



Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Policing in London](#), HC 929

Tuesday 13 January 2015

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Members present: Keith Vaz (Chair); Nicola Blackwood, Mr James Clappison, Michael Ellis, Paul Flynn, Dr Julian Huppert, Tim Loughton, Mr David Winnick.

Questions 1 – 42

Witness: **Stephen Greenhalgh**, Deputy Mayor of London, gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: We are delighted to welcome back the Deputy Mayor for London, who has not been to see us since 4 September 2012. I think it was your birthday on that day.

Stephen Greenhalgh: My birthday, yes.

Chair: You obviously did so well we decided to wait two and a half years to bring you back. We are delighted to see you here. We have just been talking to the head of Europol about counter-terrorism, so I thought we would start with that and move on to other areas. You have a very difficult job at this present time and you must be in fear, as the Deputy Mayor in charge of policing and crime, that you will be rung up at some stage some night and told that there has been an attack on London. How prepared are we here in London for such an attack?

Stephen Greenhalgh: The events of last week were really shocking and I know all of us in this room felt huge solidarity for the people of Paris. I live in Hammersmith and Fulham and we have a huge French community. We stand shoulder to shoulder with them. It must be a hugely difficult time for another great global capital city.

In answer to your question, I have huge confidence in the people who are here to keep us safe. I know they will do their utmost. I know that they are preparing for this kind of marauding terrorist attack that we have seen not just in Europe, but in Africa and in other parts of the world. We have seen it on television and I have been down to see the police. I am not an operational person, I am a politician, but watching the police prepare for this kind of eventuality and seeing them train for this—I have seen them train for this first hand—you have to have huge respect for young police officers who are being trained to move towards gunfire, someone armed with an automatic weapon, and being prepared to do what it takes to keep the public safe. I have utmost confidence in the police, but you should never say never. That is why you have to train and do all you can to be prepared.

Q2 Chair: Indeed, and they are accountable. Even though you are, as you say, a mere politician and they are the operational wing—they do the work and we have to overview and oversee them—they are accountable to you for what they do. Do you think an attack on London is likely?

Stephen Greenhalgh: The people who do the threat assessment have raised the threat level, as you know. That means that at the higher threat level there is a likelihood of these kinds of attacks and the police are working their socks off to disrupt the kind of plots that would lead to violence. They are also doing all they can, working with local public agencies, to keep the public safe, so there is a huge safeguarding agenda to stop the radicalisation and the attacks that we saw on the streets of Paris coming to London. We know from the number of British nationals that have gone to Syria—it is interesting to note that in the plot last week, I think one of the people involved was a Syrian returner—that this is a problem that we face. This is a threat that we face for the foreseeable future. You are right: you have to be prepared and I am assured that the police are doing all they can. They rightly say they cannot do it on their own. They need the proper relationship with the military and they need their capabilities on occasion.

Q3 Chair: Yes. What concerned people was that the commissioner on the Sky Television programme—

Stephen Greenhalgh: I do not watch Sky so I missed that one.

Chair: Let me paraphrase for you since you missed the programme, though we hope to have the commissioner in next week. He said that there was only a possibility of an attack on London. You are saying that this is highly likely?

Stephen Greenhalgh: There is no difference between me and the commissioner. I take my information from the commissioner. I met and discussed the terrorist threat in London yesterday with him and the Mayor. I spent my entire morning with the commissioner learning from him about the operation. There is no difference between the threat that London faces, so if there has been a linguistic expression of difference, there is not.

Q4 Chair: Deputy Mayor, I am not seeking to get a difference; I am seeking clarity. There are specific threat levels, are there not? You have accepted that.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Yes, we accept while those are—

Chair: Sorry, if I can just finish. The substantial threat level, where it is substantial, is that an attack is a strong possibility?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Correct.

Chair: Which was what the commissioner said?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Yes.

Chair: At the moment, JTAC puts it as highly likely. We just want to clarify. We are not seeking to score points here. This is not the GLA.

Stephen Greenhalgh: No. I realise; thank you.

Q5 Chair: We are just seeking clarity from you as the Deputy Mayor. Is it highly likely or is it a strong possibility? That is all I am seeking to find out.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Highly likely and a strong possibility for me is indicating that we have to prepare for it, whether it is highly likely or a strong possibility. I am not so good with language, Chairman. I just think that given there is a heightened threat level, and given that we have seen this in a sister global city, we have to be prepared.

Q6 Chair: Sure. That is very clear and your language has always been very helpful to this Committee. Let us look at your budget cuts that have been proposed. There is a worry for Parliament and others. We realise this is something imposed on you rather than a decision that you will have taken, but are you concerned that the large reduction in the budgets of the Metropolitan police and others—we know we live in times of austerity, so no one is again trying to make it into a party political point here—will affect their capabilities following what happened in France? Would you be able to say to the Government that we need more resources to deal with this issue? I am talking specifically about the speech made by the head of MI5 when he said that he needed more resources. Do you think more resources are needed for the Metropolitan police?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Are we talking about terrorism, or are we talking about the budget in general?

Chair: Both general policing and terrorism.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Okay. I will take them in two parts, if I may, given that I think they are two separate issues.

As you know, Chairman, CT policing has a slightly different governance structure from the rest of policing. I am part of a policing board that meets in the Home Office with the Minister, James Brokenshire, and I attend as the Mayor's representative on that board. We meet quarterly and look at the performance of CT policing at the Home Office level. You are right, I have regular meetings with the head of the ACSO, the head of counter-terrorism operations, and get briefed, as does the Mayor. Of course, I think it is welcome that it looks like more money is going into the fight against terrorism. The figure that I have been given is a £130 million one-off figure that has been committed.

Q7 Chair: When was that announced?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I am not sure if it has been announced. Perhaps I have done something naughty. I did not mean to announce—

Q8 Chair: Are you just announcing it?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I am not here to announce it. It is not my money; it is the Government's money. The Government are putting more money into the fight against terror and I think it is fair to say I am not very good on knowing what— Okay, the truth is, quite rightly, that the Prime Minister is putting in more money to fight terrorism, but that is not just a matter for the police. That involves the security services and all the capabilities around using a military response, and also CT policing, of which that is a part. It is important that we recognise that we live in extremely difficult times and that the fight against terror needs to be properly funded.

Q9 Chair: In respect of what happened in Paris last week, we know that it seems that ISIL is saying that it is the United States, the United Kingdom and then France. Basically, France was third on the list. This is newspaper reports; I do not have it directly from anybody. You do not think there is any need to go to the Government and say, "We do need some more"?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I absolutely think there is a need to make the case so that the police have the counter-terrorist capabilities they need to disrupt all these terrorist plots. We are lobbying—I know the Mayor is lobbying the Government—to get an appropriate settlement for what is a heightened demand. This is specific to terrorist policing. I believe that the police, as I am told by the commissioner when he briefs me, are disrupting increasing numbers of these plots every year—disrupting two to three of these kinds of plots every year. In addition, the surveillance requirement for undercover policing—50% of the undercover work in the country takes place in the capital city—is such that that also requires the support that underpins effective CT policing work. Yes, I think this is an area where there is increasing demand and you need the right level of resource.

Q10 Chair: We have heard from the director of Europol about the need for the surveillance of suspects. He has talked about thousands of people who need to be monitored throughout Europe. There must be hundreds if not thousands here. You have represented, as leader of Hammersmith and Fulham Council, a very diverse community. The police cannot monitor everything all the time, so how do we win the support of communities so that they are part of the battle against terrorism? Some are concerned and some may not be as open as they should be. I have been reading about the reaction in some parts of France of schoolchildren not being prepared to join in the campaign against counter-terrorism and about young people who support what the terrorists did, with some interrupting the singing of the "Marseillaise". How do you win communities? You have been the leader of a council. You know about communities. How do we win them over?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I was outside, under the portrait of Sir Robert Peel, and he took two attempts to found the Metropolitan Police Service. In 1829—or maybe then—he said the police are the public and the public are the police. We have to engage with communities. I was leader of Hammersmith and Fulham. Recognising the diversity that you talk about, we have a huge Somali community. We have a big French population. We have a very

diverse population, and a strong Irish community. All these communities require you to speak clearly to them about why you are doing what you are doing and to take people with you. The public's confidence in the police requires effective community engagement with all communities. That is why, certainly as Deputy Mayor, I am very keen—just as keen as cutting crime—that we have a high level of public confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service and that we measure the confidence of all Londoners—minority Londoners, white Londoners, old Londoners, young Londoners. Having confidence in the police is absolutely important, as you say, to ensure that we get the intelligence from communities and we are able to fight crime.

Q11 Mr Winnick: One or two matters that are not necessarily related to terrorism. Mr Greenhalgh, you have responsibility, with the Mayor of course and the police commissioner for London. Presumably you do work on the basis that other cities in our country could well be the target of terrorism. London is the obvious one, but Birmingham, near my constituency, and other places—well-known cities; there is no need to name them—could well be in the front line of the mass murderers.

Stephen Greenhalgh: I completely agree, which was why with the Mayor's support I sought to convene our great cities together in City Hall for a quarterly meeting to look at how cities can collaborate, communicate and work together to fight terrorism. We had representatives from Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and London. This is not to say about the threat of terrorism nationally, but the problem for cities is that they are huge engines of opportunity, and there is a public safety challenge that does set them apart. It is important that we learn from each other—as you infer, that does not just stop at national boundaries—and look to collaborate with other great global cities, and that we learn the lessons from all these things. We work closely with Paris. We work closely with New York and other areas to get the very best and to ensure that the police apply and learn the very best from each other.

Q12 Mr Winnick: In other matters, how many people have so far been murdered in London in January?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I know that the figure for last year was about 95 homicides. Just to put that into context—

Q13 Chair: For the whole year?

Stephen Greenhalgh: For the whole year. Just to put that in context, since records began, that is an incredibly low number. I think in the 1960s we saw that sort of figure. The homicide level of 95 for a whole calendar year is an extraordinarily low murder rate for a great global capital city. The homicide rate over time in London is lower than in Brussels. It is certainly massively lower, as this Committee will know, than in New York, where the homicide rate may have come down from 1,200 to 300.

Mr Winnick: I am not talking—

Stephen Greenhalgh: In London, over a calendar year it was 95. I know there has been a spate of murders. It may have been nine or eight. I do not know the figure. You tell me because you know the figure, don't you?

Q14 Mr Winnick: Whether I know the figure, I am asking you. I am not here to answer your questions. You are here to answer mine.

Stephen Greenhalgh: I know that the new year did not start well, but we have to look at homicide over time. The murder rate is incredibly low over time.

Q15 Chair: Mr Winnick, can I interrupt for one minute? Are you saying you do not know the figure for the murder rate?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I think it is around nine or eight, but I cannot give you a real-time figure.

Q16 Mr Winnick: I do know the figure. I would have thought, Mr Greenhalgh, you would know it.

Stephen Greenhalgh: How far out am I?

Mr Winnick: Whether you know it or not, the fact is—

Stephen Greenhalgh: Well, was I out by two or three, or was it—

Mr Winnick: Ten, as I understand it, so far this year.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Ten, so I was out by one. Not bad, is it? I was one out. I am very sorry that I did not get it to the exact figure.

Q17 Mr Winnick: Mr Greenhalgh, don't try to be funny. I see no purpose in you being funny or sarcastic. If 10 people, if I am correct, have lost their lives, this is not a subject of some sort of wrangling in Committees.

Stephen Greenhalgh: No, it is terrible.

Mr Winnick: I am coming to the point. What can be done—this is the purpose of my question—to save lives? When I say 10, as I understand it, it is 10 who have been murdered in gang warfare. If that is so, we have only reached nearly half of January. What can be done effectively to try to stop this loss of lives?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I have to say that I commend the work of Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe on tackling gangs and recognising there was a problem, and in creating the Trident command. That was done in 2011 and, broadly speaking, over around a two-year period we have seen a 50% reduction in shootings and about a third reduction in stabbings.

Concerningly, over time—this is not just in a few weeks, but over time—we have seen a rise in serious youth violence. I think we first of all have to recognise that the police have a capability to enforce and do something about it. That gives you the bedrock—the platform—to do what I know this Committee is interested in: how you prevent this from happening in the first place. How do we move towards preventing communities from resorting to violence? That is where the police need to work with other agencies. The Mayor has published a strategy, which hopefully this Committee has seen, under the auspices of the London Crime Reduction Board. It comes out with a series of measures around prevention—ruthless diversion, as the commissioner puts it—and also helping young people to exit from gangs. That is equally important.

Prevention starts very early on. It starts in schools; it starts in activities. Tomorrow the Mayor and I are launching the London Premier League Kicks programme, which we continue to fund as something that is also very helpful so that young people are able to have their passions in not only football, but other matters. Equally, it is about working with kids who find themselves in alternative educational environments—the pupil referral units—and ensuring that you work with at-risk young people to lead them away from a life of gang culture. Prevention is very difficult in public service delivery. It has to be better than continually enforcing, but without effective enforcement, you cannot do the prevention.

Q18 Mr Winnick: One other topic: water cannons, Mr Greenhalgh, you would know, I am sure, the position of a 70 year-old German pensioner who was blinded as a result of a demonstration in which, in fact, he was not involved. He said that he had not attended any protest since his student days. Various operations have occurred arising from being the casualty of water cannon used by the German police. As I understand it, he remains virtually blind. How far is that taken into consideration when the Met is considering, with the approval of the Mayor, apparently, using water cannon, if indeed the Home Secretary gives her permission?

Stephen Greenhalgh: It is a very important question. I have met the German pensioner because we embarked on a huge amount of public consultation. In City Hall, he came over and made his point. He does not speak English—he speaks German—but I understood what he had to say. It is fair to say that I think it was in Stuttgart that the police deployed water cannon and they did not follow their own manual. Their operating procedures were not followed or complied with, and it is a tragic consequence to see someone blinded by water cannon.

I have to say that the case for water cannon did not start with a politician. It certainly did not start with me or the Mayor. The case came from policing—the people who have to respond on occasion to extreme violence and disorder. The case for water cannon was made not just by the Met, but also by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and ACPO. They made the case over time that we needed to close the gap in the public order toolkit. As you know, the police are licensed to use firearms and there is a specialist firearms command. They have baton rounds, and at the moment their tactics in public order, for me as someone who is a civilian looking at this, are using a baton and charging with shields, which also can create and cause harm. Therefore, they were making the point, having talked to Sir Hugh Orde, that water cannon can be used as a way of buying

distance on occasion. The Mayor has been very clear, and so has the commissioner, that this is a tool that will be rarely used or rarely seen.

Q19 Mr Winnick: In 2011, do you really think that would have helped the situation? Many believe it would have escalated the disturbances that unfortunately occurred.

Chair: Could we have a brief answer to that?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Am I speaking for too long? Sorry.

Chair: Maybe the whole session is a little too long.

Stephen Greenhalgh: You want long questions and me to give relatively short answers?

Chair: No, we will make sure that the questions are also short from now on, I promise. Let us do this deal.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Okay. These operational matters are a matter for the police. If you want to get a good question about when this becomes an operational consideration, get the head of public order policing to come and talk you through this. They made the case that this is something that would be rarely used and rarely seen, but on occasion. It is probably an example of when the police would be using less force than all the other tactical options they have within their armamentarium.

Q20 Chair: Are you surprised that the Home Secretary has taken so long to authorise the use of these water cannons, which you have already bought and which the commissioner has made a case for before this Committee?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Well, before I answer that, 68% of Londoners support the use of water cannon. Some 52% will have more confidence in the Met's ability to respond to extreme violence and disorder where there is a risk of life, widespread property disruption and violence. They understand that that can improve the capability of the police to respond to that. Now, on the issue of the Home Secretary's decision—

Q21 Chair: She is taking a long time, isn't she?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I met the Home Secretary about this very recently, so I can give the Committee some news. We had the conversation with her only a few weeks ago, just before the Christmas break. She made it absolutely clear that she will be in a position to make a decision before the purdah period, which I think is 30 March. There is a process for this—a very rigorous process, quite rightly. The process, called CAST, finished I think at the end of December, and then SACMILL—I can spell out the acronym if the Committee is interested—has to then provide its report. That would be available by the end of January.

Q22 Chair: You do not think there is any dragging of heels? You accept that it is a long process?

Stephen Greenhalgh: No, there is a health and safety process and it is quite right and proper that that finishes. That will be concluded by the end of January.

Q23 Chair: Do you think we should have done this before you purchased the water cannons?

Stephen Greenhalgh: There is no lost time because obviously this is new to the Met in the sense that they have to train on it. These three water cannon have now been liveried. The police are able to train and use it effectively, and we know that by the end of January the Home Secretary will be in a position to take a decision.

Chair: Excellent.

Q24 Tim Loughton: Could we go on to the subject of child sexual exploitation, which is obviously a very big issue that has hit all the headlines? The incidence of sexual exploitation within gangs is another factor. What impact is it having on police resourcing that you are seeing, and what sort of priority is it?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Well, Tim, I think the impact of this is not so much on police resourcing, but this is an incredibly complex area that requires all the agencies to work together. It requires focus. It requires an understanding of the problem and an ability to map the response, importantly to target the commissioning where you need other agencies to help you more effectively, and for the police to strengthen their operating model. It is not a question of money; it is about organisation. Certainly, what MOPAC can do as the oversight body of the Met is to work alongside to make sure that all the different players that have a say in an effective response to child sexual exploitation work together. We have convened that on several occasions in City Hall, both in July and December last year, but also my officials sit on two very important boards that enable us to ensure that the police are working alongside local councils. That is the London Safeguarding Board and the London Prevent Board. I do not think this is so much a money issue; this is an organisation alignment issue.

Q25 Tim Loughton: Okay. The issue of cultural sensitivities, and the police and other agencies not wishing to rock the boat with the community in places like Rotherham, Rochdale and other northern metropolitan boroughs, was a key issue. Interestingly, those charges have not been levied against police in London to that extent, yet it has a much more diverse population. Are you therefore satisfied that the police are being as proactive as they could be in working with other agencies to root out the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation, especially when it involves gangs of people of BME origin?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I would not use the word “satisfied”, but implicit in the question, I believe, is that the police over time recognised this as a rising problem and have the

resources to do something about it. They are working effectively with other agencies that can provide them with intelligence, and with the public to intervene and not to stand by.

Q26 Tim Loughton: Are you proactively challenging them on that particular perspective? Clearly authorities in other parts of the country were not, and for whatever reason it was being shuffled under the carpet. How big an issue is this for you when you meet police who are involved with child sexual exploitation?

Stephen Greenhalgh: One of the things I will say is that we do need to get better understanding of the problem and mapping of the problem. What I constantly ask is to be appraised of where they see the issues, of the extent to which this is a problem in London and of what they are doing to work with communities and other agencies to respond to it. I am satisfied, because we have a specialist command that looks into this area, that their policing is focused on it, but that is not just enough to have a specialist command. It has to be something that works root and branch through the bedrock of policing—through neighbourhood policing. You have 20,000 police officers in neighbourhood policing and they need to know enough about the problem to be able to refer it to the specialists. My concern is not that the police do not want to do a really good job, and that they are going to step forward and do something about it, but that there is a one Met approach to child sexual exploitation. I think they are doing a good job, but I am not complacent and there is always more work that can be done.

Q27 Michael Ellis: Deputy Mayor, it is said very often from the left that the policing of London has suffered due to the necessary austerity measures that have had to be put in place thanks to the legacy of the previous Labour Government's economic mismanagement. Do you agree with me that the fact that the crime rate is significantly down, that the use of firearms in the Metropolitan police area is down by something like 50%, and that the all-pervasive, it seems, and very worrying knife crime is down by 33% gives the lie to those who say that it is not possible to make rational savings in policing without affecting the work of the police?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I have to say that making savings in public services is never easy, but let us look at where we are and where we will be by 2016. In 2012, when I took on the job as Deputy Mayor and was appointed by the Mayor, what was interesting was that 4,700 police officers were in the back and middle office. That meant that they were well away from being able to fight crime. They are warranted officers; they are paid more than staff. Around 642 were in the back office. This commissioner quite rightly said that the London public want to see thousands more officers in neighbourhoods. The ability to do that and to get 2,600 officers into neighbourhoods while having a reducing budget is, I think, testament to a commissioner who is both a crime fighter and a reformer.

Q28 Michael Ellis: Is that why you think crime rates are down?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Absolutely. We have to get police officers into neighbourhoods. They have to be there fighting crime. They have to have the ability to arrest people. We

have a sensible plan and the sensible plan I put to this Committee when I first appeared on my birthday was the three Rs around: reducing the overheads of policing—if you remember, Chairman—

Chair: I do.

Stephen Greenhalgh: —releasing assets that were underutilised; and then also reforming policing. What we are seeing is that we will have saved nearly £600 million out of the Met's budget. Crime has come down and the murder rate the lowest it has been from the 1950s. We are seeing burglary at a level that has not been seen since 1974, when you were one, Michael, or perhaps two.

Michael Ellis: I was a very young man.

Stephen Greenhalgh: It is a horrible crime, burglary, and it is down to 1974 levels. It is interesting to see the theft of mobiles, which was a huge problem when I first started this. After Working with and cajoling the manufacturers to do something about it, mobile phone theft is now down by a third because we have got the manufacturers to design it out. We are seeing crime down and confidence in the Met has gone up from 54% when I started to 66%, and we have taken nearly £600 million out. I think that that is a huge, huge, huge testament to the Metropolitan Police Service.

Q29 Michael Ellis: I agree with you and congratulations to you and to those police officers that have achieved that.

Can I move back to two questions about the counter-terrorism issue? First of all, on communications data, do you have a view on the gap? We heard from the director of Europol before you gave evidence this afternoon and he accepted that there was a clear gap in the ability of our law enforcement—that includes the police—to, if you like, deal with terrorists and criminality via modern forms of communication, as opposed to more traditional landline telephones and the like. Would you like to speak to your view as to that? Do you think there is a gap? Do you agree with Interpol and Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, who has spoken about communications data saving lives if we can get that on the statute book?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Most importantly, I agree with what the Mayor said this morning. There is always this balance between freedom and security. We recognise that it is quite right and proper that the police need the powers to keep up with changing technology. Effectively, as technology changes, legislation needs to keep pace with that, as I understand it. I also agree with the Mayor that you do need to have appropriate oversight and that we cannot necessarily see politicians doing that. We do need some form of judicial oversight as well, and it is really a matter for Members to work out what the legal framework is and what legislation enables the police to do their job, while maintaining that fine balance between the freedom that we all love, and but also keeping us safe.

Q30 Michael Ellis: You agree in principle that it is not that the police ought to be able to see who made a telephone call at what time if they used a landline, but not if they used voice over internet?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Yes, correct. Just because technology changes, they should not be impeded in their crime-fighting ability—absolutely right.

Q31 Michael Ellis: When the Mayor says in Trafalgar Square that he is not so interested in the human rights of those who commit criminal offences but in the human rights of those who live in this city and around this country, do you agree with that?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Do you know what? I do.

Q32 Michael Ellis: Yes, I thought you would.

Can I ask you about this, finally from me? During the awful incident in France, it was quite clear, I think, that the French military assisted the police. I realise they have a very different system there. If this is not something that you can speak about, I will not pursue it, but are there contingencies in place for the British military to assist the Metropolitan police in the event of an incident? Are you satisfied that if there is a need for that, the contingency is in place, even if you cannot speak to the details?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I am not going to speak to the detail because I think this is now straying into operational matters, but it is a concern. I had a meeting with the Mayor and the commissioner yesterday, and I spent the morning with the leadership of Scotland Yard. Your questioning indicates the importance of that link between the police and the military to ensure that there is an effective response. We do not have a standing army in London, so the police being able to respond with military support is absolutely critical. I know that there is a mobilisation plan in place and that the governance structures are there, but if you want to ask more detailed questions, I think you need to ask—

Q33 Michael Ellis: That is operational. You are aware that structures are in place?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Yes, absolutely.

Q34 Michael Ellis: A final point from me: is there particular concern from certain subsections of the community in London about their own security? Are individual processes in place to protect those who may feel particularly vulnerable as far as terrorism provisions are concerned?

Stephen Greenhalgh: There are concerns in communities. London is a hugely diverse capital city. I am a son of a refugee. She did not come to London, but London is a place that is tolerant and welcoming to communities. I spent the last few months talking to the Muslim community in London who feel fearful, because you do not want to conflate someone who is a Muslim with someone who is an Islamist terrorist—they are two different people. Equally, the Jewish community is the largest community in our capital city. I think Manchester is the second largest, but we have a huge Jewish community.

They obviously are rightly concerned. It is very important that we maintain that London is the safest and also the greatest and most tolerant global city on earth.

Q35 Chair: In respect of that, there was a newspaper article yesterday about members of the Jewish community having their own security forces, with their own cars looking very similar to the cars of the Metropolitan Police. Are you happy and comfortable with that? Are you comfortable with communities themselves policing their places of worship, which we have allowed, of course, previously in London? I live in north London when I live in London, and obviously places of worship are protected by individual security services. You understand that and you support that?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I support the work of the Community Security Trust in strengthening places of worship and education, and what they do for the Jewish community in London I think is phenomenal. I made a visit to Golders Green. I have walked with them to see the practical work they do on the ground. I have supported Shomrim, but they have to be very careful. They do not want to pass themselves off as police officers.

Q36 Chair: Do you think there is a danger that they are?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I think there is a message that you should not wear a uniform that could be confused with that of a serving police officer. The message needs to go out to Shomrim, yes: do what you can to keep your community safe, but you are not the Metropolitan Police Service.

Chair: That is a message to all communities as well that they should work to—

Stephen Greenhalgh: That is to every community. Irrespective of who you are, you have to recognise that, yes, do what you can to keep yourselves safe, but there is only one first public service. It is inadvisable, I think, to be able to—

Q37 Chair: Do you think that the cars and the uniforms did cause concern? Do they cause you concern?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I do not know much specifically. I do not know about that, but I am making the general point and I think the Committee will understand that.

Q38 Chair: Finally, on diversity, the College of Policing was suggesting, although it has assured us it is not doing this anymore, a relaxation in the rules for the recruitment of individuals, some of whom may have had previous convictions, in order to increase diversity. Have you heard about this? Do you have any comments to make about it? You have made it very clear that London is the most diverse city in the whole of Europe, perhaps in the whole world. Do you favour the relaxation of entry requirements for this purpose?

Stephen Greenhalgh: First of all, Chair, if anyone is convicted of a serious criminal offence, that should be a bar to joining the police. Equally, if someone's trust and integrity is in question, that should also be a red line. The commissioner has made that clear and I make that clear to this Committee. I have to say that any kind of lowering of the bar will not increase the public's trust and confidence in the Metropolitan Police Service. When you get to minor offences, and potentially something that someone has done when they were very young, that needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. That is something for the Met properly to consider.

Q39 Chair: When you came before us you also talked about more senior officers who were from the ethnic minority communities and who were women. Nobody doubts the Mayor's popularity among the diverse communities of London, because I see him at many events to do with the Asian community in particular, but we have not managed to make that breakthrough, have we, at the very top of the Metropolitan police? There are no women at the very, very top. Obviously there is only one job as commissioner, but in terms of the top team, we need to do more work, don't we? It is not quite as you would like to see it.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Chair, you are right; there should be no glass ceilings in any walk of life. I think I said before this Committee that it would be great to see the first black commissioner or the first Asian commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service on merit. It is important to recognise that this commissioner is seeing a greater diversity within the Met, but it is no good that just being at the lower ranks. We have to see that progression, as you say, right to the very top.

Now, one of the things the Met is pioneering and is leading British policing on is the direct entry at superintendent level. They have five who have come in—and that is a large proportion of the total number of direct entries—three of whom are women and two who are BME. Of course, we have to recognise that when you—

Chair: All five are from the diverse community?

Stephen Greenhalgh: No, two are BME and three are women.

Q40 Chair: How many do they have in?

Stephen Greenhalgh: Five. It is a pilot of a new scheme—that is what I am saying. If we are going to change the game, we have to look at different ways in which we can bring in the talent that is within our global capital city to get the leadership that reflects it. Direct entry is an interesting way of bringing someone in with a different skill set who could potentially be the police commissioner of the future. It is at an early stage. We also have to see that promotion to the very top is entirely on merit and that you have the best people going into the best positions to keep us safe. Entirely on merit, the commissioner has announced, I think yesterday, the appointment of Assistant Commissioner Pat Gallan, and she is the first female black police officer to hold a chief constable rank. That was made public yesterday.

Q41 Chair: Sorry, has Pat Gallan got a new job?

Stephen Greenhalgh: As assistant commissioner.

Chair: I see, okay.

Stephen Greenhalgh: There is definitely more work that can be done. The message implied in your question is that we have to see people routing their way up from police constable. I am the grandson of a police constable who rose to the rank of police constable. We want people to rise far and fast, and get to the top on merit.

Q42 Chair: This is your valedictory appearance before this Committee.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Why? Don't you want me back?

Chair: Unfortunately, the Committee dissolves on 30 March.

Stephen Greenhalgh: You will all be re-elected, presumably.

Chair: If you are looking at your term as Deputy Mayor, what would you like to have been your legacy?

Stephen Greenhalgh: I will have wanted crime to have come down year on year. I want to have found a sensible way to reduce the budgets, but what I still want to see is—the big challenge for my last year holding this public office is to see—a greater degree of public confidence in the Met. It is higher than it was, but there is more work to be done.

Chair: Deputy Mayor, thank you very much for coming today, we are most grateful.

Stephen Greenhalgh: Thank you.

Chair: That completes the evidence.