

HOUSE OF COMMONS
ORAL EVIDENCE
TAKEN BEFORE THE
HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS: PROGRESS TO DATE

TUESDAY 7 JANUARY 2014

KATY BOURNE and ANTHONY STANSFELD

CHIEF CONSTABLE MARTIN RICHARDS and CHIEF CONSTABLE SARA
THORNTON

LORD STEVENS and PROFESSOR IAN LOADER

Evidence heard in Public

Questions 128 - 360

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Oral Evidence

Taken before the Home Affairs Committee

on Tuesday 7 January 2014

Members present:

Keith Vaz (Chair)
Mr James Clappison
Michael Ellis
Paul Flynn
Lorraine Fullbrook
Dr Julian Huppert
Yasmin Qureshi
Mark Reckless
Mr David Winnick

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Katy Bourne**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex, and **Anthony Stansfeld**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, gave evidence.

Q128 Chair: Commissioners Bourne and Stansfeld, thank you for coming to give evidence to the Committee today. This is the Committee's resumed inquiry into police and crime commissioners, which we began on the first anniversary of their election. Will Committee Members please declare any interests over and above what is in the Register of Members' Financial Interests? Good.

Commissioner Bourne, it is a year and a bit since you were elected. Are you enjoying the job?

Katy Bourne: Thank you, Chairman. Before I start, I wish happy new year to everybody and thank you for inviting me. Yes, I am enjoying the job. It is not without its challenges, but I think it is one of the most satisfying jobs that I have ever done.

Q129 Chair: Is it what you expected?

Katy Bourne: Yes.

Anthony Stansfeld: I think it is what I expected. I was on the police authority when we were setting it up and making provision for it, so there were no major surprises.

Q130 Chair: One of our witnesses who is coming along later is Lord Stevens, who has just conducted an inquiry into police and crime commissioners and he says that the system that we have at the moment is systemically flawed. Would you agree with that, Commissioner Bourne?

Katy Bourne: No, not at all. I think he makes some valid points in the report. I question whether it is independent, because obviously it is going to frame the Labour party manifesto

going forward, but I do think he makes some valid points around neighbourhood policing, which is a model that we adhere to in Sussex. The chief constable who will be giving evidence after me will, I am sure, speak about that. Neighbourhood policing is very valued by residents in Sussex.

There are other assumptions Lord Stevens makes, effectively giving more power or making small local committees. In Sussex, we have three top tier authorities—two county councils and one unitary—and under those there are 12 district and borough councils across the county. If each of those had their own committees that were in charge of policing locally they would be making local decisions that were pertinent to them, but how would that relate to something like the strategic policing requirement, which is a national requirement?

We do a lot of work in Thames Valley and Sussex as part of the Regional Organised Crime Unit in the south-east. How could a local committee make decisions with a view to that? I just don't see that working. So I do think that is flawed.

Q131 Chair: Thank you. We will come on later to examine some of those issues. I assume you agree with Commissioner Bourne?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes. I almost have bigger problems. I have 18 councils. I would be at a meeting every moment of the day if we did it the way that is suggested. It might possibly work for some of the very small police forces, but Thames Valley is three or four times bigger than many police forces.

Chair: May I give apologies on behalf of Nicola Blackwood, a Member of our Committee, who represents part of Oxford? Unfortunately, her constituency is being flooded at this moment. She wanted me to put that on the record. That must apply to some of your area as well.

Anthony Stansfeld: It is entirely in my area.

Q132 Chair: Were you surprised, Mr Stansfeld, at the amount of press coverage on the work of police and crime commissioners, and the way in which the press have homed in on the issue of the cost of commissioners and the expenses? In particular in your case, is there anything you wish to tell the Committee about the controversy surrounding the setting-up of your office in Hungerford? Some alleged that it was not a proper office but a secondary office that should not have been set up. For the record, would you like to tell the Committee about that?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes. *The Mail on Sunday* and *The Times* have actually retracted their articles. I eventually had to go to the Police Complaints Commission over *The Mail on Sunday*. It started off by saying that my expenses had gone up by 6,000%, without pointing out that the base was £7. It had gone to just over £400 the next month and I had driven about 1,000 miles. So I think it was a totally scurrilous article from the word go. The motive, I think, was that when police commissioners first came in, the editor had made an effort to find out anything he possibly could and then distort it. It was a thoroughly bad article. *The Times*, I have to say, took back its article very quickly when it was pointed out.

Q133 Chair: Commissioner Bourne, were you surprised? I do not have any examples of press interest in you to put to you so you can clear the record, but have you been surprised by the interest in what Commissioners do, how much they spend and how many members of staff they have?

Katy Bourne: I have not been surprised by the interest, because you can see that the press have enormous interest in all public bodies now. MPs have also been under this scrutiny, and I think it is right that they are under such scrutiny.

I think that there is still a lot about our role that is unknown. A lot of emphasis is placed on the cost of the office of police and crime commissioner, comparing that with the cost of the police authority, and I think there is a lack of understanding that the role of police and crime commissioner is much bigger than the role of the police authorities ever was. It is very difficult to compare apples with pears—you cannot do it. We are 14 months in now, and what I would like to see going forwards is that very much put to one side and for us to start talking about what the police and crime commissioners are achieving and where they see the role in the future.

Q134 Chair: Let us move on to the substance of some of these issues. The first issue is reporting crime. We have had evidence from a number of chief constables on this subject. It started with a whistleblower from the Met who said that the reason why crime is going down is not that fewer crimes are being committed, but because there has possibly been a misreporting of crime. I wondered whether either of you was aware of that and whether you had asked your chief constable to look at why there has been such a large reduction in the amount of crime in your area.

Anthony Stansfeld: I think there genuinely has been a very considerable drop in certain sorts of crime, I will make that point. I am happy that our statistics are well done. We were inspected by HMIC two years ago, and we passed out, I think, top of all the police forces in the country. It was interesting that our performance at the time did not look very good on paper. I think actually we were probably much better than we thought we were, but we were being very honest with our figures.

Q135 Chair: But, for example, overall in Thames Valley you are down 20% in burglary. Does that worry you? Obviously, you must be pleased with the reduction, but given the stories about misreporting of crime and incentives not to report, are you doing anything about looking at these figures?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes we are, but I am absolutely convinced that they are genuine.

Q136 Chair: What are you doing specifically?

Anthony Stansfeld: We have 15 people purely checking our records and how we do it, and HMIC has looked at them and is entirely satisfied.

Q137 Chair: Is that in your team, or the chief constable's?

Anthony Stansfeld: That is in the chief constable's team.

Q138 Chair: Right. But you will get the results.

Anthony Stansfeld: I have all the results and I have somebody in my own staff who also goes through them and checks them.

Q139 Chair: So you can tell this Committee that you are satisfied that the reduction in crime in your area is not to do with misreporting.

Anthony Stansfeld: In those areas that we are doing the figures, I am absolutely happy that the figures are accurate. I think what is a problem is when you hit one particular sort of crime—we have taken household burglary right down, by 40% in Reading in a year. I have no illusions that the people who did that now realise that it is probably not worth doing that because they are so likely to get caught. A lot of them have moved to things like shoplifting far more. That does concern me.

Q140 Chair: Commissioner Bourne, your reduction is also pretty impressive. I think crime has gone down by 9% in Sussex in the year to 30 November and it has reduced for eight consecutive years.

Katy Bourne: That is correct.

Q141 Chair: Are you concerned about any of the allegations made by some police officers that there has been an incentive to misreport and write things down that are not correct in order to meet targets, or are you satisfied that these are robust figures?

Katy Bourne: As PCC, I wanted to understand two things. If a crime is not being recorded, is that down to poor training or poor process management, or is that down to an unprofessional performance culture? I have met with the force performance guy who runs this and tried to understand, because crime recording is quite a complex area and trying to get your head round it is quite difficult. He has done it for numerous years and he says he sometimes struggles with trying to explain it.

I know that in Sussex the intention is that a crime is recorded as the victim sees it. It is then up to the officer, as they go through their investigations, to make the decision as to whether that crime is as it was seen originally. For me, the three questions that I always want answered are: are people safe; do they feel safe; and when they need help, are they going to get the absolute best possible help they can? I do feel confident that crime recording in Sussex is as it should be, but I am not complacent. My colleague, Mr Stansfield, referred to the last HMIC report. Sussex did very well in that, but HMIC are currently doing a report anyway around crime reporting and I look forward to seeing that, because it will help me going forwards.

Q142 Dr Huppert: There has been a range of discussions about how police forces are structured. Obviously, you have both amalgamated over various years. Do you think the current level is appropriate?

Anthony Stansfeld: Thames Valley is the fourth biggest police force in the country. We cover by far the biggest area—far bigger than the forces bigger than us. We have the three major counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. I cannot remember the exact date, but it was about 30 years ago when it was combined, and other ones were not combined. I think we are probably a very efficient size. It is quite difficult for me as a PCC covering such a vast area, but we are three or four times bigger than some other police forces, although our infrastructure is not three or four times as big as theirs, so we have a fairly good model at the moment. Of course, a lot of the things we are doing now, like serious organised crime and counter-terrorism, we have combined right across the south-east of England. Most of it is headquartered in Thames and we have jointly appointed an assistant chief constable to run them on a regional basis.

Q143 Dr Huppert: Commissioner Bourne?

Katy Bourne: Yes, certainly for me collaborating with other forces is critical, but only if it is going to drive out efficiencies and further savings. Otherwise, what is the point of doing it? Certainly, Sussex force are now collaborating far more with Surrey and we—the two police and crime commissioners and two chief constables—have had some very good, progressive discussions on this over the last year and we are sharing a lot more. We are just about to appoint a joint chief information officer to run the collaboration programme between the two. If it is going to make a force more efficient then, yes, I think further collaborations are definitely something worth looking at, but also with other organisations as well. I know some of our colleagues up and down the country are doing other things with local authorities and so on.

Q144 Dr Huppert: So both of you would essentially argue that the current sizes are right, but you should collaborate where possible?

Katy Bourne: It's horses for courses. Your first question has always got to be: what is right for the people you represent? You want the best possible police service for local residents because they are the ones who are paying for it. In Sussex and Surrey they joined on major crime. Over Christmas, there was a very unfortunate case which is ongoing. It is interesting that the actual murder took place in Sussex, but it is being led by the senior officer in Surrey, because the team is as one. That is a really good example of how it is very effective and shares best practice across two forces.

Q145 Dr Huppert: How do you manage to cover the very large areas that you are both responsible for? How do you make sure that there aren't areas that get left out?

Anthony Stansfeld: On a personal basis as the PCC?

Dr Huppert: Yes, absolutely.

Anthony Stansfeld: I live down in the bottom left-hand corner, near Hungerford, and I have an area that runs to Milton Keynes and Newport Pagnell at the far end, and Heathrow. I have kept my staff very small—in fact, my staff costs several hundred thousand pounds less than the police authority staff did—but I did appoint a part-time deputy who lives in Buckinghamshire, was a county councillor, had been on the police authority and knew the area very well. So between us we cover the area. It is fairly difficult because you cannot use public transport, which does not go across the area, and it would mean me coming up to London and going down again for half my area, so I spend rather too much of my time in a car.

Q146 Michael Ellis: May I ask you both about public awareness? Perhaps I could take a step back to the crime figures. Clearly, there is a political agenda to rubbish the crime figures when they are not appreciated, but the reality is that your officers and officers around the country have succeeded in getting crime figures down significantly almost across the board. For that, perhaps you will take back to your respective constabularies our thanks and appreciation for the good work that those police officers are doing. Crime is down, and down significantly.

As far as public recognition is concerned, the BBC did a poll a few months ago in which it found that only—I emphasise the word “only”—62% of people knew they had a police and crime commissioner for their area. I think there was a political agenda behind that as well because I seem to remember another poll indicated that after 30 years of police authorities there was only 7% knowledge of their existence. I think you have done rather well as a body to get 62% recognition of police and crime commissioners in about a year.

However, what more can you do to increase public awareness so that even more people are aware that you are there as an option and that they can write to you if they have any issues with the police that concern them?

Anthony Stansfeld: It is a difficult one. Obviously, I go round to every area, I have a huge number of meetings, I go to all the councils, and I have public meetings in every area. However, for the press, good news is not very newsworthy and that is clear. The quickest way for a police commissioner to get himself into the news and well known is to do something disastrous, which is unfortunate.

Michael Ellis: I don't think we recommend that.

Anthony Stansfeld: It is a problem. Obviously, I am on local television and local radio quite a lot and it will take time, but the fact is that it has built up a great deal; it is moving in the right direction.

Q147 Michael Ellis: I will come to you in a moment, Miss Bourne. Mr Stansfeld, do you think that police and crime panels can do more to assist police and crime commissioners to raise their public recognition?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes, I think they can. The only difficulty is that they are district or county councillors and it is as difficult for them not to be seen as political in doing that. Through the community safety partnerships and bodies like them which deal with local issues and in dealing with local charities, word gets out very well. Many people living in the Thames valley know me now but did not know me a year ago.

Q148 Michael Ellis: Miss Bourne, do you have any comment to make about raising public awareness above the 62%?

Katy Bourne: Yes. The figures you quoted are interesting. In 12 months, the ComRes poll clearly showed that people knew they had a police and crime commissioner. I was slightly disappointed that the focus of that poll, which is really encouraging, was on the fact that people did not know our names. I don't think either of us are so precious that we care whether they know our names. What is really important is that people know that they have one person they can go to who will represent them. They did not know that the police authority was there originally, so I think that is a great bonus.

There is always more you can do. I engage a lot with social media. In Sussex we are looking to set up a youth commission—not commissioner—with a group of 25 young people between the ages of 14 and 25 taken from all the different communities across Sussex. We are setting that up at the moment and it will help to give me evidence for my police and crime plan going forward. That in itself is raising awareness. We do a lot of work with local authorities—you have already heard from my colleague on that. It is about getting out and meeting the public. There is nothing better than face to face.

Chair: We will continue with this questioning. Thank you, Mr Ellis.

Q149 Mr Winnick: Mr Stansfeld, may I first take you up on your response to the Chair. You seemed rather critical, to say the least, about a newspaper article that appeared about your activities. Do you accept that, like Members of Parliament, you are an elected representative and subject to scrutiny and criticism by the media?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes, I do. It is one of the things that, if you are brave enough to stand for election, you have to put with. I did put up with it. I did not enjoy it.

Q150 Mr Winnick: So the article appeared, and you considered it unfair.

Anthony Stansfeld: To start with, I did nothing about it, but when they repeated it twice more, I felt that I had to do something about it.

Q151 Mr Winnick: What did you do?

Anthony Stansfeld: I went to the Press Complaints Commission—having written to the editor beforehand and not had any positive response.

Q152 Mr Winnick: And the Press Complaints Commission did what?

Anthony Stansfeld: They looked at the facts. They said I had a chauffeur being paid something, but I had a part-time person for a short time on a fraction of what they said. They said I was earning a major sum as full member of a council when I was a back bencher and earning a fraction. They said that I had a scam office. In fact, the part-time office that I use is absolutely vital.

Q153 Mr Winnick: Does that mean—to get to the point—that they upheld your complaint?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes, they did.

Q154 Mr Winnick: But both of you presumably accept that inevitably and rightly, as with Members of Parliament or anyone else in public life, you will be subject to media scrutiny and attention.

Anthony Stansfeld: I appreciate that.

Q155 Mr Winnick: I am sure that you do.

If we look at the issue of police and crime panels, how often have you appeared—if you have appeared?

Anthony Stansfeld: It is every two months.

Q156 Mr Winnick: This is a regular thing.

Anthony Stansfeld: It is a regular meeting every two months where I go and sit in front of the panel.

Q157 Mr Winnick: How long would you say that it lasts?

Anthony Stansfeld: The best part of a long morning. It starts at about 10 o'clock and ends at about 1 o'clock or half-past 1.

Q158 Mr Winnick: Is it a public session?

Anthony Stansfeld: It is in public, yes. The public are invited to come in.

Q159 Mr Winnick: So you appear before the panel every two months.

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes.

Katy Bourne: I believe that ours are quarterly. They are webcast live online, so members of the public who cannot actually attend can view them. They are also invited to put

questions to me as well. We take questions from the public in the police and crime panel meetings, too.

Q160 Mr Winnick: I wonder whether I can put this point to you, arising from what happened in Wales, where a Chief Constable was dismissed—there have been other such cases. There will be questions about Chief Constables, so I will not pursue that, but how far do you refute—if you do refute, which I am sure you will—that the panels are pretty toothless? You go up before them and you explain and justify what you do, as is right and proper, but at the end of the day, how much control do they have over your activity?

Anthony Stansfeld: I don't think they are toothless. For a start, if I wished to put up the police precept in the council tax, they have the ability to stop me doing that, which is actually quite an important power. I would not want to turn up at a meeting with my plan all ready just for them to turn it down. My police and crime plan has to go through them to start with before it is ratified. I went through a lengthy period of consultation with them. There is no benefit for me whatsoever in not having them agree with me. They represent their councils. They represent the 18 councils in my area, and if I am doing something that they do not think is right, it would be very stupid of me not to take full cognisance of that.

Q161 Mr Winnick: You would obviously rather that they were on your side, which goes without saying if it is a choice between the panel being on your side or against. At the end of the day, however, you would decide and not the panel.

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes, but I don't see any major decision that I am likely totally and utterly to disagree with. I think it is an unlikely event.

Q162 Mr Winnick: And you, Ms Bourne?

Katy Bourne: Yes, I've found my panel to be very helpful during my tenure so far. They have not always agreed with everything that I have put forward to them, but we have a very good working relationship. Their job is to scrutinise, and effective scrutiny will always make an organisation much stronger. I find that their scrutiny is very effective. Although I meet them formally in the police and crime panel meetings, we do meet informally outside of that as well. I have a regular meeting with the chair and vice-chair of the panel. They have also set up three working groups. One helps me to write and inform the police and crime plan. Another helps with a lot of the victims commissioning work. The third helps with finances. That is where some of the real questions and challenge take place, which I find incredibly helpful.

Q163 Mr Clappison: Mr Stansfeld, do you have any other panels besides those that have to be set up containing local authority members?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes, I have all the community safety partnerships, of which I have a very large number. I also have an independent audit panel. Those are the main panels I deal with.

Q164 Mr Clappison: Who chooses the members of those panels?

Anthony Stansfeld: The community safety partnerships are chosen by the councils. They are a council issue. They also usually include as a member the local superintendent for that area as well as representatives of probation and youth offending teams and so forth. I certainly do not appoint them.

Q165 Mr Clappison: What are the arrangements for these other panels? How do they constitute?

Anthony Stansfeld: They are a council responsibility. We have a major input. I also provide a considerable amount of their funding. It was Home Office funding to them; it was then diverted to the police and crime commissioners.

Q166 Mr Clappison: Are members of the panel paid or not?

Anthony Stansfeld: Most of them are in full-time jobs. A large number of them are council officers. On most of the panels there are probably two or three elected councillors.

Q167 Chair: Sorry. Could you clarify that, Commissioner? How many members of the panel do you have in Thames Valley? How many people are on your panel?

Anthony Stansfeld: On my police and crime panel? I think it is 21.

Q168 Chair: Twenty-one. Are you telling the Committee that the majority are council officers?

Anthony Stansfeld: No, no. He was asking about the community safety partnerships.

Q169 Chair: Were you?

Mr Clappison: Panels.

Anthony Stansfeld: He was asking about panels and we were talking about the community safety partnerships.

Q170 Chair: As far as the main panel is concerned?

Anthony Stansfeld: The majority of the main panel are district councillors.

Q171 Chair: And you have how many? 21.

Anthony Stansfeld: I think it is 20 or 21. It is 20 actually.

Q172 Chair: And Sussex?

Katy Bourne: Seventeen, I believe. This is the police and crime panel. The community safety partnerships—

Q173 Chair: Leave aside the community safety partnerships. We are talking about the main panel.

Katy Bourne: Yes, the police and crime panel. There are 17 members who have an allowance. One of the county councils is the lead authority. They get a certain amount from Government every year. My understanding is that the members get a small allowance, but it is minimal. For the year it is less than £1,000.

Q174 Mr Clappison: Is that the case for Thames Valley?

Anthony Stansfeld: They are unpaid in my area, other than allowances for petrol to get there. I believe in some areas—in other ones, especially in the north of England—they are paid quite considerable sums to be members of the board.

Q175 Mr Clappison: It is very public spirited of them, isn't it?

Anthony Stansfeld: I think it is very public spirited of them.

Q176 Lorraine Fullbrook: Just a quick supplementary, Chairman, please, to Commissioner Stansfeld. Have you found it difficult to make the transition from councillor to police and crime commissioner?

Anthony Stansfeld: I think if I had come into it completely cold I would have found it more difficult, but I had been the council's representative on the police authority and I chaired the performance committee on it in the year running up to taking on the job. So, probably not, no. It is a very different environment, but I had quite a good run in beforehand on it.

Q177 Yasmin Qureshi: Coming on to the police and crime panels, Commissioner Bourne, I think you said there were 17 people on your police and crime panel. Are most of them elected councillors? What sort of background do they have? Do you know?

Katy Bourne: They are all elected councillors, bar two. Two of them are independent members.

Q178 Yasmin Qureshi: Are they from different political parties?

Katy Bourne: No, they are not from political parties at all. They are completely independent of any political party. One is a representative of the victims' support group. I believe they sit on the panels as themselves, not as representatives of any groups.

Q179 Yasmin Qureshi: I know you mentioned that you found them very helpful and that it is good to have a constructive dialogue with them, but recently you appointed your deputy despite the panel's decision not to endorse him. Does that not suggest that, in effect, they are toothless?

Katy Bourne: Not at all. To give you a bit of background, you have to understand the situation that I was in. When I took office I inherited from the police authority eight full-time equivalent people plus an interim chief exec who was acting up and an interim finance officer. So I had no senior team members. Three months in, I decided that I needed some support, so I appointed a deputy, as the Act allows. You are allowed to appoint a deputy; you don't have to go out to interview on that. As any leader of any council would appoint their deputy, so you can appoint yours.

I appointed a deputy who happened to be the previous chairman of the police authority. He had eight years' experience, was well regarded and was particularly good on the financial side as well. He was an incredible asset to me at that time. Since then, I have appointed a chief executive and a chief finance officer, as per the Act, because those are the two senior roles I must have by law.

The panel at the time did not want me to appoint a deputy. I don't think they fully understood the situation that I was in. I have to admit that at the time we probably did not have the open relationship that we have now. So it has been a lesson for both of us. It was a case of keeping the dialogue open, so that they could understand.

The reason they gave for not appointing was that they were concerned that he was already a councillor. They said that he would not be able to be a full-time deputy for me and be a councillor. Unfortunately, that went against the Employments Rights Act, which clearly shows that, as a responsible employer, you can have an employee doing voluntary work. Being a councillor counts as voluntary work. Therefore, I did not take their advice. I said no and appointed him. He subsequently stepped down from one of his council roles, anyway, which he had told the panel he was going to do. That is where we are. After six months, he decided he couldn't carry on for personal reasons, so I no longer have a deputy.

Q180 Yasmin Qureshi: The question is not so much why you did what you did or that he has left. It is a question of the fact that the police and crime panel did not endorse him but you went ahead and did so. Therefore, it brings in the question about how effective and powerful they are in reality, or are they basically there to make suggestions? If you like the suggestion, that's fine, but if you don't like what they suggest you will go ahead and do what you want to do. You could say, that is fine and that is what you want to do. But it raises the question of how effective they are in holding the commissioner or anybody else to account.

Katy Bourne: The greatest benefit that the panels can bring a police and crime commissioner is as a critical friend. Their role is to scrutinise, not to hold to account. That is clearly shown in the Act.

Q181 Chair: What is the difference between scrutinising and holding to account in your view?

Katy Bourne: I think as a scrutiny body they act as a critical friend and put forward their reasoning. The learning that came out of this, to answer the question, was that I had not had a good dialogue with the panel. It was my own fault and I had not spoken to them properly. Since then, we have learned from this to set up these working groups that have been incredibly effective. That allows the panel to scrutinise properly my decisions and challenge me as well, without it blowing up into such a big furore. That is the learning that has come from it. I don't think that shows them to be toothless at all. I think that shows them absolutely in the spirit in which the Act was written.

Q182 Chair: So when Brad Watson said to you that they were concerned that Mr Waight would not be able to devote enough time to his demanding job, given his commitment to other local authorities, at the time you felt that if you had had a better dialogue with them, you might have accepted what he said? At the end of the day they were right, were they not, because he did step down after only six months?

Katy Bourne: No, they were not right at all. He stepped down for personal reasons and I respect him for that. That is fine and had nothing to do with his work load. At the time, if I had had a better dialogue with the panel, I would have been able to explain to them the reasons why I needed a deputy at that time.

Q183 Chair: So it was a communication issue?

Katy Bourne: It was a communication issue, definitely.

Q184 Chair: You have been very open. It is not often you get public officials coming along and saying they made a mistake and should have had a better—

Katy Bourne: It was never a mistake. I don't admit that it was a mistake. I absolutely stand by my decision to appoint him. It was the right thing to do; it was the right thing for my office at that time.

Q185 Chair: Even though subsequently he has gone, for the reasons they said that he would go, that he has obviously not got the time.

Katy Bourne: Their concern was that he could not hold down a full-time job as my deputy and be a councillor at the same time. Had I had a better dialogue with them, I could have explained that, actually, under the Employment Rights Act, as a responsible employer, it is good that your staff do voluntary work and I am a great supporter of that. As police and crime commissioner, I remain a school governor. Had we had a better dialogue, I think I could have explained that a lot better and I do not think that this would have occurred. I do not think they would have said no. I think they would have agreed with the appointment.

Q186 Chair: Okay. I think we know enough about that. Finally, on whether you agree with your panels or not, has there been an occasion, Commissioner Stansfield, where your panel has said, "We think you should do x" and you have done y?

Anthony Stansfeld: No.

Q187 Chair: There hasn't. And, apart from that particular incident, Commissioner Bourne, has there been another occasion when the panel has turned to you and said, "Actually, we think this is the wrong way to do things" and you did not accept what they said?

Katy Bourne: No.

Q188 Chair: So that is just an isolated example?

Katy Bourne: Just that one. The learning we took from it was that we need to keep having much better dialogue.

Chair: Indeed, and you have been very open about that. Thank you.

Q189 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to ask both Commissioners what arrangements you have developed in your areas for holding your Chief Constables to account.

Katy Bourne: I think probably the most effective thing that we have done is that I have a weekly meeting with my Chief Constable every Friday from 8 till 10 and we talk about ongoing issues. It is a bit more of a relaxed meet. But, every month, we hold a proper performance and accountability meeting, which is webcast online. The public can put questions to my office, on which they can then see me question the Chief Constable. That has been incredibly effective and it has been recognised, certainly by the submission that was put in by—I forget who it was—at the beginning of the pack that we have here, and by the Policing Minister, as a really good, transparent way of holding to account.

The really great thing was, if we take one example locally, probably the most challenging thing that we have had so far in my tenure was the anti-fracking protests in a little village called Balcombe, which is just down the road from where I live, and it is now globally on the map. You can imagine that the correspondence I had from members of the public was quite intense. We had a PAM—a performance and accountability meeting—which was webcast live online, purely about the policing of that event. I was able to put all the questions

that the public wanted answered directly to the Chief Constable, and he was able to answer them. I think that was a real show of transparency, openness and the value of this role.

Anthony Stansfeld: I have a fortnightly informal meeting—but minutes are taken—with myself, the Chief Constable and the chief executive, where we go through all the major issues that are coming up. We look at performance, finance—

Lorraine Fullbrook: When you say chief executive—

Anthony Stansfeld: My chief executive, who takes the minutes. We have an agenda which we go through it and we have any other business and everything that comes up. For more formal meetings, where I hold the Chief Constable to account, we have what we call a level 2 meeting where the major decisions are made and discussed. They are then put on to the web and you can see them. Then we have a public meeting.

Q190 Lorraine Fullbrook: Is that level 2 meeting held in public or webcast?

Anthony Stansfeld: That is not held in public, but there is then a level 1 meeting which is held in public and, at that meeting, I hold the Chief Constable to account: we go through all the various features. It is not an antagonistic way of holding the Chief Constable to account, but, if things are going wrong, this is my opportunity to say that publicly.

Q191 Lorraine Fullbrook: So as well as your informal, fortnightly meetings, how often do you hold level 1 and level 2 meetings?

Anthony Stansfeld: I think we hold them quarterly. If we held them monthly, there would not really be enough major things to go through.

Q192 Chair: Some would say, Commissioner Bourne, that the relationship has become very cosy. We will question Lord Stevens about this later, but, in his inquiry, he thinks that the relationship between Commissioners and Chief Constables—not you and Mr Richards in particular—is too cosy. I expect you and Mr Richards sent each other Christmas cards and that you, Mr Stansfield and Sara Thornton exchanged Christmas cards. Do you recognise that description? After all, they only have to keep you happy, whereas in the old days it was the police and crime committee that the Chief Constable had to keep happy.

Katy Bourne: I don't recognise that description at all in Sussex. I have a very professional relationship with Chief Constable Richards. He is a man whom I respect enormously. He has risen to the top of his profession, and as such should be treated with the respect he deserves. I see my role as challenging but also supportive. I should be intrusive and supportive.

Q193 Chair: So you have no concerns over the way he has handled the Tim Loughton case?

Katy Bourne: I don't think it would be appropriate for me to comment on that here because I am responsible should there be an official complaint against him. I don't think it would be appropriate.

Q194 Chair: At the moment there hasn't been.

Katy Bourne: I think we are still waiting for the results of the public affairs committee—

Q195 Chair: The Standards and Privileges Committee.

Katy Bourne: Yes.

Q196 Chair: So you have had no involvement in this at all? No one has come to you about it in your role as commissioner?

Katy Bourne: My role as commissioner is to investigate any formal complaints against the chief constable. Therefore without making myself prejudiced at this point—

Q197 Chair: Of course, but as far as the issue of police information notices and the way in which your authority—your area—seems to be giving them out, you have no concerns over the number of PINs that have been issued by Sussex police?

Katy Bourne: I think this is probably verging more on the operational side.

Q198 Chair: But as a matter of policy?

Katy Bourne: I would be wary of commenting in the light of Mr Loughton's outstanding case at this moment in time, but it is something that I am alive to.

Q199 Chair: Right. Mr Stansfeld, one of your Members of Parliament is the Prime Minister. Would you have him writing to you as his commissioner, complaining about the lack of police in Witney?

Anthony Stansfeld: He never has. Neither has the Home Secretary written to me. She is also one of my MPs.

Q200 Chair: Do you feel a special responsibility to make sure that the relationship with Sara Thornton isn't too cosy because you have very high profile Members of Parliament in your area?

Anthony Stansfeld: I don't think that things are really interconnected at all. I have one of the most senior chief constables and the most experienced. We don't always agree. There are things that we will not necessarily agree with in private, but I think I have a very good working relationship with a very competent police officer.

Q201 Lorraine Fullbrook: Chairman, if I may, I should like to ask both commissioners a supplementary question. Lord Stevens argues in his report that the power of commissioners to dismiss their chief constables has had a damaging and chilling effect on police leadership. Do you agree with those conclusions?

Anthony Stansfeld: I don't. I think it is a huge exaggeration.

Katy Bourne: I would endorse my colleague's sentiments. There has been a lot of churn at the top because a lot of chief constables have left for whatever reasons, but that is not an unhealthy thing in any organisation. It gives others opportunities to come forward. I think it is healthy.

Q202 Mark Reckless: Ms Bourne, you said there would be difficulties in the strategic policing requirements if the Stevens recommendations were acted on. How would that work? Would it just be getting people together from the various councils every now and again? Is there not also an issue of who would apply proper and full scrutiny to the chief constable?

Katy Bourne: Well, yes, you are asking for dilution across, looking at Sussex, 12 different district and borough councils, each with their own agendas and so on. I didn't have a police authority background, but from what I have learned it was hard enough to get them to make a decision—one committee of 17. I cannot imagine how difficult it would be to get 12 committees of potentially 17 apiece to make decisions. I cannot see how that would benefit residents in Sussex.

Q203 Mark Reckless: It might not benefit residents, but it might well benefit the chief constables who would not have to—

Katy Bourne: It would be very easy to hide. The one thing that has been shown up and down the country with police and crime commissioners is that chief constables are held up to scrutiny far more than they have been in the past. That is a positive thing.

Q204 Mark Reckless: So may it be perhaps that Lord Stevens and some of the other ex-chief constables he was working with aren't so keen on that level of scrutiny.

Katy Bourne: Well, I mean, yes. Why would a turkey vote for Christmas?

Anthony Stansfeld: I would agree with that.

Q205 Mark Reckless: Ms Bourne, you were saying about Mr Richards that he deserves respect because he is a chief constable. Haven't we rather moved on from that and respect is earned rather than ex officio?

Katy Bourne: Yes, respect is earned, but you have somebody who has been in policing for 30 years. Anybody who has worked their way through an organisation for 30 years deserves respect for getting where they have got to. That was really just to give an understanding of where I come from with the relationship. I am not there to be Mr Richards's pal. I am there to hold him to account, but I am also there to be supportive. I want him to be the best possible chief constable that he can be, because that benefits people in Sussex.

Q206 Mark Reckless: But when you put the emphasis on deserving respect because he is a chief constable, or because he has had 30 years of experience, might some people not see that as rather a pro forma statement of confidence, rather than anything stronger?

Katy Bourne: I hope not. Call me old-fashioned, but that is just how I was brought up. Coming from my business background, when people get to a certain position, they don't usually get there just because they won it on a lottery ticket.

Q207 Mark Reckless: And presumably in his case, if you have not appointed him at least you have continued to have him in post. You mentioned Balcombe. Were you satisfied that Sussex police did everything they should have done to allow Cuadrilla to go about their lawful activity?

Katy Bourne: I am, yes.

Q208 Mark Reckless: Could I ask you about collaboration? What concrete results have you had in terms of benefits from your collaboration with Surrey police?

Katy Bourne: It is still very early days. Surrey and Sussex have been collaborating for quite some years now, and in that period haven't really achieved as much as we have started to see achieved in the last 12 months.

Mark Reckless: So it is not early days. It has been going on a long time, but nothing much has happened.

Katy Bourne: Yes.

Q209 Mark Reckless: Why is that?

Katy Bourne: I just think there was perhaps a lack of will on both sides and there was no drive there before, to really make it work.

Q210 Mark Reckless: And does your relationship with the Surrey PCC deliver that drive which was lacking before?

Katy Bourne: It helps enormously, but it is not just the PCCs. It is working with the chief constables as well. It is important that both organisations are aligned from both sides.

Q211 Mark Reckless: Is there significant pressure for savings? I know that in Surrey the council tax payer has to pay for about half the cost of the force. In Sussex, I think it is over 40%. Is that fair, when some of the forces in the north are almost 7/8ths funded by the national Exchequer, yet according to Mr Stansfeld, all this money can be found for big allowances for members of the police and crime panels?

Katy Bourne: It is an interesting correlation in Surrey and Sussex, because Surrey taxpayers on band D pay approximately £207 per annum for their police precept, whereas in Sussex they pay £138.42. Sussex is the fourth lowest precept of all the 41 police forces, and certainly the lowest of all the shire counties as well. That is quite a difference.

Q212 Mark Reckless: Mr Stansfeld, do you see collaboration as offering the prospect of savings for your council tax payers?

Anthony Stansfeld: I think the only reason that we have been able not to cut the front line in Thames Valley—we are one of only four police forces that has achieved not cutting it, but also taking the considerable cuts that are now well over 21%—shows that collaboration has been one of the major ways we have done this. For instance, we have a road vehicles fleet—one of the biggest in the country—but we are combined with Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and the nuclear police. With Hampshire, we have combined all our ICT, firearms and dogs. Over the regional thing, I mentioned we combine counter-terrorism, serious organised crime and I could go through about 10 other things that we have actually combined. We are just combining with Hampshire on all our records.

Q213 Mark Reckless: Surrey has a boundary with Berkshire in your force. Is there any collaboration at all between the two forces?

Anthony Stansfeld: We have just signed a very big contract with BT right across the south region, although one is not a member.

Katy Bourne: Yes, it is Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley.

Anthony Stansfeld: Kent has not become a member, but it is a huge collaborative one and we are going to save I think £300,000 a year out of that contract alone. Of course, with Surrey we have combined, as I said, all our regional organised crime and all that side of it. We

have a meeting early next week where the PCCs and chief constables will go down to Guildford and go through all the collaborative projects that we do together.

Q214 Mark Reckless: Finally from me, do you think police and crime commissioners will continue? Will there be a further set of elections, with some of you re-elected, or do you think Lord Stevens will hit his target?

Anthony Stansfeld: It is up to you who wins an election. I will say that there are 13 Labour PCCs, of whom four, if not five, are ex-Labour Cabinet Ministers. Our chairman, Tony Lloyd, who runs Manchester, is a senior ex-Labour Minister.

Q215 Mark Reckless: And Alun Michael served on our Committee until recently.

Anthony Stansfeld: And he is in south Wales.

Q216 Mark Reckless: Ms Bourne, do you think PCCs will continue?

Katy Bourne: I hope so. It will be a sad day for the public if they do not. I really think it is a fantastic opportunity. More members of the public in Sussex I speak to understand the role, and what it means for them that they have somebody through whom they can hold the police to account. It is a real benefit for them, and I hope that it continues.

Q217 Mr Winnick: One understands your wish for police and crime commissioners to continue. It would be unusual otherwise. Do you accept—this is a yes or no question—that the whole position of police and crime commissioners is on probation?

Katy Bourne: No, I do not think we are on probation, because we are elected and in the role now. We are very much here, and I hope that we are here to stay. I certainly intend to keep my sleeves rolled up and keep working hard to prove to people that this is a fantastic opportunity.

Q218 Mr Winnick: Whether you are elected or not, will the position continue? Do you accept that whichever party wins the next election will presumably review the situation, and therefore to that extent the position is on probation?

Katy Bourne: The position is constantly under review from all quarters. Ultimately, it has to be the people's decision.

Q219 Mr Winnick: The same?

Anthony Stansfeld: Yes. It is inevitably under review the whole time, and the better the job we make of it, the better. However, it would be extraordinarily difficult to go back to the huge, largely anonymous committees that were running the police. When we put together Serious Organised Crime across the south-east of England, imagine getting five committees of 17 to 19 members agreeing to do that. We sat down with the five commissioners, the five chief constables and their staff and we put it together over the course of three or four months. The savings and efficiency improvements were absolutely massive. I don't believe that the police authorities could have done that.

Chair: It would be helpful if you could write to us with that information, because we are interested in the issue of collaboration.

Q220 Mr Clappison: In making the case for your posts, may I ask each of you what you regard to be your most significant achievement?

Anthony Stansfeld: I set three priorities, but it is always difficult in an area as diverse as Thames. One was to reduce household burglary, which I have done very effectively, I hope—when I say I have done it, I mean the police have done it. I set another one on vulnerable people. You are aware of what went on in Oxford and the serious problems we had with that. Some 25 extra police officers were moved into child sexual abuse and exploitation. We are putting together multi-agency hubs to sort that out through the three areas, which is frightfully important. It is no good the police and everybody else doing it in isolation; that doesn't work. You have got to operate together in one office.

I made one that was slightly contentious, which was rural crime, but two thirds of my population live in rural areas or small towns, and we had a massive problem with serious organised crime and the stealing of heavy machinery and plant, allied with intimidation across a wide area. We have reduced that quite a lot, but I have got a long way to go on that. I think that my three priorities have not been entirely achieved, but we have made huge progress on all three.

Katy Bourne: Nationally, for me it has been the performance and accountability meetings, which have shown the public that their questions can be put forward on issues such as emergency response times, which has been an issue in Sussex, and burglary going up. I have been able to challenge on those issues, and see burglary response times drop. Locally, the public tell me all the time they want more visible, effective policing. I have been able to open recruitment for the first time in three and a half years in Sussex. That has been an incredible achievement.

If you want to take one specific, the last 10 years in the west of the county we had really bad issues with Travellers, because there has been no transit site provision across the county. In less than 12 months, with my role, I have been able to get all the district and borough councils together with the county, and they have actually identified somewhere for a transit site now, which will alleviate a lot of the pressure that residents across Sussex have been crying out on, for years and years. So I think from an achievement point of view that sums it up.

Q221 Paul Flynn: How many people listen to your webcast?

Katy Bourne: Gosh, I think pre-Christmas we were hitting around 800 live online. I think the Balcombe one was probably our most successful.

Q222 Paul Flynn: How many have you had?

Katy Bourne: I don't have the figures to hand, but we can get those to you. We were told by the company—I will not name them, because I am not sure if this is a public broadcast-type; I do not want to advertise them in that respect—that if you get more than 100 online viewers watching at the time, that is really impressive. Our first one we had over 300 watching. The Balcombe one, in particular, I think we had over 1,000 online, watching, at the time. Then of course they can download archive afterwards.

Q223 Paul Flynn: The decision on whether this experiment with police commissioners continues will be decided by the next general election, by a vote on many issues. In what ways do you think the remit of commissioners could be changed, to make it more likely that you continue?

Katy Bourne: I do not think you should change the remit of commissioners. I think it is absolutely—

Q224 Paul Flynn: You are not concerned about the unfettered—or what is claimed to be the unfettered—power of the police commissioner to sack a chief constable, particularly in the case where not only the chief constable may have 30 years of experience, which you commended, but the actual commissioner might have 30 years of experience in the police? Do you think that is something that is useful and likely to endear the commissioners to the population?

Katy Bourne: Members of the public have a huge say in the commissioner that they vote in, and they very much understand what they are getting when they vote for—

Q225 Paul Flynn: This is an example: a commissioner working on the strength of a democratic vote of 8% of the electorate immediately set about putting pressure on the chief constable to resign, who later told this Committee that he expected a large number of applicants to replace her. In fact he had no applicants to replace her. He replaced her with his deputy but no external applicant came in. Do you think that powers of that kind are likely to affect the popularity of commissioners and their acceptability?

Katy Bourne: There are two points there, if I may, that you raise. In one of them you remarked about an 8% mandate. What is a mandate—one vote or 1 million—

Q226 Paul Flynn: None of us here were elected on 8%, I can assure you.

Katy Bourne: I think it is a bit pedantic, though, to argue about what a mandate is here. That is one thing I would refute, absolutely; 15.8% of the electorate voted for me. That actually amounted to just short of 200,000 people voting. That is more than vote for any MP, so we won't go down the mandate route. When you ask whether there is too much power in one person's hands, ultimately you want somebody who can make a decision. If the public don't like the decisions that their police and crime commissioner is making they can make their voice heard at the ballot box.

Q227 Paul Flynn: Do you think the powers that police commissioners have to appoint their deputies in a way that is entirely unfettered—we recognise there is some kind of approval with the panels—is a power that has brought criticism to the office? Most of them have appointed their panels.

Katy Bourne: No, because the leader of a council has the right to appoint their deputy without recourse to anybody. It is their decision. The Prime Minister has the right to appoint his deputy without recourse to anybody. Therefore as police and crime commissioner, I should have the right to appoint my deputy.

Mr Winnick: That is one way of putting it!

Chair: Order.

Paul Flynn: Imagine if I mentioned Mr Clegg in that way—

Chair: Order. Final question.

Q228 Paul Flynn: Are you conscious of a situation in which someone appoints a pal of his, who is a fellow freemason, for instance, or someone who served with him as a fellow

policeman, without any kind of advertising or interviews with people? That is what brings the office into disrepute.

Katy Bourne: I cannot be held responsible for decisions that colleagues of mine make. I can be held responsible for the decisions that I make and I stand by them.

Chair: Thank you. That is a very clear answer.

Anthony Stansfeld: I needed somebody who knew something about the police and who knew a lot about Buckinghamshire. I chose a county councillor in Buckinghamshire who had been on the police authority. I did not have many people to choose from. I did not want somebody who was coming in as my deputy who was learning from scratch. I needed somebody who could advise me on the Buckinghamshire issues. I think I made the right decision. It went in front of the police and crime panel, which agreed with my decision, so it was not an unfettered decision. If they had all objected wildly to him, I do not think I would have appointed him.

Q229 Paul Flynn: Mrs Bourne, your panel objected, didn't they?

Katy Bourne: I think I explained the reasons behind that.

Q230 Paul Flynn: You did, yes. They did actually object, but you still continued with your appointment.

Katy Bourne: They did, and I explained the reasons behind that.

Chair: We have heard that explanation. Thank you for coming in. We are most grateful. It has given us a useful insight into the work of police and crime commissioners. If there is anything else you want to tell us about, please do not hesitate to write, especially with the information on collaboration, which I think the Committee finds extremely interesting. Thank you.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Martin Richards QPM**, Chief Constable, Sussex Police, and **Sara Thornton CBE, QPM**, Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police, gave evidence.

Q231 Chair: Perhaps I can begin with you, Sara, on the nature of police and crime commissioners. We have heard from your police and crime commissioners. We wanted to make sure that we heard from the chief constables immediately after the commissioners had given evidence. You may or may not have read Lord Stevens's report, but you know who he is and obviously you have had contact with him. You yourself have had a very distinguished career in the police. Lord Stevens concludes that there are systemic failures in the way in which the whole operation of PCCs has taken place. Do you agree with that?

Chief Constable Thornton: Chairman, I think that to give a straight answer on that would be to venture into party politics. We have got the coalition Government who have introduced police and crime commissioners. Although it is an independent review, it was commissioned by the Labour party, so I do not want to be drawn on what I think is a party political issue. My sense of duty as the chief constable has been to make sure that I did my very best to implement what Parliament had decided in the introduction of police and crime commissioners, and that is what we have done in the Thames Valley.

Q232 Chair: Has it gone well?

Chief Constable Thornton: I was trying to think about what the differences are. I worked with police authorities for a long time. The point that Mr Stansfeld made about the clarity of priority is really important. He stood on a manifesto that was about burglary, rural crime and vulnerable victims. Those have been translated directly into his police and crime plan, and that is what we operate against. There is clarity about objectives.

Also, both commissioners made the point that the public now have what you might call a go-to person when they are concerned about issues or individual cases. That does not mean the police and crime commissioner becomes the decision maker, but they can then advocate on behalf of that member of the public to either me or my colleagues about issues or cases.

Q233 Chair: Sure. Can I stop you there? Are you telling us that you are getting fewer complaints because people tend to write first to the commissioner? As an MP, if somebody comes to my surgery—other Members will have different ways of dealing with this—I would write to the chief constable. I would never get a reply from the chief constable. It would go to the commander of the local police force, who would then reply to me. Constituents like to know, when they go and see their MPs, that they have written to the chief constable. It sounds good. Are you finding that people are now writing to the commissioner first, rather than you? Do you see any change, or is there no change in the way in which the public approach you?

Chief Constable Thornton: I still get numerous letters from Members of Parliament. I am aware that the police and crime commissioner gets them in addition, but I have seen no drop-off in the letters. For my own part, if an MP writes a letter to me, they get a reply from me.

Q234 Chair: When you say that they are the advocates of the public, how has that manifested itself practically? How do they advocate what the public want?

Chief Constable Thornton: People will write to, e-mail or contact the police and crime commissioner, or raise an issue at a meeting. When we have our informal bi-weekly meetings, which he explained to you, he will raise those issues with me. For example, he is very concerned about fraud and the way in which Action Fraud has changed arrangements nationally and whether that is a good deal for victims. He has been very concerned about issues such as female genital mutilation and has raised those issues with me.

But also, he will raise individual cases. I think it is important to say that he does not in any way seek to replace my decision making. I think there is an important respect for our mutual roles. I have first accountability to the law, but what he will do is challenge me and seek explanation and rationale for why I was adopting certain approaches.

Q235 Chair: Mr Richards, you have been lavished with praise by your commissioner. Were you slightly embarrassed with the words that she used when you announced your retirement? She said that you were steering the force through difficult times and dealing with significant financial challenges. Today, she is obviously someone who has full respect for your work. Do you think that relationship is too cosy?

Chief Constable Richards: It certainly does not feel cosy on a Friday morning when, not the eyes of the world, but, as you heard, the eyes of anything up to 1,000 people are on you, and the commissioner is putting her questions, linked very much to her police and crime plan. What may not have come across to the Committee is that the questions tend to be grouped around her priorities and our operational response to them—perhaps a little bit like

this afternoon. There can be questions that we might anticipate, but there are certainly very many that we do not.

What it also provides is that sharp focus. It is right to say that we had identified—but the commissioner was very much on the case—a drop-off in performance on burglary detection, which you have heard about, and response times—issues that are critical to the public. I certainly felt, not quite put through the mincer, but it was a tough time. We have responded and reacted as a result.

Q236 Chair: So if we are now looking for a boss of policing in Sussex, is it you, or is it Commissioner Bourne?

Chief Constable Richards: I like to think it depends on what you are asking about. We have already talked this afternoon about communities and representation. For me, the boss could be the police community support officer, if we are talking about a parish council or local issue that addresses the needs or difficulties that 100 people might be experiencing.

If it is an issue such as Balcombe, the drilling and the policing of that drilling, which we have also heard about, then that is almost certainly a matter for the chief constable, with scrutiny and holding to account from the police and crime commissioner.

Q237 Chair: Has your life changed at all under the new system?

Chief Constable Richards: Yes. Significantly.

Q238 Chair: Because?

Chief Constable Richards: For a start, if I can put it bluntly and personally, I remember what it is like to work for one boss. Where I would demur from one or two is, I do feel that it is a hierarchical arrangement, which I do not think is a view shared by everyone. I certainly feel that I have been held to account by a single individual who, as we have heard, has the capability of hiring and firing. That sounds pretty hierarchical to me, and it sounds as if I need to be on my mettle when being asked questions, whether they be of a financial, organisational or operational nature.

Q239 Chair: Do you go and see her, or does she come and see you?

Chief Constable Richards: We alternate. We play home and away on a weekly basis. For reasons of technology, the webcam meeting takes place in her offices. I must emphasise that our meetings and conversations are not restricted to what I might call the set piece. If there is a high-profile and reputational issue of an operational matter, I or one of my senior staff will brief her as soon as it is practically possible—a relationship that we maintain with our local councillors and MPs as well, of course. There will be other meetings during the working week, either where the commissioner is briefed by my senior departmental heads, or an informal meeting or phone call with myself.

Q240 Chair: You have mentioned your relations with local MPs. I raised the case of Tim Loughton, and you know about it because it is in the public domain and has been debated in Parliament. Have you now written to the Standards and Privileges Committee with your submission?

Chief Constable Richards: Yes. We have written a full submission.

Q241 Chair: Do you know the timetable for the conclusion of that? Because the Committee may take an interest in what has been decided.

Chief Constable Richards: I do not know. We have not had a response since we made the submission a week or two before Christmas.

Q242 Chair: But do you now accept that ultimately Parliament is sovereign in these matters, and that you have to make a submission?

Chief Constable Richards: I have never not accepted that. We have made a lengthy and detailed submission on two occasions now to that Committee.

Q243 Chair: As far as police information notices are concerned, how many did you issue last year?

Chief Constable Richards: Having heard you ask that question in the previous session, I wondered whether it would come to me and I do not have the answer. I can write to you. It would be wrong for me to guess.

Q244 Chair: Let me turn to one issue of substance that we wish to raise with you: the operating figures, the recording of crime figures. Both of you can come to this Committee and proudly say that the number of crimes has gone down in your area. In Sussex, it has been going down for a considerable length of time. Chief Constable Thornton, you must be very pleased, having the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary on your patch, to be able to report a reduction in crime. Were you as concerned as the Committee about the allegations that some of these figures have in effect been fiddled: that the figures recorded are not accurate but are to satisfy the Home Office, the public or some other individual or body? Have you looked at those allegations?

Chief Constable Thornton: I was very concerned when those allegations were made nationally. As a police chief, I need accurate crime statistics. I cannot operate effectively, protecting the public in Thames Valley, unless I understand what crime is happening where. It is absolutely in my interest to make sure that crime figures are accurate. I also understand that it is an issue of public trust. We need the public to trust the police: to trust us to tell the truth in the witness box in court and to trust us to record crime accurately. It is really very important.

Q245 Chair: We have seen a reduction of 20% in the level of burglaries in the Thames Valley. We have had chief constables and commissioners before us shocked to hear about the fiddling of figures. You are very distinguished. You have served in the police force for many years, almost as long as Mr Richards. Have you ever heard in the past about fiddling the figures? Has anecdotal evidence come to you while sitting in the canteen? Do you ever wonder whether you have really reduced burglary by 20% and that there must be something wrong there?

Chief Constable Thornton: I am aware that there has always been a debate in the police service, as long as there have been statistics, about the need for them to be accurate and reliable. That is why in my own force we have 15 members of staff whose full-time job it is to scrutinise the data. That is their job. They are not based on local police areas. They belong to headquarters. They have no interest; they have no skin in the game. It is their responsibility to make sure—

Q246 Chair: So they check these figures, and you are confident that the figures for Thames Valley have not been manipulated.

Chief Constable Thornton: We check them. Because of the numbers of crime we cannot check absolutely every one but we check where we know from history that there have been problems and where there might be difficulties. As the commissioner explained to you, the last time the inspectorate inspected on this issue, which was unfortunately two years ago, Thames Valley was given a very good report. It was very important to us then; it is very important to us now.

Q247 Chair: Mr Richards, what about you? Are you concerned? You have also seen a reduction in crime by 9% for the past eight consecutive years. Have you been chief constable for eight years or longer?

Chief Constable Richards: Nine years altogether; six at Sussex.

Q248 Chair: Well, you can claim a large part of the credit for that. Are you worried that some of the figures may be fiddled?

Chief Constable Richards: I share the thoughts of my colleague from Thames Valley in terms of reputational issues. We depend upon our reputation for integrity in order to generate evidence, intelligence and support in order to prosecute crimes ultimately. Anything that causes that to be shaken needs a severe examination.

We have a very similar arrangement to that in Thames Valley, now with a centralised unit. We also put direct responsibility on the first-line supervisor. As you heard earlier this afternoon, the prima facie case of a reported crime is received. If that is going to be varied, it is down to the officer in the case, checked by a supervisor, but on balance of probability there has to be a reason to vary it and change the initial recording.

I would like to make the point, Chairman, that we offer not reward or recognition to either individuals or team leaders, purely on the basis of crime statistics. We pride ourselves on a values-based system to our recruitment, selection and promotion. It has been worked on for many years and certainly pre-dates me. It is living and breathing the values of the force, which have strong echoes of the integrity code that we are seeing introduced nationally. That is what we look to reward and recognise. When it comes, for instance, to divisional awards occasions, often attended by Members of Parliament, the categories that we look to reward in are integrity, personal responsibility, courage, compassion—what you might call the usual suspects in a public body.

Chair: Very helpful.

Q249 Dr Huppert: Can I go back to this question about how the advent of police and crime commissioners has changed your working practice? I think, Chief Constable Thornton, you were saying how it was a priority to deal with—I think you gave a list of specific things—rural crime, and various others. Are you saying that you were not looking at those beforehand? Why has that changed what you were doing before?

Chief Constable Thornton: What I am saying is that the priorities of the force are now very much informed by the democratic purpose. Anthony Stansfeld stood on a manifesto which said, “These will be my focus.” What that meant in terms of the force is that we have probably put more emphasis on those priorities because they have that power, that mandate, which plans in the past maybe did not have. It is not to say that we were not dealing with rural

crime or burglary; of course we were, but there is an absolute focus on that. In terms of operations and resources, they would get more of a priority than they would otherwise.

Q250 Dr Huppert: And does that mean that you have deprioritised some other things?

Chief Constable Thornton: It means that other things are not top priorities, yes.

Q251 Dr Huppert: It also implies that the police authorities were not setting priorities particularly. Would you agree with that?

Chief Constable Thornton: No, I do not think that it does. My point is that the priorities we have now have been informed by the democratic process. In the past, we would discuss with the police authority what our strategic assessments were telling us about the crime threats and issues in the force and we would agree with them. They never really went to the public in any way. They might have done a few surveys, but there certainly was never any election about what were priorities in this area.

Q252 Dr Huppert: Overall, do you think the people in your area are getting better policing now than they were a year and a half ago?

Chief Constable Thornton: I do not think that is the point I am making. The point I am making is that the priorities have been informed by an election, by an electoral process.

Dr Huppert: But I am asking you the question.

Chief Constable Thornton: Let's talk about rural crime. Every year since I have been chief constable, I have met with the National Farmers' Union and the Country Landowners' Association. If I am honest with you, in the early days, those were not comfortable meetings. My meeting this year was a lot more positive because they were very reassured by the emphasis that had been put on rural crime.

Dr Huppert: Overall, do you have an assessment about whether the policing received now is better or worse than it was a year and a half ago?

Chief Constable Thornton: There is less crime. If the most important thing is crime reduction, there is less crime now than there was last year. As the Chairman has said, residential burglary is down 20%. We are solving so many more burglaries than we were before. That is partly because the police and crime commissioner has asked us to do so, but also overall crime is down 5% this year compared with last year.

Q253 Dr Huppert: Chief Constable Richards, what is your take on this?

Chief Constable Richards: I follow a line of predecessors that I am honoured to follow. I think each of us would have shared the same ambition to improve policing year on year. I would not be so arrogant or complacent to claim that has been the case. Some of the key indicators are reduction in crime, customer surveys and feedback from the community. Interestingly, I have similar experiences of similar meetings with the CLA and NFU. We also have Sussex local council meetings; they come to meet with me once a quarter. The picture there is an improving and enhanced one. So I think constantly to improve.

Where I think the extra focus has come, and it will mean to a degree deprioritising other areas, is interestingly where crime has increased or reported crime has increased. The Commissioner and I would probably share a similar view here that to have an interest in hate crime, or reports of domestic violence—you are not hearing it from me for the first time I am sure—we would regard as a key indicator of a sign of confidence in reporting and confidence

not just in policing services but in all the partners that work around those really tricky areas where the true picture of unreported crime still has a long way to go.

Q254 Dr Huppert: And what are you deprioritising?

Chief Constable Richards: That is a very good question. In the past, when we have tried to create a list of things that we should stop doing, it tends to be a pretty blank piece of paper. Another way of looking at that is probably by asking where our performance has struggled a little in recent times. In some of our responses to non-emergencies we are probably taking a little longer to tackle them. That is why we put such a strong emphasis on neighbourhood policing—I would rather get to a problem that is of a lower grade and assessment eventually than not get there at all.

Q255 Dr Huppert: I am fascinated that both of you are very reluctant to say what is not the priority. I can see why. If something is really a priority, that means that there are some things that you are choosing not to do or to do less well. When you said that the thing that you were deprioritising was non-emergency responses, you immediately explained how you are in fact prioritising it to do something about it. Presumably, there are things that you have both chosen not to do in order to prioritise doing other things.

Chief Constable Thornton: There has been no deliberate thought process, discussion or decision made that we will not do this or stop doing that. If the public call us, if they need our help, we will go. We will deal with any crime that people want to report to us, and we are constantly trying to understand the threat and risk in our area and how we can best protect the people of Thames Valley. It is more a process of what we give extra priority to, rather than deliberately saying that we will put less priority on something.

Q256 Michael Ellis: Now, I would like to ask you about an issue that is sometimes raised by those who are hostile to the concept of police and crime commissioners, which is that of the power that commissioners have to hire and fire their chief constables. There seems to be a suggestion in some quarters that chief constables such as yourselves ought to be in some way inviolable and not subject to the power of others to fire and hire where appropriate. What do you think about that? Do you think that there is an infringement on your operational independence by having, as you said, Chief Constable Richards, to answer to someone who has that power over you?

Chief Constable Richards: I certainly do not feel that infringement in any way. I have always felt accountable to the law, first and foremost. In many ways, a police and crime commissioner plays a role alongside that in terms of my accountability. As police officer, we often look across the full range of scrutiny and accountability mechanisms that we have, whether that is the inspectorate, the Home Affairs Committee, the press and media, the courts of law, the police authority previously or police and crime commissioners now. It certainly does not feel unfettered to me, given that list, and of course the most important of all is the general public.

Where I think there is an interesting development, which is self-evidently part of the change, is that the general public have a key role in electing a police and crime commissioner. That has obviously not been there in the past. I think it will be fascinating to see how that plays out when the second election comes around, which I must say I do have some trepidation about.

Q257 Michael Ellis: Why do you have some trepidation about that?

Chief Constable Richards: Because I think that, however successful a police and crime commissioner will have been in any force area, understandably that record will be there to be shot at, fairly or unfairly. There will be a competition, which is, as I understand it, the nature of any election, so there will be winners and losers. My big concern is that the main loser might be the general public through a lack of confidence that plays out through the coverage of the build-up to those elections. I do not think that that is a political point—I hope it is not, because I would not want to make one; I think it is a fact of life. If it is a public confidence issue, it quickly becomes a police service issue. I think that junior and senior colleagues that I have the privilege to lead might find that a challenging time.

Q258 Michael Ellis: But of course, those being elected are not chief constables but police and crime commissioners, so perhaps there is some differentiation there. Would you concede that it is not the police that are going to be subject to the politics of an election; it is the police and crime commissioner?

Chief Constable Richards: If I may say so, if that differentiation comes out in all the coverage, I would be delighted.

Q259 Michael Ellis: But you do not feel as though your having someone who is able to hire and fire you infringes on your operational independence?

Chief Constable Richards: No, no more so than I perhaps did under previous regimes, where the choice lay not so much with the police authority; I guess it would have been with the chief officer and I suspect that there would therefore have been occasions when, if all mediation and discussion eventually broke down, my approach to life would have been seeing resignation as one of the outcomes, as opposed to hiring and firing. Nevertheless, in many ways, I see the principles as not dissimilar.

Q260 Michael Ellis: And Chief Constable Thornton?

Chief Constable Thornton: You may recall that there was a statutory instrument placed before Parliament, called “The Policing Protocol”, which set out the role of police and crime commissioners and chief constables. That is something that Mr Stansfeld and I have often looked at and when we have been asked to speak about how the world has changed, we have used that as a base point. That protocol makes it clear that operational independence is a vital principle of British policing and that both the police and crime commissioner and the chief constable have a responsibility to safeguard it. I think that is a responsibility we both take very seriously. Before police and crime commissioners were introduced, there was a suggestion that operational independence would be undermined. I have not personally seen evidence of that. In my own case, we respect each other’s roles and we respect each other individually. We have different roles and we need to work together to protect the public.

On the point you make about hire and fire, I do not feel that that makes any difference to that operational independence. The only thing that I would say is that when a police and crime commissioner feels that perhaps a chief constable is not performing effectively—not doing the sorts of things they want or whatever the issue is—it would be much better if there was some mechanism for mediation or conciliation. The protocol says that these issues should be dealt with locally, but I wonder whether it would be possible for an HMI or some other third party to get involved to conciliate, because it is much better staff relations to talk about an issue than as a first port of call to say, “This is why I think you’re not good enough.”

Q261 Michael Ellis: That is an interesting point, but the overall concept of being answerable to an individual—in this case, a police and crime commissioner—is not something you find objectionable per se, from the point of view of independence or operational independence of police.

Chief Constable Thornton: No.

Q262 Michael Ellis: Are you happy with the clarity, or otherwise, there might be as to the division of roles between a commissioner and a chief constable? Clearly, in many cases, it is, “How long is a piece of string?” In the legal context, self-defence means two very different things, depending on the circumstances of an individual case. There might sometimes be a grey area in individual cases over the roles that the two of you might have in any particular force area, but do you feel that there is sufficient clarity, between you and a commissioner and your respective areas, for the system to work functionally?

Chief Constable Thornton: Yes, I do. The protocol tries to set it out. I think that there are some areas that are clearly the police and crime commissioner’s responsibility—setting the budget, setting the precept and drawing up the police and crime plan. There are some areas that are clearly about the chief constable’s operational independence—the decision to arrest, the decision to investigate. At either end of that continuum, there is clarity; it is a grey area in between. Some of these areas are ones on which both parties have a legitimate view. For example, one thing that we discussed recently is the fact that some of our smaller police stations, where we still have a front counter open to the public, have a very low footfall—two or three people a day. Is there a better way to provide that service? I am making an operational decision, because if I have it open, I have to have staff there, but the police and crime commissioner is thinking about the community impacts and community issues. With a problem like that, both of us have a legitimate locus in the discussion and we can have a debate about what is best to do.

Q263 Michael Ellis: Thank you. That is very helpful. Mr Richards, did you want to add anything to that as far as the clarity is concerned?

Chief Constable Richards: No, I agree. Absolute clarity with the protocol. There are grey areas. If you are being held to account by somebody and your business is operational policing, I think that it is quite right that a police and crime commissioner should ask you questions about the whys and the wherefores of an operational matter, but the separate areas of responsibility are clear.

Chair: Thank you. Just to remind colleagues, we have Lord Stevens next.

Q264 Yasmin Qureshi: I am going to touch upon some of the things that Lord Stevens has said. We have had quite a lot of discussion this afternoon about the power of the police commissioner to hire and fire the chief constable. I understand that obviously, as Chief Constable Thornton said, there are political decisions as to the protocols and who hires and fires. Obviously, it would not be appropriate for you to comment on this particular issue, but I want to raise an issue that we discussed a little while ago. In light of what you said, Chief Constable Thornton, would you accept, on the issue about firing or dismissing a chief constable, that the way that it currently is—that the commissioner can make that decision—is, on the face of it, wrong, and that it does have and could have, as Lord Stevens has said, a chilling effect on chief constables? You have suggested that there should perhaps be an independent body, or another body, arbitrating, which therefore would suggest an unqualified right to dismiss a chief constable is perhaps—

Chief Constable Thornton: The law says that a police and crime commissioner can call on a chief constable to retire or resign. There is a big legal debate, and certainly my own staff association and the HMI have taken legal advice about whether that is an unfettered power. I am not a lawyer and I will not go into it, but there is a big debate about whether it is unfettered. The chief HMI's view is that it is not unfettered—that actually, there is a whole realm of years of case law that puts some constraint round that, but it has to be a reasonable decision, etc. The point I was making is that, when a police and crime commissioner comes to thinking like that, it would be much better if we had some sort of ability to mediate and conciliate before it comes to that.

Chief Constable Richards: If I may add, the spirit of natural justice and reasonableness reinforces what Sara Thornton is saying. It is not for me to legislate or propose changes, but something that has no right of appeal or challenge seems to be almost on its own in employment terms. That would be my contention.

Q265 Yasmin Qureshi: That is what we are trying to address. Sometimes, you can argue for unfair dismissals or go to tribunals, or whatever, but the way that the system seems to be here is that, yes, individual police commissioners and chief constables may have a very good relationship in some areas, but it is not hard to imagine areas where perhaps the police commissioner comes in, who is a politically appointed person with their own agenda, and the chief constable may have a very different set of priorities, and there is a conflict between the two. If the chief commissioner can then say, "I can dismiss you," would you not agree that—I understand that you might find it difficult to express your true opinion about it—in an objective setting, the power that has been given would put the chief constable or any other person in that position in difficulty, in terms of being able to do their job properly? They are going to be watching their back at all times because of the police commissioner. That is the fundamental problem with the police commissioner being able to fire the chief constable.

Chief Constable Richards: I will repeat what we have already said. It is out for a clearer legal decision. There is a danger here of bad cases making bad law, rather than the other way round. I repeat what I have said already. The role of the HMIC could be given greater clarity moving forward. We have had cases that are worthy of significant review. I think, however, that ultimately whatever the outcome of the legal advice for other decisions, there comes a time in high office where the options might be left with the chief officer to make their own decision. I do not think we should be looking to remove that either.

Q266 Mr Winnick: A previous witness, the Sussex police and crime commissioner, might well have said that if the Prime Minister can dismiss a Minister, why should a police and crime commissioner not dismiss a chief constable? Be that as it may, do you feel any sense of insecurity that the situation has changed and that your job is at the mercy, if that is the right word, of a police and crime commissioner?

Chief Constable Richards: Clearly, things have changed, because the police regulations—the legislation that goes with it—suggests that it has changed. From a personal point of view, although this may sound quite naive, I try to operate—myself, and an organisation—on the basis of principles and take some degree of confidence in those principles. I suspect a colleague of mine from the Chief Police Officers Staff Association, who would be looking at it predominantly from an employee's or akin to an employee's perspective, might have a different view, but I think the policing traditions are such that we are all public servants and that, in many ways, we stand or fall by public expectations and public votes. I recognise that the naivety of that might be in terms of contract, career, mortgage and pension, but I am hopeful that the legal advice will give us greater clarity and

the very few cases—perhaps only one case—that we have had that has been the focus so far can be seen as something that we move away from and learn from.

Q267 Mr Winnick: Bearing in mind how short a period the police and crime commissioners have been around, there have been at least two cases: Gwent, where we took oral evidence—a most unhappy situation, to say the least—and of course the decision of the High Court judge of the time to quash the decision of the Lincolnshire police and crime commissioner. Would you say that that was an illustration, Chief Constable Thornton, of the situation that exists at the present moment?

Chief Constable Thornton: The two examples you give link in to two of the points I was making. I can only speak for myself in terms of my morale and my concern. It is not an issue that I have in Thames Valley. As I have already said, I think in cases like the Gwent case, it would have been a better way to have had some discussion about what the issues were before going straight to the suggestion that the request to retire or resign was going to be made. That is my point about mediation.

The second point you make about the Lincolnshire case and the judicial review just proves the point that the power is not unfettered. There is a body of case law that has a bearing on this. If you wanted to look at the legislation—I guess that is what you are doing as a Committee—as I recall, the police authority could call on a chief constable to retire or resign in the interests of effectiveness or efficiency. That second clause no longer exists; it is just that a police and crime commissioner can require a chief constable to retire or resign. As legislators, that might be something you might want to think about—whether that additional clause would make a difference and satisfy any concerns you might have.

Q268 Mr Winnick: My female colleague just before me made reference to a chilling effect. In fact, she was quoting the words of the commission headed by Lord Stevens, who will be here in a moment. He said that “the new powers of dismissal risk exerting a damaging chilling effect over the leadership of the police service”. I take it that you do not agree with that.

Chief Constable Thornton: I read that paragraph before I came here this afternoon, because I wanted to know what the evidence for it was. It is conversations with colleagues. It is not a conversation that I had with Lord Stevens, but I do not dispute that some people might have felt that way.

Q269 Mr Winnick: You take the same view, chief constable?

Chief Constable Richards: I wait to see the evidence, and I do not see the evidence there at the moment.

Q270 Mr Winnick: Can I finally put this to you, chief constable? You said that public servants are subject to dismissal, as in the private sector. No one could dispute that. Leaving aside Members of Parliament—as a subject of the electorate, you might draw an analogy with that if you so wish—but a chief constable can be dismissed. Are you suggesting, Chief Constable Thornton, if I heard you correctly earlier, some intervention—HMI? Would it not therefore be better if there was an intervening process where the police and crime commissioner would not have the total power that exists at the moment?

Chief Constable Richards: I think that seems a reasonable suggestion. I feel that that is the way this conversation has been going for the past five minutes. Perhaps the Lincolnshire

case—I am not sighted sufficiently on the detail—indicates that there is an intervention opportunity. I very much agree with Sara Thornton, that if that can come informally in the first instance. I would add to the list as well as HMIC that each police and crime commissioner has a chief executive, and each chief constable has a deputy. In organisations at different stages of my career often you have used the deputy or you have used the chief executive to provide that mediation. So there are different opportunities, but my sense is that something more formal needs to be put in place, which seems to be behind your question.

Q271 Mr Winnick: You mentioned HMI, so obviously you agree with that.

Chief Constable Thornton: Yes. I am not sure whether HMI is the right organisation, but certainly some sort of ability to mediate or conciliate I think would be useful. It is not good for police forces and it is not good for the public to have chief constables changing in rapid succession.

Q272 Chair: So that is very clear. In answer to Mr Winnick, what you are saying is that you think there are flaws in the system. You do think the system can be improved by having intervention by another body, be it HMIC or others, but the current system needs to be formalised much more. Is that what you are saying?

Chief Constable Thornton: I am suggesting that I think there are some improvements that you could make which would deal with some of the concerns that some members of the Committee have without, in any way, undermining the ability of a police and crime commissioner to call upon a chief constable to retire or resign.

Chief Constable Richards: Chairman, I would agree with that. It seems to me that somewhere among the foreseen role of the police and crime panel and the emerging and ever-changing role of HMIC, supported by the informal mechanisms that Sara Thornton has talked about—I am not so sure I would go so far as to say “flawless”—but I think there are areas to be tested and then improved.

Q273 Chair: So, to that extent, you agree with what Lord Stevens said, because he feels that there ought to be improvements?

Chief Constable Thornton: I do not agree that the system is systematically flawless.

Chair: No, I understand that—

Chief Constable Thornton: I would just say that I think there are some improvements based on this last year.

Chair: Sure. Is that right? You agree.

Q274 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to ask both chief constables this: have you experienced any change or diminution of morale since the introduction of police and crime commissioners among your fellow chief constables?

Chief Constable Richards: Among fellow chief constables, or my own force?

Lorraine Fullbrook: Chief constables.

Chief Constable Richards: No. I think, if I may say, the conversations that I have been involved in reflect the evidence that you have heard from each of us this afternoon.

Q275 Lorraine Fullbrook: I ask that specifically based on the Lord Stevens report and the mentioned chilling and damaging effect on police leadership. I ask that to you as chief

constables and of your fellow chief constables really as follow-on from asking that to the police and crime commissioners.

Chief Constable Thornton: The point I have made about the value of some form of conciliation or mediation is something which I have discussed with several of the chief constables. In fact, with a couple of colleagues, we even suggested it to the Home Secretary a few months ago. I certainly know that our staff association is pursuing something along these lines. It is not that people have got morale on the floor; it is just that, in the light of experience, they are thinking about how we could make it better for everybody—and, most of all, better for the public.

Q276 Lorraine Fullbrook: But asking for improvement in something does not necessarily mean that there is a diminution or change in morale.

Chief Constable Thornton: No, exactly.

Q277 Paul Flynn: In your area, Ms Thornton, I believe that large sums of money have been set aside for the work on child trafficking. Has that been successful? Do the results make it look like the very distressing cases that involved more than 50 children in the past will be less likely to occur in the future?

Chief Constable Thornton: Child sexual exploitation is a live issue for my force and many other force areas. You are probably referring to the Oxford case, which culminated in seven very long custodial sentences at the Old Bailey in May last year. When we started that investigation at the beginning of 2011, I do not think we had an appreciation of just how significant the threat and issue was in the Thames Valley. That was a successful case, but it has really focused our attention on what more we need to do: working with our colleagues, particularly in social services, on how we can share information better, how we can really use intelligence and proactive policing to target the offenders of these vile crimes, but also just to raise awareness. Having met quite a few of the victims, one of the things that has stuck me is that the responsibility of police officers and police staff to safeguard children is not just for our specialist units, but about raising the awareness of all our officers and staff, so that they are alert and looking out for the signs, because, I am afraid, it is all too pervasive.

Q278 Paul Flynn: Do you think there is a danger in having someone who is a politician putting pressure on you and on your conduct? Is that likely to distort your priorities? You gave the example of a rural area. Who puts pressure on you in urban areas in the same way as the National Farmers Union and Countryside Alliance do in rural areas?

Chief Constable Thornton: In terms of pressure, it is really important to repeat the point that my first accountability is to the law, and that will always be first before any accountability to an elected politician. In terms of priorities and rural crime, Thames Valley is two-thirds rural, but there are some pretty gritty urban areas as well. When I go to Slough and Reading and Oxford city to brief the councillors, as I do every year, I get asked some hard questions about that. I think the issue for us is that there has always been a lot more crime concentrated in the towns and cities. It is about making sure that in the rural areas, where crime is pretty dispersed but everybody gets to hear about it because it affects livelihoods, we give a proper response.

Q279 Paul Flynn: Can I give you a brief example? One night in my constituency, the third world war was breaking out in one of the urban areas. There was a fight involving dozens of people, a firearm was discharged and a samurai sword was used. In another, rural

part, a couple of children were kicking a ball against the village hall. The police attended the village hall, but not the other. The reason, in practical terms, is that the articulate people who knew how to get the police on side were the ones deciding those priorities. Do you find that this is a danger? You say that peace has broken out in your rural areas, but is it at the expense of the urban areas?

Chief Constable Thornton: That was the point I made to a previous colleague of yours. If the public call us, of course we respond based on the risk. If the sort of violence that you describe is happening, of course we will go as quickly as possible to give the proper emergency response to protect the public.

Q280 Chair: I have two quick questions. First of all, as you know, Nicola Blackwood has been very involved with you on the issue of grooming. You are doing a pilot—is it called Piggott 1?—on evidence given by children in legal cases.

Chief Constable Thornton: Yes. Are you talking about the pre-recording of evidence?

Q281 Chair: Yes. I may have got the name wrong.

Chief Constable Thornton: Unfortunately, Thames Valley is not one of the pilot areas. I have been in correspondence with Nicola to try to persuade her to persuade whoever in the Ministry of Justice needs to be persuaded that we should be a pilot area, but we are not currently.

Q282 Chair: So you would like to be?

Chief Constable Thornton: We would love to be. I am in contact at the moment with victims who are saying, “Unless we are part of that pilot, we won’t give evidence.”

Q283 Chair: Right. Very good. On CT, I know that you have a very important role. The Committee is looking at counter-terrorism as one of our other inquiries, and the issue of where CT should sit. Should it sit in the NCA or in the Met? You are not a Met officer; you have a big force outside the Met. Where do you think counter-terrorism should sit?

Chief Constable Thornton: Counter-terrorism is currently a shared responsibility between chief constables, with the Metropolitan police leading us, but myself, Sir Peter Fahy in Greater Manchester and Chris Sims in West Midlands all have counter-terrorist units. We work very closely with Cressida Dick as what we call the ACPO TAM board. I think that works very well.

Q284 Chair: So you would not like to see it in the National Crime Agency?

Chief Constable Thornton: I think that the current arrangements, working closely with the Security Service and other partners, work very well. I think the risk of disrupting that is really quite significant. The National Crime Agency is new. It has got off to a good start. Let us see how it develops before we make any structural change.

Q285 Chair: Finally, on diversity, you are one of the very few women chief constables. Though of course we now have a number of women chief constables, we have no black or Asian chief constables, among 43 forces. What are you doing locally to make sure that diversity is increased in Thames Valley, an area that includes places like Slough and Oxford—not just rural areas, but big urban centres?

Chief Constable Thornton: The service has been so much more successful in encouraging the development of women than of ethnic minorities, I agree. There are currently seven women chiefs in England and Wales, out of 43. I am the director of the Police National Assessment Centre, so I look after the selection of all prospective chief officers. When the women come at that level, they do very well indeed. It is really beginning to change; my own force is well over 30% women officers now. We have not had the same success with ethnic minorities, either in terms of numbers coming in or in terms of progression.

What am I doing in my own force? Every time we go to recruit, I do not mind how many people we recruit; my first question—what I care about most of all—is about ethnic distribution, particularly making sure that we get colleagues from BME backgrounds. We do a lot of work in those areas in community groups. If somebody from a BME background contacts us saying they are interested in joining and we are not recruiting at the moment, we will keep their name and get back in contact with them saying—

Q286 Chair: But Chief Constable, there is a will—there is clear willingness to get things done—but it is just not happening. I have been sitting in this chair for seven years, and I have heard chief constables telling me that they are doing very well, having meetings and trying to encourage people, but it is just not happening. Mr Richards, one of the excuses given for having people come in from outside the force at superintendent and other levels is that the force is not as diverse. Are we ever going to change this, do you think?

Chief Constable Richards: Well, you have been hearing it for seven years, and we were all in that same boat. I do think that something about direct entry may change the chief officer profile, because at the moment the picture behind that area Sara Thornton has responsibility for doesn't look too bright either when it comes to ethnic minorities. So it is not as if it will be better in three or five years' time. I do not hold out much hope. Where I think we have some hope—but it will take a long time—is that, increasingly, our recruiting processes across the piece, not just for police officers but for police community support officers, are now more situationally based; the academic and other qualifications are more diverse; and now that we are, as you heard earlier this afternoon, opening recruiting for community support officers, police officers, special constables and police staff, we are getting complete diversity across gender, sexual orientation and race, which we have not had before. But that will not change things overnight, and it won't change things in seven years. I know that the ACPO president, Sir Hugh Orde, has had the experience of Northern Ireland, where legislation was needed to change it. If you study the statistics, the history and the demographics of the work force currently, it may mean something as dramatic as that if we are going to make an overnight change.

Chief Constable Thornton: Chair, may I add one aspect? We opened recruitment last month, in December. Of the 150 people who applied, the percentage from a BME background was 10.8%. That is less than in the population of Thames Valley, which is now about 15%. What I have said to my recruitment staff is, "Okay, can I put people into a sort of pot and take them out in proportion to the population?" I am not allowed to do that; it is against the law. If all the white people who have applied are equally as successful as the BME people, then it is very difficult for me to hit the equivalent with the population, which is 15%.

Chair: Yes, challenges ahead. Chief Constables, thank you very much for coming in, we are most grateful.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Lord Stevens**, Independent Police Commission, and **Professor Ian Loader**, Independent Police Commission, gave evidence.

Q287 Chair: Lord Stevens and Professor Loader, our apologies. We had a vote which delayed our proceedings, but I am glad that you were able to sit in the Public Gallery and hear some of the evidence. Let us first thank you for coming in to give evidence today. Some of us have read with great interest the deliberations of your commission. Just to clarify your credentials, you are not a member of the Labour party, are you?

Lord Stevens: Certainly I am not, no, nor a member of any party.

Q288 Chair: Why did you undertake this particular venture?

Lord Stevens: I was asked to do it by Yvette Cooper. There was a great amount of concern in the police service, even when I was commissioner and subsequently, that there should be a royal commission on policing. For whatever reasons, that was refused and declined. We thought that we could do a good job. One of the problems was always going to be on the resources side, but the reason for doing it was we thought we could come up with a good piece of work. I think we have done that.

I would like to stress to members of this Committee that this is not John Stevens's report. It consists of 40 experts from a range of backgrounds, of which only five are ex-chief constables and of those five, two went on to be commissioners, including myself—I was also an HMI for two years—another became part of the process in the Home Office to keep the police up to scratch, and another became chief HMI. The rest were not chief constables.

Q289 Chair: Thank you, that is very useful. Let us ask you some questions about your conclusions. I notice that one of your favourite songs on “Desert Island Discs” was “When the Saints Go Marching In”.

Lord Stevens: Indeed.

Chair: One of the points that you make in your report is the change in morale, in perception and in the integrity of the police. Those of my generation—I came to this country when I was very young—had great reverence for the police. They were real saints in our view. They could do no wrong and we always believed a police officer. After the Mitchell affair, Hillsborough and the Savile issues, what has gone wrong as far as police integrity is concerned? You seem to lay quite a lot of blame on the Government for changing the landscape of policing rapidly. Is it something systemic in the police service, or is it Government changes?

Lord Stevens: No, and I would also stress that this report should be taken in totality. You cannot look at PCCs without looking at the structure of the police service, and you cannot look at that unless you look at police morale, and so on.

I think the police have become accountable. When I started on the beat in 1962, it was a totally different ballgame. As things progressed with the royal commission we went into cars and the like. The interesting thing that we found—we have been involved in surveys on a wide range of issues, including police staff across the country—is that local policing has stood up pretty well in terms of public satisfaction and what the public think. It is the issues above that that have raised big concerns. I certainly remember doing some radio broadcasts around the country in which the biggest questions to me were on things such as Hillsborough.

Q290 Chair: So you think it is the national issues that have resulted in a decline in morale? Where does the Government fit into this? You said in the report as a whole that you think there have been too many changes in the landscape, which has led to a decline in morale because people in the force feel hunted.

Lord Stevens: The decline in the morale of the police service is because of a range of issues. You will see in the surveys that morale is probably at an all-time low, but the police have always been an organisation that complains. I remember a chief constable of mine saying, “If they’re not complaining, John, I would be very worried.” There is something in that.

However, I think the public surveys have raised concerns. I do not want to go through the numbers here, but if you look at where people are, the numbers are really worrying. Let me just quote one on PCCs, since we are talking about that at the moment: “5% of police officers and 2% of police staff consider the appointment of PCCs a good idea.” That is extraordinarily low, and there might be reasons for that. I am just saying that there have been many, many changes, and what the commission, 28 universities in this country and elsewhere, and 47 academics have said in a piece of work that will now be used by law students is that too much has been brought in too quickly and, specifically in terms of the constitutional position, that has been a dangerous situation to get into.

Q291 Chair: Professor Loader, please feel free to chip in whenever. This is not just him.

Lord Stevens: Oh, I shall certainly be asking him.

Q292 Chair: You have mentioned PCCs, and as you know, they are the subject of our inquiry. Your report—I will not say that it is you personally—is scathing about police and crime commissioners to such an extent that some people believe that, if Yvette Cooper adopts this as the policy of the Labour party, the next Government, if it is a Labour Government, will abolish PCCs. The report says: “Whilst the introduction of PCCs has given effect to an important democratic principle, the model has fatal systemic flaws. The Government has created a stand-off with the police service that has left officer morale at rock bottom.” There is no mincing of words here is there, Professor Loader? It is a pretty clear statement that having PCCs has been systemically flawed.

Professor Loader: Yes, that was the conclusion that we arrived at. The first part of the quotation is important. We think that underlying PCCs is an important democratic principle: the idea that the public should have some means of exercising control over the police and that elected politicians have a legitimate right to set police priorities. We think all those things should be applauded and defended. There is nothing in what we said that wants to reinvent police authorities or return to the days when we tried to run the police from No. 10 or the like. We simply think two things. First, you could take the view that it is just too early and that we should see how it all unfolds.

Q293 Chair: But there is that view, isn’t there? They’ve been going for only a year.

Professor Loader: There is that view, and we toyed with it for a while. We ended up rejecting the view, because we arrived at the conclusion that the various things that we saw happening on the ground were linked to aspects of the model that are systemic. We are particularly concerned about two of them. One is the idea that one individual can realistically hope to exercise effective governance over and represent the interests of a police force as large as Thames Valley police, which is the area where I live.

Q294 Chair: And what is the second one?

Professor Loader: The second one is the largeness of the constituency. They are linked points. One individual is exercising regulatory control over a force of that size.

Q295 Chair: But one of the issues that you raised is the chilling effect of one person being able to sack a chief constable, which is actually a very good power to have. They may not be able to get to every single village in Thames Valley, but one thing is certain: if they want to sack a chief constable for doing a bad job, they can do so. What is wrong with that?

Professor Loader: On one view, there is nothing wrong with that. Let us not pretend that the number of dismissals of chief constables that we have seen in the first year is, from a certain point of view, not a mistake or not anything to be worried about. It is entirely what the system was intended to do. I have been in rooms where the advocates of the system have envisaged chief constables coming and going with great regularity. They have even envisaged PCCs standing on joint tickets with chief constables in future elections. That is built into the system, so the judgment call is whether you think that it is a good thing.

Q296 Chair: And you think it's a bad thing.

Professor Loader: I think that on balance it is a bad thing. I think it is a bad thing if that power is exercised by one individual with relative restraints. It kind of depends what you think the job of the chief constable is. At one extreme, you can imagine them a bit like judges. For all kinds of good constitutional reasons, politicians are not allowed to sack judges. At the other extreme, you can say, "Should chief constables be like football managers, who just go when they lose the confidence of the club boss?" We have a system that has moved chief constables away from being judges and towards being football managers. The problem with that is that a proper and effective system of democratic government wants to build forms of checks and balance. It seems right to me that elected politicians set local priorities for the police, but you also want a system in which the chief constable can exercise and articulate their professional judgment without fear of being sacked if they lose the confidence of their PCC.

Q297 Chair: That is very helpful. Lord Stevens, you were a commissioner for five years and you were chief constable for Northumbria for five years. You have served in HMI. You are the policeman's policeman in terms of experience at the very top of the police service. Is this fatally flawed to the extent that it needs to be got rid of, or can it be improved, as was suggested by Sara Thornton and Chief Constable Richards? There are things that you can do to the system to keep it going, if you put in these different checks.

Lord Stevens: The Committee took a view—it was unanimous, as it happens—on democratic accountability. The phrase used in the Commission and by some of the academics in the work that we had from around the world, as well as the work specifically from this country, was that the genie was out of the bottle. Democratic accountability is there, but the system needs to be improved in a number of areas. For anyone to say that the system is perfect is extraordinary. Mr Winnick described the system as being on probation, and I would say it very much is. The Home Secretary rather bravely said that the PCCs have been responsible for "mistakes and errors of judgement—some possibly serious". I admire her for saying that. In the build-up to this particular Bill, some of us went to see the Home Secretary and were part and parcel in raising some concerns—

Q298 Chair: And what did she say to you?

Lord Stevens: Well, she listened. Of course, that Bill went through Parliament in the usual process. This Committee has heard about problems with appointments, problems with process, problems with sacking and problems with people—this has been alleged—giving jobs to friends. You cannot possibly say that that process is right and does not need remedying. It would be ridiculous to say that.

Q299 Chair: So they're drinking at the last-chance saloon and the restaurant is not closed.

Lord Stevens: I would use the phrase used by the Committee: the genie is out of the bottle. I believe that the political accountability, as you have just heard from the two chiefs, is very powerful, but the process needs to be improved. The room for improvement is in the report and there are options. I also very strongly believe, as does the Committee, that accountability has to be driven downwards. The coalition Government have talked about local accountability and driving it further down, like some of us did in other forces and some of us have done in delivering ward-based policing. Remember that the primary thing in relation to this report is neighbourhood policing.

Q300 Chair: We will come on to that.

Professor Loader: Can I just make one point? The issue rather depends what question you want to ask. You could ask, "We are stuck with PCCs. Can they be made better? If so, how?" There are ways that you can amend the system and make PCCs better. We were asking ourselves a different question: is this the best way to give effect to the important principle of democratic accountability? No, was the conclusion that we arrived at. We thought that there were better ways of doing so.

Chair: Hold that thought; we're going to bring in other colleagues.

Q301 Michael Ellis: Lord Stevens, you claim that your report is independent—that is written on the report and on the website—but I looked at your website, "Independent Police Commission", today, and it says, "Promoted by and on behalf of the Labour Party at One Brewer's Green, London SW1". It even gives a warning that the Labour party might place cookies on your computer, so I quickly removed myself from the website. The reality is that it is not an independent police commission report, is it? It is actually a Labour party report. You have been asked questions by a Member of Parliament, Bob Blackman MP, about the funding of the report and the commission and who pays the costs. I have been told that there has been no response to Mr Blackman's letter. Have you responded to his letter?

Lord Stevens: No, I haven't. I found the letter slightly offensive, and I don't reply to offensive letters. Let me answer that question here and now. The contribution and money that came from the Labour party was to do with the website. Other money came to deal with the expenses of people on the admin side. Nobody—let's make this absolutely clear—received a penny. Everybody, whether professors from Oxford or ex-commissioners of the NYPD, worked pro bono. I personally, from what I got from my autobiography, put in £10,000 for research, which was done through Northumbria University, of which I am chancellor, and other money went in to meet additional costs of £2,500. I want to make that absolutely clear. It would be extraordinary to accuse some of the people on the commission, such as Lord Eames, members of the Liberal party and Lord Carlile, of not being independent.

Q302 Michael Ellis: But Lord Stevens, why don't you answer the questions that have been put to you by a serving Member of Parliament? He is entitled, as are we, to expect responses to letters from Members of Parliament who represent their constituents. You could have put those points to him about issues such as donations, who is paying for staffing and whether there is trade union support. The website clearly says that the Labour party is promoting the website. It talks about cookies. There are 15 commission members who are Labour politicians, Labour supporters or outspoken critics of the Government. Don't you think it is a little disingenuous to describe the report as independent? You were commissioned by Yvette Cooper, the Labour party shadow Home Secretary. Is it not actually a Labour party report that is produced for political purposes?

Lord Stevens: No, it really is not. I have said already what the funding was, and you ignored what I said. I found the letter from the MP for Harrow offensive, so I did not reply to it. I am a Member of Parliament myself, and I don't have to reply to everybody who sends letters—gosh, I would be writing for an awfully long time. I have not replied to that letter, and I don't think that he would have listened, whatever I said. I have to say that I think I have answered your question as far as I can. We are not dealing with cookies or unions here.

Q303 Michael Ellis: No, no. The general public are being given the impression that it is an independent commission report.

Lord Stevens: Which it is.

Q304 Michael Ellis: And I'm giving you, sir, the opportunity to explain that in a public setting. You contend that it is an independent report, but there are pretty obvious suggestions to the contrary, bearing in mind what we have seen on the website and the make-up of many members of the committee. It is not disrespectful to question a party affiliation. I have no problems identifying my own parliamentary political affiliation, but I don't pretend that I'm an independent person. What I am trying to establish is the origins of the commission report, whether there has been a liaison with the Labour party when the report was published, and whether there has been a liaison with trade unions, in terms of donations received to fund the website and work undertaken. The public have a right to know that.

Lord Stevens: I totally agree. That is why I would like to explain, and I will get Professor Loader to say a bit on behalf of the academics and some of the other commissioners. As I have explained to you, the only sources of funding came from the website and from some of the expensing on the admin side. Everybody else on the commission was not paid. In fact, as I said earlier, it cost a lot of money for people. Where I have a problem with all this—I think you have heard this from Sara Thornton in particular—is that I have never done politics. I do not do politics. I am an independent Member of the House of Lords. I would never have accepted the Tory or Labour Whip. I must say that I do not think it is right for you to say that some of the people on that commission are not independent. I will let Professor Loader speak for himself.

Professor Loader: I'm slightly puzzled as to how this is advancing the inquiry into PCCs, but that is a matter for the Chair.

Q305 Chair: It is a matter for the Chair, and the Chair does allow questions if we are taking witnesses—

Michael Ellis: I don't allow interference with my questioning, Professor Loader. I don't allow it from any source.

Professor Loader: Let me just add this: it is a matter of public record that the commission was set up by the Labour party. As you pointed out, some of the commissioners were members or affiliates of the Labour party; many other commissioners were ex police officers, were from business or were members of the Liberal Democrats—

Chair: Yes, I think we get that.

Professor Loader: There's a text that we have written, which everyone is perfectly at liberty to read, engage with, discuss, agree with—

Michael Ellis: Is he going to answer the question?

Chair: In a second, Mr Ellis. I will go now to Mr Winnick and then I will come back to you.

Q306 Mr Winnick: Lord Stevens, you have had a long career in the police service. I do not know your political views, I do not want to know your political views and I must confess that I do not check how Members of the House of Lords vote on various issues. I may do so very occasionally if it is on an issue that is dear to my heart, but not otherwise. Do you find it offensive to be accused of being a Labour party dupe?

Lord Stevens: The answer to that is yes. I find that it is not just me—John Stevens is used to being insulted as a police officer and I am used to taking hard knocks. What I do find very difficult to handle is for all of these 40 people and another 47 academics who work for nothing in the public interest because they think that it is important and that they can give something of value to the Houses of Parliament and to the country, to be accused of political bias, which is not right. That cannot be right.

Q307 Mr Winnick: Do you feel that if your report had been favourable towards police and crime commissioners, as it could well have been, you would not have been faced with hostile questioning and virtually been accused of being simply a puppet of the Labour party.

Lord Stevens: I think that's right. I think it is one of the only reports to come out recently to have a favourable editorial in the *Daily Mail* and a favourable editorial in *The Guardian*. I think that that says a lot.

Q308 Mr Winnick: Coming to the substance of the issue and, really, why you are here—leaving aside the smear attacks—you are very critical of the appointment of deputies by police and crime commissioners. We can perhaps hear from Lord Stevens first, although not because you are in the Lords, and then from Professor Loader. To put it crudely, do you perhaps think that it is jobs for the boys or girls, as the case may be?

Lord Stevens: I'd like to make it absolutely clear that there are some police commissioners who I have seen and interviewed who do a very good job in the circumstances. Where I think there is a problem—I think that the commission would agree with this—is in the appointment of deputies and some of the people who surround them. Taking it at its lowest point, some of it can be seen as cronyism. If you are appointing people to positions of power, which a deputy PCC is—a PCC has even more power—there must surely be an open and transparent process as to how that person got into that position. We think that the evidence shows that that does not happen on every occasion in relation to deputies and also for some of the other appointments.

Q309 Mr Winnick: Professor?

Professor Loader: I think that there is another issue about the appointment of deputies and, indeed, the teams of people around police and crime commissioners. It seems that such appointments can be argued to be a concession to the fact that a single individual cannot do this job, and that over the past year they have effectively been appointing a committee to assist them in that task. However, it is a committee not of elected and accountable politicians, but of unelected and unaccountable appointees. I think that that would be problematic even if there were not allegations of people appointing their friends and former colleagues. This is the sharp difference between the appointment of a deputy to a PCC and the appointment of a deputy to a council leader: when a council leader appoints a deputy, he or she is appointing another elected politician who is accountable to the electorate through that mechanism.

Q310 Mr Winnick: What would you say to a different kind of argument? Suppose a Conservative or Labour person is duly elected. It would not make much sense for that former politician, as the person would describe himself or herself, to appoint someone of the opposite political view. Given the existing system and bearing in mind where politicians stood in the elections as expected, for those who were successful would it not have made sense to appoint people who shared their political views, rather than Labour appoint Tories or vice versa?

Professor Loader: Given the existing system, it makes perfect sense. What people are effectively doing is appointing a committee of people to assist them and carry out their tasks with them. There is a series of questions about how transparent you want that process of selection to be, and what kind of powers you think the police and crime panel should have over that process, which we could discuss. I happen to think that is not as effective a system of democratic oversight as having some kind of committee, all of whom are elected and accountable to the electorate they serve.

Q311 Mr Winnick: My last question is this. It was suggested by the chief constables that one way perhaps to give some sort of protection in employment to chief constables is to have an intervening body, an HMI or whatever. You were both in the room and listened to the evidence of the two chief constables. If that did occur, although there is no indication that it will, would it change your mind about police and crime commissioners?

Lord Stevens: I think in the area of dismissal—and whether it was a gross exaggeration to say chilling effect or otherwise—all I would say would be “Don’t shoot the messenger.” I think it is essential if a chief constable is being dismissed, for whatever reason, that there is some intervening body that is independent to assess what that person did, whether it was right or wrong, and give some protection to that person, bearing in mind that they are answerable to the law alone, and that you don’t have individual issues coming up when people are about to be elected and feel they have to do things for that reason and that reason alone.

Q312 Mr Winnick: Do you agree with that, Professor?

Professor Loader: Yes, I do.

Q313 Lorraine Fullbrook: I have some supplementary questions. I do not think Mr Ellis made his point to insult you in the slightest, but I do think that members of the Committee have the right to question the veracity and legitimacy of a report that is in the public domain. I do not think that was designed to insult you. I would like to follow up on some of the questions that were asked. How much money have you been paid for the website, for administration and so on, by the Labour party or donors to the Labour party?

Lord Stevens: I don't know exactly, but we can certainly give you that evidence. It is not a problem at all.

Chair: That would be very helpful, thank you.

Q314 Lorraine Fullbrook: Can I ask if it has been declared to the Electoral Commission?

Lord Stevens: I don't know, but we can give that information later.

Q315 Lorraine Fullbrook: Can I also ask if your £10,000 and anybody else's donation of £10,000 to this exercise has been declared to the Electoral Commission?

Lord Stevens: My £10,000 plus £2,000 came from an autobiography I did that was to do with scholarships of police officers at university, which I carried on. Actually that is all that remains of that particular amount.

Lorraine Fullbrook: Yes, but if it is now being used for party political purposes, I believe it has to be declared to the Electoral Commission.

Q316 Chair: Would you write to us with that information?

Lord Stevens: I will write.

Q317 Lorraine Fullbrook: Chairman, I would like to point out that if people work for nothing and have given their time, whichever party it is for, there has to be a nominal monetary value declared to the Electoral Commission for that amount of time, too.

Lord Stevens: When I did the border policing report commission for David Cameron, which took nearly a year and a half, again for no money, this issue was not raised by anybody. You will remember that report and its recommendations came out in terms of border policing. I never had this issue raised. I have to say and I want it as part of the record that I was never accused of being party political in any way. I just want to make that point.

Q318 Lorraine Fullbrook: No, I haven't accused you of that, but do you understand what I'm saying? I do think we have the right to test for accuracy and legitimacy. *[Interruption.]*

Chair: Order. We have to go and vote. We will be back and will start with you, Mr Ellis. Apologies.

Sitting suspended for Divisions in the House.

On resuming—

Q319 Dr Huppert: I don't want to dwell on the name. In my view, it was a mistake to call it independent when it was commissioned by the Labour party. I think on reflection it opens all sorts of allegations. I notice that in the Commons no one ever refers to it as the Independent Police Commission. It is always referred to as the Stevens Commission, which you may think is a good thing or a bad thing.

May I move on to the principle because the whole idea behind this—there was a difference between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats about how to achieve that—was democratisation so that there would be public accountability? Are you both supportive of that as a principle?

Lord Stevens: Yes.

Professor Loader: Yes. I thought I had made that absolutely clear.

Q320 Dr Huppert: Looking through the report, I could not see concrete suggestions as to how to achieve that.

Professor Loader: Have you read chapter 3?

Dr Huppert: I've read quite a lot of it, but let me finish the sentence—that would be a substantial improvement on the police authorities. Police authorities were local council representatives who were involved. It has changed from district councils to county councils, but it seems to me that what you are talking about is very similar to the police authority model for some of the options you outline. You outline a huge range of options from a force for England and Wales with every council leader coming together in a committee to govern it. I don't see how you are achieving that proper democratic accountability in many of the models.

Professor Loader: Can I—I may fail—put to bed the idea that we outlined a number of options. We made a clear recommendation—I think this was the innovation that you think is lacking—to uncouple the arrangements and accountability from the force level at which they are currently stuck and to relocate them at the lowest local authority area, which actually starts to do some justice to the word “local” that is not done by the idea of a police and crime commissioner. We outlined what we think local authorities should do, with the appointment of borough commanders formulating a policing plan. That has two advantages, including an advantage in terms of democratic responsiveness.

To come back to the point that was raised earlier in relation to the rural and urban crime thing, if there is a PCC making the argument for putting more resources into rural crime, who in the system is empowered to press an alternative case and say what about another area? In other words, you create a local mechanism when there is a range of actors who can make that case. It seems that making that more local and uncoupling it from the force is an improvement on the current system. It also does something else important, which is to find a way of cutting through the debate about structures.

People usually have two kinds of worries about bigger police forces. One is a legitimate worry about putting too much power into too few hands, but there are ways in which you can deal with that. The other is that they think big police forces that are required to do local policing cannot do it—so if you create a police force for the south-east of England, how would you do local policing? What our proposal does is effectively make the local policing area the foundation stone of policing, upon which forces can get bigger without undermining the mechanisms and processes of local accountability. That is the thought; that is the idea.

Q321 Dr Huppert: If I may come back to the details of the local thing, when you say there are not options, paragraph 12 highlights two other options.

Professor Loader: We made that clear recommendation. You clearly need some sort of strategic governance above that. We have a preference for a leaders' council. We also say there are two other options. The innovation we make is making accountability structures more local than they are under the PCC.

Q322 Dr Huppert: To explore this, Lord Stevens, you were in Cambridgeshire as deputy.

Lord Stevens: Deputy commissioner in Cambridgeshire. Sorry—deputy chief constable.

Q323 Dr Huppert: Maybe some day. The idea of a legal requirement on the police to organise internal force boundaries to be coterminous with local councils—you are presumably aware of the historical aspect of many of those boundaries: Waterbeach without—there would be a whole area up the Fen Road, which I am sure you know well.

Lord Stevens: Very well.

Q324 Dr Huppert: It would then be separately governed from East Chesterton, which it relates to. Do you think it is sensible to say that you have to keep the force matching exactly the local authority boundaries, which were historic for very different purposes?

Lord Stevens: I think Cambridgeshire is a good example of where there might be a slight difference in the rule. But taking that further, in terms of amalgamation, even when I was deputy chief constable, I led on the business of amalgamation with other deputies of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, which Charles Clarke tried to take through, and which, as you probably know, never came to anything. However, as a principle, I think coterminosity—which, when I became commissioner, in terms of delivering for boroughs, was driven through and was successful in most aspects, if not all—is important.

Q325 Dr Huppert: At the higher level, you say you would have a policing board with the leaders of each local authority. So in Devon and Cornwall—this is an issue the Committee looked at—you would have a board consisting of nine people from Devon and one person from Cornwall, who would set the overall funding between Devon and Cornwall. Is there not an obvious problem here?

Professor Loader: No, I don't know the details of the arrangements for Devon and Cornwall.

Q326 Dr Huppert: Cornwall has one single council and Devon has nine. It is very hard to come up with this with the police and crime panels.

Lord Stevens: I think that is right, but I think the general principles speak for themselves. Northumbria is another one—it is a county—and you have got Tyne and Wear. Having been chief constable up there for five years, I know it well. There are certain areas where you would have to look at it in detail. However, the general principles of what we are talking about I think would work.

Q327 Dr Huppert: We may have to beg to disagree on some aspects of that. Where there are local government elections, there is exactly the same thing. We currently have these police and crime panels, and I suspect we would agree that they should be stronger. How would you go about strengthening them? What would your suggestions be—not the wholesale change you are describing, but a smaller-scale revision?

Professor Loader: The most radical form of revision which would leave police and crime panels and PCCs in place is to make the responsibilities that are currently lodged with the PCC a co-exercise with the police and crime panels. If you are wedded to the model of the PCCs in charge and the police and crime panel effectively as a form of accountability over them—we did not turn our mind to this question greatly, because we came to the conclusion that that kind of tinkering with the current system was not the way to go. There may be ways in which you would want to increase the powers of oversight and veto that police and crime panels have. For example, in relation to the appointment of deputies or—

Q328 Dr Huppert: Because police authorities were essentially a mostly indirectly elected set of councillors. It is similar to the higher-tier model you are describing. I do not know what they would be like everywhere, but in Cambridgeshire they were almost completely ineffectual. Why would that not be the case? Councillors are interested in a range of things and council leaders are interested in some things; giving them more and more jobs, just because they are council leaders, for example, does not seem like it would be a best way to get accountability for policing.

Lord Stevens: Can I answer on Cambridgeshire? Certainly, when I was a deputy there for two and half years, they were extremely effective. I remember them giving us quite a hard time, especially in relation to Cambridge, as distinct from Peterborough—which are different types of place, with a different type of emphasis. I remember vividly police authority meetings once a month, which we had at Hinchbrook, where we were incredibly effective in terms trying to deliver operational policing to various areas. What you did not have there were people who were elected specifically for a policing role. That was the difference.

Whether it is Northumbria or some of the forces I inspected—Greater Manchester, Birmingham or some of the small forces, such as Norfolk or Cambridgeshire—the difference would be that these people would be elected to support the police commissioner, who would be at the top, with an elected role in terms of policing.

Q329 Dr Huppert: Sorry—so this is not the option that you said was the favoured one, which was the leaders of every local authority. You would go for the two options you list in paragraph 12—the indirectly elected ones. That is the one you are now saying would work better.

Professor Loader: No, the thing is that there are a lot of options. The thing the commission is most wedded to, and we think is an innovation, is devolving democratic accountability down to the local level. I am personally less wedded to—how you then can organise a strategic governance at police force level. We ended up with a slight preference for a leaders' council. We laid out the two other options.

Of course, this is also premised—we make a particular point of trying to connect this to the debate about structures—upon 43 forces continuing to exist. One of the things that we found in the context of our work is that next to no one thinks that system is tenable.

Q330 Dr Huppert: I intended to ask you lots of questions about this, but colleagues will probably do that later.

Professor Loader: We were therefore minded to try to put in place a kind of governance arrangement which would protect and enhance local democratic accountability and deal with the kinds of questions about accountability that arise if and when forces get bigger—and they are important ones.

Q331 Dr Huppert: But wouldn't do things like the budget—

Chair: Thank you, Dr Huppert. Mr Ellis.

Q332 Michael Ellis: Let us go back to before I was interrupted, if we may, and some further questioning along those important lines, about which I was asking you. We heard two chief constables giving evidence today. They were both asked—not by me, but by somebody else on the Committee—about the phrase, “the chilling effect”. Both chief constables said that

they had seen no evidence to that effect. We also had a police and crime commissioner before us today, who agreed with, I think, Mark Reckless MP, that there may be reluctance to allow more scrutiny of chief constables and other chief or senior police officers. *[Interruption.]* I am reminded of the phrase, “Why would turkeys vote for Christmas?”, not used by me, but by another witness. I suggest that there is a dearth of support, Lord Stevens, for contentions that you have made in this report.

Earlier, Lord Stevens, I thought that you were extremely defensive about my questioning about the independence or otherwise of this report. I will pursue that line of questioning, because I think that it is completely appropriate to ask you whether the Labour party liaised with you, or you liaised with them, about the publication date of the report and about other aspects concerning the media attention that the report received, and timing and all the rest of it, and whether also there was direct liaison with the trade union organisations about the promotion of this report. Would you answer that question for me?

Lord Stevens: Let’s first of all say, “defensive”—robust was my response. Robust, and I can be robust, especially defending other people—

Michael Ellis: I respect that.

Lord Stevens: And I respect your right to ask whatever you want to—absolutely totally.

The business of the publication of the report was actually always moving on because of developments and the fact that we had a large amount of academics and universities. We had to pull the report together. It had to have a large editorial team and took a lot of work. So the date of the report obviously was reported to the Labour party as it went on. It was also actually reported to one or two people in your party.

The bottom line of all of that is that the influence of Yvette Cooper—I admire her massively. She respected our independence. On occasions, she wondered where the report was going and I suspect she was slightly alarmed that it might never ever be published, but she was honest and honourable in not trying to put any pressure on us whatsoever.

In terms of the trade unions, I can think of no influence put on to us by the trade unions, unless my academic colleagues—the only thing that we did was that the Police Federation helped us with some of the surveys, and I think the trade union helped us in terms of an independent survey of the PCCs and police staff.

Q333 Michael Ellis: Did you write to trade unions asking them to submit evidence to the inquiry?

Lord Stevens: That part was dealt with by Professor—was it you, or was it—*[Interruption.]* It was Professor Jennifer Brown, who is Mannheim professor at the London School of Economics. So, again, we can give you a report on—

Chair: If you could write to me, that would be very good.

Q334 Michael Ellis: Finally, do you accept that the review was promoted by the Labour party and trade union organisations, including trade unions that fund the Labour party?

Lord Stevens: No. Let me make it absolutely clear, and I really want to make this issue, that when Yvette Cooper launched this particular independent inquiry, she said she wanted cross-party support. She wanted the Tory party to be part of it, and the Lib Dems. She did that on my prompting. She got up publicly, and it is on record that she actually asked that to take place.

It was slightly disappointing over the course of two years that we did not actually have the type of reaction that I would have liked to have. I can now totally understand why for political reasons; I have no problem with that. But we did offer at the beginning for it to be cross-party. So that is a matter of record and that is on the press release and everything else that came out.

Q335 Michael Ellis: I just want to ask one other thing, which is on a slightly different tack. It is the issue that has been raised about one of the faults, if you like, within the system of police and crime commissioners, as to the size of the constituency base. Do you accept, however, that there are other democratically elected persons—I am thinking of the Mayor of London, both under Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson—who have even larger constituency bases, and in other western democratic countries even larger still, including over policing? So, is that a viable complaint about the efficacy of the system—Professor Loader or Lord Stevens?

Lord Stevens: I'd like to answer. When I was deputy commissioner, I chaired the committee, which consisted of the Home Office, Lord Harris and others, on the creation of the new Metropolitan Police Authority and the responsibilities of the Mayor. It was an issue we looked at, and you will probably remember—you might not—that we actually made London coterminous with what the ratepayer was paying. In London, because of the set-up of the assembly, because of the direct relationship with the Home Secretary and because of the fact that the Mayor had deputy Mayors—at that stage, Ken Livingstone decided he did not want to chair the police authority himself, and he couldn't initially because Lord Harris, the Labour nominee, was there doing it—it was something we looked at. And I, for one, would say in terms of size that because of the unique structure of London, because of the set-up in terms of the borough base and in terms of how it delivers on the assembly, which is not replicated elsewhere—perhaps it is in Wales in a different form—that it worked there. It also worked because of personal relationships and a wish to forget about politics. I always remember Paul Boateng saying to me, “It's going to be a bloody time for you and everybody in politics,” but it did not work out that way. We got on with the matters at issue. On the question of size, I think London is probably unique for the reasons that I have stated.

Q336 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like ask about the “chartered police officer” mentioned in your report. How would the creation of the chartered police officer, as recommended by the commission's report, work in practice? For the Committee, exactly what is it?

Lord Stevens: Well, after I have spoken, I'll pass over to the professor. I was in the police service for 43 years and have been connected with it afterwards with Diana and other issues such as this. I was also invited to be the Mayor of London by the Conservative party before it chose Boris Johnson. I just thought I'd get that in. I turned it down. It is a matter of record in the newspapers. I certainly do not think that I would have been as successful as Boris. Who would be? That is another matter.

Everybody has been talking about the professionalisation of the police. This was an issue that was raised by Lord Dannatt and Lord Carlile in particular, and we really wanted to address it. The idea came from Lord Carlile, who is a Lib Dem, that there should be a kind of raising of the professional status of the police officer by some organisation, similar to chartered accountants and others.

The other thing that we were highly in favour of, which you will probably have seen if you have read the report—I am sure that you have—is the College of Policing. We thought that this was a way of raising the status of police officers and recognising right across the

spectrum the type of qualifications, the judgment and professionalism that police officers use every day of the week. All of us, unanimously—the College of Policing seems to be up for some of this as well and perhaps the same goes for members of the Government—think that this is a way of raising the professionalisation of policing. We have to go for this and we have to use the Police College, which I know ACPO is behind—

Q337 Lorraine Fullbrook: I was going to ask what would be the role of the College of Policing.

Lord Stevens: We think the role of the Police College is absolutely pivotal to all of this and to holding people accountable. If you want, I will say a little more about the inspectorate and the business of the IPCC in due course, but the college is central to all of this.

Q338 Lorraine Fullbrook: So is the proposal then to have this chartered association of police officers? Would you then propose doing away with the Police Federation and ACPO?

Lord Stevens: No. What we said about ACPO is that it should still retain responsibility for operational decisions. Let us take the petrol strike, which happened when I was commissioner. The only people who actually had the ability to move police officers around the country were the president of ACPO and the commissioner, as it happened, because I was in Cobra and the rest of it. That still remains. If we have a national emergency, it would have to be the same.

In relation to the Police Federation, that is a matter for them to decide. There will be some danger for the Police Federation if in fact the Police College takes up some kind of association and payments are made to them, but we refute the point made by the Police Federation when this report was published that this affects the office of constable. It does not. This enhances the office of constable.

I am sorry to go on a bit about this, but I have a bee in my bonnet about it. The other thing about the Police College and the chartered police officer is that you could then bring direct entries in for people with particular skills in forensics, accountancy and others, providing that they go through a proper bedding-in process and that they understand policing. There are great advantages around all of this, I think.

Q339 Lorraine Fullbrook: I am a fan of direct entry anyway. It is used in the armed forces and in the prison service. If the Police Federation and ACPO remained, would you not find that the bureaucracy of this chartered association would outweigh the benefits?

Lord Stevens: I don't think so. ACPO would have to stay, because, at the end of the day, there is legislation that states that they actually deal with national emergencies, such as flooding or whatever. They have to stay. Bureaucracy, I hope not. I think what it needs is a very strong focused, laser delivery to the benefits of all of this and not be carried away with some of the other issues.

Q340 Lorraine Fullbrook: But there is a finite sum of money to do this kind of stuff. If you did not replace the Police Federation with this chartered association, then money would have to come from somewhere else to set this up. There would be a set-up cost involved.

Professor Loader: Ultimately, the College of Policing, which the report does endorse, has to find a way of becoming pretty much self-financing. The suggestion we make in the report is that, as in the same way as any other professional association—lawyers pay to be members of the Law Society and medics pay for the Royal College of Medicine—you can

reasonably expect police officers to pay a small amount of money to the College of Policing to be its members. They can continue to be part of the Police Federation, because that does a different kind of job, and a legitimate job, that the College does not do. The College's job is to work out what kind of standards police officers at different ranks should have and what is required. And our proposal is to keep a publicly available register of officers and the kind of skills that they have, so that people can look at that.

There is also a point about this that relates to the malpractice that the Chair mentioned at the beginning. When you charter police officers, you also create the possibility that, in cases of extreme malpractice, you can be struck off. In other words, you can no longer serve as a police officer in any force, in the same way as you can be struck off from being a medical practitioner.

Q341 Lorraine Fullbrook: But can't you do all that without creating a chartered association?

Lord Stevens: No, and I think a point made very strongly by Lord Carlile is that it needs a separate identity to allow the police to become a profession, which, quite honestly, over my period of time, it has never been. I think that has to happen. It also allows—this is where I speak personally—people to come into the police service at the base level without direct entry and work themselves up in terms of qualifications to become, if necessary, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police or president of ACPO. I think this is something that could work for the general good, honestly.

Chair: We will have to leave it there. Paul Flynn has the final question.

Q342 Paul Flynn: You state that you would like to see the social purpose of policing enshrined in law. Why?

Lord Stevens: We think that over the course of the last three or four years—and I am speaking against myself, having been a career detective and concentrated on crime reduction in Northumbria, but the means of delivering crime reduction in Northumbria was by a concerted approach—we say that it would be nonsense to concentrate totally on the police.

Let us take the emergency over flooding. Are we saying that the police are not an emergency service to come and give their support to the population? Of course we are not. Yes, of course crime is important, but, at the same time, we must not ignore the broader aspects of policing. That does not mean that we should get it totally into social services in a way that sucks out some of the resources in an improper way, but when you talk about the police, it cannot possibly be solely about crime, public disorder and other issues.

Q343 Paul Flynn: There is an argument that, with more democratic accountability via the commissioners or MOPAC in London, there is a greater incentive to distort the figures. Because people have to be elected, they have a strong political imperative. Isn't this right? Isn't this almost certain to happen? Priorities will change away from what they should be and the judgments of independent chief constables, against the political agenda where people have to present a picture to show that they doing a decent job to be re-elected.

Lord Stevens: I'll let Professor Loader follow me on this, but let me say that ever since I have been in the police service, there has been a fiddling of figures. I remember being a detective constable where we used to write off crimes because, allegedly, a stone had gone from a car and banged into a window. It went on and on. There are police forces round about 1991 where they looked at the crime levels of those detections, which were 51%, and when they stopped prison visits and did primary detection, it went down to 5%. The chief constable

there was in danger because there was going to be public uproar. The police authority came to the support of that chief constable. I was the chief constable. I don't want to publicly talk about it, but when I was an HMI, there were cases when we inspected forces and found that there were real problems in terms of recorded crime—cuffing, as we call it—and the business of detection. As Sara Thornton has said, that is an absolute abomination.

Q344 Chair: Is it still going on?

Lord Stevens: Yes, of course it is.

Q345 Chair: So you are telling this Committee that as far as you are aware, the fiddling of figures, cuffing of information or whatever it is called is still going on in the police service?

Lord Stevens: In certain forces, yes. Let me give you some empirical evidence.

Q346 Chair: Can you tell us which forces?

Lord Stevens: No, I do not know the exact forces. All I can say is that I was at a session of police sergeants nine months to a year ago in Cheshire—a year and a half ago—talking about what their feelings were about the police service. It was a great session, with outstanding people; 75% of them worked on counters out on the front line. All of them said the biggest scandal coming our way is the recording of crime.

Q347 Chair: How long ago was that?

Lord Stevens: It was eighteen months ago when I went up.

Q348 Chair: So you now accept it. We have heard evidence from a whistleblower who said that this is happening on a regular basis. You are telling this Committee, which is astonishing to us, that this is still going on in some forces in the police service.

Lord Stevens: I think HMI is going to be doing annual inspections, so I hope that has stopped as a result, but my point has been made.

Q349 Chair: You hope it has stopped, but you don't think it has.

Lord Stevens: I pray to God it's been stopped.

Q350 Chair: What is the way of stopping it now? Should there be an independent investigation, or should Tom Winsor do something about it?

Lord Stevens: I think every single force should be subject to an independent, laser-focused investigation into police crime figures on both detection and the recording of crime. I think that should happen—it is happening—and it should happen as a matter of urgency.

Professor Loader: Can I make two points in relation to your question? One is that it might be helpful to make a distinction between what is evocatively called “fiddling the figures” and the exercise of discretion that officers make when they decide how and whether to record crimes. You cannot eradicate that; you can shape it in various ways. When that discretion is exercised, police officers, for all kinds of good reasons, will respond to what they take to be pressures to make that decision in one way or another. In answer to your question, I

don't think PCCs have created a pressure to manage crime figures that didn't exist from other sources, or hasn't existed for as long as I have been studying these things.

Q351 Paul Flynn: But they have to be re-elected, while chief constables do not. Today, James Patrick put in some new evidence, which the Committee decided to publish, so that it would be privileged and he could not be disciplined by his own force. It is a rather sad situation that that had to be done because the defensive action from the Met seemed to be to shoot the messenger. He is under disciplinary inquiry.

One final point: the public are rightly suspicious of one Government marching the troops up to the top of the hill and another Government marching them down again. Is there really a simple, practical way, without huge expense, for the PCCs to be abolished and a new, simple, equally democratic system put in place, without vast cost and disruption?

Professor Loader: With all due respect, I think that is what we have proposed.

Q352 Paul Flynn: Indeed. But it can be done?

Professor Loader: I think it can be done. We are a commission. All we can do is propose. It is for others to read and think about what we propose, and decide what to do about it.

Lord Stevens: And remember that whatever is proposed has to be seen in the structure of where the police service is going in the next five, 10 or 15 years. Don't ignore terrorism. I agree with Sara Thornton that that needs to stay with the Met in the medium to short term.

Q353 Chair: You agree with her?

Lord Stevens: I totally agree with her.

Q354 Chair: Because the NCA isn't ready for business?

Lord Stevens: I think the NCA has a massive job to do, and that job will take some time to bed in. Why break something up which has been a massive success over the last 80 or 100 years? Remember what Sara Thornton said: it is the police and MI5 working together. That is something that Baroness Manningham-Buller and I are more proud of than anything—combining squads to work together in the same buildings.

Q355 Lorraine Fullbrook: I would like to go back to the crime figures being massaged, to put it in the nicest way. Have you made a formal request to Tom Winsor to carry out the independent audits that you were suggesting in each force?

Lord Stevens: From my knowledge, when Tom Winsor came to give evidence to the commissioner, as did a lot of other people, I think he is already doing that.

Chair: As a result of what you have said today, Lord Stevens, we will write to him again.

Q356 Lorraine Fullbrook: That doesn't answer my question, though. Have you made a formal request to Tom Winsor?

Lord Stevens: I haven't, no.

Q357 Chair: It probably is not in your remit, but it certainly is within ours. As a result of what you have said to us today, I will write to Tom Winsor to ask him whether he can conduct the investigation that you mentioned, in view of what you have said to the Committee.

Lord Stevens: And Chairman, it has to be independent. The business of public satisfaction is how the police should be judged.

Q358 Chair: Of course; we understand that. Lord Stevens, Professor Loader, this has been a very robust session, but I am sure you will be used to it in the various jobs that you all have been doing—perhaps not you, Professor.

Professor Loader: Oh no, we do robust in Oxford, don't worry.

Q359 Chair: We are extremely grateful. Could you write to us with the information? Would you like us to write to you to set out the information that we would like, or send you the transcripts, so you know what we would like?

Lord Stevens: It would be great, if it is okay with you and the Committee, if you wrote to us. Then we will answer all the questions, including the business of the moneys, what was given and so on.

Q360 Chair: Wonderful. That would be very helpful. Thank you very much. Apologies for the votes in the middle.

Lord Stevens: No, well, thank you for listening to us.

Chair: Thank you.