



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

**Policing of the G20 Protests:
Government Response to
the Committee's Eighth
Report of Session 2008–09**

First Special Report of Session 2009–10

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The Home Affairs Committee

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Elizabeth Flood (Clerk), Eliot Barrass (Second Clerk), Elisabeth Bates (Committee Specialist), Sarah Petit (Committee Specialist), Darren Hackett (Senior Committee Assistant), Ameet Chudasama (Committee Assistant), Sheryl Dinsdale (Committee Assistant) and Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Select Committee Media Officer).

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Report

On 29 June 2009 the Home Affairs Committee published its Eighth Report of Session 2008–09, *Policing of the G20 Protests*, HC 418. The Government's response is published as an Appendix to this Special Report.

In the Appendix, the Committee's original conclusions and recommendations are in bold text and the Government's response in plain text.

Government response

I wrote to you on 24 October with an interim response to the Home Affairs Committee Report *Policing of the G20 Protests* which was published on 29 June 2009. I now write to provide you with a detailed response to the recommendations contained within your Report. This response builds on the HMIC Report *Adapting to Protest, Nurturing the British Model of Policing* published on 24 November, and the Government's position on the policing of protest set out in the *Policing White Paper, Protecting the Public: Supporting the Police to Succeed* published on 2 November.

The Government welcomes the Home Affairs Committee Report, together with the other Reviews into policing and protest published this year. The Government agrees with the Home Affairs Committee in its assessment of G20 as a “remarkably successful operation”. The Government also agrees that there are some key lessons to be learnt from G20, and from other recent policing operations, and is committed to working with the police and other stakeholders to ensure those lessons are learnt.

As we set out in the Policing White Paper, the public have the right to expect the highest standards of policing at big public events and we have to support every officer in delivering those high standards, recognising the impact that a single image or incident can have on the public confidence. Forthcoming events, notably the Olympics, make this all the more pressing.

I will not rehearse here what is in the White Paper in any great detail except to say that we agree with the HMIC Report that the policing of protest needs to be built on the British model of policing, and that the key principles of the British model need to be reflected in the updated guidance and training that the Association of Chief Police Offices (ACPO) and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) are already working on, which in turn need to be underpinned by a Code of Practice that both sets the strategic framework and supports common standards across forces.

This programme of work will directly address a number of the Home Affairs Committee's recommendations. The detailed response that follows accordingly majors on this programme, which we have given an undertaking to deliver by next summer. Our response, which is set out in the following pages, also recognises the progress the police have already made in learning the lessons from G20 which in itself illustrates the police's proactive commitment to constantly improve its service to the public in all spheres of policing.

The Committee made 32 conclusions and recommendations. Some of these have been grouped together for this response.

Relations with the Media

1. We accept that it is not possible for all officers on front-line duty, some of whom may be inexperienced in this line of work, to know, understand and fully implement the ACPO guidelines, particularly in a high tension environment like the G20 Protests. However, we cannot understand why those officers who were unable to communicate

with journalists were not willing or able to pass this problem on to a more experienced officer. We suggest that at the heart of most communication difficulties experienced by journalists is a lack of leadership on the ground and an inadequate briefing before the protests. (Paragraph 10)

2. At the very least all officers should be aware of the existence of a designated media contact point, who is trained in basic communication with journalists and able to give correct information on request. It seems to us that some members of the media experienced a broken chain of command and ignorance on the part of the police which impaired their ability to do their jobs. (Paragraph 11)

3. We accept the difficulties implicit in briefing freelance journalists, some of whom may not wish to be contacted by the police prior to an event, and to some extent we sympathise with the Metropolitan Police who appear to be keen to improve relations in this area. However, more must be done. While accepting that it is not possible to brief every journalist who wishes to attend large public protests, and that at the G20 Protests budgetary and time constraints prevented every officer from being adequately briefed beforehand on “handling the media”, we propose two relatively simple solutions which could be implemented at little cost. (Paragraph 13)

4. Since it is to everyone’s benefit that the relationship between the police and journalists is clear and codified, we suggest that the briefings given to members of the media before public protests be published on the website of the police and the National Union of Journalists prior to the event. While there may be operational reasons why a complete brief cannot be published, we are surprised that a version of this information is not made public already. In this way anyone who is planning to attend a public protest in a media capacity will have the ability to receive a briefing in this area and at the very least be assured that a media contact point will be available on the day. We urge the police to consider this action. (Paragraph 14)

5. Equally, we cannot understand why experienced officers on the ground were not granted a degree of discretion in how the police strategies were enacted. While we accept that communications between the control centre and the front-line can always be improved, we are yet to be convinced of the absolute necessity of why a relatively simple message like “please let them out if they are bona fide press” needed to be sent from the Gold Commander, who presumably had many other more pressing matters to concern him. (Paragraph 15)

6. We recommend that in its promised review of police tactics on public order situations HMIC looks at the command structure at big events and considers the benefits of allowing experienced officers on the ground the power to make relatively simple, non-controversial decisions such as these. As far as possible, power should be devolved to officers on the ground authorised to react to changing situations. (Paragraph 16)

Both the Government and police agree that good, open and transparent communication between the police and the media is important in all areas of policing and a key element in upholding our democratic traditions. As the Home Affairs Committee (HAC) Report acknowledges, these principles are already set out in ACPO Guidance and will be

reinforced and refined in the updated *Keeping the Peace* Manual in line with the findings from HMIC's *Adapting to Protest* Report.

The Government agrees with the HAC and HMIC that public order command training should be enhanced to provide explicit guidance to officers on communication strategies before during and after public order policing events. This is the key to the proper exercise of discretion highlighted in the HAC Report.

Encouragingly, through operational briefings and dissemination of good practice, improved communication strategies with the media have already been put in place at public events since G20, such as the policing of Climate Camp At Blackheath in the summer. *Adapting to Protest* recognises, “the positive steps already taken by the MPS, such as the integrated communication strategy developed for Climate Camp in August 2009”.¹

The Gold Strategy at Blackheath included developing a strategy to facilitate effective communication with the media and providing an information network for use by persons involved with or potentially affected by climate camp actions. *Adapting to Protest* again recognised that, “this tactical plan is a useful template for policing operations of this kind and HMIC welcomes ACPO's dissemination of a document outlining the learning outcomes of their policing operation”.²

7. The police must be aware that, as a matter of course, their actions will be filmed whether or not journalists are present. They must amend their attitude and tactics accordingly. The police should be aware that in the modern world actions which may be justifiable under the rules may nonetheless be completely unacceptable. (Paragraph 19)

The Government is very clear that the attitudes and tactics employed by the police should in all circumstances be appropriate and proportionate irrespective of whether their actions will be filmed or whether journalists are present. As we have set out in the Policing White Paper, *Protecting the Public: Supporting the Police to Succeed*, the public have a right to expect the very highest standards of service from all police officers with whom they come into contact and this applies as much to policing big public events as to neighbourhood policing.

8. We echo Sir Paul Stephenson's comments: in many ways the problem for the police in these situations is not their actual actions, but the perception that they are seeking to avoid accountability for these actions. We are therefore surprised that the problems of identification posed when officers change into protective equipment have not been addressed before and recommend more funding specifically for solutions in this area. (Paragraph 22)

9. Senior officers must take personal responsibility for ensuring that all officers are displaying their identification numbers and the individual officer must be provided with enough numbers so that these can be worn at all times and on all equipment. It would be helpful if the Home Office and Metropolitan Police would let us know the length of time it takes between the ordering of a new identification badge and this badge being delivered to the individual officer. It is unacceptable for officers not to

1 Adapting to Protest: Nurturing the British Model of Policing, p 7

2 *Ibid.*, p 63

wear identification numbers at such events; this must be a matter of the highest priority. We urge that any officers found to be deliberately removing their identification face the strongest possible disciplinary measures and the police must make every effort to be identifiable at all times. (Paragraph 23)

The Government strongly endorses the conclusions of all the reviews into policing of protest that uniformed police officers should be identifiable at all times by their shoulder identification numbers. The public has a right to be able to identify any uniformed officer who is performing their duty. As the Home Affairs Committee Report recognises this is wholly endorsed by the MPS and by ACPO.

Display of numerals is one of the areas that the Policing White Paper flags as requiring particular attention in revised training and guidance. ACPO has already issued interim guidance reinforcing the importance of the identification of officers, and the MPS has included specific reference in all briefing for the need for officers to display numerals.

Most officers have metal numerals, which are issued without delay—but may come unattached following heavy contact. Specialist public order officers have embroidered numerals, which take between four and six weeks to order. However, metal numerals are used during the interim period. MPS officers are issued with two pairs of both.

Communications between the Protesters and Police

10. We cannot understand why, knowing the pressures that inexperienced officers would face the police would use language which would only serve to create a “them and us” attitude and antagonise the most violent elements within the protesters. We feel that such statements essentially become a self-fulfilling prophecy and they should be avoided in future. (Paragraph 26)

The Government does not accept that the police used inflammatory and antagonistic language in its briefings and would draw the Committee’s attention to the Joint Committee on Human Rights’ Follow-up report *Demonstrating Respect for Rights* which concluded that, “the main responsibility for talking up the prospect of violence and severe disruption rests with the media, not the police”.³

11. Policing public protest is an activity under much greater scrutiny than twenty to thirty years ago, Sir Paul Stephenson told us that “as technology changes, there are different ways and many more opportunities for people to be caught behaving badly if they choose to behave badly.” This undoubtedly increases the pressure under which front-line police officers have to work; because of this they have our sympathy. However, this does not excuse behaviour which appears to contravene the norms of democratic protest. The police must be aware that their behaviour will be monitored, recorded and instantly made public via the internet. They must modify their behaviour and briefings accordingly. (Paragraph 29)

The Government agrees that there is no excuse for behaviour which appears to contravene the norms of democratic protest. We acknowledge that the technologies widely available

³ Joint Committee on Human Rights, *Demonstrating Respect for Rights? Follow-up, Twenty-second Report of Session 2008–09*, p 16

for disseminating information in this age of digital communication exposes the police to increasing levels of scrutiny. As previously stated however, the behaviour of the police during public events should in all situations be proportionate and appropriate, reflecting the principles of community policing and policing by consent irrespective of the level and immediacy of public scrutiny to which they are subjected.

12. We recommend that the police wherever possible refrain from any activity which can suggest violent intent. Instead, they must firmly prioritise communications and policing by consent, negating the need for violent action wherever possible. (Paragraph 30)

The Policing White Paper is clear that the principles of policing by consent and community policing should lie at the heart of the policing of protest. It also stresses that a framework of human rights needs to underpin the policing of protest and that communication is key. Activity that suggests violent intent is anathema to that vision.

Adapting to Protest flagged HMIC's concerns over the lack of reference in public order training to communication and negotiation as primary tactical options before any consideration of any use of force.⁴ This is an area that is being addressed in the revised training curriculum being developed by NPIA and the command courses which are being piloted this year.

As the White Paper makes clear, none of this is to suggest that there is no place for use of force in policing protest if, for example, there is a threat of serious public disorder, serious damage to property or serious disruption to the life of the community. The Criminal Law Act 1967 is very clear that any use of force must be 'reasonable' in all the circumstances and police officers are not exempt from the normal requirement of the law that any force used must be proportionate.

13. We also recommend that more funding be made available specifically for training in the softer issues of communication and speaking to crowds. At the very least each unit involved in the policing of large protests should contain one officer trained and able to communicate with crowds of protesters. This would enable communications with protesters to take place on a consistent, codified basis, and increase the opportunities for large groups of protesters to be policed by consent. (Paragraph 31)

The Government supports the conclusions of the HMIC *Adapting to Protest* Report that the police do not need more training but rather the training provided needs to be smarter—more directed, more focused and more relevant to the current public order challenges facing the police.⁵ Time spent on suppressing mass urban disorder could be reduced and time spent on planning and keeping the peach enhanced.

Again NPIA and ACPO are already updating training and guidance which gives consideration to the findings of the HMIC *Adapting to Protest* Report.

14. It seems paradoxical to us that both sides stress the importance of communications, and complain when these are not forthcoming yet are unwilling to put people in place

4 *Adapting to Protest: Nurturing the British Model of Policing*, p 104

5 *Ibid.*, p 105

to make this process easier. Elsewhere in this Report we have recommended that the police designate ‘contact points’, we also recommend that protest groups put ideological concerns to one side and instead do everything they can to aid communications both before and during the protests. (Paragraph 34)

The Government agrees that communication between the police and protesters is of the highest importance. This is clearly articulated in the Policing White Paper.

The police have already begun to put into practice ideas such as nominating designated contact points for communicating with protesters as seen at a number of the English Defence League demonstrations in the summer. Equally the MPS used Bluetooth messaging as a means to communicate with protesters during the Tamil Protests explaining the policing approach and stating that the police did not intend to disperse protesters and that permission to protest would continue.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that, in the interest of fostering good relationships, communication with protesters must be a priority for all police officers, not just designated individuals.

15. We question why these new, up-to-date tactics used by the Police Service of Northern Ireland have not been shared and adopted nationally and urge all forces to adopt newer, more efficient methods for communicating to large crowds as quickly as possible. (Paragraph 37)

The Government can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has shared its tactics with ACPO through the NPIA. PSNI sit on the ACPO Public Order and Public Safety Working Group, and chair Sub-Groups of that Working Group.

Use of Containment

16. The use of containment involves a shift in power and control from the protesters to the police and should be used sparingly and in clearly defined circumstances. These circumstances should be codified. The use of containment tactics should also be closely linked to police intelligence. The police must have reasonable grounds to believe that the protesters being contained are liable to cause disturbances elsewhere and innocent bystanders and non-violent protesters (where they can be identified) must be allowed to filter out; containment should continue only for as long as absolutely necessary and the comfort of those contained must be given as much consideration as possible. As we discuss later on, this was not the case in the particular example of the G20 Protests. (Paragraph 41)

17. There is no excuse for the police preventing peaceful protesters or other people innocently caught up in a protest from leaving a “contained” area when the police can be sure that they do not pose a violent threat to society. This is doubly true when people are asking to leave for medical (or related) purposes. We are particularly concerned at the evidence we have received suggesting that an explicit order was given to maintain the “cohesion” of the police lines at the expense of peaceful protesters’ right to egress and to access medicine. While it may be true that some protesters would falsely claim a medical need to leave a contained area for the purposes of causing disorder, we believe

that this is a risk that the police must be prepared to run; the dangers of denying protesters their needed medications are too great. (Paragraph 45)

18. The police must reorganise their priorities with regards to the circumstances under which protesters are allowed to leave a “contained” area. It is not acceptable for a blanket ban on movement to be imposed. Again we recommend a devolution of power in this area. During any containment procedure experienced officers must be authorised to use discretion and allow access and egress in cases where a medical need is involved, trusting their own judgement and experience when necessary. Crucially, as with the media contact points, their existence and availability in this role must be commonplace; it must be made clear to front-line officers in briefings before and during the day. (Paragraph 46)

The Government and police are very clear that containment, in keeping with the House of Lords decision in *Austin*, must be proportionate, used in good faith and enforced for no longer than is reasonably necessary. Further, all efforts must be made to provide adequate services to those contained.

The Government supports HMIC’s recommendations on containment as set out in *Adapting to Protest Part 1*—no surprises, clear release plan, easy access to information, clean signposting and awareness and recognition of the UK press card. We also support *Part 2* findings which consider that the key to achieving proportionate and appropriate use of containment is good intelligence and information about protest crowds and crowd dynamics, together with the ability to communicate to them—both before and during containment—the reasons for the tactic and how it will be managed. Police use of both technology and face to face communication will be important in this area.

ACPO has already issued interim guidance on use and management of containment, and the MPS has established the role of Bronze Cordon to ensure the correct deployment and management of containment should the tactic become necessary.

19. We fully endorse Sir Hugh Orde’s comment that “talking works”. (Paragraph 52)

20. We are firmly of the view that the problems that were reported by those “contained” at Bishopsgate could have been easily prevented through greater communication throughout the day. We recommend that in future the police exhaust all possible avenues of communication before using force and be as open as possible about their intentions at all times. We also recommend that the police follow their own guidelines and allow peaceful protesters to filter out of the cordon and go home. This would minimise and focus force used in a subsequent dispersal. (Paragraph 52)

The Policing White Paper is clear that the policing of protest needs to be founded on good communication between police and protestors drawing on community style policing. The White Paper is also clear that updated guidance and training will cover how police and protestors can improve communication with one another building on the police use of new media over the summer.

In *Adapting to Protest*, HMIC flagged its concerns over a lack of reference in public order training to communication and negotiation as primary tactical options before any consideration of any use of force. HMIC also flagged its concerns over a lack of reference in

public order command training to the importance of communication and negotiation with relevant groups at the planning stage and limited consideration of the impact of police behaviour and tactics on crowd dynamics.

The Government can confirm the police are committed to developing better communication with protestors. This is being addressed through the Bronze courses already piloted and silver and gold command courses in development.

21. Equally, we recommend that groups of protesters make every effort to prevent the police viewing them as a threat to public order. We are of the opinion that in the case of the ‘Climate Camp’ the degree of reticence on the part of the protesters adversely affected the police’s perceptions of the protest and made the use of force, unfortunate though it was, more likely. Groups with peaceful intentions should make every effort to alert the police to their intentions, removing any suspicions the police may (rightly) have and aiding the planning process to mutual benefit. (Paragraph 53)

22. Protesters should remember that “talking works” is a maxim which is true for both sides. (Paragraph 53)

As set out in the Policing White Paper, Government is clear that communication needs to be two way: *“police and all public authorities must start from a position of supporting those who want to exercise their rights to peaceful protest. Those seeking to exercise their right to protest should act constructively with the police”*.⁶

The Use of Force

23. We do not pass comment on the cases of Nicola Fisher and Ian Tomlinson. However, it remains true that the images of “distraction” tactics in action have the potential to undermine the public’s trust in the police. We hope that these pictures and films are the start of a widespread public debate on the use of force by the police and lead to further discussions on the tactics available to the police in similar situations. We recommend that the police publicly clarify how and when they should legitimately be used. (Paragraph 58)

The Government agrees with the HMIC *Adapting to Protest Part 2* Report that fundamental principles on the use of force must run as a golden thread through all aspects of police business. It is critical that all police officers are absolutely clear about the circumstances in which they can use force and the legal thresholds that must be met before they use any level of force. In particular, public order training should not assume that officers have already acquired knowledge on the use of force and there needs to be a clear connection between public order training and officer safety training.

Officers need to be well versed in the minimum use of force. The Government will use the Code of Practice to articulate these principles and promote clarity and understanding around minimum use of force.

ACPO, through the Self Defence and Restraint Committee, are ensuring that personal safety tactics—e.g. distraction techniques—are fit for purpose in public disorder scenarios.

The Committee also has a programme of work in place to ensure that these techniques are assessed by independent medical experts.

24. Never again must untrained officers be placed in the front-line of public protests. At the very least each unit should contain a core of fully trained, experienced officers. While greater funding must be made available, the police must also allocate their resources better to ensure that all officers on the front-line of public protest are trained adequately. (Paragraph 60)

The Government is clear that no untrained officers are placed on the front line in public order situations. The point the MPS were seeking to make in evidence was that some of the officers had no ‘live’ experience of policing public order because there had not been any major public order challenges for a number of years.

Again, the Government agrees with HMIC *Adapting to Protest* Report that the police do not need more training but rather the training provided needs to be smarter—more directed, more focused and more relevant to the current public order challenges facing the police.

ACPO is committed to revising public order command training and designing a new National Police Public Order Training Curriculum. The Bronze command course was piloted in October 2009 and the Silver command course is due to be piloted this month. The NPIA has arranged a ‘train the trainers’ course for January 2010 which will include training on human rights and public order legislation.

25. We are concerned over the police’s apparent reliance on Section 14 of the Public Order Act. Given the importance with which it is viewed by the police, we find it odd that officers are not given training on the suitable legal application of this power. We recommend that all public protest training, especially that of a more advanced level, incorporates the correct application of Section 14. Equally, if communications and relations between the police and protesters are good and both sides put emphasis on prior communication, as we have already recommended, then it may be possible to negotiate a mutually acceptable ‘finish time’, removing the need for police-driven dispersal. (Paragraph 63)

The Government supports the conclusions of the HMIC *Adapting to Protest* Report that, “it is hard to overestimate the importance of officers’ understanding of the law when each individual officer is legally accountable for the exercise of his or hers powers especially the use of force”.⁷ The Government supports the revision of ACPO training to provide officers with a clear understanding of the use of police powers that can apply in a public order situation, including explicit training on the facilitation of peaceful protest as the starting point, and human rights obligations on the police. The Government stands ready to provide input on legislation and powers into training and guidance.

26. That it takes over a year to investigate a high-profile case such as the use of force against Nicola Fisher is distressing. We would like to hear from IPCC as why the inquiry will take this long and what efforts they are making to speed the resolution. We are also concerned about such a large proportion of the Independent Police Complaints

7 Adapting to Protest: Nurturing the British Model of Policing, p 106

Commission’s investigators being allocated to the events of the G20. Greater funding must be made available to provide the resources the IPCC needs to complete their investigations in a more timely manner. (Paragraph 65)

The independent investigation into the complaint from Nicola Fisher alleging that she had been assaulted by an MPS TSG officer on 2 April 2009 has concluded. The referral was received by the IPCC on 15 April 2009 and an independent investigation was declared the same day. The IPCC investigation was completed and the final report signed off by the Commissioner at the end of July and a file was sent to the CPS on 30 July 2009.

The Use of Tasers

27. Tasers do have a role in policing. As an “alternative to lethal force” they are undoubtedly preferable to firearms and in certain situations, ASP batons, in dealing with a violent threat to an officer, members of the public or the subject themselves: (Paragraph 70)

28. The decision to extend the deployment of Conducted Energy Devices to some non-firearms officers, and the training they receive, should be kept under review. The use of this weapon on a general scale poses many issues regarding public safety and more widespread use of Tasers would also represent a fundamental shift between the police and the general public. British policing is based on consent and face-to-face engagement, the use of Taser has the potential to erode that relationship and create a rift between the police and the policed. Furthermore, we would not endorse any move to authorise its wider use beyond dealing with a violent threat. (Paragraph 71)

29. We recommend that the police continue their self-imposed ban on the use of Taser in public protest situations. More generally we urge the police to reject the use of “distance weapons” in policing demonstrations. Instead of investment in expensive equipment to give the police “distance” while policing large scale protests, we suggest that the money could be better spent on training for front-line officers and in the planning of operations, removing the need for such “distance weapons”. (Paragraph 75)

The Government is very clear that Taser has a key role to play in supporting officer and public safety. ACPO guidance makes it very clear that Tasers are only to be used when there is a threat of violence to officers, the public or the subject themselves. Every use of a Taser is recorded, monitored and published. Independent medical advisers review its safety and the police review its operational effectiveness.

Both the police and the government are clear that Tasers will not be used in public protest situations. The Government also agrees—as is made clear in the White Paper—that the use of ‘distance’ weapons like tear gas and water cannon are not the solution to concerns that have been raised about the policing of protest.

Conclusion

30. Despite a lack of time for planning, the policing of the G20 Protests was in many ways a successful operation. Front-line officers who were untrained and inexperienced in this area were placed in a highly combustible atmosphere and performed an admirable job. The vast majority of those wishing to protest were facilitated in a peaceful manner with a minimum of fuss and drama. On the whole, the police should be congratulated for their work. However, this success should not distract from the failings in the operation which were also on show and we feel that an element of luck must be attributed to the success of the operation. It is troubling that the policing operation relied so heavily on untrained, inexperienced officers. Future events may not be so calm and some officers will be found wanting through no fault of their own. (Paragraph 76)

31. This is a risk the police must not run. We cannot condone the use of untrained, inexperienced officers on the front-line of a public protest under any circumstances and this must be avoided at all costs. Equally while “containment” may have been the optimum tactic available in this operation, we urge the police to address the specific details of its application which we have discussed above and make public the situations in which they consider its use appropriate and the internal checks they have on its strategic use and practical deployment. We note the reviews on this matter and urge the police to take decisive action to prevent a re-occurrence of the problems we have identified. It is clear that the concerns about the policing of the G20 Protests have damaged the public’s confidence in the police. There must not be a repetition of this. (Paragraph 77)

32. Above all, the police must constantly remember that those who protest on Britain’s streets are not criminals but citizens motivated by moral principles, exercising their democratic rights. The police’s doctrine must remain focused on allowing this protest to happen peacefully. Any action which may be viewed by the general public as the police criminalising protest on the streets must be avoided at all costs. (Paragraph 78)

The Policing White Paper acknowledges the professionalism of the vast majority of police officers in policing protest, and also endorses the guiding principles and style of policing championed in HMIC’s Report *Adapting to Protest: Strengthening the British Model of Policing*. The Report is a significant contribution to the future direction of the policing of protests, and the White Paper sets out our commitment to work with the service to take forward the Report’s recommendations.

In particular, we are clear that the starting point for the police must be the facilitation of peaceful protest and this must be supported by good communication between all parties involved. The Government is committed to supporting the police providing revised guidance and training for public order policing and this will be underpinned by a Code of Practice. Further, the White Paper sets out the principles that must underpin the policing of protest and provides clarity of expectations for both the police and protesters.

But this is not just a future programme of work. The police are already learning the lessons. As HMIC has noted, the MPS policing operation surrounding the Climate Camp at Blackheath in August 2009 demonstrated a tangible success in integrating the findings and

recommendations of *Adapting to Protest Part 1*. It is also noted that the committed attempts by the police to facilitate contentious protests and counter-protests in Derbyshire, Birmingham, Manchester, Gwent and Leeds over recent months indicate the vitality of the British policing model.⁸

The commitment of the police to learn lessons was further illustrated by an International Public Order Policing Conference hosted by the MPS on 3 December with senior representation from most forces in the UK. That Conference highlighted the police service's willingness to be challenged and to question the way the police operate. The Government is committed to supporting the police, and to clarifying its own role around public order in the forthcoming Code of Practice.