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GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

LONDON OLYMPIC GAMES AND PARALYMPIC GAMES (AMENDMENT) BILL

Second Sitting

Tuesday 17 May 2011

(Afternoon)

CONTENTS

Written evidence reported to the House.
Examination of witnesses.
Adjourned till Thursday 19 May at Nine o'clock.

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:*Chairs:* † MR DAVID AMESS, KATY CLARK

Barwell, Gavin (<i>Croydon Central</i>) (Con)	† Macleod, Mary (<i>Brentford and Isleworth</i>) (Con)
† Blackman, Bob (<i>Harrow East</i>) (Con)	† Nandy, Lisa (<i>Wigan</i>) (Lab)
† Cryer, John (<i>Leyton and Wanstead</i>) (Lab)	† Robertson, Hugh (<i>Minister for Sport and the Olympics</i>)
Donaldson, Mr Jeffrey M. (<i>Lagan Valley</i>) (DUP)	† Watkinson, Angela (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)
† Foster, Mr Don (<i>Bath</i>) (LD)	Wicks, Malcolm (<i>Croydon North</i>) (Lab)
† Freer, Mike (<i>Finchley and Golders Green</i>) (Con)	† Wilson, Phil (<i>Sedgefield</i>) (Lab)
Hames, Duncan (<i>Chippenham</i>) (LD)	† Wilson, Mr Rob (<i>Reading East</i>) (Con)
† Hodgson, Mrs Sharon (<i>Washington and Sunderland West</i>) (Lab)	
† Johnson, Joseph (<i>Orpington</i>) (Con)	Sarah Thatcher, <i>Committee Clerk</i>
† Jowell, Tessa (<i>Dulwich and West Norwood</i>) (Lab)	
† McCann, Mr Michael (<i>East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow</i>) (Lab)	† attended the Committee

Witnesses

Garrett Emmerson, Chief Operating Officer, London Streets, Surface Transport, Transport for London

Chris Allison, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police

Hugh Robertson MP, Minister for Sport and the Olympics, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Public Bill Committee

Tuesday 17 May 2011

(Afternoon)

[MR DAVID AMESS *in the Chair*]

London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (Amendment) Bill

Written evidence to be reported to the House

LO 01 Transport for London

4 pm

The Committee deliberated in private.

Examination of Witness

Garrett Emmerson gave evidence.

4.4 pm

Q65 The Chair: Good afternoon and welcome. This is our afternoon evidence session of the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Bill Committee. We have our first witness, Mr Garrett Emmerson. Would you kindly introduce yourself, explain what you do and then perhaps make an opening statement to the Committee?

Garrett Emmerson: Certainly. Thank you very much. Good afternoon. My name is Garrett Emmerson. I am the chief operating officer for London Streets, which is part of Transport for London and, as such, I have responsibility for the operational management of the road network in London as far as TfL is concerned.

I am here today to give evidence in support of various amendments, particularly relating to traffic regulation orders, which are contained in the Bill. We think that they are sensible amendments that will enable us to be more flexible in responding to real-life situations on the road network during games time, in terms of being able to make temporary traffic orders, to improve our ability to manage special events and to ensure that we can carry out effective enforcement, particularly of the games lanes on the Olympic route network during the games. That is our general position. I am sure you want to go into particular aspects.

The Chair: Wonderful. Could you speak a little louder, so that they can pick up the notes? Colleagues, who would like to open things? Tessa Jowell.

Q66 Tessa Jowell (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab): Thank you. What problem do you think that we might face that has been given too little attention?

Garrett Emmerson: Generally, in regard of managing the road network.

Q67 Tessa Jowell: May I add to that? One of the things that we did at one point discuss on the Olympic Board was the feasibility not only of modelling but of

some kind of trial run. For instance, getting everyone to the stadium for the opening ceremony: most will come not by road, but by rail and other means. But I think that after the millennium we are all aware of how fragile these well worked-out plans can be under pressure if they have not been stress tested. What confidence can you give us that it will be all right on the night, for the 16 days afterwards and the 11 days of the Paralympics?

Garrett Emmerson: The first thing to say is, inevitably, that the nature of the Olympic games and events going on will be unique in terms of anything we have dealt with in London, or are likely to deal with again in the future, so perhaps it is not possible to simulate completely in a live situation everything we know that we will have to deal with. Having said that, we have a lot of experience of managing events over a long period of time—the ones you have just mentioned and more recent ones, up to as recently as the royal wedding a couple of weeks ago, as well as more mundane ones, such as the TUC march last month, which was a very big event, the biggest for some years in London in terms of managing crowds and the traffic around.

All those things contribute to our knowledge and understanding of how we need to manage such events, as indeed do things like major changes on the road network. For instance, just after Christmas, the Mayor took the decision to remove the western extension of the congestion charging zone which, overnight, introduced a different set of traffic flows across the network. We were able to test out in a live situation the very same modelling work that we used to understand what is likely to happen to traffic at games time—it was being used there in a live situation.

We have a lot of experience of understanding all the component parts that make up the games and the things we will have to do. The biggest challenge will be repeating the level of attention and of activity daily. We deal with a lot of these events—they are fairly regular occurrences—but we do not deal with them for 30 days in a row. There is a serious question about capacity and ensuring that we have the capacity to manage over a long period when dealing with those events. That is something we are giving a lot of attention to, and making sure that we have sufficient resources and that the public understand that. It is one thing to get the message out around a particular day and a particular event, but to be able to repeat that and to maintain that interest over a relatively long period is a significant challenge.

Q68 Tessa Jowell: May I follow that up by asking what net reduction in the normal traffic volume in London you are calculating for, on the basis that in August traffic drops anyway by between 15% and 20%? What percentage increase, back up again, are you assuming for the Olympics?

Garrett Emmerson: The targets that we are working toward vary on individual roads at individual times and on individual days. The key point to get over is that, although I can give you some general statistics around that, the biggest part of the challenge is dealing with particular pinch points at particular times on particular days. That is work that we are still working through to understand what we can do to reduce the pressure at particular times. In terms of a general perspective, we would expect something slightly less than you quoted.

Up to about a 10% reduction in traffic across the network is what we are allowing for, owing to the fact that it is the summer holidays, which is what we would normally experience.

On top of that, we are looking to achieve, through travel demand management measures, a further 20% across the whole of the network. But on particular locations that will be higher, and on other locations it will be lower.

Q69 Tessa Jowell: A 20% reduction?

Garrett Emmerson: Reduction in terms of general usage of the road network. The final element of this is not really around—

Q70 Tessa Jowell: So a 30% reduction of the road network?

Garrett Emmerson: Overall, yes, compared to a normal non-holiday traffic day. To give you some idea of what that looks like, during the royal wedding on Friday 29 April, the traffic in and around London, outside the immediate vicinity of Westminster, was roughly 30% down on what it would normally be on a Friday. So that is the scale of change, but obviously you have the August holiday to give you a big start, and then it is a question of what more you need to do to achieve that.

Q71 Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con): May I take it on from where you were going? Obviously, a key concern for many Londoners for this whole period of the Olympics and the Paralympics will be how they go about their day-to-day business. I accept your calculation of a 30% reduction for one day, which is a bank holiday. That is fair enough, but when people are trying to get to work and they are running their businesses, are you saying that you expect a 30% reduction in traffic for the whole of the 30 day-period?

Garrett Emmerson: That is what we are looking to achieve. Obviously, on different days, depending on what is going on, there will be different requirements. One of the key things that we have to get through, as we work through the detail with businesses and with communities on the days that we are particularly concerned about, is to ask how does that impact on commercial activity? How does that impact on people trying to get to work? How does that impact on general commuting? It will not necessarily be the same for everybody on every day. But in general, that is the scale of drop in background demand that we are looking to achieve.

Q72 Bob Blackman: There will be a lot of people coming from outside London to visit the games. Many of them, despite all best efforts, will come by car. What arrangements are you making for appropriate park-and-ride schemes around the whole of London, not just in the immediate vicinity of the main games site?

Garrett Emmerson: That is predominantly a matter that the Olympic Delivery Authority has been dealing with today in terms of creating a ring of park-and-ride sites and measures for that.

Q73 Bob Blackman: But TfL is interested.

Garrett Emmerson: Our interest is very much, as you say, in understanding what level of traffic will be coming in to the city and how we manage it. That comes out of the work that the ODA has led and the modelling assumptions that it makes in terms of where the traffic

is coming from. That is getting more accurate by the day, as we start to get specific information built into those models in relation to ticket purchases and where people are coming from. There is a significant push to make sure that people have alternatives and do not need to come by car, but we recognise that some will, and we recognise that park-and-rides will be well used.

As we move nearer to games time, we will get increasingly accurate models that will enable us to look at the road network and understand how we have to manage it and identify where we have particular problems. That will in turn start to target some of the travel demand management work that we need to do with individuals, businesses, deliveries and the logistics organisations to make sure that we understand as much as we possibly can on every day and every different time of each day what the demands on the network are and what we can expect.

Q74 Bob Blackman: The aim is for this to be a public transport type of games.

Garrett Emmerson: Yes.

Q75 Bob Blackman: What impact assessment have you made on the level of usage of public transport over the extended period of the games? Clearly, we will then be in a position in which people are going to the games venues every day, but others will be travelling to and from work, potentially at the same periods of time. I know what the stress already is on the underground network and, indeed, on the bus network.

Garrett Emmerson: It is a similar story on public transport, the rail networks in particular, to that on the road. There are particular corridors and routes—the Jubilee line, the Central line and so on—that we know will experience very heavy demand in general. There will also be particular pinch points around the network depending on the time of day, what events are going on and where people are likely to go. Again, it is a similar story of working through to understand, in as much detail as we can, where and when those are likely to occur and what we can do to limit their impact. As we move closer to the games, we will get increasingly detailed information. As I say, my particular role is to deal with the road element.

Q76 Bob Blackman: My final issue is the enforcement of the various elements of the network. How are you going to ensure, for example, that the games lanes are kept clear, and what enforcement measures will be implemented as a result?

Garrett Emmerson: The first thing to say is that the programme that we are putting together is about compliance as well as enforcement. A lot of that is making sure that we have good information out there to start with, so that people understand the role and purpose of the Olympic route network, and of the games lanes, which of course will be only a part of those routes. People must understand when and where they are enforceable, so that we do not have non-compliance. To some extent, the real measure of the success of that element of the work will be whether we have to do large-scale enforcement in the first place.

Having said that, it is important that we have effective powers and regulations in place to be able to do enforcement, and the changes in the Bill will give us

that, because the original Bill was passed on the assumption that powers under the Traffic Management Act 2004 would come into force, which so far they have not. The enforcement will primarily be using our existing enforcement resources, through CCTV camera enforcement and so on, which at the moment we use day to day on parking regulations, yellow-box junctions and that sort of thing. It is an extension of our existing activities, so it is a known function, but one that will be of extended importance during the Olympic period.

Q77 Bob Blackman: And you are content that the enforcement measures in the Bill are sufficient to give you the powers that you need?

Garrett Emmerson: Yes.

Q78 Mike Freer (Finchley and Golders Green) (Con): This morning, Mr Emmerson, we heard from a witness from the ODA, who talked about the suspension of all streetworks in London on the Olympic route network, the alternative route network and the A and B roads in the boroughs. I have to say that that was very welcome. May I press you on a couple of points, about which you might have more detail?

First, when we say that streetworks will be suspended, does that mean not just that the works will be stopped, but that roads will be reinstated for the period of time of the Olympics? If works are going on, suspending them would still keep the blockages in place. We need reinstatement, so that there is a clear flow of traffic. Secondly, there will clearly be emergencies. If there is a burst water main, it will have to be dealt with. Is TfL insisting on lane-rental-type penalties or night-time working to ensure that emergency works are done as fast as possible?

Garrett Emmerson: Those are two very significant points.

The first thing to say is that you are absolutely correct: we are looking for reinstatement; we will not be looking for road works to be suspended with cones and nobody working, which would defeat the object of what we are trying to do. The project to deliver that, which is called ClearWay 2012, has been in existence for quite some time. To a large extent, it is a planning activity that started a number of years ago to ensure that all the major utility and, indeed, highway planned works that might affect the road network at the time of the games were phased either to occur and be finished before the Olympics or to wait until afterwards.

The key lengths of road network will be clear, and that has been in place for some time in the form of the Olympic route network and, latterly, the alternative Olympic route network. On those roads, that will come into force earlier than the period of the games, simply to allow us the space on the road network to construct the Olympic route network and the physical measures associated with it. That will be ongoing through the spring of next year, to be ready in time for the firing up of the ORN at the beginning of the games period. It has become increasingly obvious to us, however, that effectively managing the ORN—and the alternative ORN for days when it is being used for road events and so on—is an important part of what we have to do, but it is not the only part of what we do. There will be games-related journeys right across the city. If you take into account

all the non-competition venues, such as hotels and all the other venues, we are talking about more than 200 individual locations across the city for which games traffic will be moving about, on and off the ORN.

Clearly, we have two key priorities at games time. First, we must ensure that the Olympic Family—the athletes, officials and so on—can get about to where they need to be, when they need to be there, to enable the events to run smoothly. Secondly, we must make sure that London itself continues to run as smoothly as possible. We are as exercised about the second as we are about the first. Ensuring that we achieve both is what will make it a success.

One way we can do that is to ensure that as far as possible the major strategic roads across the city are free of roadworks and disruption. That is why we have taken the view that our starting point should be that we should not expect to see any planned roadworks on the A and B road network across the city. As we get nearer the time and as it becomes obvious that some roads are not likely to be of any significance for games-related traffic—either diverting as result of the ORN being in place or being used by the games families—we may be able to make some exceptions to that. Our starting point is very much that that is where we want to be. Although the utilities recognise that that will be a major impediment to programmes, they understand its significance and they have been working closely with us throughout the development period.

On the second point about emergencies, again, I think you are absolutely right. We certainly hope that there will not be too many emergencies, and the summer is not peak season for something like burst water mains anyway, but it is inevitable that somewhere, at some time, there will be some sort of emergency. We and the utilities need to be in a position to respond as quickly as possible. That is one of the key functions of the London Streets traffic control centre, which is the key facility that we use to manage the traffic network across London, from where we control the traffic signals and monitor all our CCTV cameras.

We need to ensure that when incidents occur we are able to see them and spot them as quickly as possible, and task resources—whether that is utilities or, in the case of things such as road collisions, the police and the emergency response services—to go and respond to them as quickly as possible and to clear them up as quickly as possible. In the case of utilities, we need to ensure that the physical road reinstatements are done, and we are in the process of talking to utilities to see if it is possible to use our own resources to come straight in behind them and do the road reinstatements, rather than waiting for utility contractors to do likewise. Again, there is a lot of very co-operative working there.

I think there is a general understanding that London will be on show, and the totality of what we do in managing the road network will be very much on show. We are determined to ensure that the games run as smoothly as possible as far as our involvement is concerned.

Q79 Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab): I want to ask a few questions about public transport. I know you said that with regard to the roads there can be a reduction during August of up to 30%, because people are not at work, but is the same true for

the numbers on the tubes and the buses? My experience is often that the tubes can be busier, because we have tourists from all over the country—if not the world—here during a regular August anyway. I am interested in the normal reduction for August, if there is one, on the buses and the tubes. Can you go on to talk about your plans for the huge numbers of extra people who will be on the buses and tubes travelling to and from the Olympics? A further question is the effect on regular Londoners who are trying to get to and from work using the tube in the normal way.

Garrett Emmerson: As I say, my responsibility is predominantly for the road network rather than the public transport network. If I may correct you, I said that the reduction on the road network is in the order of up to 10% in the summer, rather than 30%. The reductions on public transport networks tend to be greater, but the key issue of course is not the total volume of road use or public transport use; it is peak traffic volumes. In the morning peak particularly, but also in the afternoon peak, those volumes are considerably down. Although we have significant influxes of visitors to London during that period, and there are very busy times, they do not necessarily coincide with the busy commuting hours.

It is a good analogy as to how the transport networks will look different during games time generally in that we will have very unusual patterns of movement across the network. There will be different flow regimes, because many people will want to get to the key Olympic venues in the centre or other parts of London, particularly the east where the main venues are. Those flows will be a lot higher and a lot different from what they usually are. The key challenge on both the road network and the public transport network will be understanding and managing those different flows.

Q80 Mrs Hodgson: Although you are TfL, you do not cover public transport.

Garrett Emmerson: TfL does.

Q81 Mrs Hodgson: Do you not work for TfL?

Garrett Emmerson: I do indeed. I am responsible for the road management functions of TfL.

Q82 Mrs Hodgson: So you cannot speak specifically.

Garrett Emmerson: I can speak about the generality, but I cannot claim to be an expert on the statistics.

Q83 Mrs Hodgson: I do not think we are having any from public transport—a specialist.

Garrett Emmerson: I will attempt to answer your questions as best I can.

The Chair: We will move on to Mary Macleod.

Q84 Mary Macleod (Brentford and Isleworth) (Con): Thank you, Chairman. Mr Emmerson, I want to ask you about the impact of the legislation on non-games-related traffic. As you said, it is important to make sure that London continues to run as smoothly as possible. Having a London constituency makes me focus on that part of it. Will you talk about whether you think the Bill covers and provides enough support for any challenges or emergencies that we may face?

Secondly, have we involved enough local people in understanding the impact on them? If I take as an example Chiswick where I am in west London, Chiswick high road is a nightmare during rush hours at the best of times, and with some of the alterations for the Olympics it will no doubt be even worse. A great solution would be to let the Piccadilly line stop at Turnham Green, because that would solve a lot of the problems, but as you are a specialist on roads, I want to make sure that we have done the background research to understand the impact by using enough local people. They are the ones on the ground who know how the system works on a daily basis.

Garrett Emmerson: The most obvious thing is the work that we are doing to develop the detailed design of the ORN, which is going out to public engagement and consultation throughout this year on the detailed design. There is a phased approach across the city, and we will contact all residents who live within 400 metres of those roads—that is upwards of 1 million letters through the year—to invite people directly to engagement sessions and consultation so that they understand what it is proposed will happen at games time, and have the opportunity to have an input before the plans are finalised and implemented on the ground. That is the major thing.

To make sure that that happens properly, the decision was taken a long time ago to use the full permanent traffic regulation order process, even though the measures will be in place only temporarily. We are going through the full process, which requires full consultation and engagement with people. But, as I said at the outset, it is inevitable that however well you plan, things will need to be done and changed at the last minute, for which an efficient process is required. That is what the Bill gives. That is the bit that was missing.

In relation to special events, the Bill gives more flexibility to take account of local views and needs. At the moment, the powers are limited to simple road closure for special events. The Bill will give you the ability to include less draconian things, such as enforcing waiting restrictions, right-turn bans and limiting different classes of vehicle. As we go forward and get nearer the games, local communities will inevitably want to hold events and so on. We must co-ordinate with those and ensure that we can, as far as possible, accommodate the needs of the public and minimise disruption to people who are travelling through events and Olympic events. The more we can do that, the better the experience will be for Londoners as a whole.

Q85 Mary Macleod: Do you think that there is enough in the Bill to support all that you need to do for the Olympics?

Garrett Emmerson: I do, yes. It fills some important gaps that we have identified over the past few years, and it does that well.

Q86 Mary Macleod: May I ask about the fines for the Olympic route if there is an extra lane for Olympic traffic? Can you give us some background on the thinking behind that? People are probably content about having a special lane, but some are worried about the levels of fines that might be levied on innocent residents or people who are travelling at that time.

Garrett Emmerson: I understand there has been a long debate about the level of fines, with significantly varying views, depending on who you ask, about what is appropriate. The decision about what the fine should be is with the Secretary of State for Transport.

The important thing, as I said, is to ensure that we get out and raise awareness and understanding about the Olympic lanes, and when and where they will be in force, so that there are not, as you say, innocent people who do not know what the measures are about. There must be a high level of awareness about the Olympic lanes. People must know the reasons why they are in operation at certain times and they must know the penalties for contravention. That is a key part of the overall enforcement strategy.

Q87 Mr Don Foster (Bath) (LD): Thank you for what you have said, Mr Emmerson. You have described the Bill as very sensible and you have said that it has filled important gaps. Are there any gaps that we still have not filled? In particular, are you confident that we have sufficient powers, or that sufficient powers will be given to the right people, to deal with freight vehicles on our roads that are delivering to keep our city running smoothly?

Garrett Emmerson: You are succinctly alluding to the last element of the written evidence that we submitted.

Mr Foster: Indeed.

Garrett Emmerson: The evidence was on exactly that point. We have identified a major concern about the ability of freight operators to service the business community at key times during the games. Obviously, with the creation of the ORN, the restrictions that it imposes, the wider limitations that there will be in central London around the mobility management area, and the sheer volume of activity right here in the heart of London, businesses will need to change how they service their businesses. A single-day event, such as the royal wedding, is a very different proposition from three weeks of a continuous event. For a single day, it is not a particularly huge challenge to say, “Well, actually, we can’t make a delivery on Friday; it will have to come on Thursday or Saturday.” But the sustained duration of this event creates a very different proposition for businesses.

We have done a lot of work already with larger businesses to ensure that they are aware of the implications of the event. There is a lot more work yet to do with smaller businesses around London. We are concerned that some—or potentially many—businesses may not respond to or understand the need to change their delivery patterns until a very late stage and that freight operators will not be able to respond in time.

Some freight operators have restrictions on their premises, such as environmental constraints that prevent them from operating at night and so on. At present, those can only be changed through a fairly long consultation-based process via the traffic commissioners. We suggested to the Department for Transport, and in our evidence to the Committee, that the Bill is an opportunity to change that situation to allow the traffic commissioners to shorten the process.

Q88 Mr Foster: Mr Emmerson, that is very helpful, but may I inform you that the deadline for tabling amendments for Committee stage is fast approaching? Mr Amess, I think it is this evening.

The Chair: It was yesterday, I am afraid to say, so there is no opportunity at all.

Q89 Mr Foster: So it is more than fast approaching. But of course there are procedures that we could adopt. Is TfL in discussion with both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Transport about how we resolve the problem—if we decide that we wish to resolve it—that you are describing, in terms of the legislative procedure that you would need to follow?

Garrett Emmerson: The short answer to that is yes. We wrote to the Department for Transport a while ago and, as I understand it, the Secretary of State is considering what the best course of action would be in that regard. We will work with the Department as closely as we can, whatever decision it takes.

Q90 The Chair: To follow on from Mr Foster’s point, there are some very special circumstances under which we might be able to select an amendment but we would have to do so very soon.

Mr Foster: Or indeed on Report, Mr Amess. That would be one possibility.

Garrett Emmerson: Our key concern is that we raise what we think is a very significant issue, which has the potential to disrupt the smooth operation of London around the time of the games.

Q91 Mr Foster: May I just leave you with the thought that it is not for me to determine whether or not this is an issue that must be addressed or not? It is beyond my pay grade. Clearly, however, if everybody agrees that it should be raised, time is definitely not on our side. So can I urge you and your colleagues to work with both Departments to see if we can find a solution to it quickly?

Q92 Joseph Johnson (Orpington) (Con): To follow on from points that have been raised just now, to what extent do you expect the Olympics to be a catalyst for a structural shift away from car usage in the capital, encouraging more sustained use of public transport? In other words, how can we use the Olympics as a means of changing behaviours in a sustainable way?

Garrett Emmerson: I certainly agree that it is an opportunity, particularly in terms of people travelling to the games and the fact that they will have, as part of their tickets, the opportunity to travel on the public transport network in particular. That is the potential of using the programme—the travel demand management programme—that sits around this, in terms of highlighting the fact that people have different travel options, using journey planners and things like that. In my experience, the best advert for people to try to travel differently or to make different travel choices is to get them to try it. The Olympic games is a huge opportunity to get people who do not normally use public transport modes to try them out. We will certainly be doing all we can to avail them of those benefits, but of course we have to provide an efficient, effective, reliable and high-quality service to enable them to have a good experience when they do that, or else those benefits are unlikely to be achieved.

Q93 Joseph Johnson: Are you anticipating a 100% bounce-back from the 30% decline in car usage that you are expecting in August next year? Do you expect car usage to go back to where it would be normally—100%—or do you expect there to be a gradual bounce-back?

Garrett Emmerson: It is difficult to say, because traffic volumes obviously vary through the time of the year. So we will not necessarily have an equivalent traffic level figure until the following August and inevitably over the course of 12 months other factors come into play, in terms of the volume of traffic movement out there. The degree of activity in the economy has a significant effect on volumes of traffic, so I would suggest that it will be difficult to tell exactly what the effect has been.

Q94 John Cryer (Leyton and Wanstead) (Lab): You might not be able to answer this question in detail, but on the issue of offering a variety of transport modes what sort of thought has been given to offering river transport? I know that we have the Woolwich ferry and there are various riverbus services, but will there be any increase in that type of transport?

Garrett Emmerson: Again, I do not have a detailed knowledge of that subject, but I am aware that the river services will be enhanced throughout the games and there are certainly a number of journey opportunities where the river makes a lot of sense. We will be looking to promote those, along with the other transport modes, wherever they are appropriate. So, yes, it is certainly an important part of what we do.

Q95 John Cryer: It is being looked at?

Garrett Emmerson: Yes.

Q96 John Cryer: All right. I just want to make the point that if someone comes from, say, Kent or Sussex they will tend to go around the M25—if they are travelling by car, obviously—and then through east London, one way or another. If you are able to go to south London and then get on some sort of riverbus service, it will take the pressure off the roads in the east end an awful lot.

Garrett Emmerson: That is an important part of making sure that the travel information and travel choices that we give out to anybody buying tickets include all the options and different ways that they can travel. That is a key part of what we intend to do.

The Minister for Sport and the Olympics (Hugh Robertson): It might be worth adding that for anybody travelling from Kent to Sussex, by far the most efficient way of doing it would be to drive to Ebbsfleet and then catch the return leg of the Javelin train that runs from King's Cross through Stratford to Ebbsfleet, turns around and goes back again. That particular group are the last people who should be clogging up the roads in the east end, because they will have the Javelin train to use.

John Cryer: Some of them will be, though.

Q97 Mary Macleod: Mr Emmerson, are there any plans at the moment to extend the Mayor's cycle scheme for the Olympics? Also, has any thought been put into how to make cycling safer across London during the Olympics?

Garrett Emmerson: Certainly, the Mayor's cycle hire scheme will be an important part of the journey choices available, particularly in central London, and plans to expand it out towards the east of the city will be in place by the time of the games, so it will certainly play its part. In terms of safety, cycle safety is something that TfL and the Mayor have been particularly concerned about, and we have put a lot of effort into ensuring that we deliver improvements. That will not change through the Olympics; that work will continue, to ensure that not only cycling but the roads themselves, for all travel, are as safe as they can possibly be. I think that we have a pretty good track record in London as a whole of delivering improvements in safety over the past 10 years. There has been something like a 57% reduction in casualties. That work will continue, and cycling will be an important part of it.

The Chair: Are there any other questions, colleagues? On behalf of the Committee, thank you very much indeed, Mr Emmerson, for the time that you have spent with us. It is useful to have your evidence when we start consideration in Committee on Thursday morning.

Examination of Witness

Chris Allison gave evidence.

4.42 pm

Q98 The Chair: Welcome, Mr Allison. The Committee is greatly looking forward to receiving your evidence. Would you mind formally introducing yourself and making some brief comments about the Bill?

Chris Allison: Chair, thank you very much. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Chris Allison. I am an assistant commissioner in the Metropolitan Police Service, and I am privileged to be something called the national Olympic security co-ordinator. A bit of background as to what that is: as you are aware, 70% of the Olympics is taking place in London, but 30% is taking place elsewhere in the country. The Olympics will also impact on every force in the country. The torch is clearly running for 70 days up and down the country, there will be the impact of the parallel events taking place and, to deliver the games in both London and Dorset, we will require officers from across the country.

My role as the national Olympic security co-ordinator is, in effect, to lead for the police service and co-ordinate planning up and down the country. Both in the planning stages up until the games and during games delivery time, I will be co-ordinating the national policing response from a newly created national Olympic co-ordination centre based at Scotland Yard.

The reason why I think I am here today is to support the proposed increase in the fine for ticket touting from £5,000 to £20,000. There is a significant link between ticket touting, serious organised crime, ticket fraud and counterfeit tickets. The Olympics will attract those. I know from personal experience; I was privileged to get out to Vancouver with a small number of my team to see the winter Olympics, and one of my abiding memories is fighting my way through a sea of ticket touts who were all trying to take anything off me that they could. The Home Office official whom I deal with, Robert Raine, and I were determined that we were not going to allow that to happen in London, for a variety of reasons.

It makes it look lawless, it makes it feel lawless, it gives the opportunity for individuals to rip off members of the public and it sends the wrong message.

We know that at the Olympics, there will be a massive demand for tickets. We are already seeing that in relation to applications through the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. Therefore, there is a lot of money to be made by those who want to do so. Serious and organised crime are already talking about it. Operation Podium, which is targeting this sort of activity, has been running since June of last year. It has already made a significant number of arrests for a variety of offences, but we have been targeting ticket touts. Therefore, our view is that this is an important measure, but it is one of a number of things that we will be doing. It is not only about increasing the fine, but also about us applying the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 to individuals, which we will do wherever we possibly can. It is about putting the fear of crime back on to the criminals, rather than on to the innocent victims.

We are very supportive of the proposal. We have to deal with ticket touts day in, day out, as part of our routine business around football, and I can say to the Committee that, anecdotally, we have heard from some touts that the Home Secretary's announcement of this proposal has already made some of them say, "I'm not interested in a fine of 20 grand. I'll go away and do something different." If that is helping in some way, that has to be a good thing, because I do not want to see what I saw in Vancouver happen during 2012.

Q99 Tessa Jowell: My friend, Sharon Hodgson, who has taken a great interest in ticket touting, will come in with a number of detailed questions on this.

I will begin by thanking Chris Allison for the really excellent leadership that you are providing for the Olympic team. We all appreciate that very much indeed. I wondered if I could just focus on serious and organised crime, of which ticket touting is obviously a manifestation. Like Chris Allison, I was also in Vancouver, looking specifically at the risks of trafficking and the sexual exploitation of young men and women at a large sporting event. I must say that, having concluded some 10 meetings during my time there, I was impressed by the rigour with which they approached this. Given that we want to ensure that any serious organised crime, such as ticket touting, is not part of our Olympics, I wonder, Mr Amess, whether I could tax your patience a little bit by first asking Mr Allison what he thinks the lessons of Vancouver were. I would be happy to share with him the quite detailed research that I did. Secondly, I want to ask what he judges the risk to be. Thirdly, what is the capacity of the preventive teams to provide an early alert to an increase in the proliferation of sex workers or, indeed, any evidence of trafficking?

Chris Allison: If I could cover the generality, we were very lucky in relation to Vancouver. We got fantastic access courtesy of Bud Mercer—my counterpart out there—who was the assistant commissioner who ran the operation, and I was able to embed a number of my command team alongside his command team during the games, so we got fantastic access and a lot of learning about various bits of business.

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is something that we have talked about on a number of occasions. There is a team called Specialist Crime Department 9 that is

looking at that activity, and there is work monitoring what is going on in the east end of London. We have to date seen no increase whatsoever in that sort of activity, but we are clearly keeping an eye on it to ensure that something does not happen. I am satisfied that we have the necessary links with all the various non-governmental organisations, and Detective Chief Superintendent Richard Martin, who runs that unit, has got a very good reputation with them and is drawing whatever he can from them. At the moment, there is no evidence that we are seeing any increase and no evidence that there will be any increase.

In Vancouver, having spoken to Bud both during and post the games, they did not actually see any increase. There was considerable concern that it was going to happen, but, again, it did not actually manifest itself. That does not mean that we are resting on our laurels. That is why we are still doing the work that we are in the east end to ensure that we understand what is going on over there. Yes, there has been an increase in a bit of sex worker activity around there, but this is a very large building site and, therefore, people may be attracted to it. In terms of trafficking, however, we have seen nothing relating to that.

Q100 Tessa Jowell: Those are very much the conclusions that have been shared with me by the various NGOs, and there are two important points. One is that we do not want to create a problem, or appear to create a problem, for which there is not evidence. Also, it was the level of vigilance, and the anticipation that there could be a problem, that meant that Vancouver passed off in the way that it did. Of course we hope that our games also will.

Chris Allison: To reinforce that, this has been talked about in a number of areas, and the media regularly bring it up, and we are at pains to explain it. What we do not want to do is create that unnecessary fear of crime. Equally, we do not want to ignore it if it is starting to happen. That is why I am reassured that the work that has been done in that area by SCD9—one of the specialist crime departments—is keeping that monitoring going, to make sure that something does not come up on the wire that we are not aware of.

However, I want to put it down that there is no evidence of an increase at the current time—certainly, there has not been an increase. Lots of the research that we have done has shown that this has been talked about in many previous games, but we have been unable to find the evidence of it. It is one of those myths that seems to have built up and everybody talks about it, and we are trying to put it back into its right place, so that we do not create fear.

Q101 Tessa Jowell: A final question on touting, and on Chris Allison's assessment of the threshold at which the level of fine becomes a deterrent to those who want to get involved in this serious criminal activity. Can we provide any protection at all against fraudulent internet sites?

Chris Allison: Our assessment is that the increase from £5,000 to £20,000 is an appropriate increase. If we are talking about an organised crime group, and we arrest five of them, and the courts on conviction choose to impose the maximum fine, that is £100,000 between

the five of them. We think that is a significant deterrent, given that we are going very public, and that we will use every other piece of legislation that is available to us. If we have evidence that enables us to seize money under the Proceeds of Crime Act, then we will make applications to court to do that as well. Therefore, this is one of a number of measures that we are using. We are saying to criminals: "The fine is going up, we are targeting you. We are actively targeting you as touts between now and the games time." We are targeting them at football events, because we know it is the same people who do it, and it is also an offence at football events. They get to know that the police service are looking at them, and that we are using all the legislation that is available to us. In our view it is an appropriate increase, it acts as an appropriate deterrent, and anecdotally, we are already hearing from the people we are dealing with that it is working for them.

There will be those—because there is massive money to be made here—who want to try to do something about it. The Operation Podium team has been working very closely for some time with LOCOG on how to reduce the opportunities for people to be scammed by the internet. We regularly trawl the internet for false domains, and for people who are offering tickets for sale, and we will continue to do so. Wherever we can, we will work with the service providers to take those internet sites down. A key message to the public—we are supported by Seb Coe and LOCOG and others here—is that you only get a ticket by going to the authorised site, the LOCOG website. If you think you have found a miracle website somewhere where you can get the final Olympic ticket for only £10, you are being ripped off. Do not believe that something is a free lunch, because it is not, it is a rip-off. This is about an education programme, and that is why we are doing lots of media jointly with LOCOG about it.

The Chair: Colleagues, I know those exchanges were a bit wide of the Bill, but I thought it was too good an opportunity to miss. This session lasts until 5.30 pm, and I want to call everyone, so I would like everyone who wants to ask a question to bear that in mind.

Q102 Mike Freer: Back on to ticket touting. You described a scrum of ticket touts, which seemed to be dealt with by a scrum of police officers. What percentage of outer London boroughs' resources will be taken from the other boroughs, and drafted in to Olympic work?

Chris Allison: We are still working our way through the plans. At the moment, for London we are talking about a policing operation of about 9,000 police officers on peak days. If we put that into context, at Notting Hill carnival—which is the biggest policing operation we normally do—on the Sunday we deploy 5,000 police officers, and on the Monday we deploy 6,000 officers. Any major event in London always requires all the boroughs to provide a percentage of aid. But there is a recognition that the Met cannot deliver that alone. So during 2012, we will be calling on something called mutual aid, with colleagues from across the country. As we work through our plans, we are working extremely closely with Ian McPherson, the assistant commissioner from territorial policing, to make sure that he can still deliver the business as usual that is required by communities

across London. Therefore, anything that he does not need we can use and anything we require above that we get from mutual aid. On the percentages, we are talking in the region of a 2% potential impact on the average borough over a whole year—the 2012 year—because we will spread out the impact by reducing annual leave, reducing days off and cancelling training.

Mike Freer: To press home the matter, are you saying that the outer London boroughs—

Chris Allison: All the boroughs.

Q103 Mike Freer: I appreciate that it is nicely equalised across the year as a percentage but, during the 30 days of the Olympic period, what percentage will the boroughs see their normal police operation officers reduced by?

Chris Allison: I cannot give you the exact figures. Part of the reason for that is the levers that we are going pull to reduce the impact. By pulling a lever and saying that in an average summer we may have 10% of our officers on annual leave and, during the 17-day period of the Olympic games, the maximum we will allow is 7%, that immediately adds an extra 3% or 4% to your work force that you would not normally have during that period. The same with training and weekly leave. Those are the sorts of levers we will pull.

It is not just the outer boroughs; every borough across London will be impacted. We will use something called the public order aid formula, which is the formula they have used on a daily basis to manage every big event in London. If you think about the student protests towards the back end of last year, the protest on 9 December used in the region of 3,600 police officers. The royal wedding just a few weeks ago required 5,500 police officers to be deployed. Each borough has a number of officers allocated to it. As you will be aware, each borough is a different size, but we take the same percentage from each borough, so that the impact on each borough is exactly the same when we pull together major events. We try to ensure that no one borough is more affected than any other borough as a result of the central London major events that we have to deal with.

Q104 Mrs Hodgson: As hon. Members will know, the whole area of ticket touting is a passion of mine. Specifically with regard to the Olympics, I would like to tease out of you some answers that I hope will be helpful in considering the wider issues surrounding ticket touting. In your opinion, who are the potential touts? You say that Operation Podium has already seen some of those touts arrested. Are they people who have just set up in business with an eye on the Olympics or are they already criminal organised gangs? I will leave you to answer that first.

Chris Allison: There clearly will be opportunists looking to make a quick buck who will manage to get two or three tickets for themselves and think, "I can sell this ticket for twice the face value by turning up." You may see that at a range of sporting events. There are those who are just selling off a spare ticket at face value, and there are those who will try to double or treble the price.

Our bigger worry and what we will certainly see with the Olympics is the organised criminal networks working this. Certainly, the people who are making large amounts of money off the back of events up and down the

country—anything from a music event to a sporting event—are involved in serious and organised criminality. Some organised criminal networks dabble in a number of things. It is not just touting; they are also involved in counterfeiting wherever they can. If you imagine that you have a market where it is seen as acceptable that you can be outside a place selling tickets at £100 when they are only worth £10, people will quite easily put counterfeit tickets there as well. Because people expect to pay that amount, they will not realise the difference between a real ticket and a counterfeit ticket.

There is lots of money to be made by these organised criminal networks. They recognise the demand for tickets. I have no doubt that the 9 million tickets for the Olympics will be significantly oversubscribed, especially for the major events. As a result, ticket touts will look to make many, many thousands of pounds on each ticket if they possibly can. There will be a network behind them. I want to create an environment in which it is not possible for those touts to operate on the ground. If it were not possible to operate on the ground, it would be harder for them, first, to make the money that they should be making and, secondly, to sell the counterfeit tickets. We must again, through our publicity, get the message out to the general public not to buy a ticket for which they are paying over the odds because there is a good chance that it is a counterfeit ticket and, secondly, not to go to any website apart from the authorised websites because, again, they are likely to be ripped off. Hopefully, we will then save everyone.

I am talking about the UK's reputation. Many people from throughout the world will go on to any internet site and think, "Oh, this is my ticket. Not only does it get me entry to the 100 metres final, but it gives me five nights at the Savoy for £220." They will buy it, come here and clearly get none of it. That will damage our reputation, so our job is to make sure that it does not happen. I see the major threat from serious and organised criminality, because such people see that they are easily into seven figures and it is money that they will then use for other illegal acts.

Q105 Mrs Hodgson: So you have evidence that serious and organised criminality already exists with regard to other major events. I am not talking about the Olympics.

Chris Allison: Yes. We have already got that. The Operation Podium team already has a number. I will not go into it here, but I had a briefing on Monday morning about some of the activities. We have already got some ongoing operations linking organised criminal networks into general ticket touting and already into some consideration of Olympic ticket touting. We are already following up on that.

Q106 Mrs Hodgson: Without giving away anything operational, what are the other live and sporting events in which you are aware of serious organised criminality at the moment?

Chris Allison: Tickets touts, and therefore by extension the organised criminal networks, will go to any event where they think that they can make a fast buck. So any event that is oversubscribed—more demand than supply—is opportunity for them to make money, and people will make money off it.

Q107 Mrs Hodgson: This is the small fry? You are talking about the big ones.

Chris Allison: Many of the people down in the small fry are actually linked to organised criminal networks. I am talking about sporting events.

Q108 Mrs Hodgson: Take That gigs?

Chris Allison: Yes, any music event that has no subscribed group. You go to Wembley, you go to the O2 and you will see those people selling tickets for over-inflated prices. You cannot be guaranteed that you are getting the real ticket.

Q109 Mrs Hodgson: So in your humble and very expert opinion—

Chris Allison: Not expert.

Mrs Hodgson: Would you see merit in extending such legislation to other events?

Chris Allison: I have to be careful because I am not an expert in this area. We are seeing organised criminal networks doing this and making money out of it.

Q110 Mrs Hodgson: Can you put a figure on it?

Chris Allison: I could not; I would not want to.

Q111 Mrs Hodgson: I have heard an estimate of £1 billion. Would that be far off the mark?

Chris Allison: I could not give you anything. I do not know the detail. I would have to get a colleague to give an answer.

Q112 Mrs Hodgson: I will bring my remarks back to the Bill.

The question of selling tickets to family and friends at face value came up on Second Reading. An exchange network will be set up next year through which people can sell their tickets back so that they can be sold on to people at face value, which I totally support—I think that we should have such a system across the board for everything. People will be allowed to sell at face value to family and friends, but do you think that that will be open to abuse?

Chris Allison: There is a potential for that. Through the Bill and the amendments, we are focusing on sale in the open and people doing it as a business. This is not designed to stop my wife or daughter who happens to get a ticket but then does not want to use it from selling it at face value to a friend of theirs. It is not designed for that.

Q113 Mrs Hodgson: How can you be sure that they will sell it at face value?

Chris Allison: I cannot be sure about exactly what will happen. My worry is predominantly about what we have seen elsewhere in the world and what we see day to day in the country. We have to focus our activity on where the most harm is: the organised criminal networks that are, in effect, ripping off completely innocent individuals for large amounts of money and perhaps giving them a ticket that is not a real ticket. I think that the Bill gives us powers to do that in a way that we have not been able to do before.

Q114 Mrs Hodgson: And you feel that the level of £20,000 will be sufficient to deter.

Chris Allison: It is a proportionate amount. The increase is in parallel with the other increases and fines in and around the Bill, and it is already having some impact. However much you make that fine, there will always be those who believe that they can get around it in some way and will take the risk. My job, and that of the Operation Podium team and all the officers, will be to deal with those people who take the risk.

Q115 Mrs Hodgson: Joe Cohen from Seatwave, which is a site that sells secondary tickets, has said:

“So if anyone has a 100 meter final ticket to sell, they are going to sell it on the black market. They are not going to sell it for 750 pounds if it’s worth 5,000 pounds. The tickets will find a buyer who is willing to pay the market price, regardless of what LocoG wishes to do.”

If someone can sell a ticket for £5,000 and get away with it, when the limit on the fine is £20,000, that might seem like a gamble that they wish to take. You mentioned the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and we have tabled a probing amendment around that legislation. Would it be helpful to have the flexibility to use that legislation set out in the Bill, or is it unnecessary?

Chris Allison: It is not necessary—we already have that power if they have acted unlawfully. The 2002 Act allows us to make an application to court to seize money that has been gained unlawfully. If I arrest an Olympic ticket tout for having done just that—receiving £5,000 for a £750 ticket out in the open—and I can prove that he has sold another 20 tickets, each at that value, as well as asking the court to impose the maximum fine—that is a matter for the court—we will also go for all that money under the Proceeds of Crime Act. We are saying very publicly to these people, “This is what we’re going to do. We’re going to come for you.”

Q116 Mary Macleod: Mr Allison, thank you for your detailed responses. I was also going to ask about whether the £20,000 for ticket touting was enough, but you have confirmed that, with all the other legislation available for you to use, you think that that will suffice.

I shall ask two quick questions, given that others probably want to speak. First, on terrorism, do you think that there may be an increased threat and, if so, is the Bill sufficient to ensure that we are covered? It might be that our current measures for terrorism are sufficient.

Secondly, in terms of traffic and road usage, and the enforcement of traffic conventions—the Metropolitan police tend to get pulled into that—is the Bill sufficient to support that over the Olympic time period?

Chris Allison: May I cover the terrorism point first? We have been planning our response to the Olympics on the basis of a severe threat from terrorism. Sadly, as I said before, I do not believe that there will be an outbreak of world peace between now and the games. It would be foolish if we did not plan at that severe threat level—that is the level against which we are policing the capital today. All our plans are there. We deliver current events against that severe threat—the royal wedding was delivered against that sort of threat level—and I am satisfied that, at the moment, we have the necessary powers that we need.

Obviously we are still working through our policing plans and the operations. There are 438 days before the start of the games—that number goes down very quickly—and we are still working our way through and making sure that we have sufficient asset in the right place. We are constantly reviewing the terrorist attack methodologies across the world to ensure that our plans deal with those methodologies. It is something that we are going to keep an eye on. We clearly have to because of the growth in what is sadly happening in Northern Ireland at the moment, which my colleagues in the Police Service of Northern Ireland are having to deal with on a daily basis. Thankfully, we always considered Irish attack methodologies in all our plans, so that has already been built in. I suppose what I am saying is that we are not resting on our laurels—we cannot afford to do that. My job is to make sure we deliver a safe and secure games, and that is what we are going to do.

On road use, I am glad that you said that we get drawn into it—it is the responsibility of others. I know that a lot of work is being done by the ODA transport team and Transport for London. There are significant challenges there, as the Committee talked about with TfL earlier. Peter Hendy has taken on the role of delivering that side, and if anyone can deliver it, he can.

We are supportive of what is in the Bill. There are two key bits to ensuring that this works. One is about ensuring that the public messaging is right about everything: not only about roads, but about what you should do, what transport you should use, what you should carry and what you should look out for. A lot of work is being done across all the domains, including locally and with TfL, to try to ensure that those general messages are right. The other bit is ensuring that there is swift compliance activity so that people understand that if they choose to break the law, they will know swiftly that they have to deal with the penalty for it. The decision on what level that will be is being made by the Secretary of State.

Hopefully, that will be sufficient in itself so that an individual says, “I know not only that I will get caught, but that I will get caught swiftly,” and feels that there is a deterrent. We cannot afford to have a whole load of fixed penalty notices appearing on people’s doorsteps in October 2012 that tell them that they went on the Olympic road network. If that happens, we will not ensure compliance at the time. People need to understand that the system will be in place and will be working.

The Chair: Mr Allison has skilfully brought us back to the Bill. When colleagues ask questions, I wonder whether they can make them a tiny bit relevant to the Bill.

Q117 Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab): Mr Allison, you have made the good case that raising the penalty for ticket touting would act as a deterrent for not only ticket touting, but other forms of organised crime, such as counterfeiting. For other organised criminal offences that are not so obviously linked to ticket touting—such as trafficking, about which you said that the link was less clear—are there any other powers that would be useful when you come into contact with these offences that are not currently in legislation?

Chris Allison: I have a list—no. It is important to say that there is no evidence that the games are encouraging trafficking, although we are monitoring it, as I said to

Tessa Jowell earlier. There has been a lot said about there being a massive increase in trafficking with previous Olympics. After doing the research, we cannot find any evidence for that, but clearly if it were happening, SOCA would get a grip of it and we would want to target it.

On general serious and organised crime, our focus since Podium has been set up has been predominantly around fraud and the stuff there might be in and around construction. We worked closely with the ODA to, whenever possible, design out the crime by putting measures in place. Crime prevention is better than chasing the people who have done it.

Am I sitting here saying, “I need this power, this power and this power?” No, I am not. To be honest, quite often the more powers there are, the more complicated and challenging it gets for us. We have the powers we need at present to be able to deliver this. I am relying heavily on my colleagues and Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick’s colleagues within specialist crime to assist me in dealing with that end of the market. At the moment, we are satisfied that we have what we need.

Q118 Mr Foster: I hope that I speak for all members of the Committee when I ask you to pass on our congratulations and thanks to the Operation Podium team, who have done a fabulous job. I am sure they have done more than we know about. The Bill states that we will raise the fine from £5,000 to £20,000. In response to other questions, you have already said that that is appropriate and proportionate. On Thursday, we will consider an amendment that would raise it to the much higher figure of £50,000. Is that inappropriate and disproportionate? Please comment.

Chris Allison: I do not think it is necessary; I think it is inappropriate and disproportionate. The £20,000 increase is sufficient to achieve what we want to achieve. On the briefing that I have had, moving it to £50,000 brings with it other challenges, because it potentially moves the matter out of the magistrates court and up to the Crown court. There might be challenges around that, and I am satisfied that for the purposes for which I think it is required, the £20,000 fine is sufficient to act as a deterrent.

Q119 Bob Blackman: Let me deal with ticket touting first. I attend sporting events every week and I run the gauntlet of the ticket touts. When I get home to my normal station at Wembley Park, if there is a concert on at the arena or the stadium, I run the gauntlet of ticket touts, even though I have no interest in attending the event. What will be different about the Olympics and how you will police it, because all that takes place when the police are within yards of the touts?

Chris Allison: For the vast majority of events there is no legislation. The only legislation that enables us to take action against ticket touts is that relating to football, and that is because of the segregation requirements. History tells us that if you do not segregate the crowd, problems will occur. I am aware that although we have powers covering football, there are still ticket touts operating at football matches. Our goal at the moment, recognising that we have the games coming, is to use those football matches to start enforcing the messages whenever we possibly can.

What will be different at the time of the games? My hope is that the publicity we have generated, the pre-work that we have done and the commitment of the Operation Podium team who are working on this, and who I can target at this sort of activity, will have sent the very clear message to these individuals that if they come out on the streets near an Olympic venue, there will be police officers out there in significant numbers who will take action against them, so there is a massive risk for them because we will catch them and go for the maximum fine. Hopefully, the courts will support us and we will use the Proceeds of Crime Act, so there is a combination of points. I think I said in my introduction that this is about putting the fear back on to them. I then have to back that up with words, and I have to make sure that the officers are properly briefed, which will be part and parcel of the activity in which we will engage with all the officers who come from across the country into feeding, muster and briefing points every day. The key activities will be briefed to them.

One of the things that we will be targeting is ticket touting. If we see a ticket tout, we will want them arrested. This will be a significant focus for us because, as I said in my opening, they make the place look unlawful and like it is not the place that we want it to be. What do I want the Olympics to be from a safety and security point of view? I want it to be a fantastic sporting event where the focus should be on the sport and spectators. The focus should be not on the security operation or the criminals who are getting in the way of people enjoying the sport. That is the briefing that I will give to my officers, and that briefing will hopefully deliver what we want.

Q120 Bob Blackman: In the next football season, can we look forward to police officers actually taking action against touts on the streets right outside the grounds in the way that you are describing as a means of starting to enforce this whole process?

Chris Allison: Can I give you a guarantee that no touts will operate outside any football stadium in London or across the country? No, I cannot. However, I can say that I am asking my colleagues up and down the country—certainly in London—to do whatever they can to send out the message that touting in certain circumstances is unlawful. Can we start taking action now? Again, there are competing pressures. On some occasions, a police officer will not take action against an individual tout because they have to deal with something else—I have to recognise that. However, certainly in relation to the activity in which we are engaged through Podium, and in which we will be engaged during games time, there will be significant activity around ticket touts.

Q121 Bob Blackman: On a related subject, no doubt you will be pleased about the proposals in the Bill to relieve you of the responsibility of dealing with seized goods. However, one of the concerns raised this morning was that organised crime might become involved in counterfeiting goods, and might organise activity across London selling illegal or illicit goods that could need to be seized by trading standards officers or whoever is doing enforcement. How will the police get involved in that process as a result of the changes that are proposed?

Chris Allison: The legislative changes, as I understand them, allow local trading standards and police officers to act against that. The Podium team certainly intends

to look at all parts of serious and organised crime, whether that is counterfeiting tickets or counterfeiting goods. Whenever we have a link, the Podium team—it is growing as we run closer to the games—will target. We have very good links with trading standards teams across London and we will work closely with them. When we can establish a link between something that is happening on the street and the serious and organised criminal network, the Podium team will become involved and do the further investigation.

These things will not be dealt with in splendid isolation. When we can get that link, it is all about intelligence and information sharing. I think that that is why the Podium team has been so successful recently. That is where I think we can make a difference. We will not just leave things to trading standards. We will not walk away and say, “It’s down to you.” When there is a clear link with serious and organised crime, we will follow those people up.

Q122 Bob Blackman: One of the concerns aired this morning involved the resources available to deal with counterfeit goods and illicit trading. Given all the other competing pressures on the police force, where will the priority be? One of my concerns is that we will see people setting up street stalls outside tube stations across London and selling illicit goods, which might need prompt action to prevent people from being ripped off. Police resources will be stretched. What assurance can you give us that resources will be available to deal with that?

Chris Allison: I cannot, and it would be inappropriate for me to give you a guarantee that we will be able to deal with every single stall set up across London. That is why we welcome the fact that others—trading standards, which is expert in dealing with that sort of activity day in, day out, on Oxford street and places like that—can take on that burden. You are entirely right that the police service will be very stretched in 2012. There are not only the Olympic events but the parallel events that people want to put on in place. If we can spread the enforcement burden on to others who are good at doing it and used to doing it, we welcome that.

Clearly, where there is top-end crime and criminality, I would look to deploy the Podium team, but again, there is finite resource. I do not have infinite resource. We still have to deliver policing as usual not only to London, but across the country. I cannot call on all 144,000 police officers to come here. We are limited in the numbers that we can get. We will do the best that we possibly can with our resources; we will target them in the right places; we will make sure that we make the most impact with what we have; and we will do it with partner agencies. That is what I welcome about the Bill. It will allow partner agencies to take action. Otherwise, we would be too stretched to do it on our own.

Q123 The Chair: Before we finish this session, did any other colleagues want to ask questions? If there are no further questions, Mr Allison, do you think that the Committee has covered every possibility in terms of the evidence that you can share with us? Do you want to make any final remarks?

Chris Allison: Everything and more, sir. Thank you.

The Chair: On behalf of the Committee, thank you very much for the time that you have spent with us and the evidence that you have given us.

Examination of Witness

Hugh Robertson MP gave evidence.

5.24 pm

Q124 The Chair: Minister, welcome. Would you kindly introduce yourself formally and then make some opening remarks about the Bill?

Hugh Robertson: Thank you, Chairman. As I think most people know, I am Hugh Robertson, the Minister for Sport and the Olympics. As we said in this morning’s session, this is a comparatively minor and technical Bill. It basically takes the original provisions in the 2006 Act and looks at areas where subsequent legislation bringing the Act’s principles into effect has not taken place or where something else has arisen, as in the case of ticket touting, to change what happened in 2006.

It is a remarkable testimony to the success of the 2006 Act that we have only had to change it once, in a comparatively minor and technical way. I think that I am right in saying that Australian experience was that they had to do this four times over, and the Australian Government had to pay the Australian Olympic committee about 80 million Australian dollars for failing to transfer the image rights over correctly in the first place. Actually, the fact that this is a minor, small, technical amending Bill is a considerable testimony to the work done in the original 2006 Act.

The Chair: Colleagues, who would like to ask the first question? Tessa Jowell.

Q125 Tessa Jowell: I think that I might have had my ration. Just one quick question: does the Minister consider that this is the end of the business of further legislation, or are there circumstances in which it might be necessary?

Hugh Robertson: I hope very much that this will be the final hurdle. One of the things that we did before introducing this amending Bill was to look across the entirety of the London 2012 project, to look at what had changed, to benchmark that against the experience of other games and what we have learned since 2005 and 2006 and to see whether anything else was required.

The one outstanding issue at the moment of which I am aware is this business about changing the regulations to allow freight to be delivered to businesses, and opening up the period over which that may be done. Our initial prognosis—the Department for Transport, as I said earlier, is looking at it very closely at the moment—is that it is not absolutely certain that primary legislation would be required and, even if so, not absolutely certain that this Bill would be used.

With that exception, as of today I am absolutely certain that this is all we need. Clearly, as we know, if the situation changes dramatically in some particular area between now and next year, then we would have to take action.

Q126 Mary Macleod: Minister, the witnesses we have received so far all seem to have been supportive of what is in the Bill. I want to get some background from you.

[Mary Macleod]

When you looked across at other hosting countries, what were the lessons learned that made you decide on some of things in the Bill?

Hugh Robertson: It is a good question. I think that part of the reason why so many people—the witnesses you have seen today—have been in favour of what we are doing is because we cauterised much of the opposition back in 2005-06. Listening to the evidence this morning, I was struck by how much the position of the advertising industry had shifted since 2005-06—it had a number of concerns about the original Bill—and I think that that is because the original Bill was enacted in a sensible and proportionate way. The powers contained in the 2006 Act have been used sensibly and proportionately, which has given people an enormous amount of confidence in the whole process.

The question of benchmarking against previous Olympics is a good one. When the original Act was put on the statute book, the benchmark was the 2000 Sydney games. There are some similarities between the winter games and the summer games, obviously, but they are very different beasts and on a very different scale. Without being too indelicate about it, the 2008 Beijing games are not always the easiest benchmark, not least because it is actually quite difficult to find out exactly what went on in some detail. They were a very different sort of games, because the whole apparatus of the Chinese state was thrown at making them work. There are reasons why Athens in 2004 was a different sort of games, so you really go back to Sydney in 2000.

Sydney in 2000 were the first games of the modern cycle, because the Atlanta 1996 games were the ones that ground to a halt completely because there was no Olympic route network of any sort. Athletes were late for their qualifying heats, there were not officials at the relevant events and ambush marketing took place around many of the big brands, as discussed this morning.

The benchmark, therefore, is Australia 2000 which is the one that we have used. There are some things in that which should be immensely reassuring to the Committee. If one is worried about proportionality, and we all ought to be, there was only one person who was fined in Australia as a result of this sort of measure. It was a fast food salesman on Bondi beach, I think, who put an Olympic logo on his kebab van—he went down for about £30 after three warnings, which he had stropfully refused to take. It is not as if the Bill will give rise to a huge trail of people going around the block at the courts on Monday morning.

The Chair: Mrs Hodgson?

Hugh Robertson: I know what this might be about.

Q127 Mrs Hodgson: During our many very fruitful exchanges on this subject over many months now—

Mr Foster: What subject?

Q128 Mrs Hodgson: The subject of ticket touting. During those exchanges, I found one of your answers to be very helpful. You said that it was a prerequisite to get the games that we did something to control ticket touting. I am very pleased that we are doing something

to control it. It was in the original Act, and after hearing evidence from the Metropolitan police you have brought forward the legislation to increase the fine for ticket touting. I just want to add that I hope that trend will continue when we move into other areas during what will no doubt be our future debates on ticket touting.

The one point that I want to tease out a bit further concerns selling tickets on to family and friends at face value. I know that that is probably the small fry end of touting and not the serious and organised crime end, which obviously the legislation is there to tackle. However, I have concerns that people who will not have realised that this legislation was even on the statute book at the level of a £5,000 fine, or who do not realise that the fine is now up to £20,000, will currently be in the process of buying their tickets, which they probably thought they were going to sell on at inflated prices. There will probably be people who have bought tickets thinking, “Oh well, I’ll sell them to my mates down the pub,” without realising that there was any criminality or wrongdoing in that, because they currently do it when they buy tickets to whatever event they might go to and their friends are always very happy that they have done so, because they put the money up front, pay perhaps six months in advance and their friends buy the tickets at the last minute if they want to go to the event. That goes on.

For those people, they will obviously be allowed to sell tickets supposedly at face value. I suppose that the only way that anybody would know is if somebody tells the police. I wonder whether you think that that will be a problem. So, somebody has bought a ticket for £300 and they go down the pub and they say to their mate, “You can have this for £400,” then somebody else says, “Actually, I’ll give you £500,” and somebody else says, “Opening ceremony? I’ll give you £2,000”. Do you know what I mean? It becomes a little bidding war in the pub that the person never intended, but they have therefore fallen foul of the law totally unintentionally and somebody could overhear that conversation, get in touch with the police and that person could be hauled in. Do you think that that will be a problem, or should we not worry about it?

Hugh Robertson: I think that sports events are probably marginally different from music events, in that at most big sports events around the world—most global sports events—ticket touting is now illegal. If you go to a cricket world cup, it is illegal to tout tickets and so on and so forth. So the first point is that among the sporting public there is probably a greater awareness that this is illegal for these key global events and there is that awareness in the market as a whole. Secondly, for anybody buying a ticket, if they read through the small print on the internet when they ordered their tickets the small print makes it perfectly clear.

Do I think that this legislation today will mean that there is absolutely no chance of anybody carrying out the activity that you described? No. Do I think that this is the best and proportionate way of stopping organised criminals targeting these games? All that I can do is to defer to the evidence given by the assistant commissioner a moment ago. I must say that I thought that his evidence was fantastic, actually. He gave us exactly the same briefing and said that there is a very particular threat that we need to address here around increased

organised criminality, and his recommendation was that we need a fine of £20,000 to tackle it—hence the provisions in the Bill. What you see in front of you today is a simple response to the evidence and the request presented to us by the Metropolitan police, on the basis of evidence gathered through Operation Podium.

Q129 Mrs Hodgson: Do you see anybody who perhaps finds themselves in that situation in the pub being brought before the police?

Hugh Robertson: If they do, I hope a sense of proportion would be exercised at the courts, but anybody who touts a ticket illegally—in other words, not to their family and friends—must realise that they run the risk of a very large fine. At the moment, at this stage in the cycle, that is where I want us to be. I want people to realise that we are discouraging that activity in the strongest possible terms. It is not to be undertaken.

Q130 Mr Foster: Minister, you describe this as a minor, technical Bill, so I hope you will not mind if I ask you an incredibly minor, technical question that arises from evidence we heard earlier today. We are told that by transferring responsibility for both storing and dealing with confiscated items, there will be a net saving of £55,000 to the public purse and a very precise £22,000 additional cost to the ODA. Please will you explain how that figure was arrived at, and does it include both storage and the handing back of items under the legislation, or only one or neither of those matters?

Hugh Robertson: I can sort of explain the first part of that because, as they say, you have kindly given me notice of the question. The initial estimate was that the cost of the police storing that material would be £77,000. If the storage is undertaken by the ODA, using their enforcement officers, that would cost only £22,000, therefore there is a net saving of £55,000—if my maths is right. That is the answer to the first part. You are absolutely right that, according to my briefing, those figures refer entirely to storage, and not to the associated costs of handling those goods. I will find out what answer is and, as they say, I will write to you.

Mr Foster: Thank you, Minister.

Q131 Bob Blackman: The legislation is reasonably vague about what goods will be allowed and what will not. May we be clear about what publicity will be given

nearer to the time, so that traders of all descriptions will not innocently walk into a trap about the goods they sell both near to the games venues and elsewhere?

Hugh Robertson: The definition is not that vague; it is laid out in some detail in the 2006 Act, after it had been the subject of considerable debate. Clearly, we are now adding an animal to that provision. It may cause you to laugh, but I saw an elephant advertising beer during the cricket world cup, so it is not quite as silly as you might think.

Since 2006, there has been an ongoing process. The organising committee, as soon as it hears of any form of infringement or potential violation, writes to people and gets into a process with them. That has been incredibly successful. There were a considerable number of such cases in the early stages; there are many fewer, as people have begun to understand the Act much better. I suspect that, as we get closer to the games, we will probably see another spike, which will be dealt with in the same way. The intention is always to work with people, to advise them that they have made a mistake, to correct their ways and to use the powers contained in the Act only as a last and final resort. I hope that by a process of education, and by the process of communication that is going on day by day and week by week, that will not prove to be a huge problem at the time of the games. If it is, we have the powers in the Act to deal with it.

Q132 Mr Foster: I would like to follow that up and to support the Minister in what he has said. I confess to the Committee that I have been guilty of a breach of that very legislation in respect of advertising. I assure the Committee that it was handled very sensitively. I was politely told off and told not to do it again, and I have not subsequently done so. Those things are handled well.

The Chair: Splendid. If there are no further questions from the Committee, we will meet again at 9 am on Thursday in Committee Room 9.

Ordered, That further consideration be now adjourned.
—(*Angela Watkinson.*)

5.39 pm

Adjourned till Thursday 19 May at Nine o'clock.

