

HOUSE OF COMMONS
ORAL EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE THE
HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

POLICING IN LONDON

TUESDAY 9 JULY 2013
CRESSIDA DICK and NEIL BASU
SIR BERNARD HOGAN-HOWE
BORIS JOHNSON

Evidence heard in Public

Questions 1 - 172

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Oral Evidence

Taken before the Home Affairs Committee

on Tuesday 9 July 2013

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)
Nicola Blackwood
Mr James Clappison
Michael Ellis
Lorraine Fullbrook
Dr Julian Huppert
Steve McCabe
Mark Reckless
Chris Ruane
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Cressida Dick**, Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, and **Commander Neil Basu**, Metropolitan Police, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: This is the Committee's inquiry into policing in London. This first session will deal with an update of the phone-hacking inquiries that are being conducted by the Metropolitan Police. Can I welcome back Cressida Dick, the Head of Specialist Operations, and Chief Superintendent Neil Basu? Thank you for coming.

Can I start, Mr Basu, with this statement from Mr Rupert Murdoch? Were you surprised to hear his criticisms of the investigation of the Metropolitan Police into News International and others when he said this: "It is a disgrace. Here we are two years later and the cops are totally incompetent. Why are the police behaving in this way? It's the biggest ever inquiry over next to nothing. Unbelievably slow"?

Neil Basu: I think it would be wrong to say I would be surprised to hear the Chairman of News International making those kinds of comments. I tend to look at his public statement, which was about empathy for his staff, as probably understandable. I would not say I was surprised by it.

Q2 Chair: Do you agree that this has been quite a slow inquiry? The Committee first got to hear about it when John Yates was running the inquiry. You have now spent in total £20.3 million, 169 staff have been involved, 120 arrests but only five people have been convicted.

Cressida Dick: Chairman, perhaps I could come in here, because I have been the management board lead since early 2011 whereas, as you know, Commander Basu has replaced DAC Kavanagh quite recently. I believe that this investigation has been progressing extremely well and in as timely a manner as it possibly could. I am very satisfied with the leadership of the investigation, the skills of the people that I have on the teams and the work that they have been doing.

Q3 Chair: But it is £20 million and it is 169 members of staff, and you have only convicted five people.

Cressida Dick: Chairman, it is a series of large and complex investigations that have been and are of considerable public interest. I don't think a valid way of assessing success or otherwise, particularly at this stage, is the number of people convicted.

Q4 Chair: How else would you assess success, then? If not by conviction, how else would you do it?

Cressida Dick: My job is to sit above these investigations, and I am constantly scrutinising and looking at what they are doing and where they have got to. Clearly at the moment we are at some very sensitive stages. I know you will understand that. I have the strictest advice from the Crown Prosecution Service, and indeed from the Attorney General and others, not to do anything that might destabilise the investigations or undermine subsequent or active prosecutions. But what I can say is that, as you have said, we currently have six people convicted. Overall we have arrested 126 people; we have charged 42 people; we currently have 56 people on bail; and there are 24 for whom no further action has been taken. I am extremely satisfied that this has been thorough, it has been very competent and we will, as we go forward, see whether further charges flow and indeed whether and how further convictions flow, and we will look at it again then.

Q5 Chair: Mr Basu, are you running this inquiry? You have taken over from Mr Kavanagh? This Committee has now seen three different leads for this inquiry. Are you running Weeting and Pinetree and Tuleta and Elveden, or are there other officers running each of those inquiries?

Neil Basu: That is correct. I am the ACPO lead for the joint inquiry for Weeting, Elveden and Tuleta.

Q6 Chair: Below you, who do you have?

Neil Basu: I am the line manager for Detective Chief Superintendent Gordon Briggs, who has been in post for 18 months.

Q7 Chair: Do you have any figures for us on whether or not all the potential victims of phone-hacking have now been contacted? When Sue Akers came to give evidence to us on 4 September last year she said there were 4,744 potential victims of phone-hacking of which 2,552 has been contacted. Have all the potential victims now been contacted?

Neil Basu: No, and if I refer back to DAC Akers' evidence she talked about the reasons why some victims were unlikely to be identified or be able to be contacted. The total number of potential victims is 5,500 now.

Q8 Chair: So, that has gone up?

Neil Basu: That has gone up. I am giving you an approximate—I can't give you an exact number, and it will change and fluctuate. Of those, 3,500 have been contacted. We think there are 1,000 likely victims. If I remind you of DAC Akers' evidence, a likely victim is someone where the name and phone number was in place but also additional material such as unique voicemails, PINs and so on.

Q9 Chair: Are those who are not able to be contacted, for whatever reason, off your list now?

Neil Basu: Yes. We simply cannot identify them.

Q10 Chair: How many are left to be contacted?

Neil Basu: The 1,000 likely victims have been contacted. It is the 2,000 that remain out of those 5,500 that can't be contacted. On Weeting specifically that is the number, but of course there are victims in Elveden and Tuleta, and I can give you those numbers if you need them.

Q11 Chair: Yes, please.

Neil Basu: In Elveden there are 419 victims that have been identified, and so far 213 have been informed. That is 51%, I think. On Tuleta there are 154 allegations, so victims, and we have identified 135 victims and they have all been informed. There are 19 again that we cannot identify. Of those 154 allegations, we have good evidence for 59.

Q12 Chair: In terms of the total cost, the last thing that Sue Akers said to us was that she estimated that the projected costs over four years were going to be in the region of £40 million. Do you want to revise those estimates?

Neil Basu: No, I think that was remarkably accurate. I would probably be saying it is £38.8 million. That is the budget predictions to the end of April 2015, which is the date I am aiming for concluding the inquiry.

Q13 Lorraine Fullbrook: Do you actually have the resources to widen the scope of each of these three main operations?

Neil Basu: Yes, I am confident I do. I have a weekly meeting with all three senior investigating officers, along with Detective Chief Superintendent Gordon Briggs. I asked that very question the day I set foot in the inquiry. They are confident they have the right resources, principally because they are able to use the resources flexibly across all three operations.

Q14 Lorraine Fullbrook: Do you believe phone-hacking is still taking place?

Neil Basu: It would be impossible to say that it can't take place, but it is highly unlikely. We are not getting a stream of allegations. One of the things that we did with Weeting is we put a single point of contact in for the industry, and we have been going to the phone companies involved in this inquiry and sitting down with them and taking statements for the inquiry. In doing that, we have been discussing just exactly what their security measures were and where they had failed, as a result of which you don't get the default PIN setting any more, which was a really significant issue, and also when you ring up to get a PIN of your own those methods have changed as well. I think those kinds of preventative measures have made a difference. We are not getting new allegations being given to us. Could I say it could absolutely stop? No, I can't say that. What I am aiming to do is when we bring Weeting to a conclusion we want to debrief with the industry and try to get some industry practice across the industry.

Q15 Lorraine Fullbrook: Give me an example of what that would be.

Neil Basu: In terms of what?

Lorraine Fullbrook: The industry practice on Weeting particularly, you say.

Neil Basu: I am by no means an expert, but every individual phone company seems to have grown up with a completely different set of procedures and practices. The not giving a default PIN, giving some kind of security advice when a phone is sold, you will find in the literature, but I bought a phone recently and the salesman did not mention anything to me about security. We would like to see some standards like that put in. That would be something we would be able to sit down with the industry and discuss after the operation.

Q16 Lorraine Fullbrook: You are happy with the three operations as they are going now, the timescales you have for completing them, and you are happy with the resources? The unknown unknowns can't be quantified, obviously, but you are happy that there is no more taking place, no more phone-hacking?

Cressida Dick: The other thing to say is that in terms of the unknown unknowns we can see our trajectory and I think it is fair to say that we believe we are coming to the end of our arrest phases but we don't know what new evidence might appear, so that of course is another unknown. We are hopeful of our trajectory.

Q17 Dr Huppert: Can I expand on the questions from Lorraine Fullbrook? Operation Motorman found a range of breaches of data protection, not just the specific type of phone-hacking that you have described by the PINs. Are you looking at all for other forms of breach of the DPA? Do you have any sense as to whether that is continuing, whichever form it takes?

Cressida Dick: These inquiries are focused inquiries. They all have their terms of reference, and we are sticking to those terms of reference. We are obviously alert to the fact that there may be other forms of criminal behaviour, and when we come across that we will deal with it. We are also alert to data protection issues.

Q18 Dr Huppert: Have you found other examples of people acquiring data in breach of the Data Protection Act? When you say you will deal with it, is that through those operations or through passing them to other things and have there been other arrests, other prosecutions, and how many?

Cressida Dick: I can't give you figures, but if and when we come across data protection issues we will always stop and decide, together with the CPS, whether it is appropriate for us to deal with it or whether it is appropriate for someone else to deal with it. I can't give you any figures for how often that has happened during the course of these particular investigations.

Q19 Dr Huppert: Is that because you don't have them or because you couldn't share them with us if you had them?

Cressida Dick: I don't have them with me. If I could at an appropriate moment, of course I would.

Dr Huppert: We look forward to hearing that when you do have it.

Q20 Michael Ellis: Assistant Commissioner, can I press you on this issue of further arrests? Surely it would be within your sphere of knowledge whether you expect or anticipate further arrests are possible as a result of these three operations. Can you give us a little bit more about whether such is likely or unlikely?

Neil Basu: I can be direct about that. We are anticipating further arrests, but I think it was absolutely correct for the Assistant Commissioner to say that the arrest phase is drawing to a conclusion. I would be surprised if they made double figures, but there are still people to be investigated.

Q21 Michael Ellis: So anything up to 10 more arrests?

Neil Basu: I would be surprised if they made double figures, but I can't give you an exact number, simply because, as with all police inquiries, we follow the evidence.

Q22 Michael Ellis: I understand, Commander, and I am not asking for exact numbers, but can you give a very approximate time estimate as to when these arrests are likely to follow? For example, are the arrests likely to follow in the coming weeks, months or over the next two years?

Neil Basu: Weeks to months.

Q23 Michael Ellis: Thank you. Finally from me, you spoke—and I thought convincingly, if I may say so—about the changes that have been enacted or at least have been brought in by phone companies and others to make phone-hacking less likely. One of the things that can't really be stopped, can it, is the issue of blagging, I think it is called, which is deceiving someone into giving information by pretending that the caller is someone who he or she is not? Can you say anything about that and how Parliament or the police can do anything to stop that?

Neil Basu: I think that is probably quite a complex area, but one of the simple ways has already been discussed with phone companies, which is the training of their customer care representatives who are quite often the people who believe they are providing a very good customer service to a member of the public who is, of course, deceiving them. Some of the techniques they use to do that have already been shared with the phone companies so they can train their staff to avoid that happening. That is part of what I was talking about in terms of trying to get best practice across the industry.

Q24 Chair: Can you tell us about the co-operation you are receiving from News International? I started the session with a quote from Mr Rupert Murdoch. Are you getting the co-operation that you were getting previously? When Sue Akers came to give evidence to us she said one of the reasons why she made so much progress, as opposed to John Yates and Andy Hayman, was the fact that they were co-operating fully with you. Is that still the case?

Cressida Dick: Chairman, I fully support what DAC Akers said. News International, and then the Management Standards Committee acting on their behalf, provided the Metropolitan Police with evidence that led to the formation of both Operations Weeting and Elveden.

Q25 Chair: That was then, but now? What I am referring to is Mr Murdoch's statement that they had given too much information to the police and it was a mistake.

Cressida Dick: I am coming to that, Chairman. A memorandum of understanding for the voluntary provision of documents by News International was subsequently signed by both the Metropolitan Police and the Management Standards Committee, and that led to significant documentation being provided. Nevertheless, I think it is fair to say, and DAC Akers made this clear, the relationship has always been a challenging one and since May of this year voluntary co-operation has been significantly reduced and all requests for new material are now supervised by the courts.

Q26 Chair: Are you telling this Committee that the co-operation that was once very helpful to Sue Akers has slowed down and you are having to go to court to get information?

Cressida Dick: In terms of co-operation that related to requests for new material, those are now always supervised by the courts, and that, of course, is a more protracted process.

Q27 Chair: When you say supervised by the courts, for those who don't understand the court proceedings and procedures, you go to court and you seek an order?

Cressida Dick: In essence, yes. I am very reluctant to—

Q28 Chair: Is there another way that a judge can supervise this, apart from going to court and getting an order?

Cressida Dick: In essence, we go to court to get orders, yes—production orders.

Q29 Chair: How many orders have you sought so far?

Cressida Dick: I can't tell you that, sir, and it would be inappropriate for me to do so.

Q30 Chair: But you have sought orders to get the information that previously was voluntary?

Cressida Dick: We are in the process of seeking orders and that is a process we have to go through.

Q31 Chair: Is it likely you will get a copy of this tape recording? Do you want it?

Cressida Dick: We are seeking to obtain, if you and I are talking about the same thing, the tape of the meeting during which Rupert Murdoch appears to have been recorded, and we will then assess the full contents of that tape.

Q32 Chair: Do you start that process by writing and asking for it, or do you just go off and get an order?

Cressida Dick: Again, sir, I don't think it would be appropriate for me to describe what we are doing, but we are currently doing this.

Q33 Chair: You are seeking it?

Cressida Dick: Yes.

Q34 Dr Huppert: I realise you are being very careful with what you say, Assistant Commissioner, but when you say, "In essence, we get an order from a court," can I just be clear that any orders you get would be approved by a judge in the broadest sense, or are you saying that there are routes to get such orders that do not rely on the courts?

Cressida Dick: No. If we are seeking an order, it is through the court.

Q35 Chair: You are seeking the tape recording that I referred to earlier on?

Cressida Dick: Yes, we are.

Q36 Chair: You have not received it yet?

Cressida Dick: I am really not prepared, sir, I am afraid, to go any further into the evidence that may or may not be obtained.

Q37 Chair: But you are seeking it. That is very helpful, thank you. Mr Basu, let us go on to evidence we received last week from the head of SOCA. We were concerned to make sure that you, as you are in charge of Tuleta, had all the information that SOCA had. SOCA was very clear to this Committee that they had handed over all their evidence, including the hard drive belonging to Philip Campbell Smith, to the Metropolitan Police. Can you confirm that you have received all the information that SOCA had concerning Philip Campbell Smith, that you have his hard drives and that there is no other information that they have that you wish to seek?

Neil Basu: I can confirm that absolutely.

Q38 Chair: In a letter that the Committee has received today from SOCA it talks about full access to material. Do you have full access, or do you have the material?

Neil Basu: All the material that we have asked for that is relevant to our particular investigation has been provided with full co-operation from SOCA.

Q39 Chair: I understand that, but how do you know what is relevant until you have seen the information? This is what is very confusing to the Committee. You have probably not seen the letter from Trevor Pearce to us. He made it very clear that the hard drives of Philip Campbell Smith were given to you. Do you have those hard drives?

Neil Basu: Yes. There was also a series of meetings with SOCA when the inquiry first started and in those meetings issues of relevance would have been discussed, so that is what I would call co-operation in terms of full access to material.

Q40 Chair: So, you would have access but you would not have all their material?

Neil Basu: We would not necessarily possess all of the material in a previous investigation, no.

Q41 Chair: On that hard disk, do you have the information that SOCA was not able to give us? We are seeking a list of people who were not newspaper people, who were solicitors and others who had employed private investigators perhaps to involve themselves in illegal activity. Would you have that list?

Neil Basu: I do have a list. I think my responsibilities to the judicial process would mean that giving that list would be inappropriate. It is a live investigation.

Chair: I have not asked you for it yet, actually.

Neil Basu: I have seen the transcript of the previous evidence, and I am aware that you would like that list.

Q42 Chair: Do you have the list that we were seeking from SOCA that they said they don't have?

Neil Basu: We have identified what we call clients, clients who would have used people to do this kind of illegal activity, and yes, I do have a list of who those clients are.

Q43 Chair: Are you telling this Committee, having received that list—and you received that list in 2009, is that right, the hard disk?

Neil Basu: No, sorry, these are clients that we have identified as part of Operation Tuleta.

Q44 Chair: In terms of what was on Philip Campbell Smith's hard disk, is there any information out of there concerning private investigators being employed by companies other than newspapers?

Neil Basu: My problem would be that I am veering very close to what I would suggest would be a commentary on a live investigation, where I am not sure I should go down that path.

Q45 Chair: That is fine. We do not want to know what you are doing. We just want to know what you have. You are telling this Committee that you are therefore actively investigating the information that you have received on the computer belonging to Philip Campbell Smith. That is right?

Neil Basu: Yes.

Q46 Chair: SOCA told us you received that information in mid-2009.

Neil Basu: That was not my understanding.

Q47 Chair: When did you receive it?

Neil Basu: 2011, I believe.

Q48 Chair: So, you received it in 2011 and you are therefore still pursuing these individuals and companies?

Neil Basu: We are still pursuing them, yes.

Q49 Chair: With a view to what, potentially prosecuting them?

Neil Basu: Potentially, if the evidence meets that criteria.

Q50 Chair: In respect of Tuleta, we were told that you have 8 to 12 terabytes of information across 70 storage devices, a terabyte being 450 million typed pages of information. That is what Sue Akers told us. Is that still the case or has someone started to go through it? What has happened to all that information that you have? Is someone looking at it?

Neil Basu: I am not aware of the exact figures. I couldn't tell you the exact figures, but I am aware it is a huge quantity of information.

Q51 Chair: That information has come from Sue Akers, and when we asked for an explanation we were told it was 1 million telephone directories of information. Does that ring a bell?

Neil Basu: Yes, that does ring a bell from reading the transcript.

Q52 Chair: That was last September. Out of the 1 million telephone directories, how many have you looked through?

Cressida Dick: I am sorry, I think we might have to write back and tell you this. I can assure you that we have a large team, as Sue described, and some very good electronic methods. I will come back to you to tell you how far we have mined that data.

Q53 Chair: Excellent. The interest of the Committee is not to seek to find out how much work you are doing every day. I am sure you are working extraordinarily hard. It is to find out where the end of this whole process is. Even though you disagree with Mr Murdoch's statement that the police have been incompetent—and this Committee does not think you have been incompetent; we think you have done an excellent job, especially since Sue Akers has taken over the investigation, continued by you, Mr Basu—our concern is that this might be a never-ending story.

Cressida Dick: Perhaps I could reassure you on that, sir. I am absolutely determined that we progress as quickly as we possibly can. It is very complex. As you have just pointed out, in Tuleta alone there is a vast volume of material. Over the time period we have been at it, evidence appears occasionally, new evidence arrives. There is a lot of complexity among the various parties involved. Also we are in some cases going to court for orders. That can take some time. We are supervised by the IPCC in Elveden. There is a whole range of issues that make this complex and therefore time-consuming and resource-consuming, but we are absolutely determined to bring all the matters to as swift a conclusion as we and the prosecution processes possibly can.

Q54 Chair: Do you have an absolute grip on what is happening in this investigation?

Cressida Dick: I think we do. I think we really do, yes. We have excellent leadership.

Q55 Steve McCabe: Chief Superintendent Basu, have you any idea why you didn't get the information until 2011 when it appears that SOCA had analysed the computers in 2009 and would have known at that point there was information that should have been handed to the Metropolitan Police? Are you aware of that and have you asked them how they account for the two-year delay?

Neil Basu: I am aware that there may have been a delay, but I am not aware that they had the material that we later got. Whether that was a different technique or a different piece of technology that allowed us to retrieve data I don't know, but I can't explain the two-year time-lag.

Q56 Chair: They told the Committee that they had seized the equipment in 2009. You are telling the Committee today that you received it in 2011. Are you saying they had a different quality of technicians; they couldn't access the information but you could?

Neil Basu: No, I don't know. I don't know that for certain, but I do know that we approached them in 2011 because of a link between the inquiries and that is when we got on to the conversation.

Q57 Chair: I see. So, you approached them? They didn't approach you and offer you the information?

Neil Basu: That is my understanding of my briefing, yes.

Q58 Chair: What this Committee would like to see is someone lead this inquiry to the end. There are been three people heading this inquiry, and we are concerned that every time somebody gets promoted, as I am sure you will be, Mr Basu, in due course, somebody else will take on your job and they will have to learn the whole process again.

Neil Basu: I have been demoted twice during this Committee session to Chief Superintendent. I am a Commander. I am only recently a Commander, and I also have a very long time left to do, and I have committed to Assistant Commissioner Dick that I am here to lead this to its conclusion. As I have stated already, we are looking at a realistic prospect of that being April 2015.

Chair: I can assure you that Mr McCabe was not seeking to demote you. We have many powers on the Home Affairs Select Committee, but we cannot promote or demote people in the Metropolitan Police.

Cressida Dick: Chairman, just to re-stress, at other levels of leadership above, and indeed below, there has been a very high level of consistency. My second point is that Mr Basu is ideally qualified and hand-picked by me and the Commissioner to undertake this role.

Q59 Nicola Blackwood: There are some quite worrying allegations that were associated with the first reporting of this SOCA evidence that the use of private investigators by serious organised crime gangs and others was perverting the course of justice, infiltrating witness protection and so on. When we spoke to SOCA they said that a lot of this activity was outside their remit and that is why they had passed the evidence on to you. What is your assessment of the evidence that you have? I am not sure whether this falls under Elveden or whether it would fall under your remit.

Cressida Dick: I will start, and then I will hand over to Mr Basu. I think the report that you are talking about there was in essence a sort of analysis of a number of operations.

Q60 Nicola Blackwood: That is true, but you have been given some evidence, and I am wondering what you have done with that.

Cressida Dick: Of course, but the point I wanted to make is that within that the SOCA team who did the analysis and come up with the, if I may put it this way, strategic assessment of the issues were relying on a number of Metropolitan Police investigations and Metropolitan Police intelligence. When SOCA passed their view back to us they, of course, in essence, apart from giving us their view of it, were not giving us anything new in relation to Metropolitan Police investigations because we had already passed them that information, that intelligence. That then came back to us. They had put that together with other material and formed a view about the scale of the problem, if you like.

That caused us—and at this point I will hand over to Neil—to do a number of things. We progressed with the investigations and the intelligence that we had already told them about, but subsequently we have carried out a whole load of other investigations that relate to private investigators of one sort or another. In fact, I don't think we will be able to give you the definitive number, because it is not that uncommon in a variety of investigations to come across a private investigator, and we would not be able to tell you precisely how many, but Neil can perhaps outline some of the significant ones.

Q61 Nicola Blackwood: Could I particularly ask you what operations you might have done to look at the integrity of witness protection programmes?

Cressida Dick: You certainly can. I am aware of some media coverage in relation to this, and Professional Standards and the people who run the witness protection team in the Met are also highly alert to this media coverage. We have done a whole set of scoping to try to understand what the media coverage refers to, but our understanding at the moment is that although it is not entirely surprising that serious organised criminals might seek to find out the identity of a protected witness or their location, we have not had any examples of the witness protection programme being infiltrated, to coin a term that the newspapers have used.

Q62 Nicola Blackwood: You have a SOCA report that specifically says that there was a risk, and that was based on evidence that had come forward, based on evidence I assume—they were not just making it up—saying that criminals might like to do this if they have the capacity to do so. I am trying to work out if you have done an operation that looked at it and said, “No, we have no examples of this,” or what you have discovered since then.

Cressida Dick: Undoubtedly risk. Anybody who works against organised crime knows that that is what people might choose to do and there is intelligence sometimes that they are seeking to do so. Neil used to be in charge of Operation Trident. It was not uncommon to hear that people were seeking to do it. My point is, I am not aware of anything in the Metropolitan Police that has resulted in infiltration thereof, but it is a risk that we are constantly trying to prevent materialising, of course, because people's lives are at risk.

Q63 Mr Clappison: I was going to ask Bernard Hogan-Howe this, but since you have mentioned the word “infiltrated”, there was a story in *The Sunday Times* last week, which no doubt you have seen, saying, “Gang boss infiltrated police units”. This was based upon a High Court judgment, and also, as I understand it from that article, a letter that was sent to the Commissioner from three of his own detectives who said that they had been stymied in their investigations. What are you doing about that?

Cressida Dick: I think that is a very important and slightly different type of infiltration.

Q64 Mr Clappison: You mentioned it. You used the word “infiltration”, so I thought that shone out.

Cressida Dick: That is clearly a very high-profile and important piece of reporting. My colleague who is head of Professional Standards, who has been involved in some of the associated legal matters here, is doing a full scoping of what that material tells us and looking to see whether there is anything in that that causes us to go back over work that we have previously done and do more or do it again.

Q65 Mr Clappison: You mentioned the word “risk”. This was a letter sent to you by three of your own officers.

Cressida Dick: Yes. I am aware of that, sir.

Q66 Chair: We will be having the Commissioner in, if you think he should answer it.

Cressida Dick: What I would say is it is an extraordinarily complex series of cases, which have been under investigation.

Q67 Chair: Assistant Commissioner, do you know about these cases?

Cressida Dick: I know some aspects of some of them. The most important I would want to make is that there is a particular person who is mentioned in that article as trying to infiltrate and causing people to infiltrate and that person has been subject to a very large number of difficult, proactive investigations.

Q68 Mr Clappison: Were you aware of the letter from three of your own detectives?

Cressida Dick: I know that my colleague Commander Gibson was aware of the nature of some of the allegations that were likely to be made in that article, yes.

Chair: Thank you very much for giving evidence to us today. We would be grateful if you could keep us updated on a regular basis on how the inquiry is progressing, and obviously this Committee, because of our interest in phone-hacking, wishes you all the best of luck in continuing with these investigations. Thank you for coming, Assistant Commissioner Dick and Commander Basu.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe**, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, gave evidence.

Q69 Chair: Good afternoon. Thank you very much for coming. Sorry to keep you waiting.

Almost every day that you open the newspapers there is another story about the Metropolitan Police. Some of course are historical issues, some like stop-and-search are current issues, and the Committee wants to explore these issues with you today. In the last 10 days we have seen revelations in *The Sunday Times* about David Hunt and Met officers who have written to you to ask you to investigate examples of corruption, we have seen the judge’s verdict on the Azelle Rodney case, and we have heard about the possible smearing of the Lawrence family. We took evidence from SOCA last week about the issue of private investigators. How will you restore confidence in the Met, bearing in mind the last opinion poll of Londoners showed that two in five are less likely to trust the Metropolitan Police as a result of the revelations about Stephen Lawrence’s family?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, Chair, as I say to this Committee and I have said publicly before, the allegations about the targeting of undercover officers against the Lawrence family and those who supported them I find shocking and I condemn if true. I understand why people are shocked in London, as they are elsewhere. That survey was carried out fairly quickly after that revelation, so I think we have to take that into account, and of

course, in a balanced way, we have to acknowledge that I think 85% of the people who were surveyed said that they had a trust in the Metropolitan Police. They are almost contradictory findings, but I will not try to run away from the fact that it was not a good day for the Met in terms of that allegation.

In building trust, it seems to me there are two things. First of all we have to perform as a police service today. We have to make sure we are keeping people's support, and perhaps we will explore the ways that we are trying to do that in terms of cutting crime and also dealing with very important issues such as stop-and-search. Secondly, I can do my best to get to the bottom of these allegations that are historical. Some of them we can do as a force. People are not always persuaded by that so we try to introduce elements of objectivity, which we may explore. There are so many things I can do to make sure we get to the bottom of the allegations, and others can support us in that. Equally, I have to make sure the organisation is working well with the resources we are given to keep 8.4 million people safe.

Q70 Chair: Let us start then with undercover operations, and this Committee has taken evidence from Pat Gallan. Two days after we took evidence from Pat Gallan, the matter was referred to Mick Creedon. Were you shocked that Metropolitan Police officers had been involved in relations, some of them sexual relations, with young women and that they had become fathers of children, as a result of these operations? We were certainly shocked when we heard the evidence of some of the women and some of the evidence that we have seen from the undercover officers themselves. What would you like to say to the Committee and to the public about the way in which these women were, in effect, used?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, I think it is clear that there is no police policy and never has been to target women, or anyone else, by trying to build a relationship, sexual or otherwise—well, really sexual—to maintain an undercover operation or develop it. So I think that is very clear. There has never been that pressure to do it, so if it has happened, it has not happened because of a policy. Clearly there were enough allegations that made you think that this had happened, but that is obviously what the investigation is trying to get to the bottom of. But I thought if you looked at the programme that was on the TV within the last two weeks there was some powerful testimony from the women involved, not all of the women but some of them, and you couldn't help but be affected at the personal level by how they were reacting to what happened to them. First of all, they had lost someone they loved, secondly, they appeared to have found out that they were police officers, and in some cases they had had children as a result. So, I think at a personal level you can't be other than shocked about the fact that it could have been the police involved, and secondly, that people's lives have obviously been damaged in some way.

Q71 Chair: Do you think they are owed an apology?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I would be quite happy to make that apology. We are involved in some civil litigation, which I hope people will understand gives me some pause, but I have said two things that I stand by here. If it is proved to be as is alleged in any way that police officers had these relationships, short or long-term, I want to meet the people concerned, and I want to apologise myself, because I think they deserve that. There are other things that we might be able to do to assist. At the end of the day they don't deserve to have their trust abused, certainly by a police officer, in the way that they described.

Q72 Chair: What about the parents of dead children whose identities have been used by officers, which Pat Gallan told us on 5 February only applied to two units but we now discover from Mick Creedon that it was widespread throughout the Metropolitan Police—at

least those involved in undercover operations? Do you think they are owed an apology for the way in which their identities have been used?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: The only reservation I have here in making the same comments that I just have about the women affected is I understand that Mr Creedon is very close to making an announcement about that particular part of the inquiry. There was speculation in the press over the weekend, which surprised us, so therefore I can't comment an awful lot on whether it is true or not, but I don't think it is going to take too long to come to some conclusions. My only reason for having some slight reservations is that in this area we need to know how many families may be affected, and we need to take into consideration all the consequences of making those revelations. One of the things that he is looking at are some very old operations involving undercover officers, and if they have not been previously identified, we have to consider the impact on them as well as the impact on the families involved.

Q73 Chair: Do you think the parents ought to be contacted and told that the identities of their dead children have been used once you have dealt with all these issues and Mick Creedon has made his statement? That would be the right thing to do, surely.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I think people know when I come to this Committee I try to be as frank as I can about where I stand on things. The only reason I am reserving my position on this is I think Mick Creedon has been asked to look at all the ramifications of that decision. We just have to wait, I think days, to hear how we should deal with that, but in principle I would want to make an apology to anybody hurt in this way. We just have to work out who we should tell and how. This is over a very long period of time and people at the moment are sat at home and don't have a clue, in most cases, what is happening.

Q74 Chair: Bearing in mind you were Commissioner for part of the time that Pat Gallan was in charge of Operation Herne, which went on for 20 months and cost £1.2 million and not a single person was arrested, do you think that the operation should have been conducted slightly more efficiently? You clearly believed that somebody else should do it. That is why you handed it on to Mick Creedon.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: On the grounds, as we started against some of these revelations that have caused people such disquiet recently, that we, along with the Home Secretary, were concerned to make sure that we had that objectivity; so it was a joint concern, although it was our decision to ask Mick Creedon to be the objective person who brought some of it on. The only thing we have to look at is whether or not we are applying enough resources, and as a result of these recent revelations I have asked him to consider two or three things.

Q75 Chair: I understand that, but before you gave it to Mick Creedon you were in charge as the Commissioner and Pat Gallan was heading the operation, but nobody was arrested.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: No, and the only thing I am trying to explain is that, first of all, we are looking at a unit here, the Special Demonstration Squad, that existed from 1968 until 2008, a period of 40 years. The people who had worked there often have moved away from the Met. The documentation has now been stored in many places around this country, because that is what we do with our documents. Putting both witnesses and documents together takes some time. So, the very first exercise, as you said by DAC Gallan and supervised by a Deputy Commissioner, was to make sure we got all the documentation together and we didn't lose any evidence. There is always a problem with these historical inquiries that you are in the process of weeding things out and it gets lost, so the first thing

was to capture the evidence. I thought that was done reasonably. I think we had about 30 people, something of that order. The Committee may yet challenge me—and I don't know if it did with Cressida—about putting too many resources into historical inquiries. We are always trying to strike the balance on that, but I think we made reasonable first steps to capture the information, and then when we saw that there was to be some very contentious issues we asked for independence over that, some IPCC supervision, but that is now being reviewed to see whether there should be more.

Q76 Mr Winnick: On the position of undercover agents, to which you have been responding to questions from the Chair, as you know, what has caused much genuine shock was the way in which apparently the Lawrence family were infiltrated by Peter Francis. I have spoken about the shock that people feel. What about yourself?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: That is what I tried to open my comments with, which was I was shocked, and I have said that publicly numerous times and I repeat it here today.

Q77 Mr Winnick: One would hope that the incompetence—there is no other way to put it—of police operations following the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence all would have come out at the Macpherson inquiry, instead of which now, so many years after the inquiry, we have the information that Peter Francis has given. Do you accept that when Peter Francis did what he stated he did—it is not allegations, apparently; I believe the Met have confirmed his story—

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I think all we have said is exactly what he has stated, he has stated he has done these things, and that is what the investigation is now trying to determine.

Q78 Mr Winnick: Obviously then he was instructed by the Met, before you were involved in any way. Do you accept that that is the position? He would not have done it just for the sake of it. He would have been given clear instructions.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: One of the things that clearly needs to be established is which senior officers were involved in his care and direction, which supervisors were involved, what was he directed to do and what did he do, and that is exactly what the investigation is now trying to determine.

Q79 Mr Winnick: Peter Francis says he is not satisfied with the inquiry that the Home Secretary announced to the House. He considers there should be a public inquiry. Do you have any views on that?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: The first thing I would say to this gentleman, who I have not met, is that I hope he feels able to support Mr Creedon and the IPCC in this investigation. He clearly gave testimony in public but now the investigators need to talk to him to tie down dates and people. A lot of information was provided, but a lot yet remains to be provided, and we do need him to support this inquiry. I understand why various people sometimes doubt this type of police investigation, but it is all we have. Either it is this police force, another police force or the IPCC. Someone will have to investigate to see if there is a crime or misconduct, so I urge him to assist with that inquiry.

Q80 Mr Winnick: It was not just the Lawrence family, whose son was murdered. When Stephen's friend, Mr Brooks—Councillor Brooks as I understand he is now—who was at the scene, had meetings with his lawyer the police were involved as well. Is that so?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: We have been discussing with Duwayne Brooks and his legal adviser over the last week to try to get information to him and his adviser as soon as

possible on what we are discovering as we are discovering it. One of the criticisms is these inquiries take too long. Some of that information has been discussed in the press, although we would say not all. But certainly the allegation is that Duwayne Brooks's meeting with his lawyer and a senior police officer and others was audio-taped. You have probably also seen that at the time a Commander, but eventually retired as a Deputy Assistant Commissioner, John Grieve, has acknowledged publicly that he was the person responsible for that audio-taping, and he provides a broad justification for that.

Q81 Mr Winnick: You have met with Mrs Lawrence?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I have.

Q82 Mr Winnick: What was Mrs Lawrence's response when this meeting took place, this whole murky disgraceful affair that should, of course, have never happened in the first place?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Mr Winnick, do you mean the meeting with me or in the past; her reaction in the one that I had?

Mr Winnick: The meeting with you.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I would not try to speak for Mrs Lawrence, because I don't think that is fair, but she has said publicly and she repeated there—I think the best capture of it was that she said that her trust in the Met had taken at least two steps back and she had been building it. We had a successful investigation, as you know; we had a successful prosecution last year; and we had an inquiry that took that long, 20 years, to get to a murder conviction. That was a step forward, but this clearly was two steps back, and it was going to take some time to rebuild trust. I don't think this breaches the privacy of our meeting, because we both said we would keep private what we discussed. We tried to share as much as we had.

Chair: Thank you. We will hear from Mrs Lawrence tomorrow.

Q83 Dr Huppert: Can I follow up on Duwayne Brooks, who was there when Stephen Lawrence was killed—he was the main witness there—and there was apparently an effort to try to discredit him? The police accept that he was covertly recorded, that the Metropolitan Police authorised covertly recording a meeting between him and his solicitor. Can you be clear yet on whether there were any other occasions where he was covertly recorded with his solicitor or without, and is it common practice for the Metropolitan Police ever to covertly record meetings for anybody with a solicitor?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Perhaps I should make one thing clear. The investigation into the allegation that Duwayne Brooks has made is being carried out by the Metropolitan Police, which you may challenge us about, but Mick Creedon's inquiry is into the Special Demonstration Squad, and this is separate from that, although the common link is obviously the Macpherson inquiry and the murder of Stephen Lawrence. That is possibly why ours is moving a little quicker in that area.

In terms of whether or not this is usual, it is possible but unusual to, first of all, record witnesses or victims, and certainly when there is a solicitor involved then it is something you have to take very carefully. The time when you wouldn't record unless there was exceptional circumstances—and I can think in my career probably twice—is the advice given by a solicitor to their client, unless you think there is some conspiracy to commit a crime, in which case there are certain rules that we have to follow to do that. So, I can only say that it is rare for a witness to be recorded. Occasionally there can be justification, and the main reason is to capture best evidence.

Q84 Dr Huppert: You say that there are some circumstances where people's conversations with their own lawyers could be recorded. Is there a written-down policy of the procedure that you would have to go through in the Met and the circumstances in which that would be allowed? You say that under exceptional circumstances you would do it even if there is advice being given, which I certainly would have thought was a privileged conversation. Can you be very clear with us, and perhaps in writing, about exactly what the rules are where you will breach a reasonable belief of client-lawyer confidentiality?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I am quite happy to provide it in writing, because one of the things is that the rules changed in 2000. The new statute came in place called RIPA, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, so that provided a different statutory basis on which these things were done. Secondly, during that time ACPO advice has changed. Just going to your latter point, it is an incredibly rare event in the circumstances we described with a lawyer. It is only if you think or you have evidence or intelligence that a crime is being committed or conspired towards, and if that is the case, then certain rules are in place to manage that.

Q85 Mr Clappison: The Chairman mentioned to you the very significant story that appeared in *The Sunday Times* last weekend. You didn't mention it in your response so can I ask you, having seen that and in particular what is said in that story about the detectives who have written to you about the way in which their investigation was dealt with, first of all, were you aware of that letter from the detectives before the story broke in *The Sunday Times* and, secondly, what are you now doing about it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Mr Clappison, just help me because there have been a few stories these last few days? Which one is it in particular?

Mr Clappison: It was a headline. I can certainly let you have a look at it if you want to.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: What is the name of the case?

Chair: David Hunt was the person.

Mr Clappison: The headline was "Gang bosses infiltrated police units". I don't know what your police cuttings service is like, but it was the headline of *The Sunday Times*.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: It was just you had not mentioned it and I couldn't see it, so I was just asking you what the details were, that is all.

Chair: I wonder whether we can just hand it to the Commissioner.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: There is no need to. You have now given the name, which I required, so now I know the story you are talking about. You just said "the story".

Chair: I am sure you have to deal with a lot of stories. This is a story in *The Sunday Times* relating to Mr David Hunt.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, clearly there are two parts to this. People may not remember, but of course this comes directly from a defamation case that Mr Hunt took against *The Sunday Times* and failed, and in fact *The Sunday Times* were proved to be right, I presume therefore because they won the defamation case. I suppose there are two broad issues within that article, which I have read. The first one is whether or not our witness protection scheme has been penetrated by people from the outside. This is vitally important, because obviously if we put people in that scheme, they need to be safe. Secondly, there is a broad allegation of serious criminality where the Metropolitan Police, and potentially others, have failed to successfully prosecute the main person named in that and some of his conspirators. So, it seems to me those are two very serious allegations. Then the final one is that some of the officers who were involved in investigating this man feel as though they have not been well dealt with by the Met and in fact on some occasions they feel that they have become the victim not the person who was carrying out the investigation.

In terms of did I know all that detail, I am not sure I knew all the detail that historically *The Sunday Times* has gone through. I obviously didn't in terms of Mr Hunt, but I did find it very interesting. I would add three things. First of all, we constantly keep the witness protection scheme under review, and we believe that it is a safe unit. I want to make that public, because there are journalists here. If you are offered the protection of the witness protection scheme it is the safest thing we can do to keep you safe, particularly in serious organised crime. The second issue, which I think is worthy of us looking at, is the police officers involved and whether or not they have been dealt with well. The third issue that is left hanging is if there is serious criminality, what are we doing about it, and that is what I want to know more about in the coming days or weeks.

Q86 Mr Clappison: I take it you are now addressing the issues that arise from that that.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Certainly.

Q87 Chair: Just before you go on to Operation Alice, you want to know more about it? What is the process when officers of your own force have made complaints about corruption in the Met, possibly of serving officers? How can you satisfy this Committee that this is going to be looked into?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: There are two ways. First of all, we talk to them and find out the details. The second thing is—

Q88 Chair: Are you arranging to meet with them to discuss this, or somebody is?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I am just saying that we will talk to them, and it may be I will meet them. I am not saying I won't but that would not be my first reaction. We have a group of people who are committed to fighting corruption, in fact one of the few organisations, I would argue, in the country that has significant numbers, into the hundreds, who look at this issue. We have those people available who can carry out those inquiries. We need to hear what they are saying. Secondly, we need to report to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, because they may choose to take over the investigation or investigate. At the end of that we will know what we have got, but there is sufficient in that public report for us to make some serious inquiry.

Q89 Mr Clappison: Can I turn to Operation Alice and some of the headlines that have arisen out of that? It is right, isn't it, that you met journalists in two meetings on 25 and 26 March in which the subject of Operation Alice arose, which was the operation involving the fallout from the former chief whip's alleged altercation at the Downing Street gates. That is right, isn't it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: That is correct.

Q90 Mr Clappison: Was a record made of the content of that meeting?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: It wasn't.

Q91 Mr Clappison: It wasn't? Isn't it current practice for a record of the contents of such meetings to be made?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: No. We do have a clear policy to do two or three things. The first thing, if you don't mind, is to set out the context of the meeting. Following on from Lord Justice Leveson's inquiry, we received constant criticism from journalists that we are not keeping an open, accountable meeting with them, not just the Commissioner but all our officers. So, we tried to find ways to meet that gap and two of the ways were that we would

meet, either at the request of the editors of newspapers and their teams, or vice versa sometimes us, and the Crime Reporters Association. Those meetings have all been advertised on the internet, so some of the accounts have said that this has been dragged out. It has been dragged out on the internet. The meetings have been there in public.

The second thing is we said consciously we did not intend to provide a verbatim account, and there are two reasons for that. One is that the journalists were saying, "If we are going to meet, we not only ask the Commissioner to make a report but also all your detective superintendents and detective sergeants." They don't want to meet us now, so if you start recording everything, that will just dampen down the whole purpose of having a meeting, to have open dialogue. The final thing is just the bureaucracy that would go with that, and that was both internally and externally.

What there was an expectation of, to be fair, was that we make a broad account of the headings of the detail of the meetings, and what I have acknowledged already publicly and repeat here today is that didn't happen, for which I am responsible. To be fair, the policy could be read two ways, and we have now said, as I said in my letter to Stephen Rimmer to advise the Home Office of my response to some of the challenges, that we have now remedied that problem.

Q92 Mr Clappison: We are grateful for that answer, which has gone into some detail, but can I remind you of what you said in your evidence to Leveson, which was not only the fact that meetings were taking place should be recorded? You also said, in dealings with the press, "However, where interviews are given and any significant issues likely to attract media attention arise then these are recorded separately so that there is a record of the issue raised and the response given. This ensures that an accurate, timely, central record is held about what the media have inquired about, what responses they have been given and what press lines have been recorded". Was any of that done in this case?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: It is difficult to remember the question, and if you don't mind, I would like to revisit that. The particular problem that I think I was facing there, or dealing with: if I am the senior investigating officer in an investigation, journalists often want to know how far we have got in a murder inquiry or rape inquiry, and if the result has not been established very early, then they will have an ongoing relationship. I will give you one case, but it won't take a long time to explain it. The investigation of the murder of Rhys Jones, a boy of 11 years in Liverpool, lasted for a year before we made arrests that led to charges. During that time we briefed journalists; the senior investigating officer briefed journalists. What becomes directly relevant for the investigator is obviously to record what is in the public domain and what they have discussed with journalists, because it may later become a disclosure issue. It was really discussing that issue of the investigator discussing it with the press so that obviously there was not a compromise to the investigation.

Q93 Mr Clappison: Once again we are grateful for a lengthy answer, but you have to accept, I think, as you have accepted implicitly in your answer there, that you didn't make a record of the issue raised and the response given. You just recorded the fact that a meeting had taken place. That is right, isn't it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: That is a selective answer, I think.

Mr Clappison: If you recorded the response, please tell us.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: The point I was making is that as a senior investigating officer we did expect that and we have very different policies about that. I am not a senior investigating officer. So, I am acknowledging that we should probably have made more of a note, and certainly the headings, and we have put that right since. I think we have met two national newspaper editors since then, and we have now remedied that.

Q94 Mr Clappison: Notwithstanding that, can you tell us what you did tell the press about Operation Alice, please?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I think if you have seen the press reports, what I said is my concern about this operation is, first of all, it has taken a long time, and it may well be that you want to talk about that today. Probably more importantly is my concern is that whichever way this went it wasn't good for the reputation of the Metropolitan Police. The first issue is was the word "pleb" used at the gates of Downing Street. If it wasn't possible to establish who said what, then the reputation of the Metropolitan Police could be damaged. The second issue is whether it was true, as some public allegations have been made, that police officers then conspired or alternatively put things into the public domain that were inaccurate—you think about the email that was mentioned. Thirdly, the federation made certain comments publicly, calling for the resignation of a Cabinet Minister. That taken together is not good for the reputation of policing or the Met, and it was in that context that I made the comments.

Q95 Mr Clappison: Did you tell the press in the meetings that Scotland Yard's investigation had not found any evidence that police officers lied about the altercation in Downing Street?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: No, because if you think about it logically, it can only be that I was concerned that the obverse was true. What I have to be a little careful about here, because I am being criticised, potentially, for saying too much, if that was the concern, is I don't replicate that damage here, if there be any damage. So, all I was saying is that in general terms—and given the amount of time that has gone on, I meet politicians here at this Committee and elsewhere, and I meet journalists who keep saying, "What are you doing about it? Are you going to get to the bottom of this?" and I have two broad responses. Like I said, I can say that it is an investigation and I can't talk about it, or I can share my concerns about reputation. This Committee started talking about the competency of the Met, and this is one of a number of issues that I have to deal with. So, it was only in that context I offered a genuine concern.

Q96 Mr Clappison: Do you understand the question that I have put to you? There is a particular statement that the Scotland Yard investigation has not found any evidence that police officers lied about the altercation in Downing Street. You are saying that you didn't say that in the press briefings that took place on 25 and 26 March?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I can guarantee that there is nothing in what we talked about. I have told you what we talked about, and in terms of their reporting I am afraid I just can't account for it.

Mr Clappison: So no, that was not said?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I can't account for their reporting. I can only tell you what I remember that we talked about.

Mr Clappison: You did not say that?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I can't put it any clearer. I have told you what I did say.

Q97 Mr Clappison: Can I ask the Commissioner if he can throw any light on how it came to be that on 29 March, just a couple of days later, two national newspapers produced the same story that the police investigation had found no evidence that police officers had lied? Can you throw any light as to how that appeared—

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I am afraid I can't account for their stories. I can only share with you what I was talking to them about. I would invite you to think about two things. I am genuinely concerned about our reputation if these investigations conclude that police

officers lied or conspired together and the consequence was a Cabinet Minister lost his job. That is a very serious allegation.

Q98 Mr Clappison: The point I am putting to you is I am trying to establish who told journalists or how did they come about the information, apparently, that there had been no lying by police officers about the altercation in the Downing Street?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I don't know, and I can't answer the question. I can only say that I am trying to make clear my concerns, and I am afraid I can't account for what caused them to write the stories.

Q99 Mr Clappison: You cannot? It is quite striking, because two different newspapers produced the story in almost the same terms—no evidence that police officers were lying—very shortly after your meeting with them. If you can throw any light on it, please do, but it is quite striking.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: If I could—but I am afraid I can't account for their stories.

Chair: Mr Clappison and Commissioner, I think there are other members who want to come in. Can I just say to members we have spent an awfully long time on this subject. There are other things that we need to ask about.

Q100 Michael Ellis: Commissioner, I would like to continue on this for a moment. Can I just make sure we establish you accept, do you, that you had an off-the-record meeting with senior crime reporters about Operation Alice?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Well, just to be clear, it wasn't my intention to talk about that. They raised it, as did the editors and the people who were there.

Q101 Michael Ellis: I understand. This was about and featured the issue of the fact that the police file had been passed to the Crown Prosecution Service, so the timing of the procedure was such that that is about when that meeting was.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: It was around that time, although I think the meeting had been arranged in February, or was about to be. The meeting had been arranged before the end of March, probably February, and then coincidentally really a file—not the file, because we might come back to when the file would go—was about to go to the CPS.

Q102 Michael Ellis: Sir Bernard, do you think that you said anything that would justify the headline that Mr Clappison has referred to, "Police find no evidence to say cops lied", or whatever the headline was?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I don't believe so. I know you might feel I am labouring the point, but I can't see how logically I can be saying I am concerned about the reputation if it is found that police officers have lied and conclude that no one lied at all, because that—

Q103 Michael Ellis: Forgive me for interrupting, Sir Bernard, but would you also accept that if anyone made such a statement, it is palpably incorrect, is it not—factually incorrect—in that I believe that the police have arrested eight people already? There is some CCTV evidence that is in the public domain that would tend to support the contention that there is some evidence. Whether that evidence goes on to be believed or not is another matter. So, anyone saying that there is no evidence would be wrong, would they not?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I am not going to comment any more, I don't think, because it would be unfair, on an ongoing CPS consideration of a file. I am in danger of doing the very thing that I am being accused of, starting to express opinions about evidence, some of which I am aware of and most of which I am not. So, I think I just have to be really careful.

Q104 Michael Ellis: Presumably there would have to be some evidence to justify arrests, but my question to you finally is this. Do you agree that investigating officers in Operation Alice reading a story like that in national daily newspapers might interpret it as an attempt to pre-empt their own investigation and therefore their duty to get to the truth? So, it is injurious to the national interest, is it not?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Well, in short, yes, and if I thought that was the case, then obviously I would be concerned. In retrospect I might regret having said anything and probably the best thing to have said was I probably shouldn't have said anything, but I genuinely was trying to get over in the leadership of the Met some of my concerns. I either ignore it for 18 months, which is not far off what we are going into, or I say something. I chose to say something, and in the process I left myself trying to explain what I was talking about.

Q105 Mark Reckless: Commissioner, you just used the word "regret", and I wonder if that could help us move on from this. Is that briefing that you provided to journalists something you now regret, and in particular would you apologise to Andrew Mitchell?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, I would emphasise my regret that we ended up talking about it at all, not least of which is that I end up trying to explain what I was talking about on that occasion, so I have no problem with that. In fact, if it helps you—and I have said that I have met with editors since then, and each of them interestingly has always asked, "What is happening with the Plebgate case?" and my answer has been, "I'm afraid I can't discuss it," not least of which is some of the press speculation recently. I think by doing that I have acknowledged that probably it is best not to say anything and therefore not deal with the reputational damage just by not saying anything.

Q106 Mark Reckless: I am sorry you haven't used the word "sorry", which I think could have helped us move on from this.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, if it has damaged Mr Mitchell's or anybody else's confidence in the integrity of our inquiry, then of course I am sorry, so I don't mind offering it in that sense. Did I intend to—

Mark Reckless: In light of that, Commissioner, I am happy to leave the rest of my questions on that. Thank you very much.

Q107 Steve McCabe: Commissioner, what people are going to see here is this looks as if police officers stitched up a Cabinet Minister and what the man in the street is going to say is if they can go after him and stitch him up they could stitch anybody up. What are you going to do? You are responsible for this organisation now. What are you going to do to restore any measure of confidence?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I think the first thing is that under the supervision of the IPCC we are carrying out a thorough inquiry. People may complain about the time involved, but we have put significant officers into it, and the only reason for the time is there has been revelations as time has gone on that we have to respond to. The second thing is—and this has not been in the public domain before, although I have corresponded with Mr David Davies about this—is that I have asked DAC Pat Gallan, who as you said earlier has been leading this inquiry at a very high level, not the SIO, to review what it tells us about what we need to think about in terms of our protection officers and their duties and whether there is something that we need to learn from that. It is in part how our firearms officers are organised altogether. So, again, I would just offer to the Committee that if I was completely immune to the fact that we

might have something to account for then I would not be asking these questions. That process has started, and I expect very shortly to be able to make some announcements about that.

Q108 Chair: Are we done with Alice? Excellent. Can I move on to stop-and-search, if I may, and the report that was published only yesterday by HMIC that shows that 27% of those stopped and searched in London were stopped and searched illegally? When you became Commissioner you made this a feature of what you hoped to do, which was to reduce the number of people being stopped in this way and therefore stop members of the ethnic minority community from being more likely to be stopped and searched than those who are not members of the ethnic minority community. What do you say about these rather remarkable figures?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, I am not sure it just talks about the Metropolitan Police. It talks about across the country and I am going to say addresses directly the criticism that you have just referred to, and I hope you will allow me to say a little about the positives. First of all, these figures refer to the year 2011-12, although the HMI's investigation took until March 2013, so I am little surprised that they didn't go into the later time. I think what they say is not necessarily that the stops were illegal but they didn't record the grounds for which they were made in a very clear way, and for that we have to be accountable and we have to do something about improving the way we stop and search. The reason I am particularly keen to take this last year into account—you are quite right—as I arrived I would have to have been immune to any feedback to not hear the feedback from the community that in fact we were getting stop-and-search wrong. Also, if you remember, the report that was carried out into the riots in London in 2011 concluded that stop-search may have played a part in that problem. So, what I did was to say a few things, really, and not only say things but then we did things.

The first thing was I thought we were carrying out too many stop-and-searches. In year 2011-12 we carried out around 500,000 stop-and-searches, and last year we carried out around 350,000. That is still 350,000, but it is 30% less than the year before. The second thing that concerned me was that it seemed to be relatively ineffective. Our hit rate, the arrest rate, was something to the order of 8.5%. I think people will see from the report it shows a spectrum of productivity, if you look right across the country. This last year we have increased the percentage of arrests to 15%, so almost doubled it. That is about one in six. The third thing is that we have reduced the number of complaints. We used to have about 1,200 complaints for the 500,000 stop-and-searches, and we have reduced it to just over 900 for fewer stop-and-searches. So, we have reduced the number of complaints.

Although interestingly the report does not refer to a racial disproportionality, we have done something about that. If you are an Asian person, you have about the same frequency of being stopped as if you are white. I think it is 1.1 to 1: still a slight disparity. If you are black, then it is 2.4 to 1, but that has improved from 4.4 to 1. So, I am not saying it is perfect—it is not—but I think we can show we did something.

Q109 Chair: I will bear those figures in mind when I next walk round the streets of London.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Right. The final thing that I would refer to is that one of the big challenges that our Deputy Commissioner noticed was that the percentage of section 60 stop-and-searches was very high in London. I will not bore the Committee with all the regulations, which I am sure they know anyway, but basically a section 1 is the “having a suspicion” stop-and-search, and section 60 is an order put in place by a senior police officer that means that anyone can be stopped and searched in that area if they start to gather.

We have reduced those section 60s, which were accounting for a large amount of the proportionality, by 95%. So I think we can show that we listened and we have done something. The report identifies best practice, which includes that we have trained 18,000 police officers in stop-and-search, and it says that most forces have not. We have another 25,000 to train over the next coming two years. We have already trained 18,000, improving the way they do stop-and-search. I think the figures bear out that we have made a difference. At the same time that we reduced the stop-and-searching, crime came down. Serious crime for young people was reduced by 29%, and the number of stabbings reduced by about 20%. So, despite that, crime still dropped in the particular areas that stop-and-search is designed to prevent.

Chair: Thank you. I know that was a long answer, but could I ask you if you could keep it as short as possible for the next one as there is a lot of stuff that we want to get through? Thank you for that very full answer.

Q110 Dr Huppert: You are presumably aware that in the House the Home Secretary praised the efforts that you have made to reduce inappropriate stop-and-search. We are all very pleased to see that reduced, because it has been a huge blight on relationships between the police and the public, particularly black and ethnic-minority populations. The national figures were that only one third of stop-and-searches were recorded; 37% of people were not told the reason for the search; and 27% of the records did not contain significant sufficient grounds. I do not have the figures for the Met yet.

What do you think are acceptable figures to have of stop-and-searches that are recorded, people not being told the reason and records that do not contain sufficient grounds for it?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, stops should all be recorded. That is the law. Sometimes there is human error or the fact that somebody is chasing somebody, stops quickly in the street, does a quick search and then sees the person they are racing after. You can imagine circumstances where it might be almost impossible. But I regard that as a very small number. In terms of filling in the form, it is a bit of a challenge at night, in the rain, even if you have a piece of kit. So, I accept that human error can come into it. They say human error can account for 3%. You can never reduce it below that. So, 3% might be reasonable. Beyond that, I think it has to be explained. As you say, this percentage of failure is a national figure and we do not know exactly what the Met figures are—I have not had it shared with me so I am afraid I just don't know—but that would be too high, and I acknowledge that.

Q111 Dr Huppert: Good. If you can find out what the Met figures are and send them to us; if there was some data that they had, that would be helpful. I think we would perhaps understand 3%. If the problem is about recording things in the rain, can I suggest that there is a range of electronic devices that work reasonably well in the rain and that might help.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: We do use those, Dr Huppert. My only point is that people do make errors, whether we write it or not. That is the only sense in which I accept it. It is never acceptable to say, "We won't bother".

Dr Huppert: We would agree completely that you should be complying completely with the law.

Q112 Chair: Commissioner, the Committee is also looking in some detail at the issue of private investigators. We have taken evidence from SOCA. Cressida Dick and Neil Basu were helpful in some of the things that they were saying. We are very concerned about the fact that SOCA may not have given all the information that they have in their possession to the Met and that the Met may not have had all the information that is relevant to them. We are

particularly concerned with the possibility of a breach of the witness protection programme. Do you have any information as to whether or not that programme has been breached? That, of course, would be very serious indeed.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Part of what I was saying to Mr Clappison probably is quite confusing, but it was always an issue in that particular case. So, we have taken steps to reassure ourselves that that is not the case. We do take that very seriously. The witness protection scheme does suffer from an inherent risk. Many of the people that we protect often are involved in criminality themselves. There are obviously the innocent, who are victims normally. And then there are people involved in serious organised crime, the very people who have very good information: if they choose to change their ways, then obviously they are a very interesting group, and they are most at risk. The difficulty is sometimes they are unpredictable people; they do not want to be constrained within the lifestyle we offer them. That can be a serious risk, and it is something we have to manage as well as the risk of information leaking out. So, sometimes they desecrate from the witness protection scheme when they understand the impact on their life. Finally, obviously, we need to ensure that they are not directly threatened while they are in that scheme. But more often the challenge is from those who are around them, and it is very hard to put the entire family and those who know them, who they may still be communicating with, in a scheme that avoids any risk of a threat being passed on.

Q113 Chair: Another area we are looking at of course is phone-hacking. We have been for the last five years. We were very concerned to hear the comments of Mr Rupert Murdoch that the officers running Tuleta and Weeting were, in his words, “incompetent”. What did you feel when you heard those comments?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: First of all, we have to understand whether the person who is alleged to have made the comments has made them and in what context. I think Cressida Dick, together with Neil Basu, confirmed that we are interested in getting hold of the tape, and assuming we get hold of that tape, presumably we will be in a better position to make any comment on it. I think it would be unwise for me to make any comment on someone’s purported comments.

Q114 Chair: In respect of all these inquiries, every day we hear about another historical inquiry. You must arrive at New Scotland Yard—which is still there; you have not sold it yet?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Soon.

Q115 Chair: You are selling it. Where are you moving to, out of interest?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Curtis Green, a building we have, which is just off Whitehall.

Q116 Chair: So, you will be much closer to Parliament.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Yes. I think it is one that the parliamentary authorities had their eye on. It is ours.

Q117 Chair: Anyway, you must arrive there at New Scotland Yard every morning and open the newspapers—yet another investigation. At the moment 300 of your officers—who you need desperately to do bread-and-butter issues of policing—are involved in these historical investigations. We are not saying that they should not be, because clearly if people make allegations and there are serious matters such as in the Stephen Lawrence case, they have to be investigated. But the cost is now £23 million and rising. We have just heard today

that phone-hacking is going to cost £40 million in total at a time when you have to reduce your budgets as well. Since you became Commissioner, is there a feeling that this is going to dominate your term of office for the next four or five years; that you are going to spend all your time either apologising at Select Committees, as you did earlier on when you started your evidence, or appearing before the media talking about something that happened 10 or 20 years ago?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I hope not. We have had a series of events that have collided most recently. Taken together, it is not very edifying for the Metropolitan Police or for anybody else. As you say, much of it is quite historical, 20, 30 or 40 years. I think the shame for present officers who are doing a pretty good job in terms of reducing crime by almost 13% over the last year is that that story is lost. The fact that we are answering our phones on time better than any other force in the country is lost. I will not bore you with the rest, or I will be accused of a very long answer. But the Metropolitan Police are carrying out a lot that is good. As I said right at the beginning, there are two things we can do are. The first is keep our noses to the grindstone. I think people do notice good things when they are happening. I think people are fair in their objectivity. I accept that some things are historical and that people who are working there now will not be accountable for it. The second thing we have to do is, where we can, carry out inquiries and, where others are doing it, support them by being open and honest and delivering every piece of information we have.

Q118 Chair: What do you feel about the Policing Minister? I know he was at your dinner last night when you had the global cities event at City Hall, showing the brand name that New Scotland Yard is to the rest of the world. Wherever this Committee has visited, British policing is always held in very high regard. But he says you should all be nicer to the public. I am not sure whether you should be nicer when you are about to arrest them but he said, “We must banish the canteen culture,” and basically, “Better customer service; more smiles”.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: I think the Minister made a reference back to the Olympics, didn't he, which I think we all appreciated not only the Met but also officers from all over the country who were on the front foot being friendly. Of course this was a very different group to what we might be dealing with on a Saturday night who come out of the pub and may have a different attitude. I think police officers on the whole always start nice. That is always a good place to start. Sometimes it deteriorates on both sides.

I am with the Minister in one sense. I think we police officers sometimes can get trapped into a persona that is not nice. We have to deal with some difficult people, but most people that we meet are pleasant and want a great service. We do have a group of people, the “suspects”, who do not want our service at all; 300,000 of them in our case. So, I agree we should be on the front foot and be professional. We say that to our officers a lot. “Even when you are walking down the road, take the risk that someone ignores you, take the risk that someone spits at you, or whatever else. The job of a professional is to remain impartial and do your best in difficult circumstances: to be approachable.” So, in that sense, I agree.

I also agree with what I think the Federation's response was, which is that most of our people do that quite a lot. But some of them could do more, and I would not exclude myself in that. We all make mistakes in these areas. So, I think it is important that we keep that professional, firm, fair and friendly approach. We get support from the public as a result of it.

Q119 Chair: As far as resources are concerned, you have now gone out to the private sector to get agency staff to help you on some of the inquiries that you are involved in. Is this going to continue? And is this because of the fact that your budgets are being diminished?

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Not really. I don't think it is fair to say that the budget has been diminished. We have to save £538 million. We have a plan to do that and increase the number of police, which I think the public will support. As a relatively short-term measure there were some particular skills we needed around those operations. It is not just for this operation. Over a long period of time we have brought people back through agencies. I have to say that I do often get a bit frustrated by the fact that our own HR department does not seem to be able to catch our own people as they retire and then feed them back into us for an hourly rate that excludes the premium that some of these agencies charge. But there are some reasons why that is not always as straightforward as I sometimes believe. There are times when it allows us to flex good, skilled resources in, and we don't want to employ them for 20 years. That is one of the things that we have to try to get right. We do pay a premium, but usually it is for a relatively short-term need.

Q120 Chair: Commissioner, I think we will release you so you can carry on doing some policing work rather than appearing before our Committee, but we are extremely grateful to you for coming here today. Thank you very much.

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe: Thank you, Chair.

Examination of Witness

Witness: **Boris Johnson**, Mayor of London, gave evidence.

Q121 Chair: Mr Mayor, thank you very much for coming to give evidence today. We know that you have a hectic day. *[Interruption.]*

Michael Ellis: Saved by the bell.

Boris Johnson: On the contrary—frustrating.

Chair: My apologies. You know what that means.

Boris Johnson: I do. Yes.

Chair: You are excused from voting, but the rest of us, unfortunately, have to vote. We will return in a few seconds. Order. I will adjourn the Committee.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming—

Q122 Chair: Could I apologise to you, Mayor, for interrupting your evidence?

Boris Johnson: Not at all.

Chair: You have not actually started.

Boris Johnson: I have not said a word.

Chair: This is the Committee's inquiry into policing in London. We have not seen you for a while. We thought it would be helpful to the Committee's deliberations to hear from you. This afternoon we have heard from the Commissioner, from Cressida Dick and Commander Basu about individual cases.

When you arrive at City Hall in the morning, you open the newspapers and you see yet another set of allegations about the Metropolitan Police, does it concern and worry you? Does it disappoint you that there is so much criticism of events and issues that the police have been involved in in the past; not all of them under your watch, of course, but it is still a concern to you, is it?

Boris Johnson: Yes, of course it is, Mr Vaz. Clearly it is important to distinguish between getting to the bottom of what happened in the past and making sure that nothing of that kind could be happening now or will happen in the future.

If you take something like the allegations surrounding the Stephen Lawrence investigation from the undercover officer who was serving at that stage, the first thing to say is that it was a deeply shocking piece of news. As you suggest, I think it unquestionably rocked people's faith in the police. They looked back and they thought how appalling it was that somebody could be instructed to seek information that might discredit the Stephen Lawrence campaigners and indeed possibly the family themselves. So, it is very important that you try to restore confidence and get the message across—which is what I believe very strongly—that the Met is doing a fantastic job. If you look overall at the figures, they are bringing crime down steadily—indeed in some cases very sharply. In a huge and diverse city they are doing an outstanding job.

Chair: Yes. We will come to the other points in a second. Before I go on, I am afraid I have been a bit remiss in not asking members to declare their interests, other than what is in the Register. I know that Lorraine Fullbrook wishes to declare an interest.

Lorraine Fullbrook: Yes, Chair. I would like to declare that my husband was deputy director of the Mayor's re-election campaign.

Boris Johnson: I am grateful to Mrs Fullbrook for reminding me of that.

Chair: Thanks are due to Mrs Fullbrook's husband, then.

Boris Johnson: They are indeed.

Chair: Let us move on to the serious issue of undercover policing.

Q123 Mr Clappison: Before we leave this subject—I know you are keen to move on, but if crime figures were going up, no doubt we would hear quite a lot about it. I think you were interrupted before you had the chance to tell us about the crime figures. What is happening with the crime figures?

Boris Johnson: Mr Clappison, you are kind to interrupt on that subject, because the story in London is extraordinary. In the last few years you have seen sharp falls in most crime types. In gun crime, knife crime, serious youth violence, you have seen falls of 20%, 20% and 28% just in the last year. In the last year there has been a fall of 7% in all categories. That is very much a testament to the work of the police out there in neighbourhoods giving people confidence and helping to create a climate of security, which is the number one indispensable thing in a city.

But—and I think this is what you really want to ask about, Mr Vaz—how do we make sure that all Londoners feel they can trust their police service, particularly when you have allegations of the kind that we have heard in Lawrence case or the Azelle Rodney case or other cases such as you mention that have come out in the last few years?

Q124 Chair: If I can interrupt, let us just examine what you have just said. Thank you for giving us those crime figures. The way I would like this inquiry session to proceed is on the basis of the high-profile inquiries that are going on. Then at the end we will have some general questions.

On undercover agents, you have mentioned the Lawrence case and the allegations that have been made about Metropolitan Police officers in effect spying on the Lawrence family. We have just heard from the Commissioner about another aspect, which is the use of Metropolitan Police undercover agents who formed relationships with women and in some cases have fathered children as a result of those relationships. The Commissioner made an apology on behalf of the Metropolitan Police. Do you agree with that apology?

Boris Johnson: Of course. I would like to say, obviously, that I thoroughly concur with the sentiments that the Commissioner expressed earlier on this afternoon about that matter. This is one of the strands of the investigation that Chief Constable Mick Creedon is currently conducting under Operation Herne into undercover policing. This is what I mean by

the stuff that has happened in the past in respect of undercover policing. Obviously it is very, very important that he has maximum possible co-operation—and he is getting it—and that he gets to the bottom of exactly what took place in all those things, the use of the identities of dead children and so on.

Q125 Chair: On that do you also wish to use this opportunity to apologise to the parents of those dead children whose identities have been used? Do you think this is also something that is regrettable?

Boris Johnson: Of course. I am not certain exactly what the Commissioner had to say about that matter, but I certainly share people's general revulsion at that. It is important that these matters are properly investigated and that we get the truth.

But it is also very important that we establish that undercover policing is vital for our city. I am afraid that we are going to have to accept that we need undercover policing. But are they doing it in a way that this Committee would find acceptable? The HMIC under Tom Winsor is currently conducting a general investigation. We have made sure that he feels he has the resources to get to the bottom of exactly what is happening.

Q126 Chair: Do you feel perhaps there are too many inquiries into this now? We have the Creedon inquiry. We have had Operation Herne going on for a while, while you were the mayor. We now have HMIC doing it. Doreen Lawrence, who is giving evidence to this Committee tomorrow, has said that she feels that a public inquiry is necessary. What are the options for you in dealing with this?

Boris Johnson: Let me just back up a bit and say this. The distinction I have made between Operation Herne and the role of the HMIC is between past and present, if you like. I think that is a sensible distinction. I see no reason to object to that. There is then the question of how you generally tackle of issue of public confidence in policing. This is the crucial thing.

Q127 Chair: How would you do that?

Boris Johnson: Here you need to look at what is really going wrong. We must be very clear about the groups that are not confident in policing. There was a poll the other day that showed, I think, that in spite of all the recent allegations and revelations, 85% of Londoners still have trust in our police. London is showing stability in police confidence where in other areas it is perhaps declining. There are some groups in London, the BME community in particular, where that confidence is less high. I think, and I have thought for many years—I know that members of this Committee would agree—that one of the most important ways to tackle that is by recruitment from those communities so that we have a police force that looks like London.

Chair: We will come on to diversity later. If you could stick to undercover operations and then move on to the next inquiry, which is Operation Alice. David Winnick.

Boris Johnson: If I can just finish on the question that you pose—which is do we go for a judge-led inquiry or do we try to find some other way of boosting public confidence—I would respectfully remind members of the Committee that we have in London the Mayor's Office of Police and Crime, which is there to hold the police to account. That is what I am democratically elected to do. On Thursday we have an event called the MOPAC Challenge, where we hold the police to account. Unquestionably we will be asking them about this kind of thing.

Q128 Chair: You are confident that MOPAC has sufficient oversight of the way in which the Metropolitan Police operates?

Boris Johnson: I am. I will tell you how it works. People are perhaps not aware of how the relationship between the Mayor as Police and Crime Commissioner for London and the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis works. It is a very close relationship in the sense that we are in regular contact, and either I or Stephen Greenhalgh, the Deputy Mayor, will have formal, sit-down meetings with an agenda once a week in addition to other contact.

Q129 Mr Winnick: When you learned for the first time about the position over the undercover agent going in to the private details of Mr and Mrs Lawrence—activities that Mr Francis states that he carried out—what was your reaction?

Boris Johnson: As I said at the time, Mr Winnick, and have repeated to the Committee this afternoon, I think my reaction was that of millions of people in this city and in this country—utter horror. The name Stephen Lawrence is something that is synonymous with a deep sense of unease about the way that the police did conduct their activities, and it was deeply, deeply dismaying to hear that somebody could be given instructions to behave in that way towards the family of a victim.

Q130 Mr Winnick: It also applied of course to the person who was with Stephen Lawrence when he was put to death.

Hearing what you have just said—your genuine shock, I am sure, like the rest of us—did you then contact the Commissioner?

Boris Johnson: Well, naturally I have been in constant touch with the Commissioner and with the Lawrence family.

Mr Winnick: Yes. But did you immediately contact the Commissioner when you read about what Mr Francis had done?

Boris Johnson: If my memory serves correctly, Mr Winnick, I think we knew in advance that this was going to be broadcast. I think it was Channel 4, wasn't it? The Commissioner alerted me some days in advance that this was about to be revealed, and we had a conversation about it then.

Q131 Mr Winnick: Come to the wider issue of undercover agents as the Chair has stated. Do you take the view that while undercover agents are necessary for the reason stated in many instances where there is a danger of terrorism or outright criminality and where it could be justified, first of all, it should not be beyond that? In other words, the environmental groups who were subject to such surveillance and undercover agent work: do you believe that such undercover activities were too wide? Second, when it comes to the activities of the undercover agents, do you think a ban could be put on their sexual activities: in effect, that they should be instructed that they should not engage in sexual conduct with the group they are infiltrating?

Boris Johnson: I am not quite sure what you mean by the width. You ask: were their activities too wide? I think what you are really asking is: do I think it legitimate for the officers concerned to engage in forming relationships with those that they were—

Mr Winnick: Spying on.

Boris Johnson: —spying on, seeking to get information from? Plainly that was not the right way to behave. I think it would probably be wrong for me to say much more, because I would not like to prejudge what Mick Creedon and that inquiry will find out. But if that is indeed what took place, then that was clearly not right.

Q132 Mr Winnick: If the inquiry found that was the position, that the allegations are true, you consider that would be totally inappropriate. Are you telling us there that in those

circumstances you would take the view—bearing mind responsibility for the Met and the rest of it—that such activity should not take place?

Boris Johnson: This is a difficult area. I do not think with the best will in the world that we have a complete understanding of what took place. I am reluctant to give a hard and fast ruling about the conduct the undercover officers may or may not have engaged in without seeing the evidence. With great respect, I think I would rather wait to see what Mick Crendon—

Q133 Mr Winnick: The whole thing seems so utterly distasteful, but you have given your response.

Mrs Lawrence is giving evidence on Wednesday. As indicated publicly, clearly she is very much in favour of a public inquiry into the spying that took place against her and her husband at the time. Do you support having a public inquiry?

Boris Johnson: I think there are arguments both ways about a public inquiry. The risk is that you would spend a lot of time and a lot of money without casting much light on it.

I am not necessarily against it. But to get back to where I was in my opening answer I think what you might possibly need—and this is something that we are reflecting on now in the Mayor’s Office of Police and Crime and is envisaged or allowed for under the Act—is some Legacy and Ethics Committee, or something like that, within MOPAC, to act as a public-facing figurehead, if you like, that could invigilate these matters on a permanent basis. I think that would be one way of dealing with it.

Q134 Chair: This is something new that you would be creating in the Mayor’s office that would look at the issue of ethics and standards, over and above what is in the Met itself.

Boris Johnson: That’s right. I want to stress that we are thinking about this. Again there are arguments both ways, but the advantage might be that the public had someone independent there.

Q135 Mr Winnick: Mrs Lawrence wants an independent public inquiry quite removed from the Met and your office.

Boris Johnson: I understand that.

Q136 Lorraine Fullbrook: In your weekly meetings with the Police Commissioner and the Metropolitan Police service has any concern been expressed about the Met’s human resources being used in the various operations that are investigating the work of their own officers?

Boris Johnson: Are you asking me whether we think that too much money is being spent on these kinds of investigations? Is that the question?

Lorraine Fullbrook: Yes.

Boris Johnson: Yes, of course this kind of thing comes up. And yes of course we want to make sure that we do all these investigations as cheaply as possible consistent with justice. After all, all the allegations made against Met officers are very serious indeed, and they must be properly investigated. I know that if you look at something like Operation Alice, which has been going on for a while now, or Operation Elveden, these are things that do soak up quite a lot of public money, but in the end we are talking about public confidence in policing. It is very important that they get to the bottom of it.

Q137 Chair: In answer to Mrs Fullbrook, do you think there should be timetables?

Boris Johnson: That there should be a kind of guillotine?

Chair: Yes. Should you as the Mayor of London say, “This has been going on for far too long. It took 45 seconds in Downing Street. It has lasted nine months and it has cost about £200,000. Where’s the result?”

Boris Johnson: It is a very interesting proposal, Mr Vaz. I think the risk is that I would be accused of interfering in an operational decision. I think in this place the use of the guillotine is well known to direct certain objectives. I would not want to have that accusation levelled against me. For the benefit of the Committee, I am frustrated at some of the money we are spending.

Q138 Chair: It is £23 million now. It is a huge amount of money.

Boris Johnson: On Alice it is about—

Chair: It is about £200,000.

Boris Johnson: It is about £100,000. But on Mr Assange, we have so far lashed out about £4 million to keep this chap in his room in Ecuadorian Embassy, which frankly—

Q139 Chair: Mr Mayor, that is not about police failings, is it? That is something quite different.

Boris Johnson: Why can’t he be sent on to, I don’t know, Brighton? It is absolutely ridiculous. That money should be used on frontline policing. It is totally wasted.

Chair: Indeed. Lorraine Fullbrook, not on Julian Assange but on your other issues.

Q140 Lorraine Fullbrook: In your position and your office what do you now do to rebuild the trust of the public following these various operations that have involved the Metropolitan Police?

Boris Johnson: Number one, it is very important to stress that public confidence in policing has by no means collapsed. It is still high. It is very important to get that point over. We are dealing with a police force in London that is doing a fantastic job. Number two, support and encourage the current investigations that are going on to get on with it; Herne, the HMIC business, the inquiry being led by Mark Ellison QC into the circumstances of the alleged corruption surrounding the original Lawrence investigation—get on with it, sort it out, bring your result before the public.

Then absolutely let us look at the possibility of what Mr Winnick supports, the judge-led inquiry. As I say, I do think there might be advantages in another approach, and we are looking at that within the MOPAC. It is very possible we will go down that route.

The final point is this: do the things, the basics, that will build the confidence of London’s communities in the police. So, recruit. We have a huge opportunity to recruit now in London where, unlike any other force, we are recruiting 5,000 PCs, and that is a big chance.

Q141 Chair: Is this also an argument for getting rid of counter-terrorism, because that is obviously a national portfolio? Should that not go to the National Crime Agency, leaving your Metropolitan Police to do the bread-and-butter tasks that you want to set them?

Boris Johnson: This is an argument we have been round many times, and I have slightly veered back on this, because I know that—the argument is that, if you took out counter-terrorism, you would create a democratic question, which is: what would be the involvement of the Home Office in domestic policing in London at all? There are arguments both ways.

Chair: Both ways, but let me bring in Nicola Blackwood before we rehearse those arguments.

Q142 Nicola Blackwood: Thank you. I just want to take you back to the comments that you were making to Mr Winnick, about the women who are making allegations about being in relationships with undercover officers, because we seemed to skate over it slightly, and perhaps you might want to get into it at your next MOPAC meeting. You may be aware that the Met Commissioner, just before you came in, said that it was not the policy of the Met to allow undercover officers to enter into relationships with informants. But with these allegations that is what is implied. Also, the former DPP, Ken Macdonald, has been clear that, were these allegations true, these women would have a good case in court to sue the Met. So I just wonder what sort of questions you might be raising at your next MOPAC meeting as to who knew what, when, and who will be held to account for it. Sorry if you don't like that question.

Boris Johnson: I hesitate to repeat my answer, but I think it depends on what you mean. It is not at all clear what happened, and it was—

Q143 Nicola Blackwood: Some of the women claim to have had children during these relationships.

Boris Johnson: Again, I am reluctant to be drawn into general comments on the relationships that may or may not have been formed, without seeing the details, having them confirmed by Mick Creedon's inquiry. I think that is really what we should wait for.

Q144 Nicola Blackwood: Yes, well, that is reasonable. I suppose my question is do you think that undercover officers, in reporting back to their handlers or whoever, would have at that point been reporting who they were engaging with, and things like that? The monitoring mechanisms: do you want to check that those are robust now, so that these sorts of things cannot be happening any longer?

Boris Johnson: Yes. Absolutely. This is something where obviously conclusions will have to be drawn about what is permissible behaviour and what the thresholds are, and all the rest of it, from what is established in this investigation. But my difficulty is I am not able to give you any hard and fast indications of what really went on. That would be premature, and I think you have to wait for what Mick Creedon and his investigation have to say about that.

Q145 Dr Huppert: Mr Johnson, you have spoken many times about how you have the democratic role and you are elected to have this oversight body. But I notice on the MOPAC page you say that you have appointed Stephen Greenhalgh as the Deputy Mayor, who will discharge the vast majority of MOPAC's duties, and you will only do the Police and Crime Panel to appoint and remove senior Metropolitan police officers. So, what fraction of your time do you spend on policing?

Boris Johnson: I can't give you a figure, because I am working the whole time for Londoners in all sorts of ways. I spend a lot of time in discussion about law and order, about policing issues, either with Bernard Hogan-Howe or with Stephen Greenhalgh or others. I can't give you a figure. If your question is what am I personally putting into it, I will just go back to what I said to Mr Vaz, which is we have not just the MOPAC challenge, and all that kind of stuff, but regular meetings, formal meetings, between me and the Commissioner and numerous telephone contacts, which is what you would expect.

Q146 Dr Huppert: Nobody doubts that, but would you say it is one hour a week, five hours a week, 10 hours a week, 20 hours a week, 50 hours a week—just roughly? You must have some sense.

Boris Johnson: Well, it is a lot.

Dr Huppert: Which means roughly what? I am not asking for an exact figure.

Boris Johnson: I can't give you that. I don't know. I am not one of those chaps who sits there ticking off the hours he spends doing this or that. I have a very good relationship with the Commissioner—

Dr Huppert: Mr Johnson, nobody is expecting you to keep track of every single hour. I am not asking for a precise figure, and I am sure you do have a good relationship with people, but you must be able to estimate roughly how much it is, give or take.

Boris Johnson: Let me tell you this, Mr—Dr—Huppert: there is not an hour of the day that goes by when I don't think about the greater security and safety of the police.

Chair: Thank you. I think we will accept that as an answer. Let me—

Boris Johnson: In fact, I would say it was 20—*[Interruption.]*

Chair: I think we will accept that answer for the moment.

Q147 Michael Ellis: Mayor Johnson, one of the things the public really care about is the crime figures. You have already alluded to the fact—and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner told us a few minutes ago—that crime is down significantly in London. I want to explore that, because I have spoken in this Committee before about the importance of police resources and allocating them most effectively where they are needed in these challenging times, and rationalising in the appropriate places where we can. I believe you have a policy, and I want to see if we can extrapolate this out into the national picture in other constabularies, called “Bobbies, not buildings”?

Boris Johnson: You bet.

Q148 Michael Ellis: The result of this, is it not, is that, despite measures to reduce costings, there are more police officers on the streets than ever before?

Boris Johnson: That is exactly right, Mr Ellis, and what we are doing is trying to keep police numbers. I want to go back to Dr Huppert's question. One of the conversations that I have had regularly with the Commissioner over the last few years—and this is perhaps an area where the rubber hits the road, where the democratic imperative meets what the police would otherwise do—is about numbers. I believe very strongly that police numbers should be kept high, and if you talk to learned criminologists, they will say, “Actually, numbers are an irrelevance. The police can do a brilliant job with a few.” We want to have, at or around, 32,000 police officers on the streets of London, and, to that end, we go through a radical programme of reconfiguring our buildings. We have about 497 buildings, of which only 136 are actually accessible to the public. We are selling or disposing of—well, the square meterage is going down from 900,000 to 600,000. We are getting rid of a lot of space, realising £50 million worth, putting that into police officers, and indeed into specials and so on. We will have by 2015-16 26,000 PCs, more than ever before in the history of the Met, and we will have put another 2,600 police into Safer Neighbourhood teams.

Q149 Michael Ellis: You are getting them out from behind desks and on to the streets. Do you think that is what is resulting in the crime rates falling dramatically in London?

Boris Johnson: I have to be absolutely clear, I think there are many causes of the fall in crime at the moment. I think we have to be intellectually honest and say there are many causes, but a huge factor is good policing and the security that goes with seeing police out on the streets. That is absolutely indispensable. So, Safer Neighbourhood teams in every ward in London is part of what I promised the people of London. It is not just a mere electoral gimmick; I genuinely think that it will make a difference to people's sense of security.

Q150 Michael Ellis: Just finally from me, how would you advise other Chief Constables, outside of London, to get the sort of results that you are getting in London and getting crime further down and saving in buildings?

Boris Johnson: I know that other Chief Constables in other cities are certainly doing some of the things that we are doing. There are also savings to be made, and let us be clear, with outsourcing. We are looking at a variety of services that can be provided otherwise than by the police or by the public sector, and it is important to look at that as well. Although what we won't have—excuse me, Mr Vaz—is private sector contractors depriving people of their liberty. There are some functions that must be reserved to the police.

Q151 Steve McCabe: I was going to say I regard you as a pretty radical and innovative guy. What parts of the Met, which others may not even have the imagination to consider, are you eying up for privatisation?

Boris Johnson: That is a slightly, classically, difficult question, Mr McCabe. I don't want to accept your hypothesis that we are recklessly privatising things, but what we want to do is to maximise value and to get officers able to do the things that they signed up to do. So, I suppose there are things that you could look at in transport, in catering, in IT, in human resources. There is scope for synergies, and I think it would be remiss of us not to look at them.

Q152 Mark Reckless: When the Police Bill establishing the Met's Police and Crime Commissioners was going through, whenever there was ever any criticism or suggestions of possible problems that might emerge, the Policing Minister referred to your role in London, and I just wondered, as you see those PCCs bed in do you feel that you are the model for them?

Boris Johnson: You are very kind to suggest as much, Mr Reckless—or I do not think you are suggesting, but you are asking me. I think that the Chairman, in his goodness, said something to that effect not so long ago in Parliament, and I am grateful for that and I do think that, broadly speaking, it works well. It has to be a fricative relationship, in the sense that my role, after all, is to support the police, to champion the police, to fight for funding for the police, and to explain what the police are doing to the public, to a great extent, but it is also to challenge and to be simultaneously the public's voice with the police. That is why I make the point I do about numbers. There are other aspects, on stop-and-search or whatever it happens to be. There will be areas where it is necessary for the mayor to talk frankly with colleagues in the police. I think that is the right way round, because, after all, if I don't do that well, and I don't hold the police properly to account, then there will be a democratic price to be paid, and that is clear.

Q153 Mark Reckless: So we are now having the democratic mandate rubbing up directly against the operation. It depends; I think you used the phrase "rubber on the road".

Boris Johnson: Yes, I am not quite sure what I meant by that. You know the gist of it.

Q154 Mark Reckless: I just wonder, I think you succeeded in getting more cops on to the buses, you got the Met to focus on teen knife crime. I think the Prime Minister has got the Met investigating the Madeleine McCann disappearance.

Boris Johnson: Yes.

Mark Reckless: Do you feel that with that and the police protocol and new legislation that there has been some shift towards greater political lead and oversight, perhaps, in areas where that was not there before?

Boris Johnson: I think there is now a clearly visible democratic accountability in London, and I think broadly speaking it works. People know that if the crime figures aren't good at the end of my mayoral term, then I will be marked down heavily for that, and if I were standing again, my chances would be considerably diminished. As it is, the Met are doing a fantastic job, but we are there both to help and support but also to challenge.

Q155 Chair: You are a Latin scholar, so you are familiar with the words "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" At the end of the day, it is an issue of accountability. We have had Police and Crime Commissioners before this Committee that have basically turned round to Chief Constables and said, "It's time that you went," and they have gone. They have not been very happy that that has happened. In your particular case, of course, right at the start, you made it clear that you did not want the first commissioner to remain. Are there circumstances where you think you may have to do this again, not particularly in terms of this commissioner, but are there going to be issues or have there been issues where you want to take the Met in a particular way, in a role, and the officers have said, "Sorry, we're not going in that direction"? Where does political leadership end and operational leadership begin?

Boris Johnson: That is a brilliantly hypothetical question, Mr Vaz, but thankfully in the current case that question certainly does not arise, since Sir Bernard and I are very much in agreement about the broad way forward. I know this is a point that members of the Committee will have heard before, but if you look at the Met now and compare it to a few years ago there is a real cohesion around the leadership. The top team is very much working together, and that is very, very helpful and encouraging.

Q156 Chair: There is stability, there is no doubt about it, because this Committee has interviewed a number of commissioners since it was created after the last Parliament. But the issue is this: it is not very diverse, is it? You constantly attend events. Trafalgar Square, under your mayorship, is full of events for the black and Asian community, and you go to all of them and you sing and dance, and do whatever you have to do, and speak of course at those events. But the Met is looking less diverse than it was when you took over. What has gone wrong?

Boris Johnson: Allow me to correct you there, respectfully, because that is—

Chair: At the top, I mean, not in terms of—

Boris Johnson: If you look at the body of the Kirk, if you look at the constables—and these figures are still too low—it has gone up from 8% to 11%, the BAME representation. I think in the case of PCSOs it is 32%; Special Constables, 28%. I think in the Cadets it is 48% BAME representation. If you consider that a lot of the promotions are from PCSOs to PCs, you can see that the change is happening. It is not fast enough, and there I would agree, and also—

Q157 Chair: So, do you support positive action being used as Peter Fahy has said?

Boris Johnson: I totally support positive action. What I would not support is positive discrimination.

Q158 Chair: So, two candidates of equal standing who have got through the selection process, they are sitting before you or the Commissioner, one is a man, one is a woman; you would choose the woman?

Boris Johnson: Well, caeteris paribus, as we Latin buffs say, since you—

Chair: Indeed.

Boris Johnson: Yes. But my preference—for what I mean by positive action—is actively recruiting, creating the climate in which people from communities who don't think of

themselves as naturally supplying the police force of London to want to sign up. Ray Lewis is helping us, and you will know Ray. He is helping us do a big, big surge now, and what we won't do, and people must understand, is we will not compromise on quality. We won't accept inferior qualifications.

Chair: Of course.

Mr Winnick: But no one has ever suggested that, Mayor, as you know full well.

Boris Johnson: It is worth saying, none the less.

Q159 Chair: We are very grateful for that. We are coming to the end of the evidence session, Mayor. I have permitted one or two members of the Committee to ask questions that are not directly related to your policing portfolio. I would like to start with your suggestion of an amnesty for immigrants living in London. You support an amnesty?

Boris Johnson: I would be very interested in the views of this august committee, because I think it is a fascinating question, and you may be better able to get to the answer than and I can. I would like to know how many people, illegal immigrants, have been deported from this country after they have been here for more than 12 years and who have not been in trouble with the law. I would like to know the figure. If you can find it, I would be much obliged, because we have tried and we can't.

Chair: We could not find that figure.

Boris Johnson: I would be very surprised indeed if it was a large number; in fact, I—

Q160 Chair: So, if they had been here for 12 years—

Boris Johnson: I think what we need to recognise in this country is that we effectively have an amnesty. We have a de facto system whereby the authorities simply give up and, in my view, under those circumstances it would be more sensible to recognise that these people are in the economy. They cannot contribute legally. They cannot pay taxes legally. They cannot do things for the rest of society in the way that we would want, and I think we should look at that and I have said it for many years.

I also symmetrically think that during a long period of Labour misrule we should have been a lot tougher in our approach, and it was a disgrace that—sorry, Mr Vaz—the then Labour Government decided to turn a blind eye to what was going on and to abandon all control of immigration. That was the mistake. The people of this country know it. Anyway, that is the thing that needs to be done.

Chair: Order. You have given me my answer.

Mr Winnick: We are not campaigning at the moment.

Q161 Chair: You want to move them into the mainstream so they become people who pay their tax and—

Boris Johnson: I just think we should recognise de jure what already happens de facto, and I think you can do that without actually creating a lunar pull, without creating a magnet for that.

Q162 Chair: You know that the Prime Minister disagrees with you?

Boris Johnson: Well, I am sure that sweet reason will prevail or whatever.

Q163 Mark Reckless: Mayor, you wrote in the *Telegraph* yesterday, “This thing isn't going to cost £42 billion, my friends. The real cost is going to be way north of that. Keep going till you reach £70 billion, and then keep going.” Were you describing your Thames Estuary Airport plan?

Boris Johnson: No, but I probably could have been. Let's be clear, Mr Reckless, that any such scheme will not be wholly financed by the private sector. I do think it is a bit odd that a scheme like HS2 has to be wholly publicly financed whereas, say, Crossrail 2, which is an infinitely better business case, is supposed to be half-financed by the private sector. A new airport would find a lot of backers, but clearly there would be a substantial state contribution.

I think the general case for a new 24-hour four runway hub airport somewhere in this country—and I appreciate your particular constituency concerns—is very, very strong. We have run out of room at Heathrow. The disaster would be to put a new runway in at Heathrow, because you would then be going even further into the cul-de-sac. You would be greatly, greatly aggravating the problem of noise pollution here in London, and you would have to have a fourth runway.

Q164 Mark Reckless: When I last heard you before a Select Committee you said that you were looking at a hub airport east of London rather than the Thames Estuary, and I think you said you were now equidistant between the Thames Estuary and Stansted—

Boris Johnson: Yes.

Mark Reckless: —which has caused some concerns with the Aviation Minister, who represents—

Chair: If we can have a quick answer.

Mark Reckless: I wonder, will you be putting forward the proposal to the Davies Commission? Will that include proposals for expanding at Stansted?

Boris Johnson: We are putting forward the options to the Davies Commission, and the transport implications—the mass trans-communications for all three proposals. I think it—

Q165 Mark Reckless: You said previously it would be one or two. Are you now saying all three, and can you confirm if that will include Stansted?

Boris Johnson: Sorry, I think you are absolutely right. I think we are winnowing it down to two. I think the one that is looking—it has many attractions, but it is unquestionably further away, and could be more expensive is Stansted—

Chair: Thank you. I am going to stop you there.

Q166 Mark Reckless: Are you now ruling out Boris Island?

Boris Johnson: I am not ruling it out. The stuff I have seen most recently suggests to me that of the three top ones it is probably third.

Chair: Thank you. No more on Boris Island. Mr McCabe has the final question.

Q167 Steve McCabe: Are you overwhelmed with job applications from female graduates?

Boris Johnson: We have a very strong stream of applications for jobs of all kinds at City Hall, but are you trying to get someone a job?

Chair: Not at this Committee.

Boris Johnson: It is not the kind of thing we normally have in this Committee, Mr Vaz, people actively trying to place their friends in City Hall.

Chair: I am sure that is not what he intended. I am sure there was a deeper significance.

Steve McCabe: I am deeply hurt, Mr Johnson. Are there as many—

Chair: Thank you, Mr McCabe. A very quick 30 seconds, Dr Huppert.

Q168 Dr Huppert: If I can combine two of your interests you spend a lot of time on, cycling and policing, it has been shown that 20 mile an hour speed limits are very supportive

for cycling, but the police have shown a great reluctance to enforce them. Have you been able to resolve that within the Met and would you encourage the police to enforce 20 miles an hour?

Boris Johnson: It is a very interesting point. As I said to boroughs, if they want to go ahead with 20 mile an hour zones, then that is something I am perfectly happy to support. If you are telling me that the police are not properly enforcing them, then that is something I will take up.

Q169 Dr Huppert: If you could look into it, because nationally they have been—

Boris Johnson: Is there any area in particular where this is alleged?

Dr Huppert: Across the country the ACPO guidance is very minimal enforcement at best, so it would be worth looking into.

Q170 Chair: Mayor, were you consulted by the Home Secretary about her decision today concerning the opt-ins and opt-outs of the European Arrest Warrant and other Justice and Home Affairs issues?

Boris Johnson: No.

Chair: You were not?

Boris Johnson: I was not. I can tell you. I don't normally like to go into what I have talked about, but I did want to give a speech on this matter a long time ago in Parliament, in which I opposed the bloomingham thingummies. If they had listened to me then we wouldn't have this problem now.

Q171 Chair: The Commissioner has told us that New Scotland Yard is going to move and he told us this afternoon it is going to move to Curtis Green, but we did not find out from him when that is going to be. Do you know when the move is going to be?

Boris Johnson: I can get back to you on that. I can't give you a time. I will make sure that we get you an answer.

Q172 Chair: Finally, when Stephen Greenhalgh gave evidence to us he said that there were 56,000 lockers for the Metropolitan Police but only 31,500 police officers. Have we discovered what is in the lockers?

Boris Johnson: What is in the lockers? I have made inquiries as to what is in the lockers. I am told that it is the much-prized uniforms, these blue serge tunics, which are much venerated and passed from officer to officer. This is what I am told. Apparently, this is what is to be found in most of these lockers. Whether that is true or not I cannot personally vouchsafe, Mr Vaz, because I have not looked through all the lockers.

Chair: Mr Mayor, as usual, thank you very much.