly research service used by many organisations to gauge the opinion of Londoners.
- A total of 4,223 responses were received (a minimum of 300 per GLA Constituency) between 18/02/2014 and 03/03/2014
- Results are weighted by gender, age, social class, children in household and ethnicity to ensure data is representative. Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/not stated. All demographic differences referred to are statistically significant at a 95% confidence level.

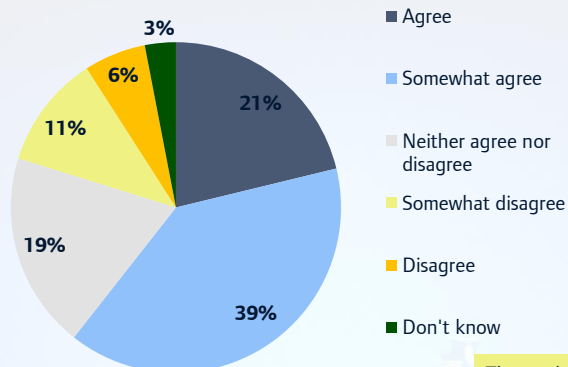
Key Findings

- The results are strongly in favour of the introduction of the availability of water cannons to the Met in the event that they should be required.
- The majority of Londoners (60%) feel the Met Police has shown itself capable of responding well to serious disorder in London (17% disagree).
- Most Londoners know something about water cannons, over half (52%) say they know a little and 13% know a lot. Just over a quarter (27%) feel they don't know a lot and 8% know nothing at all.
 - Awareness of water cannons is higher amongst men, those in higher social grades ABC1 and those with children under 15yrs in the household.
- Londoners are uncertain whether water cannons are already available for use – 36% think they are, 41% don't think they are and 24% don't know.
- 70% agree that water cannons could fill a gap in the Met police toolkit if faced with serious public disorder (12% disagree).
- 60% feel water cannons would be useful for policing London (18% don't feel they would be useful).
- 68% agree there is a 'small limited role' for water cannons in dealing with the most serious public disorder in London (17% disagree).
- Over half (52%) would be more confident in the Met police's ability to respond to serious disorder/rioting if they were able to use water cannons. 27% don't think the water cannons would make any difference to their confidence in the police and 13% feel water cannons would make them less confident in police ability.
- Those who feel more positive towards the use of water cannons and feel they would gain increased confidence in the police are more likely to be older (55+yrs) and parents with children under 15yrs in the household.
- Those who have limited or no awareness of water cannons are more likely to feel they have insufficient knowledge to form a positive or negative opinion.
- BAME respondents were slightly less supportive but were more likely to have no opinion either way or to not know whether water cannons have a role to play and whether their use would leave to increased or decreased confidence in police ability.
- 3% of this sample refused to provide their ethnicity and those who refused were much more likely to not have strong opinions on water cannons.

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In the last few years, the Metropolitan Police has shown itself capable of responding well to serious public disorder in London. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

All adults aged 16+ yrs



Those more likely to agree are:

- Male (63% v 58% female)
- Parents with children <15yrs (66% v 58% those without children <15yrs)
- Those aware of water cannons (65% v 52% those unaware)
- Those living in Bexley & Bromley and Lambeth & Southwark

Those more likely to disagree are:

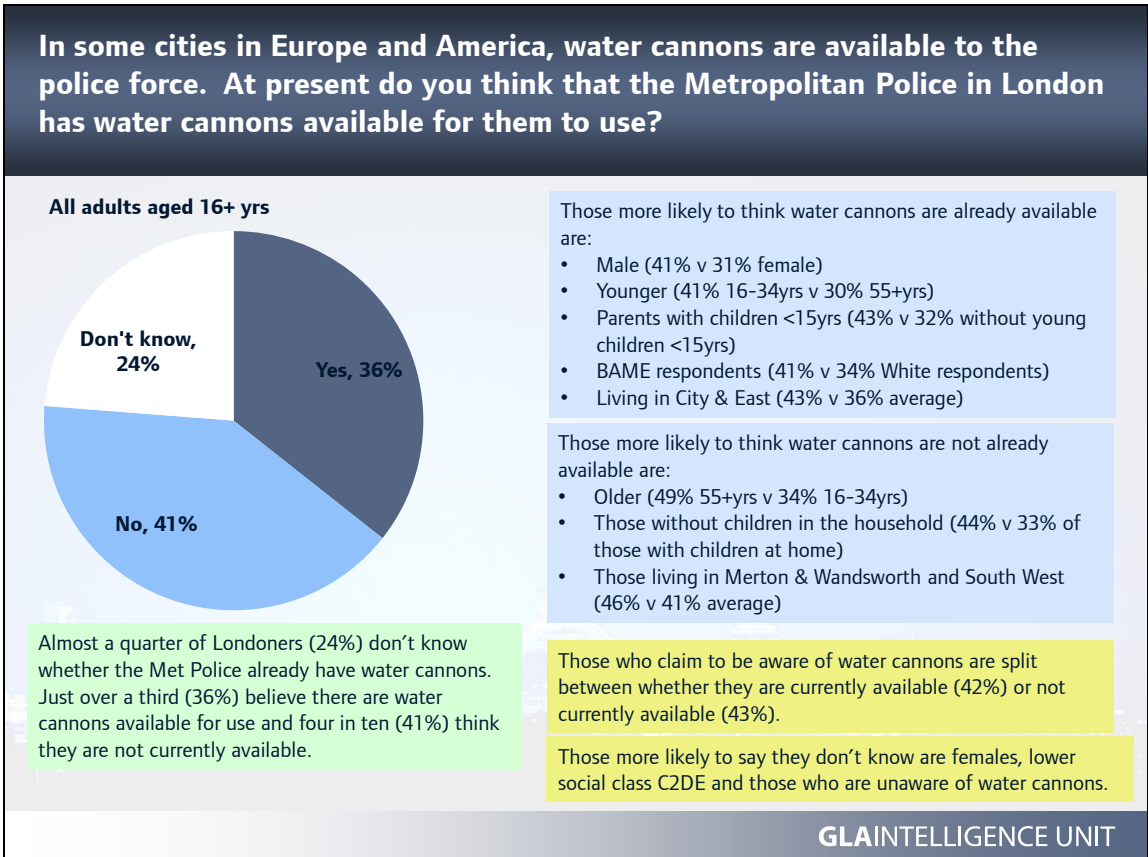
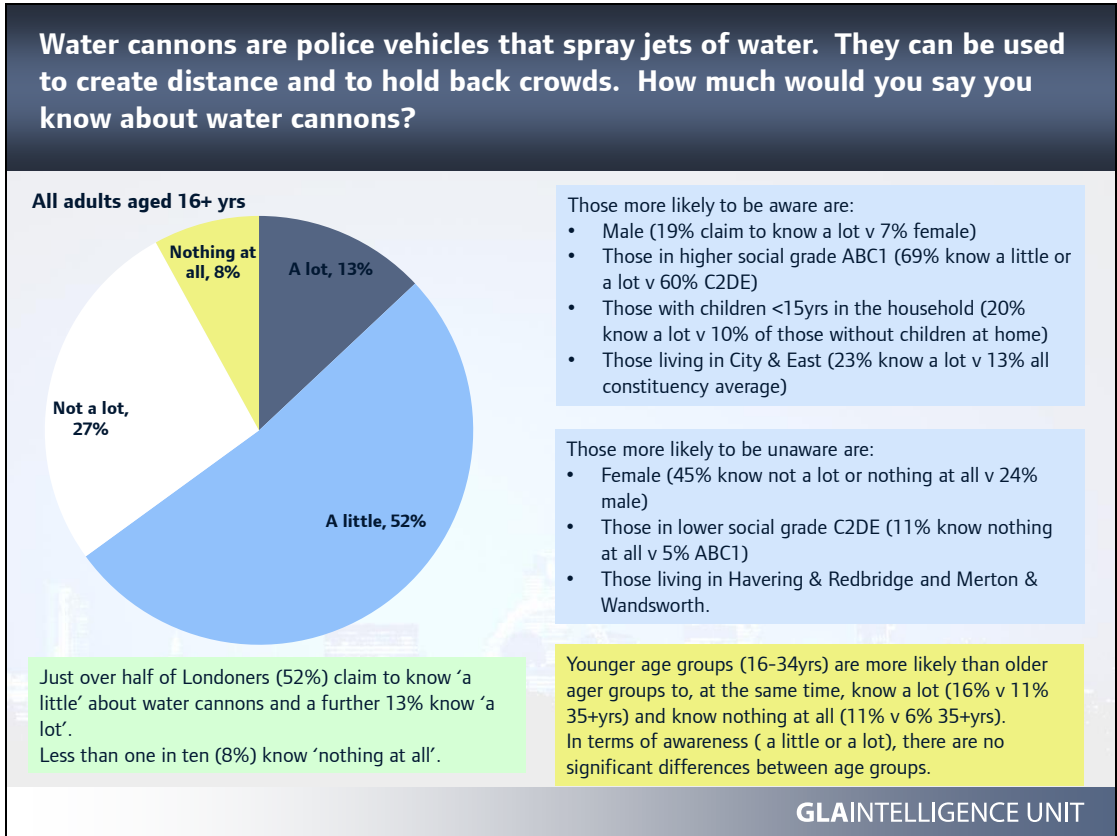
- Those living in Enfield & Haringey & the North East

The majority of Londoners (60%) feel that the Met Police has proved itself capable of responding well to serious public disorder.

Those who are unaware of water cannons were more likely than those aware to have no strong feelings either way (24% v 17%).

BAME respondents are slightly less likely to agree (57% v 62% of White respondents). This doesn't mean they are more likely to disagree, but that they are slightly more likely to have no strong opinion either way.

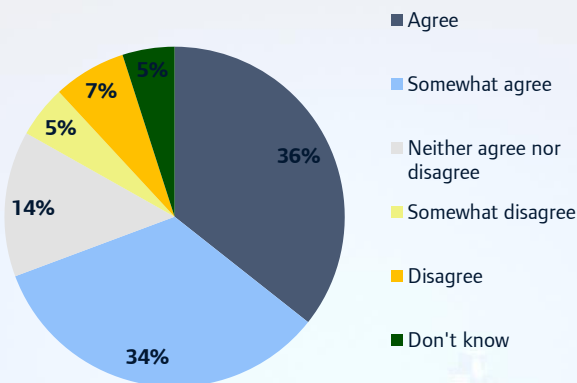
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Appendix: Water Cannon

At present, the law allows the police to use a range of tools to respond to public disorder. These include riot trained police with batons and shields, mounted officers on horses and in the most extreme cases, police armed with rubber bullets. All of these tactics can result in injury and the police must follow strict rules about their use. If the police find that their use of batons and shields is ineffective, they can resort to horses or rubber bullets, but these tactics pose more risk of injury than using water cannon would. Police in London have argued that in the rare event of serious public disorder this means there is a gap in their toolkit that water cannons could fill. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this?

All adults aged 16+ yrs



7 in 10 Londoners agree that water cannons could fill a gap in the Met Police toolkit. Just over 1 in 10 (12%) disagree and the remaining 1 in 5 are unsure or don't know.

Those more likely to agree are:

- Older (75% 55+yrs agree v 67% 16-34yrs)
- Those with children <15yrs at home (74% v 68% of those without children at home)
- Those aware of water cannons (75% v 61% of those unaware)
- Those living in Bexley & Bromley, Croydon & Sutton, Ealing & Hillingdon and Havering & Redbridge.

Those more likely to disagree are:

- Those living in the North East and West Central

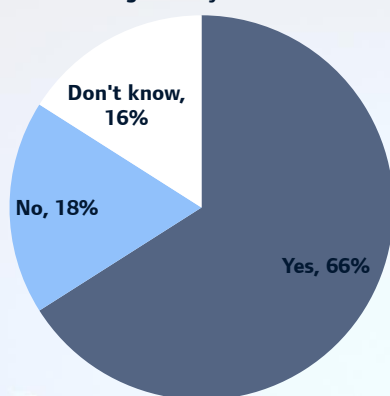
1 in 5 of those who are unaware of water cannons were unable to decide whether they agree or disagree.

BAME respondents are more likely than White respondents to have no strong feelings either way (18% v 12%)

GLAINTELLIGENCE UNIT

The police in Northern Ireland have water cannons, as do the police in many other large European and American cities, although there are many too, that don't. Do you think that water cannons would be useful for policing the capital city of London?

All adults aged 16+ yrs



Two-thirds of Londoners feel that water cannons would be useful for policing the city. Just under 1 in 5 (18%), do not feel that they would be useful and the remaining 16% do not know either way.

Those who think they would be useful are more likely to be:

- Older (71% 55+yrs v 62% 16-34yrs)
- Aware of water cannons (71% v 58% of those unaware)
- Living in Bexley & Bromley, Croydon & Sutton and Havering & Redbridge.

Those who think they would not be useful are more likely to be:

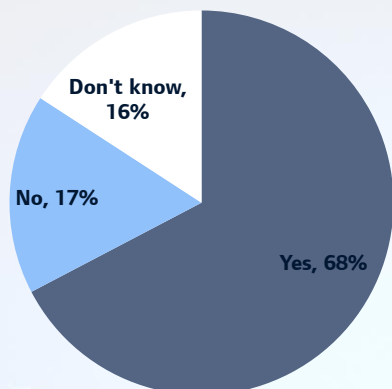
- Higher social classes (20% ABC1 v 15% C2DE)
- Living in the North East (26%).

Those who are unaware of water cannons are more likely than those aware to say they don't know whether they would be useful (27% v 11%).

GLAINTELLIGENCE UNIT

Do you agree that there is a 'small, limited role' for water cannons in dealing with the most serious public disorder on the streets of London? Serious public disorder' being where there is the potential for loss of life, serious injury or widespread destruction to property.

All adults aged 16+ yrs



Over two-thirds (68%) of Londoners feel that there is a specific role for water cannons when dealing with serious public disorder. 17% do not believe there is a role for water cannons and the remaining 16% don't know either way.

Those who believe there is a role are more likely to be:

- Older (77% 55+yrs v 62% 16-34yrs)
- Higher social grades (70% ABC1 v 65% C2DE)
- Those aware of water cannons (70% v 63% of those unaware)
- White respondents (70% v 60% of BAME respondents)
- Those living in Bexley & Bromley, Croydon & Sutton, Havering & Redbridge and Lambeth &

Those who don't believe there is a role are more likely to be:

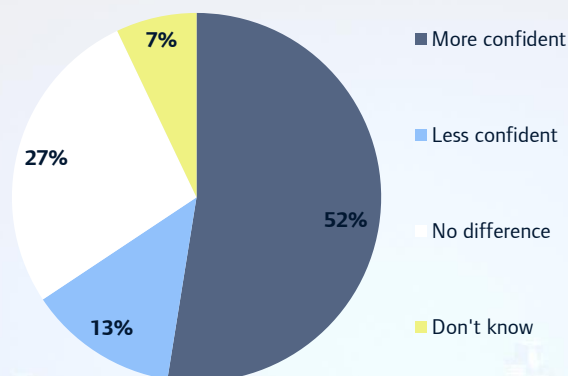
- Aware of water cannons (19% v 12% of those unaware).
- Living in West Central.

Younger respondents (16-34yrs), those in lower social classes C2DE, BAME respondents and those unaware of water cannons are more likely than their counterparts to not know whether there is a role for water cannons.

GLAINTELLIGENCE UNIT

If the police in London had water cannons available for them to use, would it make you more or less confident in the police's ability to respond to serious public disorder or rioting?

All adults aged 16+ yrs



Just over half of Londoners (52%) feel the availability of water cannons would make them more confident in police ability. Water cannons would make no difference to confidence levels for 3 in 10 Londoners (27%). Just over 1 in 10 Londoners (13%) feel the availability of water cannons would make them less confident in the police.

Those who would be more confident are more likely to be:

- Older (58% 55+yrs v 49% 16-34yrs)
- Parents with children <15yrs (57% v 51% of those without children in the household)
- Aware of water cannons (58% v 43% of those unaware)
- Those living in Bexley & Bromley, City & East, Croydon & Sutton and Havering & Redbridge.

Those who would be less confident are more likely to be:

- Younger (16% 16-34yrs v 10% 55+yrs)
- Those aware of water cannons (16% v 8% of those unaware).
- Those living in Enfield & Haringey and North East.

Those who are unaware of water cannons are more likely to say they don't know if they would be more or less confident or feel that there would be no difference.

GLAINTELLIGENCE UNIT