

COMMUTER COPS

Helping our police to live in the city
they serve

Glyn Gaskarth



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The Capital City Foundation is a new policy unit devoted to the continued prosperity and progress of London. It aims to be London's most influential think tank, taking a long-term look at how to improve the lives of current and future Londoners to protect its standing as the greatest city on earth.

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About the Author

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Glossary

ACPO, The Association of Chief Police Officers

ATOC, The Association of Train Operating Companies – used to refer to the ATOC concession, a travel subsidy concluded between the Met and the Association of Train Operating Companies

BME, Black and Minority Ethnic

CIPD, The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

CKP – Certificate in Knowledge of Policing

DCLG, The Department for Communities and Local Government

EEOC, The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

GLA, The Greater London Authority

HMIC, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

LCCI, The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Met, The Metropolitan Police Service

MOPAC, The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime

MPS, The Metropolitan Police Service (as referred to in official documents)

NPCC, The National Police Chiefs' Council

NYPD, The New York City Police Department

ONS, The Office for National Statistics

PC, Police Constable

PCC, Police and Crime Commissioner

PCSO, Police Community Support Officer

PRRB, The Police Remuneration Review Body

RMT, The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers

RSA, The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce

TfL, Transport for London

TOCs, Train Operating Companies

The research process

Policy Exchange cooperated with Police Now and the Metropolitan Police to organise interviews with seventy-four police officers between August 2015 and January 2016 to find out their views on the housing support services provided by the Met and those the police officers believed should be provided. Both recent police recruits and more experienced officers were interviewed.

We also conducted interviews with senior members of the Metropolitan Police and the former Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to gauge their interest in using the police estate to provide affordable housing opportunities in London.

Private roundtables were conducted with senior Metropolitan Police officers, the former Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and Greater London Authority (GLA) housing policy specialists respectively. These sessions were designed to understand what options would be feasible and the practicalities of putting them in to effect.

Private discussions were conducted with the chief executive's of relevant housing associations to determine if they would be interested in a partnership with the Metropolitan Police to develop the police estate in London. We thank the Metropolitan Police and Police Now for their cooperation with the research process. Their assistance in this respect does not signal that they have any opinion on the recommendations contained within this report.

The cover photo image for this publication is of Charing Cross Police Station. It is used, purely, for illustrative purposes and our use of it does not signal that we recommend the sale and redevelopment of this particular station.

Executive Summary

Most of the policemen and women who patrol the streets of London do not live here. The Met is a force of “commuter cops” who travel in from the Home Counties or further afield: some from as far as Cornwall, or the south of France.

The Met retains the authority to restrict where Met police officers live, but it, generally, allows them to live where they wish. As of last September, of the 18,179 Met officers assigned to local borough policing, only 8,896 (49%) lived anywhere in Greater London and only 1,261 (7%) lived in the borough which they policed. Of the 572 officers assigned to police the borough of Islington, only two lived there.

The phenomenon of the “commuter cop” reduces the police presence in London. It reduces officers’ contact with, and perhaps understanding of, the communities they serve. It makes it harder to deploy officers quickly in emergencies, such as riots or terror attacks. It contributes to the Met being demographically, in the words of the Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, “nowhere near what London is,” with further implications for the force’s performance.

Even when they are off-duty, police officers stabilise communities. They deter criminals. Though they will not be working, they may still intervene in extremis. Londoners would benefit from having more police officers as neighbours.

But as well as being against the public interest in more effective policing, commuting cops are against the interests of police officers themselves. The anti-social hours, unpredictability and strain of police work make it less suitable than almost any other kind to be tied to long commutes and unreliable public transport.

Police officers interviewed for this pamphlet spoke of having to sleep on the floor after they missed their last trains. To avoid that, they admitted they would slacken off in the last hours of late shifts for fear of time-consuming, train-missing arrests.

The Met strongly wants to employ more Londoners. Since 2014, police recruits must have lived in London for three of the last six years, though there is nothing to stop them moving out once they have joined. For new recruits, the force has also withdrawn a rail travel concession which allowed officers to commute cheaply. These changes are having small effects, but not on their own enough.

Most police officers we interviewed, too, said they would like to live in London – though not, for understandable reasons, precisely in the places they policed – if they could afford it.

How to make it more affordable is the purpose of this pamphlet.

Police officers need bespoke housing support

Even among essential public sector workers, police officers are a special case. They need to live closer to the communities they police, but not precisely in them, since their jobs inevitably bring them into conflict with some members of those

communities. They are more likely to work anti-social hours. They move around more. But surprisingly, there are no special schemes to help police officers obtain affordable housing in London. Those needing help are instead referred to generic “key worker” schemes which do not meet their particular needs. The Met must provide, or arrange for, specialist, bespoke support.

Yet almost all police housing support has been withdrawn

Until 1994, supported housing was a substantial part of many Met officers’ compensation. Younger, single officers were given rooms in “section houses.” Older, married ones were given free or subsidised housing. Those without either were given housing allowances. Almost all such accommodation has now been sold and housing allowances withdrawn for post-1994 recruits. Very little housing support, either physical or financial, is now offered. Only a few section houses and flats remain available to police officers.

Salary increases have not made up for the loss of housing support

Police salaries have improved substantially since the days when all officers were required to live in London, and subsidised accommodation was more widely available to them. But property prices have risen by far more. The average London house price, £530,000, is almost 18 times a new police officer’s annual wage; first-time buyers are now estimated to need earnings of £77,000 to buy in London, about twice what the average police constable earns.

The Met should provide “Met Match” top-ups to police officers saving to buy a home in London

The Government’s new “help to buy ISA” gives all those under 40 who are saving to buy a home a 25 per cent top-up on their savings (up to a maximum top-up of £3,000 on £12,000 savings). The Met should introduce a similar top-up scheme for its officers who are saving for a property in London, or inner London, at the same or more generous rate – perhaps 50 per cent, a genuine “match,” up to a certain ceiling. It would be additional to the Government scheme, which police officers could also use. For example, if it was introduced at the same top up rate as the Help to Buy ISA (25 per cent) but with a higher monthly contribution rate (£500), and all eligible new officers used it, it would cost the Met £7.5 million a year.

The Met should offer low-interest loans to its officers saving to buy a home

The add-on costs of house purchase (stamp duty, surveyor’s fees, legal and removal expenses) are particularly acute in London. The Met should offer low-cost loans, repayable over ten years, of up to £14,500 for new police officers to cover the costs of buying property in London, or inner London.

The Met should convert some of its buildings into police officer housing

The closure of front counters and entire police stations under the previous Mayor was achieved without noticeable difficulty or impact on the public, which almost never accesses police assistance via physical buildings. But the estate remains substantial: more than 6 million square feet, almost 400 separate sites, and 73 front

counters. In May 2015 the Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, floated the possibility of further reducing the number of Met sites from 400 to 100.

Further closures and consolidations should take place – not, as before, to provide income for the force from property sales, but to free the sites for conversion or redevelopment into officer housing. As Policy Exchange has previously recommended, confidential police contact points, replacing local front counters, should be established in the Tube’s disused and now surplus station ticket offices – much more accessible to the public than police stations. Custody suites should be consolidated and smaller ones closed. Back-office functions currently in inner London should be moved to outer London. Some police stations should be amalgamated with fire and ambulance stations.

Converting 25 per cent of the Met/MOPAC estate to housing would generate 3,350 one-bedroom properties, or 2,750 two-bedroom properties.

The homes should be sold to police officers at a discount, but on a restricted market.

Police officers in our interviews said that discounted ownership rather than tied-house rental would be more likely to incentivise them to live in London. However, it would not in our judgment be acceptable simply to transfer public assets – Met property – to private individuals at a discount and would, of course, only address the affordability problem for one set of officers. The properties should therefore be sold at a discount to the prevailing market value, but on the condition that they can only be sold on (at the same percentage discount) to other police officers, or to the Met/MOPAC. This would allow officers to benefit from rises in the market, but not deprive future police of the discount.

The new homes and the other elements of the incentive package should be varied according to an area’s crime rate.

To avoid the scheme simply incentivising officers to live in leafy suburbs within Greater London, the level of match funding, loans and home discounts available should be varied according to an area’s crime rate. Greater financial assistance and home discounts would be available for those who chose to live in areas with higher crime rates.

The entire package could be delivered for little net cost to the Met or taxpayers

The new homes would not need subsidy. They could be delivered at a discount to buyers because the Met/MOPAC already owns the land and property. The price paid by the buyer would cover the conversion or redevelopment cost. The help with moving and associated costs would be given in the form of loans which would be repaid, though there would be an upfront cost to the Met before the first repayments were made. The only element of the package with a significant net cost to taxpayers would be the “Met Match” scheme. If all eligible new officers took this up, we estimate that it would cost around £7.5 million a year but the cost would depend on the amount of monthly contributions the Met allowed police officers to make (£200 like the Help to Buy ISA or a higher rate, say £500) and the top-up rate the Met are willing to pay (25 per cent or 50 per cent).

Recommendations

We have grouped our recommendations under four main themes – first the measures the Metropolitan Police (Met) could introduce to incentivise police officers to live in London. Second, the approaches the Met could use to identify the parts of their estate that could be redeveloped. Third, the policies the Met could introduce to build genuine community policing. Fourth, the measures that could be used to assess the impact of these measures on the Met in terms of their operational effectiveness and the retention rate of their new police officers.

I. How to incentivise police officers to live in London

- The Met/MOPAC should provide ten year low interest loans to Met Police officers appointed since January 2014 to help meet the cost of the add-on fees to purchasing a property such as stamp duty and legal fees etc.
- A ‘Met Match’ scheme should be introduced where the Met/MOPAC will promise to pay a top-up on savings made by Met Police officers to use towards a deposit on a London home. This scheme will be restricted to police officers appointed after January 2014.
- The top-up rate applied in the ‘Met Match’ Scheme could be varied by the crime rate in the borough to which a police officer is moving, to incentivise officers to live in particular London boroughs. Each year the MPS Property Zone team could update its targeted London boroughs and the top-up rate to reflect the changes in the annual recorded crime rate statistics. Higher crime areas would receive a greater top-up.
- Property in the Met/MOPAC Police Estate identified as suitable for development should be put into a special purpose vehicle to be offered to developers, including members of the G15 group of housing associations and private for profit housebuilders to be converted into residential property.
- The Met/MOPAC should sell many of the newly developed properties to police officers at a discount to the market price. Each year the MPS Property Zone team would update its targeted London boroughs and could vary the discount rate for each borough to reflect the changes in the annual recorded crime rate statistics. Higher crime areas would receive a greater discount.
- The Met/MOPAC should include in the sale agreement for the discounted properties a provision to ensure police officers have to sell the property back at the same percentage discount to the market price to the Met or another police officer. The Met/MOPAC should apply a ‘buy-back’ guarantee to these properties.
- The interpretation of S106 requirements for affordable housing should be expanded to allow police housing to count towards meeting this requirement. If necessary, S106 should be amended by the Government to allow police housing to count towards meeting the affordable housing requirements. Many of the properties in the new developments should be earmarked for police officers and advertised to them on the Police intranet prior to being made available to the general public.

- The role of the MPS Property Zone should be expanded to make it into a one-stop-shop advising Met police officers on housing issues. It should be given a target to assist 3,000 police officers to live in London within five years (there are currently 31,000 Met police officers).
- The quality of the MPS Property Zone should be tested by hiring mystery shoppers to request information about housing opportunities to feed back any gaps in the service provided.
- The Met should publish an annual update on the number of police officers the MPS Property Zone team have interacted with and the number that subsequently purchased a London home.

2. How to identify the parts of the police estate that could be redeveloped

- The Met/MOPAC should close some of their police offices in inner-London locations and, where necessary, locate offices in outer-London locations, subject to an assessment of how much space is still needed.
- The Mayor of London should introduce a ‘rebuttable presumption’ in favour of amalgamating emergency service stations within one kilometre of each other. Where a valid objection to a merger is made the respective services should be required to provide an alternative proposal to release a similar amount of land.
- The Met/MOPAC should identify the utilisation stats for each police office and station and consider selling off the properties where the utilisation rate is lower than 50%.
- The Met/MOPAC should close custody suites with fifteen cells or less and use part of the savings to expand custody suites nearby where the two Custody Suites have forty cells or less between them, or, if necessary, use the savings to construct new custody suites.
- The Met/MOPAC should sell off the two sports facilities the GLA property database states they own and rent such facilities when required.

3. How to build genuine community policing

- The Met/MOPAC should remove Police front office counters (PFOCs) from police stations and create new ‘underground police points’ in the disused ticket office space in the London Underground. This should be trialled first in the areas where a PFOC is near to a London Underground station with vacant ticket office space, on a line set to introduce the 24/7 Night Tube Service, which has a high crime rate.
- The Met should produce a version of ‘the knowledge’, which is a test undertaken by London Taxi drivers that requires them to know all the streets in London and the best routes between any two places. The Met could adapt this test and require Police Officers to be tested on their borough after a specified period of service e.g. one year.
- The Met/MOPAC should identify the London boroughs with the lowest proportion of their borough estate made up of Safer Neighbourhood bases and sell off some of the police stations in these boroughs. They could then partner with other public sector bodies to replace this coverage by expanding the number of Safer Neighbourhood bases in the affected areas.
- The Met should map where the police officers in each annual intake live and use this to determine which areas of London under produce police officers to aid police recruitment.

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- The Met should update these maps on an annual basis to track if and when police officers move outside London and provide an ethnic breakdown of how many live in each London borough.

4. How to monitor the impact these measures have on the Metropolitan Police

- The Met should model how many police officers can be mobilised and rapidly deployed on London's streets in the event of a crisis and how this would be affected by having more police officers live in London.
- The Met should record the number of arrests and interventions made by Met Police officers off-duty separately and should publish this information. The Met should better support police officers that make arrests or intervene while off-duty.
- The Met should monitor the retention rate for the 5,000 police officers recruited since 2013 and begin to produce figures for the retention rate for each new annual intake of police officers. These figures should then be published annually, so different police cohorts' retention rates can be compared.
- The Met should publish a full itemised breakdown of the training costs for all new police officers and monitor and publish training costs for each new annual intake throughout these officers careers, to identify which points in the average police career incur higher training costs and what the lifetime cost of training the average police officer is.
- The Met should model the replacement cost to the Met of each new police recruit that leaves the Met in each year after they have joined. They should include in this analysis police pay and pension costs to find out when police officers are more expensive to retain.

Introduction

Between 2013 and 2016, the Met recruited 5,000 new police officers¹ to maintain its total officer count, which now stands at 31,000.² Any of these new officers that leaves the force in their first few years sets back the new Met police recruitment aim to create a more ethnically diverse, London resident police force, with higher educational qualifications, that understands London, which we will explore in chapter one.³ There are strong reasons to believe the new police officers may leave in greater numbers than their predecessors and that housing affordability will be a key reason for this. The Met along with other forces in the South-East of England, despite having a high retention rate, have consistently had: “more severe retention difficulties than forces in other regions”⁴ due to the lack of affordable housing. This report will define what the ‘housing crisis’ in London is, how it affects police retention, why this is important and what simple measures can address this problem. Increasing police pay and forcing police officers to live in London will be shown to be poor ways of addressing it.

What is the housing crisis?

Police officers are not homeless – they can rent property, but the majority of the police officers we interviewed expect to buy, and this means moving out of London. The ‘housing crisis’ is one of unmet expectations: “I have always thought of myself as some [one] who lived in London, grew up in London, will probably spend their whole life in London. The only thing is I do not know if I ever would be able to afford to live in London in a ... manner that I would feel comfortable living in”. Another interviewee said: “I would like to live in London. It is where I grew up. It is a cool city. It is exciting. It is where we work. But as things are now there is no way. I think I gave up a few years ago”. Most police officers knew they could not afford to purchase a London home: “So I have just accepted it. I think that a lot of people who have always lived in London, historically, are being priced out of London”. Buying in all but the poorest London boroughs is not an option, without inherited wealth, a high salary, or a rich partner and the overwhelming majority of police officers we interviewed wanted to buy a property. The Met have repeatedly stated that they want London to be policed by Londoners – this requires that officers are able to afford to live in London.

How does housing affordability affect the retention rate?

In 2004, the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate published a report entitled ‘Retention of police officers: A study of resignations and transfers in ten forces’. It found that the level of resignations in the police force was lower than the wider public sector. However, police officers that transferred had: “particular concerns about achieving a better quality of life”.⁵ For transferees from all police forces “housing was a particular issue”.⁶ The report found that: “Transferers’ choices about destination forces were based on personal reasons to

do with desirability and costs of the housing, judgements about the quality of life and, in some cases, personal ties with the area”.⁷ In terms of factors that would have helped keep them in their initial police force: “help with housing” was mentioned along with “improved pay” and “improved management and being made to feel valued”.⁸ The new police officers we interviewed, who currently live at home, or in rental accommodation stated that when they seek to buy, in a few years time, they will do so outside London because they believe London house prices to be too high – their concerns are grounded in fact as explained below.

Is London housing ‘unaffordable’ for new police officers?

In 2014, a report by estate agents Hampton International on housing affordability found that between 2007 and 2014 it had become more affordable to buy a house outside, but not inside, London since 2007.⁹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revealed that UK house prices have grown faster than both incomes and rents in recent years.¹⁰ In July 2014, the IMF stated that: “The UK housing recovery remains unbalanced. Demand is outpacing supply, particularly in the London market”.¹¹ In 2014, the European Commission urged the UK Government to: “deploy appropriate measures to respond to the rapid increases in property prices, notably in London”, including an increase in housing supply.¹² Focusing on the London market we can see that both London house prices and rents are fast outstripping the wages of police officers.

Are London house prices too high for police officers?

To assess whether a new police officer can afford to buy a property in London requires identifying the price of the average London property and comparing it to their wage, as a mortgage lender would. The Land Registry House Price Index on 1st June 2015 listed average house prices in each of the London boroughs; only three had average house prices below £300,000 (Bexley at £287,732, Barking & Dagenham at £274,173, and Newham at £295,306).¹³ By January 2016 in no London borough was the average house price below £300,000.¹⁴ The average house price in London in January 2016 was £530,000¹⁵ - almost 18x a new police officer’s annual wage (under £30k). Research by Lloyds Bank revealed that the ‘price to local earnings ratio’ in Greater London was 8.75.¹⁶ House prices in London increased from four times median earnings, in 1997, to ten times median earnings in 2014.¹⁷ KPMG estimates that first time buyers need to earn £77,000 to buy in London compared to £41,000 in the rest of the UK.¹⁸ The National Housing Federation Home Truths 2014/15 report ‘London: Broken Market, Broken Dreams’ suggests those looking to buy the average London property with a deposit of 20 per cent and taking a mortgage 3.5 times their salary would need to have an income of £108,500 to afford the average London property – just below 4x the salary of a new Police Officer.¹⁹

Are London rents too high for police officers?

This requires an assessment of how expensive rent in London is compared to both Police Officers’ take home pay and rents elsewhere in the UK. The London Valuation Office’s private rental market statistics, released in May 2015, showed that the median rent in England between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2015 was £600 per calendar month²⁰ but the median rent in London was £1,350.²¹ London rents are more than double the English average but Met officers’ wages

are not double those of other police forces. The Mayor's *Strategic Market Housing Assessment 2013* found the recent recession did not reduce the gap in rent costs between London and the rest of England. It stated: "average rents rose more quickly in London than in the rest of England both before and after the recent recession. For example, in August 2013, average rents in London were 5.3% above their June 2009 level, compared to 3.1% in the rest of England"²² and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) index of private sector rents found that average rents grew 4.1 per cent in London, compared to 1.9 per cent in England as a whole in the year to September 2015.²³ So, the gap is large and growing.

How are London politicians tackling this issue?

London politicians from all the major parties recognise the need to provide more affordable housing. Former Mayor of London Boris Johnson referred to the shortage of affordable housing in London as: "perhaps the gravest crisis the city faces".²⁴ He wanted: "Londoners to be able to live near where they work and to raise their families in our boroughs".²⁵ Former Deputy Mayor for Policing Stephen Greenhalgh, said: "increasingly, London is home to either the very rich or the poor. But what about everyone else? Many Londoners on middle incomes have to flee the city to find homes they can afford and then travel back long distances to work on crowded commuter trains. It's not good enough".²⁶ A former candidate for the Labour Party mayoral nomination, the Rt. Hon Dame Tessa Jowell, explained what the London housing "crisis" was: "When Londoners dedicating their careers to others – as nurses, teachers, council workers – face mammoth commutes because they cannot afford to live anywhere near the people they are paid to serve – that's a crisis".²⁷ Defeated Conservative candidate for London Mayor Zac Goldsmith MP proposed restricting the sale of houses built on public land to London residents to prevent foreign investors buying up these properties.²⁸ The new Mayor of London Sadiq Khan wrote that fixing the "housing crisis" was the "greatest challenge" for his generation and a solution was "the single biggest thing that Londoners' need from their next Mayor".²⁹

The new Mayor of London Sadiq Khan wants to prioritise the provision of more housing that is affordable to Londoners on average salaries – such as police officers. The Met do not control the overall housing supply within London but they do have an asset – their estate – they could use this to provide housing for more of their officers. They used to do this as explained below.

What housing support did the Met provide to their Police Officers in the past?

Prior to January 2014, all new Met Police officers had the option to have their housing arrangements subsidised by the Met – either directly or indirectly. This support can be divided into three different types of support – the provision of physical properties i.e. flats and houses, for free or at a subsidised rate, financial allowances to cover housing costs, and the train travel subsidy (the ATOC concession), which subsidised officers' access to cheaper housing outside London.

Between 1920 and 1994 police regulations stated that serving police officers would be entitled to free accommodation or a housing allowance.³⁰ Police housing has gradually been sold off from 1992 onwards.³¹ The Met under their Estate Strategy 2013-2016 committed to retaining only 200 residential units

– not enough to accommodate even one per cent of the approximately 31,000 police officers currently serving in the Met.³² Where an officer could live used to be at the discretion of senior officers, and Met Police officers were restricted to living within a certain distance from Charing Cross Station. Both of these requirements are no longer applied – the ATOC concession operates in a 70 mile radius around London, and the Met does not tell serving, ordinary police officers where to live. From 1 September 1994, new Met Police officers have not been entitled to either a housing allowance or free accommodation. Existing housing allowances were frozen but continued to be paid to officers employed pre 1994. However, providing little housing support was quickly recognised to cause problems.

In the early 2000's the Home Office recognised that: "some officers in the Metropolitan Police and in forces in the south east have experienced difficulties in finding affordable housing".³³ In 2003, then Home Office Minister in the then Labour Government the Rt. Hon. John Denham said: "While police salaries are determined nationally, house prices are not and I am aware that it is easier to buy houses in some parts of the country than others"³⁴ and he awarded funds to help three South-East England police forces to "discourage them [police officers] from seeking transfers to forces where costs of living are lower."³⁵ From 2001, the Met subsidised police officers to access cheaper housing outside London by negotiating a rail travel subsidy for police officers to live outside London (the ATOC Concession – referred to elsewhere in this document as ATOC). ATOC is separate to the Transport for London (TfL) concession, which allows Met Police officers to travel for free on the London Underground and remains in place.³⁶ As of January 2015 eighty per cent of eligible Met police officers were signed up to receive ATOC (23,000 out of 29,000).³⁷

As of 1st January 2014, new recruits to the Met have not received the ATOC rail travel concession on national rail services in London and the South-East of England. The end of ATOC for new police officers is important as it had been listed in the Met submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) January 2015 as one of two ways the Met: "have been able to respond to the higher costs of commuting (and housing)"³⁸ and the Met had stated that: "largely as a result of these additional arrangements [which included ATOC]" there was no need to increase the London pay differential for Metropolitan Police officers in 2015.³⁹ The Met recognised that ATOC is a "hidden pay supplements equivalent in gross earnings terms of between £3,000 -£7,000 per year" for those police officers that receive it. However, officers appointed after January 2014 do not receive ATOC, and, thereby, the issue of London housing costs is highly relevant for the (now lower-paid) new police officers.

Increasing Met Police pay will not solve this problem

In the early 2000's a Home Office spokesperson confirmed that: "Police homes are no longer required. The way forward now is to ensure that officers have enough money for housing from their salaries."⁴⁰ In 2015, the Met suggested that in the longer-term police pay should be increased within London by gradually reducing the pay package of police officers outside London.⁴¹ It justified this on the basis that the maximum pay rate for a police constable is 1/10th the price of an average London house.⁴² It said that: "longer term there will be an issue to address if we want officers in London to be part of the community we serve and

live in and participate in the life of the city”.⁴³ However, the pay increases necessary to make the average London home affordable seem unrealistic – taking the ten to one ratio of police officer pay down to five to one (already a higher ratio than many mortgage lenders will lend) would mean doubling police officer pay and committing to increase it by house price inflation for each subsequent year, which would be expensive.

Pay alone would be a poor way to encourage new police officers to live in London. Extra pay could be spent purchasing a larger property outside of London. It could finance a longer rail commute in to London, allowing police officers to live further from London. Also, pay increases would likely go to all police officers, in general, rather than just new police officers – a very expensive way of providing aid to new recruits. Met Police officers’ wages and allowances are already higher than those of serving police officers in other regions, because they receive London based pay supplements for working in London e.g. London weighting.⁴⁴ Also, many new police officers thought their pay was perfectly fair and was higher than some other public services: “We are still really lucky because my friends that work on the civil service grad scheme are on £24k. We are on £30k straight away and we do not have any trouble. It makes you think. We are really lucky”.

Why forcing all Met Police officers to live in London will not work

The Met could require serving police officers to live and work in London. Under the 2003 police regulations the Met can restrict where police officers live, but the Winsor Review, on police officer and staff remuneration, found this was rarely applied in practice. To enforce restrictions, the Met would have to establish a costly bureaucracy to track whether police officers live where they say they do. If we consider how this would work out, two possible negative scenarios are likely - either the rule is enforced and experienced officers are sacked because of where they reside, or it is not enforced and law enforcers become law-breakers. Compulsion does not make living in London any less expensive to the individuals affected. It imposes costs on them, and is likely to be resisted by their representative bodies. The majority of police officers we interviewed opposed any proposal to compel police officers to live in London.

The experience of the City of Boston in the United States shows why residency requirements are problematic. In 1993, a new Mayor was elected who implemented a new tougher residency law.⁴⁵ He increased municipal workers’ benefits but required them to live in Boston. A ‘compliance commission’ was created to enforce this.⁴⁶ The *City of Boston Municipal Code* specified that: “Upon taking employment with the City, and annually on February first thereafter, every person subject to this section shall file with his or her Department head, or like officer, a certificate, signed under the pains and penalties of perjury, stating his or her name, and place of residence”.⁴⁷ In July 2014, analysis by the *Boston Globe* newspaper of the payroll and property records of senior officers found that thirteen of the twenty-two top police officers lived outside the city.⁴⁸ Senior officials had listed their primary residence in the city, but lived outside Boston, having two properties, one within the city, and one outside.⁴⁹ Also, trade union officials have achieved an exception allowing police officers to move out of Boston after ten years of service for rank and file police officers.⁵⁰

Why building more houses on the police estate will not make police officers more able to buy them

The Met Police does not control the overall London housing supply but the surplus police estate could be used to provide more housing – as we will explore in chapter three. But, police officers will not be able to afford the new properties without help. The British Property Federation (BPF) in ‘who buys new homes in London and why?’ studied the purchase of new homes in London in 2013 and found that sixty-one per cent of new homes were purchased by investors compared to thirty-nine per cent by owner-occupiers.⁵¹ BPF also discovered that the average rent for a new build property in the 107 new London developments featured was £1,314 per month for a one bedroom property or £1677 per month for a two bedroom property.⁵² This rate is significantly higher than the rental rate charged by the Met in their remaining, housing stock which according to the MOPAC Residential Rent Review 2016 is 8.54 per cent below that charged on ‘key worker type accommodation’, which is itself lower than the market rate.⁵³ The 2015 MOPAC residential rent review found that: “current demand is outstripping supply and open market rents are considerably higher than current rents charged”.⁵⁴ The new build market rental rate is almost double the average rent paid by the police officers we interviewed (£700-£900).

Housing affordability is a key issue for new Met Police officers. Now we will explore why it is particularly important for the Met to retain the 5,000 Police Officers they have recruited since 2013 before we examine why addressing housing affordability is key to achieving this.

The New Police Recruitment Landscape

Key messages

- 1 The Met have recruited 5,000 new police officers between 2013 and 2016. They have focused on recruiting Londoners with language skills and graduate degrees. This represents a significant investment by the Met and a high retention rate among new officers is needed to recover this investment.
- 2 Traditionally, the Met have had no problem recruiting additional police officers and little problem retaining them. However, a new police cohort with greater skills and lower pay may not act the same as previous ones.
- 3 Many of the new police officers could leave policing or transfer to police forces outside London due to high housing costs. Research on previous transferees suggests that high housing costs have been a key factor in previous transfers out of the Met and this new generation of police officers does not receive any housing subsidy.
- 4 Neither the residency requirement, nor the cessation of the ATOC concession for new police recruits make it more affordable for them to live in London, the Met might need to provide some positive incentives for police officers to remain in London.
- 5 Policy Exchange interviewed seventy-four Met Police officers to examine if these concerns were legitimate and to test how to address them, in a way popular with police officers.
- 6 The Met should monitor the retention rate for the 5,000 police officers recruited since 2013 and publish annual figures for the retention rate for each new annual intake of officers so we can compare the rate for different police cohorts.
- 7 The Met should publish a full itemised breakdown of the training and recruitment costs for each new annual intake of police officers for each year of their career and monitor this to identify at what points in an average officer's career training costs are higher and what the average lifetime training cost is.
- 8 The Met should model the replacement cost of each new police recruit that leaves the Met in each year after they have joined and should include in this analysis police pay and pension costs to identify at what point police officers are less expensive to replace than to retain.

In this chapter we will explain why housing support schemes should be targeted towards retaining new police officers specifically rather than police officers in general. The Met have attempted to recruit a new type of police officer, and their efforts to change the force require that they retain these new police officers.

The aims of the new Met recruitment policy

The Met want to recruit more graduates, to increase the number of ethnic minority police officers and to boost the numbers of officers resident in London. They have introduced a graduate development programme⁵⁵ and incubated 'Police Now', a social enterprise created to promote a police career to graduates.⁵⁶ They have established a language requirement in Met recruitment that expects police

officers to know one of 25 languages other than English.⁵⁷ They created a residency requirement so that from 1st August 2014 all new Met recruits have to have lived in London for three of the six years prior to joining the Met.⁵⁸ They proposed the introduction of affirmative action to boost ethnic minority recruitment, a proposal that was, rightly, rejected because race-based discrimination is illegal.⁵⁹ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) highlights that: "The force [the Met] has a recruitment policy which is designed to make the workforce more representative of the community it serves".⁶⁰ The Met Director of Human Resources, Robin Wilkinson specifies: "We want people who are used to working in this diverse culture. This is part of a broader ambition to get the Met looking and feeling like London, to have London policed by Londoners".⁶¹

Met Police efforts to increase the number of ethnic minorities in the force have had some success - between June and August 2015 the number of BME recruits to the Met more than doubled from 12 per cent to 26 per cent compared to the same quarter in 2014.⁶² However, an increasingly ethnically diverse London continues to be policed by a largely white-British Met police force that commutes in to police the city. The 2011 census revealed that London had become a minority-majority city, with white-Britons now constituting 44.9 per cent of the City population.⁶³ In contrast, in March 2015, 88.2 per cent of Met Police officers were white.⁶⁴ The new residency requirement for police recruits boosts the number of police officers resident in London and the ethnic diversity of the force because it restricts recruitment to London, a city with a more ethnically diverse population than the counties that surround it.⁶⁵ In 2013, Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Simon Byrne considered outsourcing police recruitment because he feared that the Met would lose the opportunity to change the ethnic makeup of new recruits and be "swamped by applications from our relatives".⁶⁶

The current situation with Metropolitan Police recruitment and retention

The Met does not have a problem recruiting additional police officers. For example, in 2014/15 the Met needed to recruit 3,141 police officers.⁶⁷ The Met target was for 8,000 expressions of interest but they expected to receive 12,000 in 2014/15.⁶⁸ The Met describes how: "This high rate of interest has also been matched by a high quality of candidates" with forty per cent of those expressing interest having a first degree or higher qualification.⁶⁹ The Met recruits more consistently than the smaller county forces because it is a larger force, and the Met provide a greater range of specialisms than the county police forces – so they have had little problem with recruitment, with the exception of the recruitment of ethnic minority police officers, which is lower than they would wish.

The Met also has a high retention rate across the entire Met Police Force – just 160 FTE police officers leave each month – eleven hundred of the nineteen hundred police officers who leave each year do so involuntarily due to retirement or dismissal – so only 2.5 per cent of the Met leave out of choice each year and a third of these transfer to another police force.⁷⁰ The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) estimate a median turnover rate of eleven per cent across the labour market, other public sector professions such as teaching and the NHS have turnover rates of between eight and ten per cent per annum.⁷¹ So, having a lower retention rate across the whole Met would not automatically be a problem but - it depends who is leaving.

More of the new police officers could leave

Changing the Met means keeping the new police officers the Met have recently recruited. As young, highly educated, ethnically diverse and less well paid officers leave the Met Police the overall force becomes older, higher paid and, whiter, comprised of police officers with fewer higher level qualifications – this is not what the Met say they want. Below we consider why new police officers may leave and the problems with this.

First, a recruitment policy designed to attract officers with different skills and a different outlook is likely to recruit a greater number of individuals who find the career does not match their expectations. A greater number of the new police officers have no prior knowledge of policing. Officers from policing families, or who have served with the police in other capacities e.g. as a police special, or a police and community support officer (PCSO), will know more about what the job entails. Recruiting a new and different type of police officer makes it difficult to predict their retention rate. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), now named the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), in a submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), wrote: “retention levels remain good, but there are small signs that voluntary resignations have increased”.⁷²

Second, Policing is now a less financially attractive option due to recent workforce reforms. Younger police officers starting pay is not high and it is unlikely to be increased (it is £22,443 plus £6,663 in allowances).⁷³ Police officers recruited after ATOC was abolished for new recruits are, effectively, paid around £5,000 less. Police pensions have been reduced - the pension age increased from 55 to 60 and the scheme is now a career average rather than a final salary scheme.⁷⁴ ACPO, now the NPCC, in their PRRB Submission highlighted that retention levels “will need to be monitored as further changes to pay and pensions are introduced”.⁷⁵ They write that: “traditionally forces have been able to predict wastage levels with reasonable accuracy” but ACPO cited the pension changes and “any changes to retention levels” as “likely to make that more difficult in the future”.⁷⁶

Third, a police force with more skills and particularly more transferable skills is likely to be more mobile. ACPO, now the NPCC, referenced the increase in police officer skills as a potential threat to police retention: “as officers become highly skilled in sought after specialisms (such as cyber related crime) ... then retention might be more difficult for police officer roles as well.”⁷⁷ This concern was voiced by a few of the police interviewees: “We have a fraud squad, Operation Falcon, and their policy is they will not give them [police officers] financial investigators courses, because the minute they do, they’re normally gone within a year”, the interviewee added: “they still have the skills and the ability to investigate that calibre of crime but they are not getting the actual qualification and the courses to back it up”. These remarks have not been verified but they indicate a possible tension between having more skilled police officers and the police retention rate.

Some members of the Police Now scheme implied there may be a lower retention rate among the new police officers: “it is slightly different for us being on this specific scheme [Police Now] rather than being... going through the like usual route because possibly some of us will have just not necessarily thought that much beyond the two years. Personally speaking I have not really thought about what I would do afterwards. Maybe we would feel a bit freer to go do something different afterwards”. To monitor this, the Met should begin to publish the retention rate for each new annual intake of police officers so the retention rate for different police

cohorts can be compared. The replacement cost of each new police recruit that leaves the Met in each year after they have joined should be modelled. Currently, there is no retention rate figure for the new police officers as a cohort distinct to the figure for the Met Police Force as a whole.

Why would it be a problem if the retention rate among new Police Officers dropped?

The drive to change the ethnic and educational makeup of the Met Police Force relies on retaining the new more highly educated and ethnically diverse police officers. If new officers leave at a greater rate, early on in the careers, it will take longer for the overall ethnic composition of the Met to change in the way the UK Government and the Met leadership aim. The ethnic diversity of London and the number of graduates living in London are both increasing – so, the Met are trying to reach a moving target on both indicators. The white-British component of the London population fell by 14.9 percentage points between the 2001 census and 2011 census.⁷⁸ The Met figure of 40 per cent of new potential police recruits (those who expressed an interest) having a graduate degree or higher qualification compares with the fact that, in July 2013, only 4,727 Metropolitan Police officers had a degree i.e. less than one in six of the overall Met Police force⁷⁹ and that in inner-London over 60 per cent of the working age population have degrees.⁸⁰

Second, losing new Police recruits will change the composition of the Met workforce – the average Met police officer will become older and more expensive because cheaper new police officers will be leaving at a greater rate. A new officer will receive a wage of £22,443 plus London Weighting of £6,663 but they progress up the pay scale based on year's service to reach the top rate of £37,254 plus London allowances.⁸¹ Every police officer at the top end of the pay scale costs the same as at least 1.65 police officers at the bottom end in wage costs, excluding pension costs and the London allowances. When older police officers leave the new officers that replace them are on a lower salary, but when a young police officer leaves their replacement will be paid a similar wage, so the Met will have the negatives of an officer leaving, such as the training and recruitment costs and the disruption to the force, without the positives, such as lower pay costs.

Third, the Met will want to achieve a return on their investment in training these police officers. Unfortunately, it has been very difficult to determine the level of Met investment in new police recruits because the Met's data on the cost of training and recruitment is poor - information was not collected that allowed average training costs to be estimated for each year of a Met police officer's career or to produce an estimate of the lifetime training cost. The Met could provide the cost of training a single police officer for their initial thirteen weeks of training – £2,157 per officer, which did not include accommodation, recruitment/vetting costs, or uniform provision. In a January 2015 response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request for the cost of training new regular constables per PC, and per annum, the Met specified a total figure of £2,348 for externally recruited PCs, which would imply that after the costs for the 13 week training course, the entire other training costs in a police officers' first year amounts to less than £200 – which is highly unlikely.⁸²

Clearly, some police officers will choose to train in specialist skills, but the Met should be able to estimate the cost of training an officer involved in community policing for each year of their policing career. They could then estimate the potential

costs they would face if there were a lower retention rate among the new cohort. Other police forces within England and Wales have been able to provide figures on the cost of police officer basic training.⁸³ As recently as 2010/11, the Met could provide an estimate for the total cost of police training (contained below). We have used these figures to estimate the overall training cost per new Met Police officer.

- In 2010/11 the cost of training a Met Police Officer at Hendon Police Training College for a 95-day course followed by three further five-day interventions during their probationary course was estimated to be £16,694.⁸⁴
- The Times Newspaper cites a figure of £120 million to train the 4,817 recruits taken on in the year ending March 31st 2015⁸⁵ – a cost of £25,000 to train a single applicant.⁸⁶

If we subtract the current cost of the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing (around £1,000) from the known figure for police training given by the Met Police in 2010/11, then the assumed cost for the two years of training a new police constable is now £15,694 for external Police recruits i.e. those that have not served as a special constable or PCSO prior to becoming a police officer. Alternatively, we could use the £25,000 figure for police training provided by the Times. Depending on which figure you use, for police officers' two year probationary period, assuming police wages of around £60,000 over the two years, police training would amount to an added cost of between 26 and 42 per cent of a new officer's basic wage and allowances, excluding pension contributions. So, the training costs for new officers form a high proportion of their total cost during their probation period. Once recruits are trained, the cost declines as their wages are initially low. Police officers' pay progression is based on a pay scale linked to year's service rather than productivity. Without changes to how police pay is calculated the Met has an incentive to invest more in retaining new police officers rather than older officers who are paid more to do the same job.

The Met already recognises the need to retain new recruits to recover the cost of investment in recruitment and training when they recruit PCSOs and police staff who are not British or European Economic Area nationals who: "must have a visa entitlement to live and work in the UK for a period of time sufficient to recoup the recruitment and training costs for the role".⁸⁷ Police staff must have 1.5 years left to run on their visa, and PCSOs must have at least 2.5 years left to run on their visa, at the point of application.⁸⁸ The greater number of years reflects the fact that PCSOs cost more to train than police staff. Police officers will cost the same or more to train than PCSOs so the Met needs to retain them for at least, but probably more than, 2.5 years to recoup training costs.

Fourth, if new police officers leave it will affect the operational effectiveness of the Met because police officers that are not fully trained cannot be deployed on the same basis as other police officers. Only in stage 4 of their training will new police recruits be given "Independent Patrol Status"⁸⁹ and prior to this a police officer will, in stage three of police training, be sent out on coached patrol with experienced officers. Given the two-year training period before a police recruit becomes confirmed as a police officer there is a delay before a recruit will patrol alone and become a fully functioning and deployable police resource. In his *Review of Police Leadership and Training*, Peter Neyroud specified that:

"In a probationer's first year, the officer carries out relatively little duty in the face of the public other than as part of their training. The current recruitment and

probation process therefore means that a substantial number of the police officers newly employed by the force are not available for duty because they are in core training”.⁹⁰

During this period experienced police officers will devote part of their time to training the new police recruits. Having police officers that are not fully trained and cannot be deployed alone is a training cost that is, often, not included in the estimates of the training cost. The five thousand officers recruited since 2013 are either in their initial probationary period (two years) or have just recently qualified – would seem to constitute around 16 per cent of the total number of the 31,000 Met police officers. However, new police officers are a much larger proportion of the police officers on patrol. The number of officers with less than two years’ experience in the job who are on patrol in London Boroughs increased from 1,706 to 5,005 in the last three years – which the Evening Standard estimate to be one third of the total.⁹¹ Joanne McCartney, Labour chairwoman of the London Assembly police and crime committee believes that the high ratio of inexperienced police officers on patrol may be a factor in the decline in the Met arrest rate from 24 per cent to 19 per cent in 2015.⁹² The number of supervisory sergeants in the Met has declined by half in the five years prior to 2015.⁹³

How much does it cost to recruit an additional Met Police officer?

Recruitment costs will increase if the retention rate falls because the Met will need to recruit a greater number of police officers. The Met were asked to provide a recruitment cost per additional police officer but they did not provide a separate figure. However, we can see that in 2007, the Met estimated that the cost of advertising and marketing for each additional PCSO was £1,300.⁹⁴ PCSOs will not be more expensive to recruit than police officers and the Met has since introduced a requirement to verify where police recruits live, which will add to this cost. Between 2010 and 2015 government funding to the police declined by around a quarter; applying this reduction to the recruitment cost produces a figure of just under £1,000. The cost of recruiting an additional police officer would seem to be somewhere between £1,000 and £1300. Adding this to the £15,694 training costs gives a combined training and recruitment cost of around £17,000 for every new police officer that completes their probation.

How much would it cost the Met if the retention rate matched that of other public services?

If the new Met Police cohort replicated the drop out rate in other public sector professions of between eight and ten per cent turnover each year this would suggest that between four hundred and five hundred new police recruits of the five thousand new recruits would drop out. Replacing these police officers would cost between £6.8 million to £8.5 million, assuming the £17,000 recruitment and training cost. If the higher £25,000 training cost were used then the cost of replacing these police officers would be between £10 million and £12.5 million. Factoring in the existing turnover rate of 2.5 per cent (125 of the new police officers) this means a net additional factor of between 275 and 375 additional Police Officers dropping out each year. The additional cost to the Met would be between £4.7 million (if we assume 275 extra police drop out and the £17,000 cost is used) and just under £9.4 million (if we assume 375 extra Police drop out

and use the £25,000 figure). In addition, there would be the disruption of police operations as police officers leave, an increase in police overtime costs to cover for these police officers, and a likely increase in the proportion of the Met not fully operational at any one time, as they would be in training.

What do Police Officers want?

Policy Exchange interviewed seventy-four police officers in the Met including both new police recruits and experienced officers to understand how important the issue of housing affordability in London is and how it will affect police retention. We asked them what services they thought the Met should provide and what they knew of the services the Met did provide. We asked for their thoughts on what would incentivise them to live in London and whether they would consider living in the communities they served. Our analysis of our interviewees' responses is contained below.

Key messages

- 1 The Met should promote living in London more aggressively to its police officers and provide housing support options tailored to them, and not merely direct officers to general housing support schemes for key workers or middle income Londoners.
- 2 The temporary increase in London resident police officers will not last because police officers recruited since 2013 will move out of London in a few years without support to help them remain. They could also transfer to other police forces or leave the police altogether.
- 3 The Met can influence police officers who want to live in London, but are prevented from doing so because of housing affordability issues. However, police officers who want to move out of London for other reasons should not be compelled to live in London.
- 4 The old style of police housing embodied by the section houses and blocs of police flats is no longer relevant and is not wanted by younger police officers or senior police officers. A new model involving financial incentives and regulated sales is preferable.
- 5 The Met should encourage police officers to live near where they police but not exactly where they police to reduce any security concerns officers may have.

What was the most popular option among new recruits?

The most popular option among police officers was the retention of ATOC in its current form and its extension to new police officers. Policing is a conservative profession with a small 'c' and ATOC is a benefit that exists and is paid to other police officers. Many of the new police recruits wanted a restoration of ATOC to access cheaper housing outside London – this conflicts with the Met's stated aim of having London policed by Londoners, which is why we have not recommended it.

How did the Met aim to have more police officers live in London affect police officers' views on housing support?

The Met does not provide significant housing support for new police officers, and new officers believed the Met would not, because of the constrained financial situation the Met faces: "they are gonna have to make all these savings. So can they really start to ... will they be thinking, oh, what we are going to do in the future is

we are going to help recruits find some place to live. I do not think they are going to do that". There was no expectation that the Met would provide physical housing because most other employers do not. In this the Met are not unique, research by YouGov revealed that the majority of London employers surveyed (74 per cent) provided their employees with no specific assistance towards mortgage/rent costs.⁹⁵ But, the majority of employers would not have a preference for where their employees lived and the Met do.

Linked to the belief of police officers that: "it is not the responsibility of the Met to support our housing, it is not the responsibility of the Met to tell us where to live either". Many interviewees questioned why this housing support had to be linked to living in London: "I do not think that you should be required to live in one of the London boroughs ... you should be able to live within a certain maybe radius or whatever ... I mean people live the other side of London, it takes them two hours or something to get to work". Of course, providing support to help police officers to live outside London would not fulfil the Met aim to have them live in London.

The new recruits favoured financial assistance rather than the provision of physical housing but there were doubts about the type of help that would be provided. These were linked to the price of housing in London: "I am just thinking of that figure in my head of £80,000. I do not care how much support you give someone the maths do not seem to work". The group that were persuadable mostly asked which option would be most financially attractive.

If the Met is serious about its stated desire to have London policed by Londoners then the police officers interviewed wanted assistance because: if "they turn round and say 'We want you to live closer to London or in London' well if you want us to live closer to London, or in London, you need to help us out because our wages do not reflect the current housing market". Many of the measures to encourage London residency involved restrictions, like the residency rule, or have seen support recently removed, such as the changes to ATOC. The police officers we interviewed wanted positive support to be provided.

There was an undercurrent of resentment towards being expected to live in London without any help being provided: "My bitterness comes because they want to manage us to all live in London despite the fact that none of the existing police officers already do. So they have taken away the ATOC scheme and our Police Now programme aside all other police officers have to have lived in a London borough for three of the last six years. That is going to be unsustainable once they all start leaving home because although it is a reasonable salary ... living within ... London on that salary is going to be very difficult". Key to encouraging police officers to live in London is to make it easier for them to find and buy London properties that suit their needs.

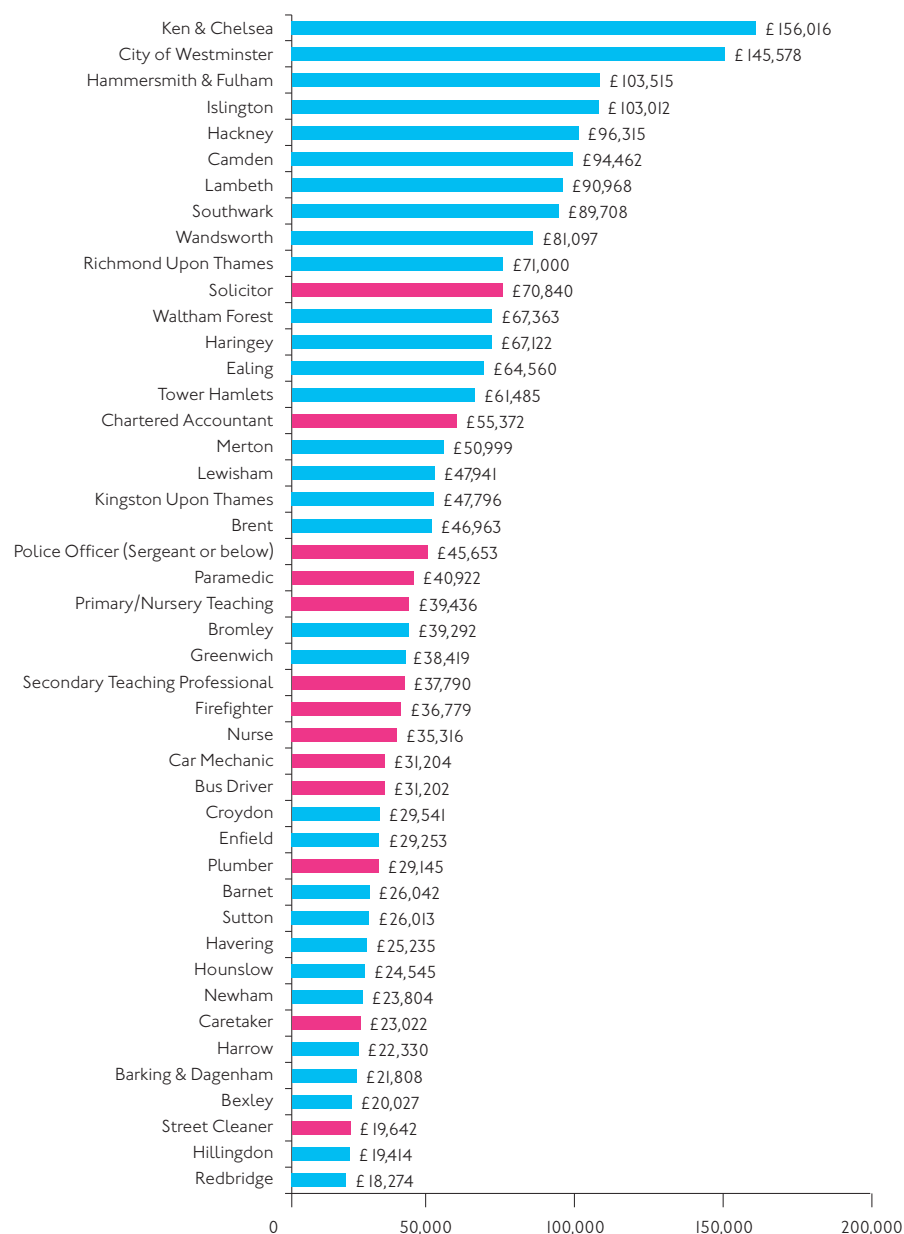
Are the housing schemes in London making housing 'affordable' for Met Police officers?

In April 2014, Darren Johnson, Green Party London Assembly Member, conducted an analysis of properties available on the First Steps initiative.⁹⁶ London Assembly Member Darren Johnson found that the average minimum income requirement of properties listed on First Steps, where one was stated, was £38,452 on average.⁹⁷ The then entry-level police officer wage was £28,836.⁹⁸ In November 2014, the National Housing Federation compared the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings with Land Registry house price data. It found that

in seventeen London boroughs in the previous year, the average house increased in value by a sum greater than the salary it said was that of the average for a police officer at the rank of sergeant or below (£45,653).⁹⁹ It should be noted that the 'average' salary featured is over £15,000 more, a fifty per cent increase, on the wage of a new police officer – the data is displayed in the chart below.¹⁰⁰

Yearly increase in house price / Salary

The Met are aware this problem is not unique to them:



But, why should Met police officers expect to receive special support for their housing costs? Many police officers thought that the problem was the affordability of London in general and they wanted more housing to be built. Some worried that providing more affordable housing to police officers might limit the amount available to low income households: "[It] would in a way be taking away accommodation from people that need it most. Even though we are not on the best wage, we are a hell of a lot better off than most people round London who are working on zero hour contracts and things like that, so I would maybe have a bit

of an issue, a social... conscience issue if housing association houses became like police housing and it just made it harder for single mothers with children to try and get housing". This assumes there is a fixed amount of housing that can be provided in London, which is untrue, but it highlights the supply problems in the current market.

The interviewees knew their concerns about housing affordability were shared by many middle-income Londoners: "London is the issue. The issue is that London is too expensive for everyone basically who are not rolling in it in the City. That is the problem". So, some officers thought: "a better option would be that it is not really fair if just police officers have got that. Surely they should just employ someone to do a bit more lobbying to sort the Government out, sort out the housing in London". Many police officers preferred a solution for Londoners in general, but this is not within the authority of the Met to provide. Others thought that a variety of 'key workers' including firefighters, teachers, doctors and nurses could receive housing help. The measures we outline here could be replicated by other public services but we would advise against the extension of support to all 'key-workers'. These schemes privilege public sector workers in general over equally essential workers in the private sector.

New police officers view their residence in London as temporary:

The majority of young police officers interviewed lived in London, but they were mostly in their twenties or early thirties and most of them aspired to own property outside London. They would tolerate cheaper shared accommodation in poorer or high crime areas during their youth but this would change when they settled down and had a family: "I am single, no kids, but if I wanted a family I could not have it in my flat. I would have to move out of London, and I would. I would have no other option. I have looked into that with previous girlfriends etc. I could not buy a three-bed house in London on my wage". Recruiting London resident police officers does not mean they will remain in London and so any increase in London resident officers may be temporary.

Police officers are not unique in moving out of London in their middle age

The majority of Met Police officers live outside London and they are not unique in this respect. An ITV News/ComRes Poll, in March 2013, found that four in ten Londoners consider leaving London because of the cost of living there, increasing to 47 per cent among the 18-34 year old age group in central London.¹⁰¹ ONS data shows that many act on these instincts. The internal movement between local authority areas show that in the twelve months prior to June 2013, there was a net outflow of 55,000 from the city; 197,000 internal migrants moved into London but 252,000 moved out.¹⁰² From age 30, more internal migrants move out of London rather than move in from the wider UK - this peaks at age 36 for males and 34 for females.¹⁰³ London's overall population continues to grow due to births exceeding deaths and international migration to London from outside the UK. The ONS believe that housing costs could be a: "key factor for people in their 30s and 40s who move out of London".¹⁰⁴

Middle-income families have, increasingly, responded by moving out of London. In March 2014, the Lloyds Bank commuter towns' survey identified the price difference between the property prices in commuter towns with those in

London Zones 1 and 2.²⁶⁸ The average property price in London zones 1 and 2 was £641,000. The average property saving was £276,000 10-22 minutes travelling time away, £358,000 25-40 minutes away and £380,000 45-70 minutes away. The average cost of a rail season ticket for each was £2,000, £3,700 and £5,000 respectively. Moving out of London enables individuals to afford their first home, or a larger home during the age bracket when people have children. Research by a former candidate for the Labour Mayoral nomination, the Rt Hon. Baroness Tessa Jowell, suggested London workers would be better off living in Madrid and commuting to London Liverpool Street via Stansted Airport than renting a one bedroom flat in Camden and commuting by the London Underground. Her estimate included rent, council tax and travel costs.¹⁰⁵

How does this affect the Met aim to have London policed by Londoners?

Former Police Federation Chairman Peter Smyth has said that police officers living outside of London “do so out of economic necessity – most officers cannot afford to buy a reasonable property in London”.¹⁰⁶ He argued: “When I joined the Met, it was one of the biggest landlords in London with thousands of properties for officers to live in – either police houses, flats or section houses. They have nearly all been sold, forcing officers to buy or rent accommodation where they can. It is therefore a bit rich to criticise them for doing just that.”¹⁰⁷ Interviewees from Police Now were asked how housing affordability would affect whether they stay in the Met and they said:

- “I think the police is the career for me. I would like to be in here for thirty years. I am from west London. I love the city. I love to work here. But the only thing is I cannot afford to live anywhere near here. I have already got a child. I cannot sit in a one bed and pay £1,000 a month to live here Longer term I think I would probably have to leave the Met and then hopefully probably move out to Hertfordshire or Thames Valley or somewhere like that”.
- “The problem is and this has been mentioned before . . . is the cost of housing . . . if you want to stay in the Met and you want to work in the central boroughs then either you are going to have a place bought for you, you are going to have some pretty big inheritance coming your way or you are going to have to be helped out somehow”.
- “Living on a police wage in London, it would not be sustainable for me to stay here for ever. Not that I would not want to, but I just know that I am not going to be able to afford a house or a flat, so it is just not sustainable. So I think at some point I will move out and hope to join, if I’m still interested in the police, which I hope I will be, the forces outside”.

One issue the interviewees raised that is unique to police officers is that they are prevented from having a second job: “the police are specifically told you cannot use your skillset outside” of the police. This means that if a police officer wants to make more money out of the skills they have, to be able to afford to buy in London, they either need to be rapidly promoted or to leave the Met.

How did those police officers that did own manage to buy?

Those who had managed to buy a flat had done so through family inheritance, or very particular circumstances. For example, one interviewee said: “the only reason we have been able to buy is because my boyfriend went to Afghanistan twice and

got pay-out twice, and that is the only reason we have been able to". Another interviewee said: "my parents actually lent me the money to buy my own flat. I am now paying them £1,050 a month repayment for this loan and renting out the spare bedroom to a mate of mine so the rent I get from him more or less covers what I am paying back to my parents". This also applied to some interviewees who were considering accessing Government housing support programmes. One interviewee said that her friend was trying to persuade her to do a shared ownership scheme because her friend had received £10,000 in inheritance: "So, obviously, that is only doable because she has had that money". Housing expectations were not extravagant – new police officers wanted to own a one or two bedroom flat.

Police officers, who wanted to buy a property but were renting in London, were considering having a buy-to-let outside London while they continued to rent in the city: "Me and my partner we think we might buy in his home town in Bath. We could probably get a house there on the outskirts, or in Bristol, and do it as a buy-to-let". Another interviewee said: "I do not really mind whether I am buying to let or whether I'm buying to live there, so I am quite flexible on that." These arrangements are understandable, but they distort the housing market outside London. These police officers were not seeking to become buy-to-let landlords – it was just the only way to have a stake in property.

What services do the Met provide?

The MPS 'Property Zone Portal' provides serving police officers with help finding housing. It should be a one stop shop for housing services for police officers, as is provided in American cities such as; Atlanta, Washington, Detroit and New Haven, but it is not.¹⁰⁸ It is a section of the Met's intranet service that contains limited housing advice. The Met is working with the G15 of London housing associations to assist officers accessing London rental property. MOPAC has promised to: "work with registered providers to establish links" that would point police officers to: "options for affordable housing close to their place of work"¹⁰⁹, and has agreed, in principle, a partnership with Soho Housing Association to prioritise police officers in new housing developments. Similar agreements are being discussed with Peabody for Camden and Islington. The MOPAC/Peabody Housing Pilot Scheme has fifteen properties for police officers at an affordable rent. In addition, in December 2014, the Met began to offer a rental deposit interest-free loan limited to one month's salary.¹¹⁰ These schemes promote renting in London to police officers, but the Met recognise that they are "only on a small scale" and they are "exploring opportunities to expand it where possible".¹¹¹

The *MOPAC/MPS Estate Strategy 2013-16* commits to retaining two hundred residential properties to provide accommodation, as necessary. There is also 'section housing', which is short-term accommodation similar to a hall of residence, provided to a limited number of police officers. Section housing had always been a temporary option, but it used to be one of many housing options provided by the Met. One older police officer said: "when I was living in the section house during the first third of my career...more permanent police housing was for married couples. I knew no more on the subject than that, so I did not know you could actually ascertain one if you were single to be honest". It was not possible to stay, indefinitely, in section housing: "I lived at the section house for ages, about a year when I first came here, and they are quick to tell you, "We need you out at the end of the 12 months," but do not offer any place to go unless you

specifically ask for it". So, the Met no longer provides long-stay accommodation to new police officers and the rental support and links to wider housing options in London provided are, they acknowledge, limited.

How aware were the interviewees of the housing related services the Met provide?

Very few of the interviewees had any awareness of the housing help the Met does provide. Clearly, many police officers had not looked – interviewees made comments such as the following: "No I do not think... do they do advice?" When police officers did have some interaction with the MPS Property Zone it was limited: "I was showed that by a colleague very, very briefly but it was not something that we talked about during training. I do not think that anybody that I trained with knows about it." In terms of the 'key-worker' schemes available many interviewees agreed that: "it is very slim pickings" and "when I looked it up online, and they do offer properties that are called intermediate rent properties, and they are in the region of £1,000 a month, which does not sound intermediate to me at all".

One of the problems is that the services provided are through the Met's intranet service, and as one interviewee observed: "You cannot access it from home and we were not yet officers at that point". Another stated: "So I got supplied with a list of about sixteen different providers, individuals' names, schemes that are supposedly ongoing but you had to do a bit of Googling, it was not very well put together, so I searched and searched and just exhausted every possibility, which did not result in anything". The MPS Property Zone service was: "very much signposting where to find information rather than a bit more supported help in finding some". These are police officers who want to live in London and the help provided to them to do so has been poor.

Most police officers knew that section houses existed but they were viewed as poor quality accommodation, that was not that cheap and a short-term option for people in need. There was some awareness of the Peabody scheme: "I know that Peabody Housing are quite big in London, I've heard this through friends of friends, that if they have three or four police officers go to them and say, 'We would like to stay somewhere' they slightly bump you up the queue to get a Peabody flat". Again, the knowledge of the Peabody scheme was very limited and it provides only 15 properties – not enough to house the 5,000 new police officers recruited since 2013.

What kind of housing support do the police officers think the Met should provide?

Most interviewees expected simple low cost measures to be undertaken such as: "Something that I thought they could have done better is that we were told in March what our boroughs were going to be and so then you had a bit of an idea where you wanted to go and live". The benefits for police officers would be that: "you can start looking into what the main issues are and start making contacts with who your supervisors are going to be". Basically, police officers wanted the Met to consider where they lived when deploying them and to give them sufficient notice.

New police recruits on the Police Now scheme had a Facebook group which some used to organise flat shares: "people were asking questions on there about if there is any help finding accommodation, if there is any landlords that we should use or should not use. And it all seemed very perfunctory – the information that

was given to us. It was not actually tailored to actually helping us. It was very much oh there is some information on the intranet that you can look up”. For police officers in the wider Met no attempt was made to match officers that wanted to live in London: “there is not a lot of information on that within the Met. I have tried to look for it and it just does not seem very easy. Simple things like facilities to help find other officers looking for properties would be really useful in my situation right now.” Linking police officers seeking accommodation in London is something the Met could easily facilitate.

Are existing housing support schemes tailored to the unique needs of Met police officers?

The MPS Property Zone often refers police officers to ‘key worker’ and affordable housing schemes in the capital such as the Mayor’s First Steps housing programme because no programme to help police officers, specifically, to buy in London exists. police officers receive no specific priority in the First Steps scheme (which is open to Londoners based on their income level). Individuals can buy a part equity share of a property, sharing ownership with a Housing Association and pay rent on the share they do not own.¹¹² These schemes link people with properties near where they live or work and many police officers did not want to live in new developments in the boroughs in which they served, because they might have to arrest their neighbours.

Where did the police officers in the wider force live and why?

The majority of Met police officers live outside London and commute in to the capital. In 2013, former London Mayor Boris Johnson revealed in answer to a question from Green Party London Assembly Member Jenny Jones that 15,319 police officers lived in London and only 1,126 lived in the borough they worked in (around half of Met police officers lived outside London).¹¹³ We found that some police officers were living very far from London: “some [Met police officers] live in the south of France because they work 14 days on in a row, so they work 14 days in a row and then they go home for the remaining two weeks of the month”. One experienced officer said: “11 years ago we sold and moved to Cornwall, which is where I live at the moment. I do not commute daily”. She did compressed hours and had a London flat.

In 2010, Chairman of the (now defunct) Metropolitan Police Authority, Kit Malthouse, observed that: “police officers now, certainly Metropolitan Police officers, often want to live in police ghettos, villages in Surrey and Hertfordshire, which are disproportionately over-populated with police officers because they like to live together”.¹¹⁴ One interviewee said: “Hertfordshire is a bit of a Police conclave” and this was echoed by many of the interviewees, who also lived there. The reasons were varied, one said: “if you earn a similar wage all your other colleagues earn a similar wage, you’re going to gravitate towards a similar geographical area where the house prices are roughly the same”. Others noted the good commuting links in to London and a different pace of life in those communities: “There are a lot of police officers [that] live in Hemel because it is on the commuter route [and]...you have a real good commuter route”. Another suggested it may be due to how Police allowances were structured: “it transpired that that was where paid the most amount of housing allowance, because different areas were zoned at that time”.

Do police officers want different types of housing at different stages of their lives?

Many new police officers had not made their first independent housing choices or they were in temporary accommodation e.g. they lived with their parents, some rented with friends or colleagues: “we live in North London. Five bed house. I have a brother but he moved out ages ago. I just cannot really see the point of moving out. I can stay at home, save and then move out when I have enough money to move out”. This was even the case for some who already had kids: “I am married and have a kid. But I am still living in my family home. We have a loft conversion so we pretty much just live up there”. They accepted cramped accommodation: “what I and my housemate have done is something that is quite common, which is where one of you lives in the lounge. It is like a London thing. So we have a one bed flat, which is a two bed”.

The majority of interviewees who specified a monthly rental amount said a figure between £700 and £900 plus bills. The take home pay of a police officer on £30,000 would be £1,957 after income tax and national insurance, but before pension contributions, meaning that rent and bills consume between over a third and under a half of their post tax income. When asked about their housing expectations and plans interviewees said these could change: “the sort of housing we might take in this position maybe just you and your partner would be very different to what you would be looking for in twenty years time and with London you may know that actually that three/four bedroom house you might want in twenty years time. You will never get anyway”. So, the housing options offered by the Met will need to adapt to officers’ changing needs.

London was ok for the next few years but most new police officers wanted to leave after that: “Obviously I would like to own, but in London I have almost given up on that dream really. I can see myself living in London for the next ten years probably, so maybe if I do go down that route I might do like [X’s] done and get a place. People go to the Home Counties ... where it is a bit cheaper. Milton Keynes is fairly reasonable”. Many of the younger interviewees would consider living in most areas of London, for example, one interviewee said: “I think Stratford is the perfect example; it is not particularly the nicest area in London; however, there are some very nice places to live within Stratford”. However, they realised that it would not be affordable and so they will move away.

Should the Met expand the number of section houses available for police officers?

Section houses are blocks of flats owned by the Met, which are provided to serving police officers. They are one of the few remaining housing options within the force. In times of need the section house was a stop-gap measure e.g. police officers that had divorced or that had transferred to the Met from other forces might live there: “especially people that started off up north, transferred down, for the first year or two might live in police housing, before they get to know colleagues etc. and move in with them”. For another interviewee: “it was easier for me just to live in there [in the section house] while we were in the process of buying a house and it was all going through”. So, section housing was a good short-term option for young police officers and those needing temporary accommodation but it was not applicable for police officers with families.

Section houses were viewed as poor quality accommodation by the police officers interviewed: “They are quite grotty. Not ... cheap, but you get what you

pay for. Dingy, damp, not very well maintained". The accommodation compared poorly with accommodation provided to other public servants e.g. the armed forces: "they [armed forces properties] were a better standard than police ones". A former section house resident said: "It was great value at the time. It suited me down to the ground .., starting off my career, young, I did not have any roots, did not have any family so it was perfect for me really, very cheap, very affordable. The standard of the housing was, it was enough, it was not great but it was enough". Many believed section houses: "were for single people really" and they were: "perhaps just a short-term fix, nothing for the long-term there".

We floated the idea of an expanded number of section houses being created, which received a mixed response. In essence, it came down to whether the interviewees liked the idea of living with other police officers: "It is a little difficult 'cause obviously you work so much and then you live with two hundred police officers, it is very police orientated my life at the moment so it is quite difficult to find a balance". The benefit was that other police officers understood the demands of the job: "you can kind of like let your guard down with them when you get home". Some thought that other police officers would be considerate in how they acted in the shared property because they understood the demands of the job: "You are not going to come back at 10.00 on a Friday and you know you have got to be at work on the Saturday and they are going to be having a party". Because shift patterns might differ it was unlikely that police officers who shared would see each other as much: "I live with a police officer and he is on the course as well and we just do not see each other".

Other police officers recognised the potential pitfalls of living with other police officers, such as finding time to relax: "I think there is a risk in this job though and it is called the 'job' and you get a lot of people who talk about the job all the time. They live it when they work it and if you go home and you are with 'job' people as well, in inverted commas, when do you decompress outside of the police?" Many Police Now graduates thought that section housing would be ok during the initial training stage but not after this: "I would have done it for the six weeks [initial training] but I would not want something like that now. I think operationally it would be quite dangerous anyway". Having police officers in a single identifiable police house would, they believed, be a terrorist target. There was hostility to replicating any form of police housing that resembled a student dorm, and to any compulsion to live in this accommodation.

Police officers that liked section houses liked the low rent: "100%, move straight in. If it was cheaper, say if it was like 400 or less, I would be straight in there" but "apparently it is quite dated. I have not seen one to be honest, but from what I have heard it is quite dated now, the building and so on". This would allow them to save and have more disposable income because: "I have got hardly any money really at the end of it and I cannot save. I have not saved anything so far. I know I have only been here a little while but that is not really how I want to spend my life".

The unique nature of the people that police officers have to deal with

The police deal with some pretty unpleasant and often amoral people: "there are people who obviously have no respect for police, have absolutely no respect for any authority whatsoever and who will think nothing of scratching your car, putting shit through your letterbox, you know, whatever it might be and honestly I do not

think people should have to put up with that and I think that is what would happen if people were living where they policed". Simple tasks of everyday life would be more difficult. For example: "hanging your shirts on the line outside in the summer, you have got to think [about the] neighbours". Police officers wanted to live in areas where the level of anti-social behaviour and crime was not high.

Police officers see the worst aspects of life in the city. In their leisure time many wanted a complete break from the problems of London. They were worried about bumping into people they had arrested or otherwise dealt with in their police work. One interviewee said: "I felt too much on top of other people, some of whom would take offence to the fact that I was a police officer". This was not entirely about housing affordability, important though this issue was. Clearly, the Met will find it difficult to encourage police officers that left London for reasons other than housing affordability to return to London, so it should not seek to influence them to do so.

Fundamentally, police officers do not want to be on duty 24/7; they need to be able to relax: "we have got an oath to deal with things but at the same time we cannot always be working, and if you were in an area where there is a lot of things that go on, you are going to have to deal with it, so you are naturally going to gravitate towards [living in] an area where you are a) safe and b) less likely to [have to deal with an offence that has been committed]".

Are police officers encouraged to police when they are off-duty?

Technically police officers are always on-duty, but in practice the Met did not encourage them to intervene when they were off-duty: "they [the Met] do not encourage you to show out very much now and purely for the higher security risk I think across the country". Security considerations remained a priority for the majority of police officers of all ages: "We have had a notice sent out because people on my borough have received death threats sent to them from 192, the directory". Police officers were not encouraged to publicise their occupation: "We are told specifically with the time that we are in now, to keep it under wraps unless necessary ... social media be very, very careful, obviously do not have loud conversations on tubes, buses, only produce your warrant card if absolutely necessary". So police officers would tell close friends and family but not other people. Some officers also observed that off-duty members of the force would not have the backup or the necessary equipment to safely arrest people.

Do these police officers object to living where they police, nearby or just in London itself?

Police forces around the world are advised against living in the exact areas they police. For example, in April 2013, Deputy Commissioner Paul Browne of the New York Police Department (NYPD) issued a statement, on NYPD policy towards where Police were deployed, which read:

"The NYPD assigns personnel based on the needs of the department, but it tries to accommodate officers' preferences that often reflect a desire to make their commutes as short as possible. However, the department has a prohibition against officers residing within the same precinct to which they are assigned in order to avoid potential conflicts if called upon to take enforcement action against neighbo[u]rs or others they may know personally".¹¹⁵

Our interviewees had little objection to living near to where they worked provided it was not *exactly* where they worked: “you would be crazy to live specifically in the area that you police, because there is a lot of talk of safety and things like that, and I can imagine it could get quite difficult if you were to encounter someone and they recognised you. So I think a close distance is perfect”. Another stated: “*closer* to where you work but not where you work I think is probably the sweet spot” and one suggested: “I do not mind living somewhere rough that is not where I police”. The distance police officers felt they needed to be away from where they worked varied: “I would have no problem with living in the same borough. I would not want to live in the same ward”.

In May 2016, Sian Berry a Green Party Member of the London Assembly highlighted data showing that in 2016 a minority of Met police officers lived in London (49 per cent). In inner London Boroughs the number of police officers that lived in the Borough was very low with only two in Kensington and Chelsea and four in Southwark.

Police officers could afford to live in areas of London with cheaper housing but these areas also tended to have a high crime rate and interviewees did not want to live in these areas: “if I was to get statistics of all the boroughs with the lowest crime, that is what I would consider decent areas, and that is literally, as ignorant as that sounds, that is what I would hope for”. Another interviewee said: “I would not want to live in somewhere that is a borough that is up and coming as such or pretty run down”. When designing housing options for police officers it was important to consider that: “We [the police] deal with horrible people and I would not want any of them to know where I lived or who my friends were.”

Are ethnic minority police officers more likely to live in London?

Evidence from America suggests that ethnic minority police officers are more likely to live in the city they serve. However, we do not know how the ethnic composition of the Met affects the number of police officers that live in London because the Met have not released an ethnic split of where Met police officers live.

Analysis conducted in the United States found that a greater number of police officers lived outside the city they served than was the case in London - sixty per cent of police officers live outside the City they serve in the seventy-five U.S. cities with the largest police forces.¹¹⁶ They also found a big racial divide within the U.S. statistics. Forty-nine per cent of black police officers and forty-seven per cent of Hispanic police officers live in the cities they serve. Only thirty-five per cent of white police officers do.¹¹⁷ This data is known because the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Census Bureau collect data on the racial composition of government workers in American cities.¹¹⁸

The Met should record where new police officers live and use this data to identify if there are differences in the parts of London police officers of different ethnicities choose to live. We could then see if the residency requirement has a lasting impact on the period that police officers live in London for. Given that ethnic minority officers are more likely to have family resident in London, a police housing scheme may be an attractive way of retaining these officers.

What did the police officers think of the residency requirement?

Many police officers understood the reasons why the Met were trying to get more officers to live in London: “I do understand their point that the Met are also trying to increase the BME [black, minority and ethnic] aspect of the police, to make it less male, pale and stale, but if you’re going to have ATOC, you want to get people from the home counties commuting in, and it comes up home counties occupation police force, rather than one actually drawn from London”. One interviewee stated: “We do not really reflect London, which is quite a young population and quite ethnically diverse, and that is what the Met are also focusing on. They want to represent London and reflect back what London is”.

Some interviewees lived just outside London and felt it was unfair, one said: “I remember when they brought it out I was literally gutted because all I ever wanted to do was work for the Met, but luckily I was police staff so I still would have got in because I worked for them. But effectively I would have had to apply for Kent police I guess, but they were not recruiting... I literally live five minutes from an outer borough of London” and because her nan lived in London she: “even considered saying I lived with my nan”. Residency requirements encourage recruits to lie about where they live.

Do the different recruitment aims of the Met conflict?

Many police officers asked how the met could want the best recruits when they restricted their recruitment to the inhabitants of London and prohibited people from outside London applying. “I mean eighty per cent of this cohort would not be here under the residency requirement. That is a stat we were told the other day [this has not been verified]. I firmly believe the police should recruit on merit and if they are excluding everyone outside of London that is potentially a huge talent pool”. The Met were excluding the best applicants: “people who go to Oxford and Cambridge, Durham, Warwick, Nottingham, all the other Russell Group universities who are outside London, are very unlikely to qualify for it, and so you are basically saying, ‘No sorry!’ So it truly must diminish quality of people”, which did not make sense.

But there was some sympathy for the residency requirement among Londoners who wanted to police London: “I mentioned that I did the Certificate in Knowledge of Policing earlier. This was before the residency requirement came in a couple of years ago. I was the only person from London on it. They came from absolutely everywhere to do the scheme to join the Met and everyone I spoke to said I am gonna do a couple of years and I am gonna leave”. So, why could they not join their local police force and not: “then deprive someone from London that wants to serve their own community”. Another interviewee believed that when big events occurred there was a value in having London resident police officers: “I know obviously the news is there but I do feel like being in the city. Like say when all the riots were...if you were in the city at the time, which I was not...I still think you would feel different about it or you would have some kind of knowledge about it”.

Could there be an increase in the number of police officers transferring to other police forces?

Many new police officers were considering this option: “you weigh up the cost because I’m never going to be able to save money here [in London], or a substantial amount of money, whereas if I move back to Manchester it is much more likely that

I could perhaps have a higher standard of living and a better place to live”. This was related to the fact that police officer salaries were not hugely different across the country and police qualifications are transferable so: “if you have a certain set of skills you can go around the country, and the Met’s the best place to really acquire those skills, because the Met has the most money and the big specialist departments”.

Without authoritative figures on the cost of training in different police forces it is unclear if it is more or less expensive to train new police officers in London. What is clear is that every police officer that trains in the Met and then transfers to another police force represents an economic loss to the Met. However, any increase in turnover will not occur immediately: “After a few years I’ll probably end up moving back home to Leicester and see if I can join the forces there, just because, without crossing over too much, you cannot really afford to buy somewhere here on the salary. I would not like to think that I am just renting for my whole life really”. It is difficult to predict at what point new police officers might begin to leave in greater numbers.

What factors affected police officers’ decisions on whether to transfer?

The view of new police officers on whether a transfer to a county police force would be beneficial was mixed. Quality of life would improve as police officers could buy a bigger property and the cost of living would be lower: “that is why I said I probably would not stay after two years because I need to make money to buy a house. So ... I cannot actually see it happening”. Others argued that some of the county police forces might provide housing support already: “some of the smaller county forces still have police houses so I think you are going to be like, “Oh the Met does not provide that, well such and such a force does. Why do you not provide that?”” However, the Met retained its attractions as a force with a broader range of opportunities than county forces.

Some police officers had joined the Met rather than their county force because the Met was consistently recruiting and so: “I think there is a lot more that you can [do] in the Met that you cannot in the county forces”. There was a perception that: “it is a unique police force in the UK ... you have got West Midlands and you have got Greater Manchester as well, which could be comparable, but the MET is so large”. So there was: “a lot more opportunity within the Met, certainly than some of the smaller forces. I think they play on that, they advertise that [a] lot to draw people in, like there is a lot of different things you can actually do compared to elsewhere”.

So, the Met wants more of its police officers to live in London, as they believe this will influence how they police, but it does not advise that they live where they police. The Met admits that the existing housing related services it provides are insufficient and is looking to expand them. New Met Police recruits viewed housing affordability as one of the few issues that might cause them to leave the Met, along with the issue of promotion opportunities and the ability to transfer to specialist departments. New Police officers did not expect the Met to provide housing support unless the Met wanted them to live in London and most thought they would soon move out of London. They viewed the existing housing options provided by the Met to be inadequate. The Met cannot solve the housing affordability crisis for all Londoners, but they have an asset – the police estate in London – that could be used to expand housing supply and to ensure police officers can access these properties. We will now explore how much potential there is to do this.

The Police Estate in London

The Met want to retain the new more ethnically diverse, educated, London resident and cheaper police officers they have just recruited. We have explored how housing affordability is a key part of retaining the new police officers recruited since 2013. However, to do this the Met need to identify the parts of their estate they could develop to provide this support; we outline this below. We will explore why the announcements on police funding make it possible to develop the police estate with a more long-term approach.

Recommendations

- 1 The Met/MOPAC should remove the police front office counters (PFOCs) from police stations and create new 'Underground police points'. This should be trialled first in the areas where a PFOC is located near to a London Underground station with vacant ticket office space, on a line set to introduce the night tube service, in an area that has a higher crime rate.
- 2 The Met/MOPAC should close custody suites with fifteen cells or less and use part of the savings to expand custody suites nearby where the two custody suites have forty cells or less between them, and, where necessary, use the savings to construct new custody suites to provide enhanced coverage.
- 3 The Met/MOPAC should close some of their police office space in inner-London locations and, where necessary, locate additional office space in outer-London locations subject to an assessment of how much space is still needed.
- 4 The Met/MOPAC should identify the utilisation stats for each police office and police station and consider selling off the properties where the utilisation rate is lower than 50%.
- 5 The Met/MOPAC should introduce a 'rebuttable presumption' in favour of amalgamating police, fire and ambulance stations within one kilometre of each other. Where a valid objection to a merger is made the respective services should be required to provide an alternative proposal to release a similar amount of land.
- 6 The Met/MOPAC should identify the London boroughs with the lowest proportion of their borough estate made up of Safer Neighbourhood bases, sell off some of the police stations in these boroughs and partner with other public sector bodies to replace this coverage by expanding the number of Safer Neighbourhood bases in these boroughs.
- 7 The Met/MOPAC should sell off the two sports facilities they own and rent these facilities if required.

The new police funding environment

In the Autumn Spending Review 2015 the UK Government pledged to protect police spending "in real terms over the Spending Review period".¹¹⁹ However, there is still some uncertainty about the funding situation because the exact allocation of funding between the different police forces in England and Wales is still to be determined. The new police funding formula for 2016/17 has been delayed by twelve months, due to a Home Office error in calculating the

different allocations.¹²⁰ The implications for the Met Police are uncertain – they were initially predicted to lose £184 million in funding¹²¹ but under the revised projections would now lose around £3 million.¹²² What is clear is that the overall police budget will not fall as much as expected and the £800 million in spending reductions that Met Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe predicted will not occur.

Clearly, the Met is now under less pressure to make budget savings. But, the funding announcements are not an excuse to end the process of police reform. Public services are under an obligation to secure best value in their use of taxpayers' money and public assets. The Met have sold a significant number of properties in the last three years - the MPS Estate Strategy 2013-2016 sought to reduce the running cost of the estate by 35 per cent by 2016/17 (to £140 million per annum)¹²³ and to reduce the property utilised by the Met by 300,000 square metres by 2015/16, from 955,948 square metres in 2013.¹²⁴ In 2013/14, 91 buildings were vacated and sold.¹²⁵ The Met is seeking to increase the use of the remaining estate by 30 per cent¹²⁶ and has promised to “sell all surplus buildings”¹²⁷ and use the capital receipts to enhance the remaining estate. The Met Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan Howe believes there is capacity to reduce the estate further, and in May 2015 floated the idea of reducing it from four hundred sites to one hundred sites.¹²⁸

The benefits this provides to the Met

The benefit of the new funding situation is that the Met can now rationalise the police estate to achieve long-term value. They do not need to sell assets quickly, to secure short-term capital returns, to smooth the reduction in their funding. Every pound spent maintaining buildings that are underutilised, poorly situated or expensive to maintain is a pound not spent on frontline policing, so the Met should prioritise achieving savings in its estate to re-invest surplus funds in frontline Policing. A December 2014 update on the police estate rationalisation found that: “Recent developments have necessitated the need to look at the accommodation requirements of specific teams again” and “studies are underway to model whether the existing MOPAC estate can meet these requirements or whether third party accommodation is needed”.¹²⁹ This indicates that the Met are also looking again at how they use their estate and are willing to consider new proposals. To do this effectively the Met needs to determine what it wants to achieve from its estate.

What should the Met seek to achieve from their estate?

We have identified the following four broad aims below:

1. Modern facilities in the places needed to prevent and respond to crime with the greatest efficiency.
2. Low running costs to allow greater investment in the uniformed police officers that prevent crime and less in maintaining the estate.
3. An estate flexible enough to adapt to challenges as crime patterns change and technology enables a greater range of tasks to be performed remotely.
4. A demonstrated presence within communities that helps to retain and enhance public confidence in the police.

How large is the Metropolitan Police estate?

It is important to recognise that even after the significant reduction in the MOPAC physical estate, conducted under the estate plan for 2013-16, it remains extensive:

- The Metropolitan Police website currently values the police estate at £1.2 Billion¹³⁰ and says it occupies 6 million square feet or less than 600,000 square metres of space (557,000 square metres).
- However, adding together the square metre building areas of all the properties listed in the GLA Property database as Metropolitan Police property assets produces a figure of over 670,000 square metres.
- Our estimate of the total size of the police estate is likely to be an underestimate for the following reasons:
- We have used the internal building area for each property listed and not the site area because this is the figure for which we have the most data - for ninety-one per cent of the properties listed on the GLA property database the building area size is given. In contrast only a third of the properties listed on the GLA database as not; 'in development' or 'subject to disposal' listed the site area.
- Also, for nine per cent of the total police estate no building size or site area above zero was entered – these buildings size will have to occupy a space greater than zero so they will increase the overall size of the estate but because the information is not provided these properties have not been included in our calculations.
- We have not included any assets marked 'in development' or 'subject to disposal' – there were four such sites listed on the GLA property database and they comprise around a third of the police estate or 300,000 square metres. They include the Westminster headquarters of the Met and part of the Peel Training Centre at Hendon.
- Since we conducted our valuation of the police estate the price per square metre has increased in 31 of the 32 London Boroughs, according to the Halifax price per square metre figures for 2016. Kensington & Chelsea was the only London Borough in which prices have fallen, and this was by one per cent.²⁷⁰

How much is the police estate worth and what is its potential?

- The total police estate listed on the GLA property database amounts to **over 670,000 square metres**.
- The value of the entire police estate if it were converted into residential property would be just **over £4 Billion** if it could be sold for the value per square metre of residential development, in each London borough the police properties are situated in.
- If the entire estate was converted into residential development it could house **at least 5,800 people**, if it replicated the population density of the London boroughs the police buildings are in.
- If the police estate were redeveloped in its entirety at a population density matching that of the London borough with the highest population density - Islington – **it could house 10,000 people**.
- If the Met/MOPAC converted just 25 per cent of their estate into residential property it could allow for the construction of over **3,350 one bedroom properties, or just over 2,750 two bedroom properties**. If they converted 40 per cent then either 5,380 one bedroom properties or just over 4,400 two bedroom properties could be built'

The Met do not provide an itemised public valuation of their estate, but they do list the square metres of their individual buildings on the GLA property database. To estimate the value we multiplied the figure for the size of each building by the estimated value of residential property per square metre in the respective London borough as determined by the Halifax Bank. This provides an estimate of the potential value for each building if it were redeveloped as residential property. We then added together the total combined size of all police buildings for which a building area was given for each London borough to provide a combined borough police estate footprint. We converted each borough's combined police footprint from square metres into hectares. We then divided the sum for each borough by the population density for the borough. This created a figure for how many people the Police estate in each London borough could accommodate.

It should be stressed that the estimates here are based on the value of the buildings as redeveloped residential property. The final value would depend on what the Met could secure in a negotiation with any developer, with whom they would need to split this value. However, the value per square metre of the estate will increase while the estate is developed, and the estate is also larger than the estimates here because the sites for which no site or building area is listed in the GLA database – around 9 per cent of the number of properties listed – are not included in our estimate. For the majority of police properties, which are less than 500 square metres, it may not be practical to redevelop them so the assumed alternative arrangement for these surplus properties would be their sale.

Using a similar method the Met should undertake a thorough budgetary assessment of their estate and apply a full commercial valuation to each property they own and assess if they would continue to occupy it under these conditions. They should ask how much of their existing freehold property they would retain if they were forced to rent it. If they had to buy these properties now, would they do so? The budget and accounting procedures of the Met should be altered to recognise the opportunity cost of each premise they own and to apply a notional rental charge to each property. At a central government level the problem of the departmental bias in favour of retaining underused property assets is being partly solved by centralising departmental assets and charging each department a commercial rent on the freehold assets they own, which will come into operation by March 2017.¹³¹ This helps pressure every department to make a value for money assessment of every property they occupy. To undertake this assessment of the police estate the Met will need to identify the type of properties they currently own, and their potential and then develop criteria to assess the effectiveness of their existing estate. We do this below.

What is the freehold/leasehold split in the existing police estate?

The Met has a stated preference for operating from freehold properties over leasehold properties, on the basis that it helps to: “reduce [the] direct revenue costs of running the estate and to enable greater flexibility in the long term”.¹³² However, our analysis of the police estate shows that:

- Almost sixty-five per cent of the actual properties in the estate are leasehold properties and only thirty-two per cent are freehold, the remainder are either long leasehold or private finance initiative buildings.

But, when you compare the actual size of the properties themselves the freehold/leasehold split is reversed. The freehold properties are less numerous, but

they are also much larger than the more numerous leasehold properties. Of course, both leasehold and long leasehold (LLH) properties can still be sold, even if there may be restrictions on what they can be converted into, but freehold properties are easier to develop as there is no separate owner of the freehold.

The freehold Met Police estate comprises:

- Almost sixty-eight per cent of the square metres listed compared to just nineteen per cent for the properties that were leasehold; the remainder were either long leasehold or private finance initiative properties.

Is much of the police estate comprised of small properties that are difficult to sell/redevelop?

We heard that much of the police estate was comprised of smaller properties that are less marketable. It is true that many police properties are small in size - fifty-three per cent of the properties are less than 500 hundred square metres in size compared to 38 per cent that are over 500 square metres in size. The remainder had no size above zero entered. However, while there are lots of small properties, the majority of the area occupied by police buildings is in properties that are over five hundred square metres:

- Almost sixty-eight per cent of the total area of the police estate was in freehold properties in excess of 500 square metres – few freehold properties were less than 500 square metres.
- Around 455,000 square metres of space is currently occupied by police properties that are freehold and over 500 square metres.

How should the Met identify surplus properties on their estate?

So, which properties are in the three hundred surplus properties referred to by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner? The answer is that this is not clear. Three hundred and eighty-one Metropolitan Police properties were listed as assets on the GLA property database when we conducted this analysis. Of these, only two were listed as ‘subject to disposal’, two were ‘in development’ and three hundred and seventy-seven were listed as ‘operational’. The definition of what qualifies as ‘operational’ is vague – the Met describe it as “any site used for operational purposes” (a tautology). The definition of ‘operational purposes’ is a building that has a police presence and/or an MPS IT security system that requires certain security arrangements to be in place. Because virtually every site is listed as ‘operational’ the term has little value - almost ninety-nine per cent of Met properties listed on the GLA property database are listed as operational²⁶⁹.

Of course, properties are removed from the database as they are sold so operational sites will always constitute the majority. However, given that all sites that have been sold were once ‘operational’ it is clear that ‘operational’ sites can be reclassified and redeveloped. For example, in 2015-16, the Met Police were budgeting to make £196 million from the sale of property assets and this estimate included operational assets.¹³³ The MOPAC/MPS *Estate Strategy 2013/16* recognises that: “all buildings in the estate are potentially underused”.¹³⁴ However, the Met do not provide the public with the utilisation rates for each of their properties – though they collect this information. With the exception of maintenance costs, the main cost, to the Met, of their current estate, is the opportunity cost it represents – this is the value that could be unlocked if many of these properties were sold or rented out to raise revenue – and this cost does not appear on the Met balance sheet. Below we outline the criteria the Met should use to identify their surplus properties.

Seven ideas the Met could use to decide what properties to release for sale or redevelopment:

1. *The Met/MOPAC should remove the police front office counters (PFOCs) from police stations and create new 'Underground police points'. This should be trialled first in the areas where a PFOC is located near to a London Underground station with vacant ticket office space, on a line set to introduce the night tube service, in an area that has a higher crime rate.*

It is possible to split the police estate by the functions its different component parts fulfil. If you consider the police station it will, often, contain - a front counter, interview rooms, some office space, an evidence collection store, a custody suite and, perhaps, some car parking. From these assets we can ascertain that there are four main functions of the police estate. It has a role:

1. As a forum for interaction with the public and victims of crime, providing them with information about police services and collecting intelligence from the public e.g. the front counter or the police contact point.
2. As a place to manage and process offenders e.g. the custody suites and interview rooms.
3. As a base from which police officers can operate and perform the bureaucratic tasks that are a feature of their job e.g. office space and meeting rooms, and to acquire the skills necessary to perform these roles e.g. training facilities.
4. To provide technical specialisms geared to maintain and deploy the equipment that the police rely on e.g. wireless stations, stables, workshops, laboratories, and to organise the deployment of police in response to incidents i.e. control rooms.

Focusing on the first of these roles - the police front counter, it is not fit for purpose. Victims, witnesses and offenders are dealt with from the same facility despite the fact that ordinary members of the public, and victims, do not want to mix with offenders. The current estate strategy commits to providing victims with separate points of access to each building but they are still entering the same building.¹³⁵ Between 2006/07 and 2011/12 crime reporting at front counters fell by 45 per cent¹³⁶ as reporting migrated online, and the Met now allow the public to book in a time for a police officer to visit a victim's home to take a statement. Only eleven per cent of visits to the front counter are to report a crime.¹³⁷ The police have responded to the decline in crime reporting at front counters by closing them - the number of police front counters was reduced from one hundred and thirty six to seventy-three between 2013 and 2016.¹³⁸

However, the police recognise that they need to maintain a visible base in communities. Contact points were developed as a new way of interacting with the public- this is where a police officer arranges to meet members of the public for a limited number of hours, on set days of the week, in public places such as libraries, coffee shops and supermarkets. It is difficult for the public to raise sensitive issues at these meetings, and in some areas they have been poorly attended.¹³⁹ However, the idea of going where the public are to engage them is the right one. The police could close some of their front counters within police stations and move them into the now vacated London Underground ticket offices. This would conform to the aim of the *GLA Consolidated Budget and Component Budgets 2013-14* which

described MOPACs challenge to the MPS to: “improve public access to the MPS by co-locating front counters in hospitals, fire stations, council housing estate offices, libraries, supermarkets and other appropriate locations”.¹⁴⁰ In Boosting London’s Frontline Policing the Capital City Foundation at Policy Exchange recommend that between ten to fifteen London Underground ticket offices be selected to trial Police Points. Both Contact Points and new Police Front Counters would be part of this trial. If successful this idea could be rolled out across London.

The costs of these new police points in London Underground stations could be shared with other public sector organisations that need a base from which to interact with the public. The ticket office space is a small and clearly identifiable public site that is now vacant and they are spread across locations throughout London. The Met have committed to having at least one 24/7 front counter in each London borough. Working from new ‘police points’ located at TfL stations operating 24/7 services the average commuter on the London Underground would also see them twice daily on their commute to and from work – helping provide this reassurance function at low cost. Jurisdictional issues with the British Transport Police could be resolved as incidents relevant to the work of the former could be referred. Also, it should be recognised that the jurisdiction of the British Transport Police has not been a factor in the operation of ATOC, which is partially justified by the security function Met Police Officers on commuter trains provide.

The Met Police should model taking the seventy-three front counters they currently operate out of their police stations and establishing new ‘police points’ in the vacated ticket office space in the London Underground stations. To achieve this we recommend prioritising moving the 24/7 police front counters into the ticket office space of stations on the new 24 hour night tube service - this would provide an added reassurance function to late night travellers.¹⁴¹ Clearly, these ticket offices will need to be refurbished to make them more appropriate for this task and more open to the public and so the pilots will be useful in establishing the total cost of this.

2. *The Met/MOPAC should close custody suites with fifteen cells or less and use part of the savings to expand custody suites nearby where the two custody suites have forty cells or less between them and, where necessary, use the savings to construct new custody suites to provide enhanced coverage.*

Next, the custody suites are usually attached to a police station. A wide geographic spread of custody suites minimises the time police officers spend transporting suspected offenders to these holding facilities. Suspects’ possessions will be logged on arrival at the custody suite so basic evidence storage facilities need to be located in the same premises and interview rooms will be needed to get statements from the alleged offender. The question in this area is whether the Met needs forty-two separate custody suites with between seven and forty cells each. The Met could commit to closing custody suites with few cells and replacing them with larger facilities.

Operationally the need for smaller custody suites is declining as the use of street bail is increasing - under this provision the Police can ask suspects to return to attend the custody suite at a specified time and this helps to manage the flow at custody suites.¹⁴² If an offender is asked to attend a custody suite later they can also be asked to attend a suite that is not close to the scene of the offence because the alleged offender would be travelling to the suite on their own time: “yeah, street bail, we are doing that a lot more these days, so shop lifting and minor offences where they admit

the offence on the scene, we just summons them to court straight away and that saves custody time. It did help a fair bit". Also, the Met should model whether they could adopt the policy applied by Lincolnshire Police where G4S operate a 'street-to-suite' service that collects alleged offenders from police on the beat and takes them to the custody suite, which has saved 1850 hours of police time.¹⁴³

How would the closure of the smaller custody suites affect the number of cells available?

The *MOPAC/MPS Estates Strategy 2013-16* commits to providing 950 cells.¹⁴⁴ It recognises that: "within the custody estate – many buildings with smaller costly custody units remain open only because of the custody facilities provided. The remainder of the building may no longer be usable or efficient for alternative uses and as such the existing custody suite is inefficient to run".¹⁴⁵ In fact, the GLA property database lists only two Met properties whose primary purpose is to serve as custody centres. The custody suites operated by the Met as of January 2016 are listed in the appendix; this list contains three sites which have 'Custody' in their designated property name.

The MPS estate strategy commits to consider the replacement of custody suites with fewer than fifteen cells with modern facilities with up to forty cells.¹⁴⁶ Currently, five custody suites have less than ten cells; an additional ten custody suites have fifteen cells or less. The Met aimed to operate 950 cells but they have only 881 cells listed, of which 754 are in facilities operating 24/7 and 127 in facilities that are classified as overflow facilities. So currently, the Met/MOPAC have around 7% fewer cells than they would like. Eight of the fifteen custody suites we identify as sites that could be, potentially, closed are overflow facilities and seven are 24/7 suites with fifteen cells or less. The seven 24/7 custody suites identified comprise just 15 per cent of the building area of the 24/7 custody suite estate. Bigger custody suites were popular with the police officers we interviewed.

The consolidation effort should start by merging custody suites in boroughs where two of the sites in the borough have 15 cells or less e.g. Newham and Enfield. The Met should then assess if it is possible to expand the larger custody suites in boroughs where they have two suites and the number of cells in the larger facility and the number in the smaller custody suite are equal to or less than forty cells. For example:

- Camden has a custody suite with 16 cells and one with 11.
- Ealing has a custody suite with 22 cells and one with 11.
- Hackney has a custody suite with 16 cells and one with 9.
- Hammersmith has a custody suite with 18 cells and one with 9.
- Hillingdon has a custody suite with 30 cells and one with 11.
- Southwark has a custody suite with 18 cells and one with 8.

In each of the cases above the two custody suites could be merged to form one suite in each borough providing 40 cells. If the existing larger sites cannot be expanded to include additional cells both properties could be sold and a site large enough to provide a new custody suite with 40 cells purchased with the proceeds. Every custody suite with fifteen cells or fewer is located on a site that the Met Police own freehold. It is vital that the new custody suites are located in areas that are within easy reach of the former facilities. Where this is not possible overflow facilities, in particular, could be maintained but the preference should be to close them.

The Met/MOPAC should undertake a full review to examine the potential savings that could be achieved by merging these sites and the costs of doing so. In any cases where the costs of amalgamating sites, including relocation and construction costs, exceed the estimated savings to be achieved by amalgamation the sites should not be merged.

3. *Move police office space in inner London locations to outer London locations:*

Thirty-three per cent of the total police estate is made up of office space. Police office space is divided in the GLA property database into two categories – the ‘Police Office’ and ‘Office’. The former is accessible to the public and the latter is not. So, the former could be shared with another emergency service because it is already shared with the public at large. However, there is also scope to share the latter - the Met are investing in mobile technology to enable police officers to log crime reports while out of the office. There is little reason why a police officer should fear doing paperwork in a shared facility with the fire service but be ok performing this task in a Starbucks.

For those bureaucratic functions that the police must perform in a secure setting, the question is whether police office space should be provided in inner-London boroughs, where land is more expensive, or outer-London boroughs, where it is cheaper. London councils define twelve London boroughs as being in inner-London; these are Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.¹⁴⁷ The Met/MOPAC owns around 220,000 square metres of office space. The office space that the Met owns within central London is spread across twenty-nine sites; it amounts to around 172,000 square metres. The value of this property if all the office sites owned by the Met were to be re-developed as residential property would be around £1.5 Billion. The value of the inner-London office estate is just under £1.36 Billion, compared with £160 million for the outer-London office estate.

The Met has sixty-four offices in total listed solely as office space. Some sites have been listed as both a police station and an office and where this has happened we have included these sites as police stations. Four London boroughs have no police office space within the borough; Croydon, Enfield, Redbridge and Waltham Forest. Four London boroughs have police office space but do not give any estimate of the size of these sites and so it has not been possible to estimate their size or value. These boroughs are Ealing, Hounslow, Southwark and Camden and there are five police office sites listed between them. In the outer-London boroughs, between thirty-five different sites the Met occupies just 49,000 square metres of space. Despite having six more offices in outer-London than inner-London (35 compared to 29) the outer-London estate occupies an area that is around a quarter the size of the inner-London police office estate.

The combined value of the outer-London office estate, if it were to be redeveloped as residential property, would be worth around £160 million – the value of the inner-London office space is around 8.5x the value of the outer-London police office estate. Ninety per cent of the value of the police office space is located in its inner-London office sites and the overwhelming majority of all police offices in both inner and outer-London are in excess of 500 square metres in size. The focus should be on reducing the amount of office space in inner-London locations - the value of the office space occupied by the Met in each of

the individual London boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham (just under £343 million), Lambeth (just under £230 million) and Westminster (£562 million) alone is worth more than the value of the entire outer-London police office estate (£160 million).

The Met could pledge to halve the amount of office space it uses in the inner-London boroughs. This would mean the sale of just over 86,000 square metres of office space, valued at just under £680 million. To purchase an equivalent amount of space in the outer-London boroughs would cost around £281 million. This is based on dividing the total value of the outer-London police office estate (£160 million) by the number of square metres occupied (49,000), which equals £3,265 per square metre and then multiplying it by the amount of space needed – 86,000 square metres. It is likely that this property could be obtained for less because we have used the figures for residential values to calculate this cost and the Met would actually be purchasing/renting commercial space, which is less expensive.

By selling half the inner-London office space and purchasing the exact same amount of office space in outer-London boroughs the Met could achieve substantial savings. The Met would need to negotiate their share of this amount with the developer and would need to consider the relocation costs. However, the savings could be even higher because the Met may not need the amount of office space they currently have due to two factors:

First, the Met is investing in new technology that allows officers to perform basic tasks such as processing arrests while on the road – reducing their need for office space. Under the ‘One Met: Total Technology’ plan for 2014-2017, £200 million is to be invested over three years to make police officers more mobile, allow them to do more of their tasks outside the station and to keep police officers in the community for longer.¹⁴⁸ Also, to better utilise their space, the Met has introduced a policy of unassigned desks to free up desk space and assigned a target to ensure desks are used seventy-five per cent of the time. But, while understandable, this is the wrong approach. There is no value in encouraging police officers to spend more time at their desks to meet an arbitrary target for the usage of desk space when the Met also wants officers to spend less time at their desks.

Second, police officers type up reports after a day of activity rather than during it. Police offices are not occupied for the majority of the day. Also, the seventy-five per cent target only applies during office hours. This will not address the problem that police offices are staffed between 9am and 5pm five days a week. This means that of the one hundred and sixty-eight hours of the week police office space could be used:

- Police office space is not used sixteen hours a day between Monday and Friday and for the forty-eight hours at the weekend.
- For a combined one hundred and twenty-eight hours out of the one hundred and sixty-eight hours available, police office space is not used; this is seventy-six per cent of the available time.

4. Identify the utilisation stats for each police office and police station and consider selling off properties where the utilisation rate is lower than 50%.

The utilisation rate across the police estate is low; the police estate plan 2013-16 referred to pilot analysis that showed that over 40 percent of police desks were potentially unoccupied at any one time and that every workstation cost £3,500 per annum.¹⁴⁹ If this stat were replicated across the estate it would mean that just less than

270,000 square metres of space would not be being used by the Met at any one time. Sadly, while the police collect utilisation stats for each of their sites they do not release a publically accessible list showing the utilisation rate for each site. We do know the utilisation rate for some of the sites that have been part-sold and it is very low; the utilisation rate of the police training headquarters in Hendon was around 20 per cent¹⁵⁰ before it was put up for redevelopment.¹⁵¹ The Met should identify each of their Offices and Police Stations that has an utilisation rate below fifty per cent, and submit them to an internal review - any properties identified as surplus to requirements should be sold.

5. *Introduce a 'rebuttable presumption' in favour of amalgamating police, fire and ambulance stations within one kilometre of each other. Where a valid objection to a merger is made the services should be required to provide an alternative plan to release a similar amount of land.*

The Met estate has been reduced with only limited attempts to joint plan provision with other public services such as the London Ambulance Service and the London Fire Brigade. In July 2013, HMIC in its assessment of the Met's response to the funding challenge stated that the Met: "has not entered significant collaborative arrangements with forces or others for joint delivery of policing services". Also, the Met did not report any savings coming from collaboration over the spending review period.¹⁵² In July 2014, the HMIC assessment of the Met's response to austerity noted that in 2014/15 the Met:

"... expects to spend 6 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute 5 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is lower than the 10 percent figure for England and Wales".¹⁵³

This is partly due to the fact that the Met does not need to achieve economies of scale in the way small rural police forces do because it is already a big organisation. The Met has national policing responsibilities, which may not be captured in the collaboration figures. Nevertheless, both the fire service and the police will need to cooperate more. As of Tuesday 5 January 2016, both the police and fire services are now administered by the same government department - the Home Office. In the former Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Theresa May MP's letter to all Chief Fire Officers in England announcing this she stated that both services have something to learn from each other – specifically, she mentioned that the police could learn from the fire brigade's success with prevention activity, and the fire brigade from the police's success at "workforce reform".

By 2017, the Autumn Statement 2015 promises that there will be a new statutory duty for the emergency services to collaborate on issues such as procurement, vehicle maintenance and new stations.¹⁵⁴ In 2012, the then chairman of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority James Cleverley released a report: 'A United Emergency Service: Shared Services and Estate Options for the Metropolitan Police Service'.¹⁵⁵ This explored how they could joint plan the estate. It suggested that the police and fire services share command and control facilities, an option that was recently recommended by MPS Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan Howe.¹⁵⁶ Sir Bernard Hogan Howe in his speech to the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA) entitled '2020 Vision: Public Safety in a Global City' stressed that: "I would like us collectively to have a plan within 12 months, where the default assumption is we are bringing the blue light services in London together".¹⁵⁷ Sadly, this plan has not yet been developed.

How does emergency services collaboration in London compare with other areas of the country?

Currently, the Safer Transport Base the Met operates from Holloway Fire Station remains a rare exception. The London Fire Brigade, the Ambulance Service and the Met continue to develop separate estate plans with little consultation between them. For example, the *London Fire Brigade Asset Management Plan* compiled in 2011¹⁵⁸ and the *London Ambulance Service Estate Strategy Report 2011*¹⁵⁹, were drafted separately to the police estate plan of 2013.¹⁶⁰ It is likely that the new Mayor of London will be presented with individual estate plans for both the fire brigade and the police, containing limited input from the other emergency services. But, other areas of the country have made progress integrating their emergency services estate. Rural constabularies are already piloting merged services such as combined response vehicles and, in the case of Cornwall, personnel employed by both the Fire and Police services.

- Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City Council, Redditch Borough Council, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police created¹⁶¹ a joint property vehicle to develop a joint estate management plan.¹⁶²
- Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Ellis submitted a plan to combine the local police and fire service in response to a consultation by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.¹⁶³
- Police Scotland is the product of the merger of eight police forces in April 2013. It has proposed a shared services advisory group to: “investigate opportunities for collaborative working between the three emergency services and suitable options for co-location in local communities”.¹⁶⁴
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Police have agreed to co-locate staff; police officers now work from a number of fire stations, and the two entities will now share a headquarters.¹⁶⁵
- Northamptonshire has been given £600,000 from the Home Office¹⁶⁶ to share premises, training and develop a joint operations team across the three emergency services.¹⁶⁷ This has included the deployment of a joint rural intervention vehicle that was manned by a combined fire and police team.¹⁶⁸

Is there a lot of overlap in the work done by the different emergency services?

We asked the police officers we interviewed to describe their interactions with the fire brigade and it was clear that they had limited interaction with them, but daily interaction with the ambulance service. This was because of the high incidence of mental health related call-outs that the police are asked to attend at. It is clear that the Met also request support from the London Ambulance Service; the London Assembly estimates that the Met do this 100,000 times per year.¹⁶⁹ Some interviewees agreed that a joint control room made sense, as this would limit the number of calls where multiple services were asked to attend.

Interviewees stated the following:

- “From a borough perspective I know officers get called to an extraordinary amount of calls that when they get there you realise there was no need for you to be there at all, due to possibly a bad risk assessment or bad management in some of the other services, mainly the ambulance because we get called to a ridiculous amount of calls just to stand in the background just in case they may kick off or something”

- “I do have a lot of empathy and sympathy for the ambulance service because they have to deal with a lot of people who just abuse them and assault them on occasions as well” and “they [ambulance service personnel] cannot arrest the person that is abusing them; the police have to do that. So it is a tough one but we are wasted a lot, a lot”
- “So you might have someone who has a mental health problem, is living in the community, they might be fine one day and then the next day they stop taking their medication and then slowly but surely we start to see a destructive and/or criminal behaviour emerge which might lead to 30-odd crimes being committed and recorded”.

How many emergency services stations are close to each other?

One way of identifying properties that the emergency services could share is identifying which are located in close proximity. We have sought to calculate the number of emergency services stations that are within one kilometre of each other in London. To do this Policy Exchange used the address of each police station, fire station and ambulance station listed on the GLA property database and the London Ambulance Service website to calculate the distances between each site. Merging sites that are near each other is unlikely to affect response times and will deliver a similar level of service. Policy Exchange found that:

- Over eighty emergency service stations were within one kilometre of another emergency services station.¹⁷⁰
- Just fewer than fifty police stations were within one kilometre of a fire station.
- Just fewer than twenty police stations were within one kilometre of an Ambulance Station.
- Just fewer than twenty ambulance stations were within one kilometre of a fire station.

Separate research conducted in 2011 by the London Assembly indicates that forty-one per cent of ambulance stations have a fire station within one kilometre.¹⁷¹ We did locate some errors in the GLA property database. Both Southwark and Lewisham fire stations are listed with the same postcode – SE5 8PR. However, the postcode for the Lewisham fire station, located in Deptford and listed with the correct street address of 186 Evelyn Street is actually SE8 5DB. Southwark Fire Station was within a kilometre of two police stations but has since closed.¹⁷² In some cases on the GLA property database a facility was described as a police station but was also referred to as a police office – these facilities have been included as police stations in this analysis. Also, there already exist shared emergency service stations - two fire stations shared a postcode with an ambulance station - indicating that they were, or had been a shared facility; these were Barnet Station and Croydon Fire/Ambulance Stations and both these facilities were within one kilometre of a police station. Furthermore, some properties were within one kilometre of more than one other emergency services station.

What is the ‘rebuttable presumption’ in favour of merging police, fire and ambulance stations and why is it necessary?

Interestingly, the new statutory duty for the emergency services to collaborate on their estate applies only to “new stations” and not to the existing estate.¹⁷³ Without pressure to merge the estate it is unlikely that the emergency services in

London will do so. This is why we believe it would be best that the future Mayor of London introduce a 'rebuttable presumption' in favour of merging police, fire and ambulance stations that are located within one kilometre of each other into single shared facilities. Individual services could put their case for why this would not work in each case and, in some cases; they could present compelling objections such as:

- Sites could be too small to accommodate both services.
- Security concerns could affect particular proposals.
- Some properties may have recently been expensively renovated to particular specifications or may in time, be marked for closure for other reasons.
- Other properties may be provided under a PFI deal which restricts the ability to change the site.
- The costs of amalgamating emergency service stations may exceed the savings to be achieved with some sites and in these cases an amalgamation should not take place.

However, in cases where the respective services believe an individual site is not appropriate for a merger they should be required to submit a counter bid to share their estate with another body that would release a similar space or greater for residential development. Which stations are actually merged or closed will require a full prior public review.

The review will need to include a full cost based assessment of each individual merger before it takes place. Clearly, in cases where the costs of sharing a single merged site are greater than the costs of continuing on the existing separate sites a merger should not take place. The respective services should continue to provide their services from the existing sites in such cases. This standard should be applied to all the estate changes suggested in this report to ensure that these broad ideas are applied in a flexible way that achieves the required savings.

6. *Take the ten London boroughs with the lowest proportion of their borough estate made up of Safer Neighbourhood bases, sell off some of the police stations in these boroughs and partner with other public sector bodies to replace this coverage, by expanding the number of Safer Neighbourhood bases in these boroughs.*

The police estate is the product of legacy purchases and current political commitments. We requested details of the costs of maintaining each police building within the existing estate and the age of each of the existing police buildings but were not provided this information. In 2007, the Met did release some of this information – they said that forty per cent of their estate predated 1940.¹⁷⁴ What we can see from the current GLA property database is that different London boroughs have a radically different proportion of their local police estate made up of Safer Neighbourhood bases and patrol bases compared to the percentage that is made up of police stations.

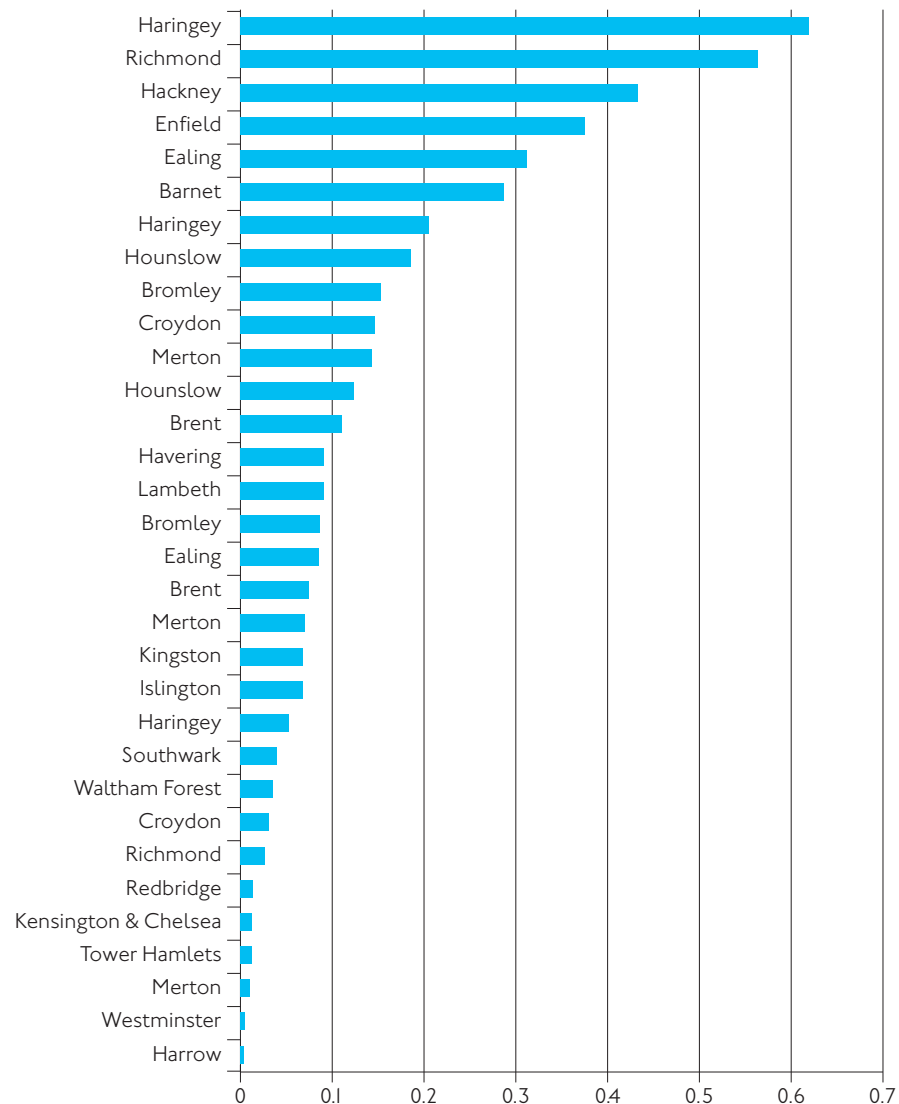
There are two hundred and sixty-six entries for 'Police Station', 'Safer Neighbourhood' and 'Patrolbase' in the GLA property database. Only five of these entries do not have a building area size above zero listed for them. Safer Neighbourhood bases are forward operating bases for community policing teams. While they are sometimes located in police stations, they are often located from

shared community premises including schools, churches, hospitals and shopping centres.¹⁷⁵ Patrol bases provide space to store police vehicles and equipment and allow for police officers to be trained and briefed on operations. Just over half of the police estate is made up of police stations/Safer Neighbourhood bases and patrol bases. These facilities are a key part of community policing; they embed the Met in the communities they serve. Although, it should be noted that since these calculations were undertaken fifteen Safer Neighbourhood bases have been identified for sale by the Met Police, of which five are in Bromley, five in Croydon and one each in Ealing, Greenwich, Haringey, Hillingdon and Westminster.

Setting a target to increase the proportion of the public facing police estate that is comprised of Safer Neighbourhood and patrol bases, in London boroughs where the existing coverage is low, would provide a focus for efforts to get the police to provide a greater proportion of their overall Police Estate from shared facilities. In 2014/15, HMIC rated each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales on the percentage of their budget the police force planned to spend on areas to be delivered collaboratively with other Police forces, local public services or private companies; the Met ranked 31st out of 43 Police forces.¹⁷⁶ A good way of identifying if a borough has a low percentage of safer neighbourhood bases is to compare the percentage of the public facing police estate comprised of police stations with that composed of safer neighbourhood/patrol bases. For this analysis we did not include police office space, which has been dealt with separately, or the police support facilities such as workshops and training centres.

The majority of London Boroughs with a large percentage of their public facing estate (e.g. police stations/Safer Neighbourhood bases and patrol bases) comprising Safer Neighbourhood bases and patrol bases are outer-London boroughs such as Havering and Waltham Forest. Seven inner-London boroughs are in the top ten London boroughs with the lowest proportion of their police estate made up of Safer Neighbourhood bases: Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, Lewisham, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Camden and Wandsworth – only three outer-London boroughs – Hounslow, Redbridge and Sutton are in the top-ten. However, not all inner London boroughs performed poorly on this indicator - Greenwich and Kensington & Chelsea are both inner-London boroughs and they have a high proportion of their police estate comprised of Safer Neighbourhood bases rather than police stations, so they could provide an example to other inner-London boroughs. The Met should seek to increase the number of Safer Neighbourhood bases in the seven inner-London boroughs with a low percentage of their estate comprised of such facilities.

Table one: percentage of the police public facing estate in each London borough comprised of Safer Neighbourhood and patrol bases



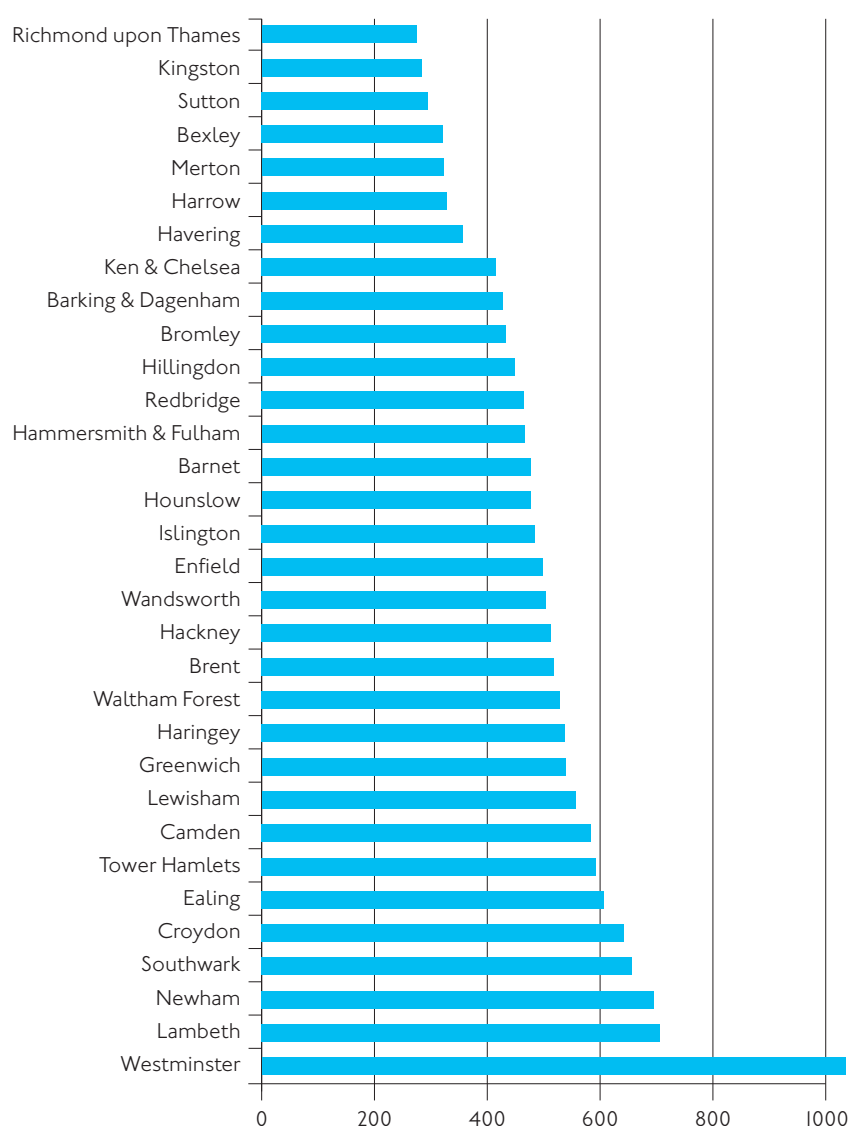
7. *Sell off the two sports facilities listed as owned by MOPAC/the Met and rent such facilities when required*

MOPAC/the Met owns two sports facilities located in Bromley. The two sites are worth at least £26.3 million, if they were to be converted into residential property and they occupy around 7,000 square metres. If these properties were converted into residential accommodation well over 250 people could be housed there. Currently, the Met receives rental income related to one of the properties of just under £69,000 per annum.¹⁷⁷ The Met could use the money raised from the sale of these facilities to finance the ‘Met-Match’ savings scheme outlined in the next chapter to allow new police officers to save towards a deposit for a house or flat in London.

Does the size of the police estate in a London borough indicate the number of police officers deployed there?

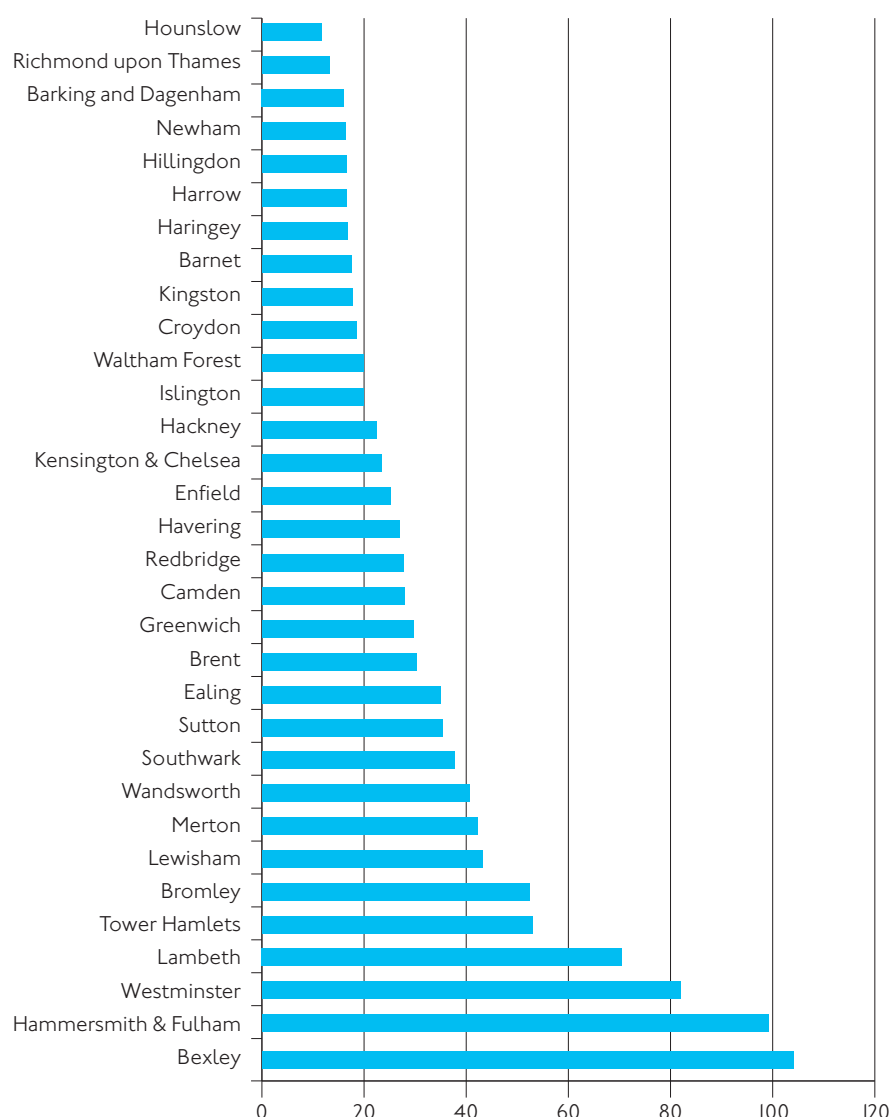
One objection to the sale of police buildings is that it represents a reduction in the police presence in an area. We compared the police estate in the different London boroughs with the number of police officers in each borough.¹⁷⁸ The Met could conduct a similar exercise with regard to the number of police staff in each borough compared to the size of the estate, to identify which areas have a larger estate per member of police staff. Whereas police officers are expected to be on patrol, police staff will be present on the police estate for the duration of their shift. However, the data on how many staff work in each borough is not publically available. Also, the public objection to the sale of the police estate is, likely, because of a belief that it represents a reduction in the number of police officers deployed locally, and not police staff.

Table two: The number of Metropolitan police officers per London borough¹⁷⁹



We then compared the number of police officers per London borough with the size of the police estate as you can see in the table below.

Table three: The number of square metres of police estate per police officer



While there is some correlation between the size of the police estate in a London borough and the police presence, it is very weak, and there is little evidence that there is any causation. Bexley has the fourth lowest number of police officers of any London borough, and it has the largest amount of square metres of estate per police officer. Bromley has the sixth highest amount of estate per police officer and the tenth lowest number of police officers of any London borough. Newham has a large number of police officers and a very small amount of police estate per officer. What we would not want is to create the impression that the lower the proportion of police estate per Police Officer the better. We would like more of the police estate to be located in outer-London boroughs and there will always be fewer police officers in these areas. But, we believe that the police should prioritise reducing the police estate in the London boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and Lewisham, where the police office estate is clearly very large.

Why is more public land not being released in London?

First, there is no single body in charge of managing public sector land in London. In May 2012, former Mayor Boris Johnson set up a single property unit, called GLA Land and Property Ltd (GLAP)¹⁸⁰ to bring together the GLA assets¹⁸¹. However, the single property unit does not, “for a variety of legal and practical issues, have any day to day responsibility for the management of GLA Group’s operational assets”.¹⁸² Instead, it focuses on publishing a list of all GLA assets and establishing “a single cost-effective procurement process for all GLA Group and other public land holdings”.¹⁸³ So, the single property unit has no power to reorganise the public estate in London. Each public sector landholder in London views their estate differently - TfL seeks to develop their estate to obtain commercial rents but the Met wants to achieve capital receipts on land not used for operational purposes.

There is a Government Property Unit (GPU) which has operated at a national level since 2010. In the Autumn Statement 2015 the Government announced that the freehold property assets of Central Government Departments would be transferred to the GPU and the Departments would pay a market rent to occupy these properties. This should create an incentive for these Departments to free up some of the London property they occupy. However, the Departments will probably need to be nominally credited the funds to allow them to pay the market rent on these properties to the GPU. This is because, unlike the existing rental properties they occupy, the current cost to a Department of occupying a freehold property that they own is just the depreciation and maintenance cost. Paying a market rent on a property that the Department formally did not pay rent on would represent an additional budget reduction. This situation is likely to be prevented by crediting the Department the rental cost. Transferring the properties Departments are leasing to GPU control might be simpler as the Department could pay their existing rent to the GPU rather than property owner and no new money would be needed in the system.

Second, the recording of public land was split between multiple different bodies. The GLA was one of four bodies the LCCI found to be recording public sector land in London. The other three were; the Register of Surplus Public Sector Land, the National Land Use Database of Previously Developed Land and the NHS Surplus Land Collection.¹⁸⁴ Neither the GLA database nor the Register of Surplus Public Sector Land held brownfield specific data or estimated the potential housing capacity. Only in January 2016 has the London Land Commission (LLC) begun to release a comprehensive register of public land in London, and even this register has its problems.¹⁸⁵ The LLC has divided the searchable categories for the register into those that are public and those kept private and many of the factors you would need to know if you were going to consider purchase of the sites are going to be kept private, such as the site constraints (e.g. planning or environmental and details of the ownership type and split), and some inaccuracies in the released material have also been found. Much of the necessary information is being kept confidential for unknown reasons.

Third, until recently many public authorities did not have accurate information about the properties they owned. In ‘Unlocking London’s Housing Potential: Making the Most of London’s Public Sector Land’ the London Chamber of Commerce (LCCI) asked each of the 32 London boroughs to clarify how much brownfield land they owned – only seven councils provided information on the

amount of brownfield land they had in hectares, three stated they owned no brownfield land, seven had no data, and eight did not respond.¹⁸⁶ TfL, in answer to a Freedom of Information request by Harry Phibbs, of Conservative Home, revealed that: “There are estimated to be some 350 acres owned but not yet registered with TfL. The actual figure will be confirmed later this year.”¹⁸⁷ Of the land confirmed as TfL property, TfL knew if the property was freehold land, but did “not distinguish between uses, e.g. tracks versus stations”.¹⁸⁸ Also, many public authorities have little incentive to intensely manage their properties as if they sell properties they may subsequently receive lower public funding.

04

The housing options for police officers

Having used the seven criteria we have outlined to help select properties within the police estate for development the Met will then need to determine what housing support they should provide for police officers. We acknowledge that no single housing policy can match the diverse needs of all police officers. So it is important that: “the MET should have a variety of different options”, and be realistic about what can be achieved. Not all Met police officers will want to live in London. It should be entirely legitimate for officers to take advantage of the schemes available for a limited period. Individual police officers may have many reasons for living outside of London that the Met cannot influence. Older officers may wish to move to the suburbs to achieve more space, closer links to family or a different type of living environment, for example easy access to the countryside. Attempting to reverse or frustrate this process is misguided. However, the Met should not be indifferent to the plight of police officers who want to live in London but cannot afford to and to police officers that could be persuaded to live in London for an additional few years.

Recommendations

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| 1 | The role of the MPS Property Zone team should be expanded to make it an, all-purpose, one-stop-shop advising Met police officers on housing issues. It should be given a target to assist 3,000 police officers to live in London within five years. |
| 2 | The quality of the MPS Property Zone team should be tested by hiring mystery shoppers to request information about housing opportunities to rectify any gaps in the service provided. |
| 3 | The Met should publish an annual update on the number of police officers the MPS Property Zone team have interacted with and the number that subsequently purchased a London property. |
| 4 | The Met/MOPAC should agree to provide ten year low interest loans to Met Police officers appointed since January 2014 to help meet the cost of the add-on fees to purchasing a property such as stamp duty and legal fees etc. The interest rate could be set at the inflation rate to ensure that the Met retains the value of its investment. |
| 5 | A ‘Met-Match’ Scheme should be introduced where the Met will promise to pay a top up on savings made by Met police officers to use towards a deposit on a London home. This scheme would be restricted to officers who are not on the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) scheme, who were appointed after January 2014. |
| 6 | The top up rate applied in the ‘Met-Match’ Scheme could be varied by the crime rate in the borough where a police officer is moving to incentivise officers to live in particular areas of London. Each year the MPS Property Zone team could update its targeted London boroughs and the top-up rate to reflect the changes in the annual recorded crime rate statistics. Higher crime areas would receive a greater top-up. |
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7	Property in the MOPAC/Met Police Estate identified as suitable for development should be put into a special purpose vehicle to be offered to developers including members of the G15 group of housing associations and private for profit housebuilders to be converted into residential property.
8	The Met/MOPAC should sell many of the new properties that are developed to police officers at a discount to the market price. Each year the MPS Property Zone team would vary the discount rate for sales in each London borough to reflect the changes in the annual recorded crime rate statistics. Higher crime areas would receive a greater discount.
9	The Met/MOPAC should include in the sale agreement for the discounted properties a contractual provision to ensure that these police officers would have to sell the property back at the same percentage discount to the market price to the Met/MOPAC or another police officer. The Met/MOPAC should apply a 'buy-back' guarantee to these properties.
10	The interpretation of S106 requirements for affordable housing should be expanded to allow police housing to count towards meeting this requirement. If the provision of police housing does not qualify under the terms of the existing S106 legislation to meet the affordable housing requirements then S106 should be amended to allow police housing to count towards meeting the affordable housing requirement.

If the Met wants London to be policed by Londoners it needs to provide affordable housing options and police officers will need to have some confidence that if they sign up to receive help that the deal would not be changed at short notice. If it was changed, officers should be compensated: “if you provide it, it has to be provided on an agreed basis at the start that it either cannot be taken away down the line, so you get this additional benefit because at this moment or for the last two years or for the next two years or however long you are living in London.”

What is a realistic policy aim in the short-term?

To achieve this, the Met should set a goal that is credible but ambitious. For example, they could pledge to provide targeted housing support to a specified number of officers to live in London. My suggested target would be to increase the number of police officers that live in London by an additional 3,000, just under 10 per cent of the total number of existing Met Police officers, within five years. This would change the proportion of police officers that live in London from a minority to a majority of all officers. The Met should select housing support options that can be scaled up over time to enable the performance of the scheme to be assessed. The options should enable them to realise part of the uplift in the value of the police estate during the development process and to extricate the Met from providing ongoing housing support to police officers that are fired or choose to leave the service.

In 2012, the Baltimore based Abell Foundation did a study of housing support programmes for police officers in America, they divided the incentives that can be offered into two categories; the individual e.g. help towards a down payment on a house and the general, such as a website to help police officers find houses and access to housing related services.¹⁸⁹ Financial support for rental housing is significantly cheaper in the short-term. It is also a greater incentive as smaller sums constitute a greater proportion of the cost.¹⁹⁰ However, the Met were sceptical of the benefits of subsidised rental payments as it may have the perverse of allowing police officers to buy housing outside London sooner. Evidence from abroad shows that with the right incentives a significant change can be achieved - in the United States, in Atlanta, a police housing incentive scheme helped 6 per cent of police officers living outside the city to move in to Atlanta during a 14-month period.¹⁹¹

The expansion of the MPS Property Zone

The target to assist 3,000 police officers to live in London should be entrusted to the MPS Property Zone team and they should be required to release publically accessible data on the number of officers they interact with each year and the number they have assisted into accommodation within London. Housing opportunities in London should be aggressively promoted to police officers. A single-one-stop shop for housing services should be provided to advise officers on the buying process. The Met could provide an approved list of legal firms and negotiate discounts on the fees charged to serving police officers. The quality of the advice offered by the MPS Property Zone team should be tested on a regular basis by hiring ‘mystery shoppers’ to seek advice from the team - this would be a low cost measure to test the reforms effectiveness.

Help with supplementary house purchase costs

The add-on costs of house purchase are particularly acute in London. These costs include stamp duty, valuation fee, surveyor’s fee and legal costs. The stamp duty cost on a £400,000 property is £10,000. The Money Advice Service estimates that valuation fees can vary between £150 and £1500. Surveyors’ fees vary between £250 and £600. Legal fees can be between £500 and £1500 plus local searches, which can cost around £300. Removal costs can be between £300 and £600.¹⁹² These fees combined can add up to £14,500 to the cost of purchasing a property.

A Met Police officer on £30,000 per year would receive £1,957 per month in income after tax and before pension contributions. Meeting the supplementary fees of purchasing a property an officer would need to save just over £1,200 per month for a year. This would consume sixty-one per cent of a police officer’s entire annual net income. Assuming the officer secured a rental property in London at £700 per month, already at the lower end of what younger police officers were paying, and that this rental payment included bills, this would leave the officer with £57 per month for food, socialising and vacations. It is more likely that an officer would save for longer or purchase a cheaper property outside of London, but while they save the cost of the property they wish to purchase may increase.

To help rectify this - the Met could provide recruits appointed after January 2014, who do not already own a property, with a loan for a fixed period of ten years. The interest rate on the loan could be fixed at the inflation rate or 2%. This support could be restricted to properties purchased within London. It could be capped at £14,500, which is the likely cost of the add-on fees a police officer would need to pay to purchase their own property. At the end of ten years the officer could pay the loan off by re-mortgaging and assuming the cost of those fees as increased mortgage debt. The Met would recover their capital but they would commit to helping officers live in London for a fixed period of time. A police officer’s wage will have risen during this ten-year period making them better able to meet the added cost. The Met would also be withdrawing this financial support at a point when the officer would be more expensive to retain, so it would not have to provide a long-term retention incentive.

To finance this scheme the Met/MOPAC would need to earmark some of the funds that are released as surplus Met/MOPAC properties are sold. The offer would be restricted to the new 5,000 police officers. Some of these officers will already own a property and others will not be interested in purchasing one. If half the new police officers accessed the scheme over the next few years it

would represent an investment of £36,250,000 by the Met. This money would be recovered as the loans were repaid but it would clearly tie up significant funds. To limit the total cost the Met could limit the money available to a set annual amount so that once the fund for the year was used up new funds would not be available until the next financial year.

The new ‘Met-Match’ savings pledge

Many new police officers are saving towards a housing deposit. The government has recently launched a Help to Buy ISA. This allows users to deposit an initial £1,000 and then save £200 per month. The government will contribute a 25 per cent bonus on savings in the Help to Buy ISA up to a maximum government contribution of £3,000 on £12,000 of savings when it is used to purchase a property up to £450,000 in London or £250,000 in the rest of the UK.¹⁹³ The Met could develop a similar scheme for police officers appointed after the date when the ATOC concession ended for new police officers i.e. January 2014.

The new ‘Met Match’ savings scheme for new police officers could be set at a fixed rate of 25% - the same rate as, but in addition to, the government scheme – or it could be varied depending on where a police officer chose to purchase. It would only be available to individuals who did not own a property, who would use it as their primary residence, and for London properties. Unlike the government scheme the cap on monthly contributions could be set at a higher level - £500 a month and the total top-up per officer could be capped at £3,000. This could be delivered through the salary scheme, or it could be launched in cooperation with a private sector partner such as a bank or building society who administers it.

This option was attractive for the new police officers:

- “If it was like – we are putting by for you say £500 a month towards your deposit ... If I had that I would feel very differently about my salary”.
- “A matching scheme might be an idea. So for those that do want to seriously invest in a house for every pound you put in the MET puts in an equivalent so it does not punish those that do not want to buy a house, that want to live outside of London”.
- “...it is probably going to be the deposit [that is the problem] because if you are looking at, realistically Ball Park we are looking at one or two bed, it is going to be over £300,000 anyway. What kind of deposit are you going to need if you are on a £30,000 salary? It is going to be £80,000, something like that”.

If all 5,000 officers appointed since 2013 took advantage of the scheme, the cost would be equivalent to raising the salary of new police officers by £1,500 per annum. This individual sum is not much more than the recruitment cost of a single additional police officer. It would cost the Met up to £7.5 million per annum if all 5,000 new officers signed up to the scheme. However, some officers will choose to use their accrued savings to purchase outside London and so will not be eligible for the bonus. Other police will not sign up to the scheme because they already own a property or do not wish to own one. So, the costs are likely to be significantly lower than this.

Entering into an agreement to develop the Met/MOPAC estate with a housing association or private developer

The Met has an agreement with the Peabody housing association to provide Met police officers with intermediate rental properties in London but only 15 properties are currently available under this scheme. Under the Peabody Scheme the Met referred police officers to the scheme but did not provide the land, or properties, or subsidise the rent. This model could be adapted and expanded. In 2011-12 the rental receipts received by the Met on their residential estate amounted to £1.778 million and there were 188 properties where rent was paid. Sixty-five were in Westminster, 72 in Lambeth, 13 in Islington and 6 each in Hammersmith and Haringey. No other London borough had more than 5 police residential properties where rent was being received.¹⁹⁴ The Met should identify their surplus property and enter into an agreement with a housing association or private housing firm to allocate a specific number of properties from among the new London based properties built on the police estate to Met Police officers. The Met could also conclude a separate agreement with housing associations to offer properties to serving police officers from the housing associations wider estate of homes constructed on non Police sites.

The Met could put the surplus land it owns into a special purpose vehicle. It could then be offered to housing associations and private for profit housing firms to re-develop it as residential property. The Met would take a fixed percentage of the final sale value of the properties in the development that are then sold e.g. forty percent. By collecting the sale value at the end of the development the Met would secure any uplift in land value created during the development process.

We have shown a preference for the larger housing associations in the G15. This is because they have the capacity to develop sites on a large scale, which some of the smaller housing associations do not. Housing associations would be able to access substantial portions of land with no upfront charge. Every new development has to have a proportion of affordable housing and this is typically set at a 30 per cent minimum of total housing provision on the site. The provision of 'police housing' could be treated as 'affordable housing' and could contribute towards a developer's S106 requirement. If the provision of police housing does not qualify under the terms of the existing S106 legislation to meet the affordable housing requirements then S106 should be amended by the Government to allow police housing to count towards meeting the affordable housing requirement. There could be an agreed allocation to police officers on each site – for example, many of the affordable housing properties could be made available to police officers before being released to other Londoners. The Met could then agree to market a number of the housing association properties to police officers through the MPS Property Zone located on the police intranet, at an intermediate rent for police officers.

Why would housing associations cooperate with the Met/MOPAC on this?

There are three main benefits for housing associations from partnering with the Met/MOPAC to develop the police estate.

First, land availability is limited in London and the chance to cooperate with a body that can provide land for development without the need for upfront payment is unique and valuable. In May 2014, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in 'Getting our house in order: The impact of housing undersupply

on London businesses' found that: "land availability is the top barrier to house building in London."¹⁹⁵ Three quarters of London companies in the property and construction sector surveyed by the LCCI said land availability was the top barrier to house building (74 per cent). They rated it above planning and funding considerations. The LCCI found that "Accusations of 'landbanking' are more appropriately levelled at the public sector [than the private sector], which is estimated to own as much as 40% of all brownfield land in London"¹⁹⁶ and they criticised the public land disposal process as "fragmented and protracted".¹⁹⁷ In 2011, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) estimated, in 'Accelerating the release of public sector land: Update, overview and next steps' that "40 per cent of land suitable for development sits within public sector land banks – that includes both central and local government".¹⁹⁸ Savills in 'Spotlight, Public Land: Unearthing Potential' estimated the GLA assets could provide an extra 100,000 homes.¹⁹⁹

Second, police officers will be dependable residents who are likely to pay their rent on time and are unlikely to cause damage or disturbances in the properties and: "There should not be any sort of damage type to properties, they can rely on us. And then also, like I said, just the fact that we would be living in a building [we] would be safeguarding [it], so I think like you said ... if the Met were able to negotiate with certain housing providers in maybe an OK area, I would be happy."

Third, as previously mentioned, police officers could perform a security function that might reduce anti-social behaviour and the costs it causes. Around 37 per cent of anti-social behaviour incidents in social housing related to noise incidents and around 83 per cent of the actions taken by landlords to tackle anti-social behaviour are informal actions that do not require referral to the police or social services, such as a visit or an informal warning. In 2012, social landlords spent £300 million per annum tackling anti-social behaviour in their properties. The median cost of tackling anti-social behaviour per social property in 2013/14 was £59.72²⁰⁰ and the majority of these costs were employee costs (50-55%). A police presence may reduce the number of calls for anti-social behaviour and allow a reduction in the number of staff needed to handle them.

Where is this happening now?

Developers in the United States sometimes offer incentives for police officers to move in to their developments for this reason, partly because the remaining properties in any development containing police officers could command a premium price and will sell more easily. The Abell Foundation, in Atlanta, America explained how courtesy units were "industry standard practice in Atlanta" for apartment blocks over 100 units. Police officers can rent them at a discount or no cost. In exchange, the police officer agrees to play a public safety role for the apartment complex. The officer might also investigate an incident on site.²⁰¹ For example, in Baltimore "Bayview Management was still looking for five city police officers to live at no cost in their buildings (one per unit, plus two in a larger complex), in exchange for signing a lease addendum in which they agree to "keep an eye out" on the property and report incidents."²⁰²

How could this be applied in London?

The Mayor could look at how the S106 affordable housing rules are applied to ensure that the provision of housing for police officers could form part of the

S106 requirement to provide a percentage of any new development as affordable housing. If police housing cannot count as ‘affordable housing’ under the existing S106 requirements the Mayor of London could lobby the Government to amend this legislation to allow it to do so in future. In America, the Abell Foundation, report an observer saying that having police housing in a bloc: “does something for the perception of safety, and makes residents feel good.”²⁰³ The police officers we interviewed stated the benefits of this for the other social housing tenants in a development as follows:

- “I think the community like having police officers in the area. I know my neighbours like having a police officer next door. I have had one or two people knock on my door just asking for help or advice. I have found the community generally like it, makes them feel safer ... if something did happen I would step in”.
- “... the main value would be for the security I suppose that the local community would feel by having police officers in the area, off duty, if they are popping to the shops and whatever, knowing that there are possibly off duty police officers that are in amongst them.”

Discounted sale properties and the Met/MOPAC ‘buy-back’ guarantee

The Met/MOPAC do not want to manage rental properties. However, there is nothing to stop them selling properties developed on their sites at a discount to serving police officers. A covenant could be attached to the property that requires that it could only be re-sold at the same discount to the market price to another Met police officer or the Met, which could apply a buy-back guarantee at this discounted price. The benefit for the police officer is that they would be able to capture any uplift in house prices during the period they are in the property. The benefit to the Met/MOPAC is that they would retain an effective interest in the property; the right to buy it back at a discount to the market price. Unlike with shared ownership properties there would be no opportunity to purchase additional shares in the property. The Met police officer would be the full owner of the property but their re-sale options would be restricted.

The Pocket Living Scheme already operates a similar model in practice. At the moment, properties are marketed to people that live in each borough, but this could be changed to include properties in all the London boroughs selected by the police. Pocket homes are available to people who earn less than £90,000 but the average income of a pocket buyer is around £40,000.²⁰⁴ Pocket homes can only be sold: “to people who are in exactly the same position that you were in when you first bought your pocket home: they have to have a household income less than the affordability threshold (currently £90k); they have to live or work in the borough and they cannot own any other property”.²⁰⁵ The conditions we would propose for police officers would be less onerous – your property could be marketed through the police intranet at low cost so these properties could be purchased by other police officers. The Met/MOPAC could promise to buy back the property if it is not purchased within a specified period of time subject to an independent valuation. This means that if the scheme is shown not to be a success the Met will recover their investment as they can buy back the discounted properties when they are sold. Pocket homes are, as the name suggests, slightly smaller than the average London property and this allows a greater number of properties to be built on each site.

How should the level of discount/bonus provided in the respective schemes be varied?

Throughout I have implied that the Met has an interest in getting police officers to live in particular London boroughs rather than London in general; it is important to specify why this is. There are thirty-two London boroughs. Initially, I believed that the Met should only subsidise officers' accommodation in higher crime areas. Property prices would be lower in these areas and so the scheme would be less expensive to operate - in 2004, Dr Steve Gibbons, of the London School of Economics and Political Science, analysed Met data and found that a ten per cent reduction in recorded crime increases selling prices in the area by 1.7 per cent compared to the average home in the average neighbourhood.²⁰⁶ Crimes that depressed house prices most were 'criminal damage' crimes, such as - graffiti, vandalism and arson.²⁰⁷ So, the potential public benefits of police officers living in higher crime areas would be greater, as there would be more crime for them to deter. Having a blanket rate for the whole of London would mean that officers would congregate in low crime areas: "It would be nice to do a blanket offer but obviously police officers, if they know there is something going in a really nice area, they are all going to want that".

In a time of public spending constraint the Met needs to adopt cost effective policies to increase their footfall in areas with a higher crime rate as this will help deter and detect crime. The incidence of crime is not evenly dispersed throughout London. The Police Foundation recommends that limited resources are "targeted on high crime micro-locations where the risks of potential harm are greatest".²⁰⁸ However, the interviews showed that in the area of housing provision police officers were deeply hostile to this. The option that was more attractive was for the level of financial support provided to differ with the crime rate. Higher crime areas would have a higher discount on the sale price offered and a higher bonus attached to their Met Match saving scheme, medium crime areas would have a low discount rate/bonus attached, and low crime areas would have no discount applied. Each year the MPS Property Zone team would update the discount/bonus rate applied to different London boroughs to reflect the changes in the annual recorded crime statistics.

Alternatively, the level of discount could vary by the rate of social deprivation. Police choosing to live in poorer areas or areas with higher crime rates would get a more heavily discounted property but no police officer would be forced to live in any area in particular. The benefits of this were as follows:

- "...seeing things off-duty that you can phone in [and] there is seeing things off-duty that you can report later."
- "I think if you live in a busy area that has a slightly higher crime rate then I think you are more likely to be doing that than if you live somewhere that is a bit quieter, a bit sleepier, a bit kind of... lower crime and so on".
- "...it is far more common to be involved in something off duty where you do not arrest. So if you are on a bus or if you are on the train or if you are in the street and something happens, then you can get involved and you do not even have to necessarily out yourself as a police officer."
- "I would like it to be more nuanced than a borough level just because I daresay in Richmond there might be one or two little areas [that were quite bad/less good]".
- "You want police officers, understandably, to live in the most challenging places, perhaps, and essentially to give them benefit for doing [that] but the most challenging places are inherently the least safe".

Some officers were already renting in cheaper areas of London that had a higher crime rate. They were aware that council tenants can purchase properties in these areas at a substantial discount: “Yeah, whatever that number is it is quite a juicy number and certainly I have privately rented ex-council houses before or ex-council flats in London before and I have been somewhat miffed” that the discount was available only to existing council tenants. Some police officers already live in council estates: “I live at home with my mum in a council flat and hopefully when she moves out I am going to buy it off the council. No idea how I am going to do it, I have got no idea how the whole thing works but I will figure it out”. In this case the interviewee stated: “you see everything that is going on, you know everything about everyone, you know all of the people”. Some had personally provided intelligence to local police officers: “I told the police officers around me, I have told them quite a few times about how the kids, all the bikes that they nick, they hide them in the electrical cupboards in the bottom of the blocks and they have just raided them all and found loads of brand new bikes. You learn everything”.

What indicator would you use?

To determine the bonus rate for the met-match scheme and the discount on the properties the Met could choose either the total number of recorded offences for each London borough or the crime rate per thousand of population to base it on. My preference would be for the latter as it reflects the level of criminality in an area. Unfortunately, the ONS does not have the Crime Survey for England and Wales data at the level of the London borough, so the police would not be able to use this metric. While the areas with the highest number and rate of offences are in inner-London it should be recognised that even with a level of discount applied, the price of these properties is likely to be out of reach for officers in boroughs such as Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea. However, London boroughs such as Newham, Croydon, Brent and Hounslow could be made much more affordable. A table showing the London boroughs rated by the total number of recorded offences and the crime rate is located in the appendix.

Will London boroughs support this scheme?

The Government introduced a new ‘permitted development right’ in 2013 to make it easier for developers to change the use of properties from offices to residential accommodation but they allowed certain local authorities to exempt certain areas from the application of this right. If we wanted to gain higher (residential use) values for the Met estate, such a model would probably require an extension of permitted development to allow conversion of offices to residential use without requiring planning permission from London boroughs, because many of the Councils that secured this exemption are based in London, including Islington, Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Westminster, Lambeth, Wandsworth, Camden, Newham, the City of London and the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. Many boroughs oppose allowing offices to be converted into residential use. Tintagel House last year became embroiled in a row about “live in guardians” - Lambeth Council argued Tintagel House had effectively been converted into flats without its permission and served a nine-month notice for the owners and residents to get out. In 2015, Southwark Council warned Pearson, the FTSE 100 Company, that any plans to convert its headquarters from office space to residential flats would be resisted if the new development did not retain the same amount of office space or add more.²⁰⁹

Many boroughs recognise the need to increase the number of police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) within their areas to reduce the crime rate. London boroughs and local representative groups funding extra police officers or police facilities include; Newham²¹⁰, Hackney²¹¹, Camden²¹², Southwark²¹³, Croydon Business Improvement District²¹⁴, Tower Hamlets²¹⁵, Hammersmith & Fulham²¹⁶, Kingston²¹⁷, Waltham Forest²¹⁸, Haringey²¹⁹, Kensington & Chelsea²²⁰ and Hounslow.²²¹ These boroughs fund extra police and PCSO's on a variety of different grounds – to police the town centre, to tackle specific crimes e.g. anti social behaviour, to deal with peaks in crime e.g. around Christmas and New Year, to combat crime on housing estates and, in the case of Southwark, to finance the MPS provision of additional front office counters in the borough. Some of these London boroughs also took advantage of a 'Buy one, Get One Free' offer from MOPAC that match-funded police officers financed by the London boroughs. In 2013, the (then Conservative) London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham made police officers living or working in the borough a higher priority on the local list of individuals interested in housing discounted from the market sale rate. The council also suggested giving officers access to two year fixed term tenancies in council homes at a discounted market rent. This would enable them to save for a deposit for one of the council's lower-cost home schemes. Other councils of all political compositions may be interested in boosting the number of police that live close-by. So, it should be possible to mobilise local government leaders to back measures to increase the number of police officers who reside locally.

How is this better than the old model of police housing?

Police forces made a decision to stop providing tied housing for a variety of reasons. There was a perceived security threat as locating police officers in an identifiable property could make them a target for a terrorist attack. One officer remembered: "When I first joined the police, when we applied to live anywhere we had to have authority from our Chief Superintendent, as they were at the time, and the job would dictate to us where we could live, and a lot of that was around our own personal safety". Under our new proposals additional police officers would not reside in identifiable 'police only buildings'.

The old model of police housing required that the police service own and manage residential properties and this is not something the police have expertise in. The experience with the existing residential estate shows the difficulties in providing this type of support. These properties are not run by MOPAC. An arms length housing association, called Crown Simmons, was contracted for this purpose. However, they are still subject to political pressure. Former Deputy Mayor for Policing Stephen Greenhalgh intervened personally to protect residents from being evicted from some of the properties earmarked for sale under the Police Estate Plan 2013-2016, following pleas from the residents. He promised that the developments would only be sold to bidders that could offer existing tenants the same terms or better. Under our proposed new measures the housing support is mostly financial and where it is not, the support can be withdrawn when necessary.

Third, it required that the police invest resources in housing rather than the core aspects of policing. This is why the Met have tried to sell the homes they do own. In 2013, at the time of the police estate strategy, the police owned 831 police

homes (residential units) located in 174 properties.²²² The *MOPAC/MPS Estates Strategy 2013-2016* committed to selling nearly all stand alone flats and houses into the open market, maintaining only two hundred units for operational reasons. The revenues raised by these disposals are not earmarked to build new housing for police officers. Some ex-police properties are being turned in to residential accommodation but these properties are not earmarked for police officers.²²³ Many of the retained properties will be 'section houses', which are linked to operational police buildings e.g. a police station. This sale of the existing police housing in London²²⁴ is underway²²⁵ and MOPAC has stated that they will:

"Reduce the amount of residential accommodation owned by MOPAC to no more than 200 units whilst working with Residential Providers to offer affordable accommodation to officers and staff close to where they work".²²⁶

This is the main similarity between the police housing model we propose and the old model; the police would be choosing to invest to allow police officers to live in London. On this subject the Met have changed; the Met now have an explicit aim to recruit police officers who live in London and to have London policed by Londoners. Formerly, they did not mind where police officers chose to live.

How does police housing benefit the wider community?

Met police officers may want some housing support; the police estate is large enough to accommodate these proposals, and the Met to fund them. However, the case needs to be made to the broader public that these proposals have merit – below I undertake an explanation of why this benefits us all. I explain how police officers are not generic public servants – they have a special security role, which makes where they live important. The Met would benefit from having officers resident in London as they could assemble them more quickly in times of a terrorist strike or civil disturbance. Police officers resident in London could provide key intelligence to inform local policing. Officers are obliged to intervene when they identify a crime taking place and they would be of more use in London than the surrounding counties, which have a lower crime rate.

Recommendations

- 1 The Met should map where the police officers in each annual intake live and use this to determine which areas over and under produce police officers within London
 - 2 The Met should update these maps annually to track if and when police officers move outside London and provide an ethnic breakdown of how many live in each London borough.
 - 3 The Met should produce a version of ‘the knowledge’ which is provided to London taxi drivers, for each London borough, and require police officers to be tested on their borough, and perhaps surrounding London boroughs, after a specified period of service e.g. one year.
 - 4 The Met should record the number of arrests and interventions made by Met police officers off-duty separately and should publish this information.
 - 5 The Met should support police officers who make arrests or intervene while off-duty more.
 - 6 The Met should model how many police officers can be mobilised and rapidly deployed on London’s streets in the event of a crisis and the affect that having additional police officers resident in London would have on this.
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Why are the police special? Why not other public sector workers?

The proposals developed in this report could be applied to other groups within the public sector or wider society, but this report focuses on police officers because the Met have a duty, in this respect, to their workforce alone and not all middle income

Londoners. The creation of additional housing supply helps all Londoners as it helps address the housing supply shortage. Police officers are different to generic public servants and deserve assistance to live in London for the following reasons.

Police officers have a security function – which generic public sector employees do not. Officers have the power of arrest. As former Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales Paul McKeever recognised: “police officers already have a duty to intervene in incidents whether on or off duty”.²²⁷ For instance, Met police officers travelling on the ATOC concession are expected to perform a security function. They are instructed that: “it is expected that you [the police officer] make yourself known to the train manager/ticket inspector in the event of assistance being required or requested”.²²⁸ Where police officers spend their time when off duty is important - if they live in low crime areas they are less likely to witness a crime and intervene and there is less crime in their area to deter. The Met appear to discourage their officers from intervening when off-duty and we believe this is wrong, especially when you consider that ordinary members of the public have neither training nor equipment but they can, and do intervene to prevent crime.

Living outside London can affect how an officer acts while on duty. For example, we heard from police officers that they might be reluctant to go to a call that would be likely to take longer to deal with late on in their shift as it would reduce their chances of being able to return home on time. There is no publically available detail on when during a police officers shift they make the majority of their arrests. We recommend that the Met conduct analysis of this to identify if there is a drop off in the number of arrests and stop and searches as a police officer nears the end of their shift. This could then be compared with the data on where police officers live, to see if this is a factor. The police interviewees believed this was important:

- “It is very, very common knowledge that you are getting towards the end of your shift, you are hoping that you are not going to see something cause you’re going to have to deal with it if you do, and you know that if you do that is you on for maybe four hours after your shift’s ending, and particularly for people who live quite far... it is quite difficult”.
- “If you see something, you are going to deal with it. You have to. But it is something definitely that you are wary of and perhaps you are not as proactive in looking for crime as you would be at the beginning of your shift, because of that fear of getting home ridiculously late”
- “I think there is that ... stop working towards the end of shift or drag out what they are dealing with just to reduce that risk of them missing the train”.
- “Yes, some of the calls do not turn out as you expected, but a lot of them, most of them you get a rough idea of how long it is going to take to do People will pick the calls they go to or stay busy with the other calls they dealt with to avoid taking last minute calls”
- “You get a sense with some of the officers that do need to get home on a late shift, and they are dependent on getting the last train, the last couple of hours there is either a complete sense of urgency or a complete lack of urgency”.

One caveat should be applied to this analysis, for some police officers the final hour will be devoted to paperwork so it is the final few hours where there may be a drop off: “the last hour is almost always tied up with paperwork from the preceding

seven hours. So if you imagine, say I am on an eight or nine or however many hours' shift, the first hour generally is taken up with admin, and the last hour is generally taken up by admin".

Even if police officers do not consider these factors they may still be mentally and physically affected by the demands commuting places on them. Officers work unsociable hours because: "when people like to socialise crime happens, therefore when crime happens police officers must work". Having police officers that regularly commute long distances can affect their ability to work effectively while on duty in the following ways:

- "I think the benefit is that the shifts can be very, very long. I think the travelling to and from work after a ridiculous long shift really, really can drain police officers, particularly my colleagues, like I said that live in Essex and we have had a shift that lasted 17 hours and we have missed the last train home and all of that, and then they come in the next day and they are just exhausted; whereas those of us that live locally have a much better chance of recuperating".
- "... it came to the time where there were no longer any trains going to Colchester, so she did sleep in the office, and then of course sleeping in a busy office ... they have people coming in during the night to do some paperwork, so she was basically up all night and had to wait for the first train the next morning, which is not ideal".
- "I am very fortunate, I live close, reasonably close, I can get buses, trains, I can just get a taxi if I need to, but people that live in Leighton Buzzard, Watford, Amersham, they want to go home at 11 o'clock, the last train's at 12 o'clock, they get five hours overtime which they did not want ... they are screwed. A lot of people will sleep on the floor till the next morning train".
- "When I started I got a lift home about five, six times 'cause I finished at 4 o'clock in the morning and trains and busses had all stopped, I did not fancy paying 15 quid for a taxi, so someone gave me a lift home, but a lot of people ... a colleague only last week had to pay £100 to get a taxi home."
- "... one particular shift was supposed to finish at 8 and I think we finished at 3, and my partner lives in Essex. Obviously there were no trains. We worked 7 hours overtime or something like that. So I think he stayed doing paperwork till about 5, got the first train home and then did not come in the next day ... which was cleared by the sergeant and completely fair enough".

Also, the Met Police has an interest in ensuring that its employees do not live with individuals engaged in corrupt or illegal activities. They have an interest in ensuring that police officers do not become very over-indebted as they then become susceptible to the possibility of corruption. This means the Met have an interest in the people their officers live with, and the mortgage debt their personnel take on.

How would policing change if more police officers lived in London?

First, police that live in the communities they serve can permanently tap into the stream of low-level intelligence that helps them to prevent crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recognise that police intelligence means the police having: "a mental note of the habits of prominent criminals, or cultivated special relationships with people in the criminal underworld who provide inside information."²²⁹ UNODC noted that: "the most important (and

often most underutilised) source for criminal intelligence is the patrol officers who are in constant contact with the community and are the first to attend crime scenes. The more developed the concept of criminal intelligence is, the greater the volume of information and intelligence contributed by these patrol officers will be”.²³⁰ We also believe that foot patrol is vital – but, what is foot patrol? It is police officers walking around an area at given points in the day. Police officers living in a community would be doing this off-duty, but in plain clothes, every time they visit the local store. They may not wish to intervene in situations, but they could provide information to serving local police officers.

Second, police officers resident near the community they serve begin to understand what is ‘normal’ for that community. In ‘The Functions of the Police in Modern Society’ sociologist Egon Bittner highlighted the role of police patrol in securing vital intelligence. He wrote: “patrolmen know the shops, stores, warehouses, restaurants, hotels, schools, playgrounds, and all other public places in such a way that they can recognize at a glance whether what is going on in them is within the range of normalcy”.²³¹ Police need to understand the issues in different communities. What is ‘normal’ behaviour in Brixton may vary a lot from what is ‘normal’ in Bexley. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe has said that police officers that live in London have: “better understanding of local issues, knowledge of local communities and an inbuilt insight into London’s varied cultures”.²³² The police officers we interviewed were very aware of the very real differences within London communities:

- “Some people are very precious about what they consider anti-social whereas ... I suppose it depends where you have grown up and what you have experienced growing up ... I mean some calls are just kids playing football in the street”.
- “... with enough experience you get to understand some of it is a one-off and you know that by the time you get there they will not be there and all the rest of it. Other calls you know, because of your knowledge of the area and so on, there is actually a more persistent issue going on”.
- “We have come across so many things on foot patrol that I just do not think you would be able to find were you just responding to calls or were you just working in an office and looking at things. I think that intelligence that you gather is phenomenal when you build relationships in the areas that you work in. People will talk to you and will tell you things that lead to big finds, big warrants things like that and you could just never gather if you did not have that relationship that you forged whilst on foot talking to everybody that you saw too. So I think it is vital”.
- “I think the gang problems in London are quite astonishing and it is not something that I thought was so prevalent and so open. It is quite a shock, particularly in Lambeth”.

Third, the Metropolitan Police have tried to recruit a different kind of police officer, and for these new officers to change the way policing works. One area where it is very clear that this has occurred is the use of stop and search. New police officers described how they were being encouraged to use stop and search less:

- “Some of the newer officers, including ourselves, some of the older officers think we have been taught to be scared of stop and search.”
- “Because negative searches reflect quite badly on individuals ... it is quite hard to get grounds where people are comfortable”.

- “I think some newer officers may be afraid... of their racial profiling someone by using stop and search, but I think it is a very important tactic, particularly for knife crimes”.

Fourth, the new police officers recognised the racial and ethnic disparity between London and other areas of the country. They highlighted a need to reassure communities who come from countries where the police are, as an institution, less respected. This would include the targeted deployment of police officers with language skills in the areas where those skills were most likely to be of use and a greater stress on community engagement, but it could also mean police officers developing links in the areas they live:

- “I think London is just a whole new wave of difference to the rest of the country with the mix of nationalities and embedded police hatred in Brixton and places like that”.
- “We do police by consent, but if you are from Pakistan or India or a country where the police force are actively engaged in criminal activity, the police are not held up as a model of a really great job to do. They are held as those people who exploit and extort, so to try and overcome those cultural perceptions of the police is extremely difficult and would take a lot of time”.
- “I know for some people, if you had certain language skills you might have got placed – so for example if, and to my knowledge there is not anyone in the cohort, but if you spoke Lithuanian for example, they would be most likely to put you [in] Newham, because that is ... [where the] Lithuanians [live] I think”.

How does increasing the proportion of police officers living in London affect how police officers view the communities they serve?

Police officers resident in the communities they serve, or nearby, were more likely to feel a sense of ownership of their patch: “When I worked in Camden, which was obviously a bit more of a night-time economy, we would go and eat in the community and certainly did a lot of drinking in the community after hours, so when something happened you felt ... you tended to know the streets a little better and I used to think: “That could have been me coming out of a pub or that could have been me on the way back’ whereas in [X] I definitely do feel that I am just a ... migrant worker in many ways. I come into work, I do my work there, I go home. I have very little ... understanding of the community. It does not mean I do not do my job to the best of my ability, it is just that I do not really have any kind of connection there”. A police officer who lived in London stated: “because I do live in London, I do not live a million miles from where I work, I do personally feel like if I am getting a burglar off the street I am probably getting a burglar off of my own street to an extent because it is that close in area”. The interviewees described the value of having police officers embedded in the communities they serve:

- “... by living closer to where you work you, I think, have a better sense of life in that area and life in that community and I think you have a greater empathy for people who live there and work there”.
- “They [response teams] might not know that this is actually just one of 200 calls that year relating to that address” and that is because “the trouble is sometimes I think it comes up so often, I think it is very easy to become classified, if you will, as a repeat caller that almost everyone becomes a repeat caller”.

Would police officers who live near the areas they serve concentrate on different issues?

What the last interviewee describes is the very basis of community policing. The Police Foundation recommends the police: “Focus on connected problems rather than on individual incidents and involve local communities in identifying and prioritising them”.²³³ It was clear from the interviews that police officers have little incentive to prioritise dealing with the lower order quality of life crimes that shape life in London such as litter, noise disturbances, public urination and aggressive begging. The new police officers described how this was practically difficult. The time it took to process an arrest meant that it was difficult to clamp down on minor offences. The volume of calls meant there would usually be a higher priority case to deal with. This is unfortunate because broken windows policing is about preserving public order and dealing with the lower order offences that are now described as anti-social behaviour.

By living in the community police officers would develop a continuity of interest with other residents. William J. Bratton and George L. Kelling in ‘Why We Need Broken Windows Policing’ explain how: “Left unchecked, street corners can degenerate into criminogenic environments. The bullies take over. They drink alcohol and take drugs openly, make excessive noise, intimidate and shake down honest citizens, engage in scams and criminal enterprises—and, worst of all, fight with one another”.²³⁴²³⁵ There are limited rewards for asking citizens to keep the noise down, not to drop litter, to avoid public urination, or to stop begging. Although, the issues described are those that the public often raise with the police. With more police officers living in these communities the police would have an added incentive to focus on ‘quality of life’ issues, as officers resident in London would benefit from the improvements they make along with all other residents of London.

This will help the Met improve public confidence in their work, as the Met recognise that: “alleviating local anti social behaviour” is one of four drivers of this.²³⁶ And, it is widely recognised that ‘minor’ crimes are often not given the attention they deserve. Chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council Sara Thornton has said that reductions in police budgets and the changing nature of criminality meant that victims of burglary may no longer receive a visit from a police officer.²³⁷ Police Federation Chairman Steve White has actually said: “Many people don’t report crime now because they feel nothing will be done and they are right. What’s the point? I have every sympathy with them”.²³⁸ The effect of this was: “that unless you record the crimes the police do not know what has happened and they cannot do anything about it”.²³⁹ In 2013, forty-five per cent of all crimes reported to the Met resulted in no further action²⁴⁰ and a survey of shopkeepers for the Policy Exchange report ‘Taking Its Toll: The Regressive Impact of Property Crime in Britain’ found that 35 per cent of the small business victims of shoplifting we surveyed had no confidence in the ability of the police to adequately prosecute shoplifters.²⁴¹

What is ‘policing by consent’, why is it important, and how will police living in London help achieve it?

Building a police force composed of members of the London community is branded as a new approach. In fact, it helps achieve one of Sir Robert Peel, founder of the Met Police’s nine principles of policing: “the police at all times should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police”.²⁴² The Met

still operates on the basis of ‘policing by consent’ rather than by the threat or application of force.²⁴³ Police historian Charles Reith describes how this model was “unique in history and throughout the world because it derived not from fear but almost exclusively from public co-operation with the police”.²⁴⁴ Police need to live amongst the people they serve and, preferably, to recruit from these communities because, as one of the police interviewees stated, the Met should not be viewed as an external force. This maximises public confidence in policing, and therefore enhances the crucial element of “consent”. London has a population of 8.6 million people²⁴⁵ and around thirty-two thousand Met Police officers police them. Policing London requires the consent of the public and this is not merely based on the reluctance of the police to use force.

You can see the importance of consent in policing most acutely in America, following the shooting of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson and the subsequent disturbances in Ferguson the Governor of Missouri appointed an African-American police officer Captain Ron Johnson of the Missouri State Highway Patrol to lead law enforcement efforts. He spoke to Greater Grace Church, Ferguson, Missouri and said: “This is my neighbo[u]rhood” and “You are my family, you are my friends, and I am you.”²⁴⁶ The Mayor, city council and employees announced they were considering three steps to improve police/ community relations; fitting police officers with body worn cameras, encouraging police officers to live in the communities they serve and identifying measures to increase the number of African-Americans applying to the police academy.²⁴⁷

The situation in London is very different to the racial divides in American cities. However, areas of London that have a higher proportion of ethnic minorities have a lower level of confidence in the police. In Tower Hamlets 61% of the local population thought the police were doing a good or excellent job locally²⁴⁸ but in Richmond-upon-Thames the figure was 77%.²⁴⁹ The Police Foundation recognise that: “The legitimacy of the police is important in determining whether people are willing to co-operate with the police (reporting incidents, providing intelligence, acting as witnesses) and comply with the law”.²⁵⁰ Paul Heaton, Director of the RAND Institute for Civil Justice, believes if your neighbour is a police officer: “you may be more likely to have interactions with them, speak to the officers, make reports, that sort of thing”.²⁵¹ This is why it is so important that the police live among the London public they serve.

How can the Met address the lower level of confidence in the police that is present in certain local communities?

To help address the public confidence issues we have outlined the Met should map where every police officer currently lives. This information is already stored by the Met but not in a single dataset. The Met should also record the ethnic split in where police officers live. It should be possible to identify whether ethnic minority officers live in London in greater numbers than their white-British colleagues. By identifying where police officers are resident when they join the Met it would also be possible to identify London wards that under produce Met Police officers. This would help the Met to target their recruitment and engagement efforts at those communities that produce fewer police officers.

This policy would replicate a scheme pioneered by the Rand Corporation in America. They map the locations where police officers and other security workers, including fire officers, are resident. These maps are used to inform police

recruitment. The Rand Corporation estimated the expected number of ‘security workers’ for each area. This was based on a methodology including: “the state, whether the neighbo[u]rhood is urban, the race distribution, the age distribution, education distribution, household composition, average marital status of residents, number of retirees, measures of income and poverty, number of immigrants, and housing stock”.²⁵² This policy would also help the Met to determine if recruiting police officers that live in London affects how many remain in London.

Many police officers highlighted that London was a combination of many different communities: “London is such a diverse place, and you could [go] down to Westminster and Mayfair and somebody would say, ‘Thank you very much officer, what a lovely young man you are! And then you could go to another area and they would go, ‘Oh... whatever’”. The inner/outer London split should also be recognised: “it is what is London, what counts as London now, for me, as soon as you are outside of the inner boroughs, to me it is not really London anymore!”

The majority white-British London boroughs are radically different from the more ethnically diverse ones. For example, in the 2011 census the boroughs of Bromley (84.3%), Havering (87.7%) and Bexley (81.9%) were overwhelmingly white but in the London boroughs of Newham (29%), Tower Hamlets (45.2%) and Brent (36.3%) a minority of the residents were white.²⁵³ Living in Bromley would not make you any better at policing Newham than a non-Londoner. This supports our view that the Met should concentrate on recruiting police officers from areas of London that under-produce police officers compared to their population, and target its housing offer to encourage police officers to live in some of these areas.

How has the residency requirement affected how London is policed?

The interviewees view on whether Londoners could police London better depended on whether they thought London faced unique issues or problems: “You do not get those challenges in other big cities even in Manchester or Birmingham. So one of the problems for the Met is that its workforce has to reflect the city it polices and [at] the minute it does not”. But others disagreed: “I mean other big cities have riots. I think if you live in a city you experience urban problems. I do not think that London has many unique urban problems”. It is also strange that the Met have opened recruitment to London based residents with ‘minor’ criminal records, but banned non criminals who do not live in London from applying.²⁵⁴ Restricting recruitment to Londoners means non-white Britons from outside London cannot apply to join the Met but white-British people from London can. So the residency requirement is as a blunt tool to achieving a more ethnically diverse Met Police force.

Police officers thought that knowledge of one borough would not help you police another: “they [the Met] want people to work in London so they have a better knowledge of London and are from London, but I have lived in London my entire life, 25 years, and I had to Google Kilburn when I was told I was working there... so being a Londoner and knowing London I think are two very different things”. People from outside their area of London: “probably would not be as competent as I am in [X] just because I live north of the river and that is where I have lived and grown up and that is what I know. So I do not really understand the residency rule because if I had been sent to work in a borough that was strange to me I would be just the same as someone who lived [outside]”.

How should we test police officers knowledge of the community they serve?

It is strange that police officers are not required to undertake any test to show they know their local borough. Introducing a form of 'borough knowledge test' seems appropriate. This could be adapted for each borough and taken by all new police officers after a specified period of time such as one year after joining: "I think that should be the criteria, that you should have a level of knowledge of London". Having police officers who grew up in particular areas of London police those areas may have some benefits: "I think it is quite important... I grew up in [X] so I know [X] pretty well. I know people on my response team who have been there eighteen months and still get lost on Borough". The interviewees were making a simple point that it: "would make no difference in your ability to police Tottenham, the fact that you live on Primrose Hill". So, applying a test to all police officers regardless of where they live to assess their knowledge of the area they police seems appropriate.

Will having more police officers resident in London mean that more criminals will be arrested?

The benefit of having more police officers in medium crime areas will rely on their willingness to intervene or report incidents of crime. The interviewees believed that, currently, there was little incentive to intervene in an incident off-duty unless it was serious despite their duty to do so: "You would not, there is no incentive, you would not do it. You just do not do it". Also, the Met do not keep records of the arrests made by off-duty police officers. The Met state that where such data exists it would be: "in the form of limited comments on either the custody system or case notes etc" and as such they would be: "unable to search this electronically".²⁵⁵ So, it would be difficult to track the local impact that having more police officers resident in London would bring. The police could begin to record the number of arrests and interventions made by police officers that are off-duty separate to those made by police officers while on-duty, which they currently do not. In defending ATOC the RMT revealed that it was already known that "every Met officer who uses free travel on buses, tubes and trains intervenes on average three times a year to stop or prevent trouble."²⁵⁶ The Met also noted the "security" benefit that the non uniformed officers travelling under ATOC provide.²⁵⁷ A number of police officers referred to incidents where they had been off-duty and reported some intelligence back to the police or intervened directly:

- "...it happened twice to me where I have been in the local supermarket and someone has run out the door past me so I have detained him, have not arrested him as such, and I have called local aid to come".
- "...two lads were up to no good, looked out of place there, I suppose there is knowing the community is one way of putting it, but just sat around and watched them and called the police in the end and they stopped them later that afternoon with loads of stolen gear in the car".

Are police officers discouraged from making arrests when off-duty?

It seemed so; this was because police officers would not have: "any personal protective kit, we have nothing, we have no cuffs, we have no batons, we have no spray". The

interviewees highlighted their safety fears about intervening off-duty and the lack of perceived support for police officers who did make an arrest while off-duty:

- “We are actually encouraged not to get involved in things off-duty because it often ends in a lot of problems for that officer, usually dismissal... Members of the public will make complaints against you, have you produced your badge, do they know you are Police”
- “...if you get involved in an incident whilst off duty you can get scrutinized as to why you got involved and if you did not get involved why did you not get involved”.
- “If I saw something even outside my front door, obviously depending on what it is I will not automatically get involved. I would contact the local Police to come”.
- “It is not just, ‘oh, I am going to go and nick that guy.’ You have really got to think about it and I would only do it if it was life or limb and someone was going to get hurt”.

Incidents where police officers had arrested someone off-duty and it had gone badly for them were raised spontaneously in some of the sessions: “they [a police officer] showed out [arrested someone/got someone arrested] for someone who was causing a little bit of trouble and that person got their car damaged subsequently on two or three occasions”. One police officer described a case where a fellow officer had intervened in a case where there was an attempt to steal a neighbour's bike by someone in his block of flats. He was identified and his car was “absolutely wrecked” and “he was not particularly supported by the management. It was almost like, ‘Well you brought it upon yourself by showing out’”. In another incident: “a DC on my team, he was making his way home and he intervened in a domestic incident and he ended up handcuffing a suspect and making an arrest. Now he was off-duty and he had his handcuffs with him because he was going to a training day the following day, and he got dragged over the coals by the Custody Sergeant... and by the Inspector”. This incident is described in more detail below:

- “...only a few weeks ago I was walking home about 11 o'clock at night and I walked right into a domestic. I actually got into a little bit of trouble for it at work, ended up having to handcuff the bloke with help from a member of the public. He got arrested; I had to go back into the station to do a lengthy statement. I got pulled aside, instantly questioning why I had the handcuffs with me off duty. It was all fine... [I had my] work bag with me, I travel from site to site and you are allowed to have them off duty regardless, but I was cross-examined by two sergeants [and] an inspector who seized them off me and immediately went for a disciplinary! It lasted about an hour before someone higher up said, ‘What are you playing at? Give them back to him and apologise!’ But yeah, it is taught me my lesson just to not get involved off duty.”

The benefit of having police officers incentivised to intervene or report incidents, even if they do not directly make an arrest, when off-duty, is that the police can then deploy a greater range of police coverage more cheaply. Off-duty police officers have some similarity to police officers working on overtime; as Tim Godwin, then a Deputy Commissioner at the Met described “overtime does not go sick or take leave”.²⁵⁸ If police officers intervene off-duty they will be paid when

they make an intervention and not for any preliminary work and they would only be paid extra to do work that a police officer would be expected to perform. This was explained to me by one of the interviewees, for example: “If you do anything which only a police officer can do. So for instance if I find lost property, go into a police station and book it in, I do not get money ‘cause any member of [the] public can do that, but if I witnessed a crime, again any member of public can do that, but if I physically detain someone or arrest him, then [it is] activity according to a police officer and then you get further pay”. Placing police officers in areas with a medium crime rate and paying them for the interventions they make is a very cost effective means of gaining an increased police presence.

What will the impact be on police response times/ resilience?

It is not clear how the provision of police housing will affect response times and this metric is less important than is often suggested. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) reveal that, “Forces are not required to set responses times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls, so information between forces is not comparable”.²⁵⁹ A broad target of responding to emergency calls within fifteen minutes and priority calls within sixty minutes is maintained by the Met.²⁶⁰ However, there is little evidence that reducing response times would greatly increase police detection rates. Victims and witnesses often delay reporting a crime. By the time a crime report is made the perpetrator will often have left the scene. Response times could be monitored by the Met in areas where police housing is provided but it will be more beneficial for the police to model how much more quickly police officers could be mobilised and how many more police officers could be rapidly deployed on London’s streets in a crisis.

Where having police officers resident in London will make a difference is in the area of resilience. The Met recognise that where police officers live has “implications ... for recall to duty/travel to work during major incidents or severe weather conditions”.²⁶¹ In response, they have an “ambition” to “retain officers who are a part of the community and that they live and work in it. In the medium to longer term, we [the Met] must therefore be able to address the affordability of housing and availability of housing”.²⁶² The Rt Hon. Tessa Jowell believes that the housing crisis: “has the potential to impact on whether London will be able to cope in the instance of a major infrastructure failure, such as a power outage, or terrorist attack”.²⁶³ The LCCI note that: “The ‘blue light’ services are largely shift-based and, in a major power failure scenario, renewing shift cover may be difficult if large numbers of emergency service workers are living outside the capital and unable to use public transport”.²⁶⁴ One interviewee stated: “if you look at something like large scale public disorder where you need to get a large number of officers out on the streets quickly, then if officers are living relatively close, then that is going to be easier, quicker to do”.

Having police officers resident in London means that they can be mobilised in greater numbers at speed. They would also be able to rest more between shifts during periods of civil unrest, emergency or special public events. During the 2012 London Olympics the Met budgeted to spend £6 million²⁶⁵ on accommodating police officers in a variety of locations including many hotels and a university hall of residence.²⁶⁶ The combination of the Queen’s Jubilee,

the London Olympics and the London Riots meant that police officers have, in the last few years, frequently slept in police stations, police vans and, even, in police cupboards because they had back-to-back shifts that left them unable to go home. Having police officers live in London: “increases the availability” and “deployment should things go wrong and should they need to call people in with minimal notice it is there ready for you” because: “if people live far out they are not readily available”.

Conclusion

If the Met wants more police officers to live in London because of the benefits it conveys in terms of increased resilience, community policing, and race relations then they will need to provide police officers with the support to allow them to purchase property in London. This should include measures to help officers to find properties as well as helping them to afford to buy. This help should be targeted to the areas of London where the presence of police officers would be most beneficial – those without a low crime rate. However, no police officer should be compelled to live in London. There is ample property within the police estate to accommodate the new police officers in newly constructed residential property. This would help achieve a financial return on the assets and help the police to reduce crime for all Londoners – including police officers.

Appendix

Custody Suites operated by the Metropolitan Police in January 2016

	Borough	Custody Suite	Custody Status	Cell Count
1	Westminster	Charing Cross Police Station	24/7	42
2	Lambeth	Brixton Police Station	24/7	40
3	Croydon	Croydon Borough Custody Centre	24/7	40
4	Haringey	Wood Green Custody Centre	24/7	40
5	Lewisham	Lewisham Police Station	24/7	33
6	Bromley	Bromley Police Station	24/7	30
7	Barking & Dagenham	Fresh Wharf Muirhead Quay Building 4	24/7	30
8	Hillingdon	Polar Park Unit 3	24/7	30
9	Sutton	Sutton Police Station	24/7	30
10	Waltham Forest	Waltham Forest Borough Custody Unit	24/7	30
11	Southwark	Walworth Police Station	24/7	30
12	Wandsworth	Wandsworth Police Station	24/7	30
13	Barnet	Colindale Police Station	24/7	25
14	Brent	Wembley Police Station	24/7	25
15	Greenwich	Plumstead Police Station	24/7	24
16	Islington	Islington Police Station	24/7	24
17	Ealing	Acton Police Station	24/7	22
18	Kingston	Kingston Police Station	24/7	20
19	Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green Police Station	24/7	19
20	Bexley	Bexleyheath Police Station	24/7	19
21	Hammersmith & Fulham	Hammersmith Police Station & Annexes	24/7	18
22	Redbridge	Ilford Police Station (New)	24/7	17
23	Camden	Holborn Police Station HQ Offices & Aro	24/7	16
24	Hackney	Stoke Newington Police Station	24/7	16
25	Westminster	Belgravia Police Station	24/7	16
26	Newham	Forest Gate Police Station	24/7	15
27	Enfield	Edmonton Police Station	24/7	14
28	Havering	Romford Police Station	24/7	14
29	Harrow	Harrow Police Station & Annexes	24/7	13
30	Hounslow	Hounslow Police Station	24/7	12
31	Hillingdon	Hillingdon Police Station (Uxbridge)	24/7	11
32	Hackney	Shoreditch Police Station	24/7	9
33	Westminster	West End Central Police Station	Overflow	28
34	Southwark	Peckham Police Station	Overflow	18
35	Westminster	Paddington Green Police Station	Overflow	14
36	Newham	Plaistow Police Station	Overflow	12
37	Camden	Kentish Town Police Station	Overflow	11
38	Ealing	Southall Police Station	Overflow	11
39	Barking & Dagenham	Dagenham Police Station	Overflow	9
40	Hammersmith & Fulham	Fulham Police Station	Overflow	9
41	Southwark	Southwark Police Station	Overflow	8
42	Enfield	Enfield Police Station	Overflow	7
Total Number of Custody Cells operated by the Metropolitan Police				881

Total recorded crime and the overall crime rate for each London borough 2014-15²⁶⁷

Borough	Total Number of Recorded Offences (2014-15)	Crime Rate (2014-15)
Barking & Dagenham	16,227	81.8
Barnet	23,153	61.8
Bexley	12,270	51.2
Brent	25,093	78.2
Bromley	20,431	63.6
Camden	28,420	121.0
Croydon	28,794	76.6
Ealing	25,930	75.8
Enfield	22,299	68.7
Greenwich	21,012	78.2
Hackney	25,700	97.7
Hammersmith & Fulham	20,249	113.5
Haringey	23,802	89.0
Harrow	12,314	50.1
Havering	15,253	62.0
Hillingdon	22,011	75.2
Hounslow	20,808	78.4
Islington	26,217	118.6
Kensington & Chelsea	18,830	120.6
Kingston upon Thames	9,771	57.5
Lambeth	33,009	103.7
Lewisham	22,105	75.7
Merton	12,159	59.7
Newham	28,974	89.3
Redbridge	20,123	68.7
Richmond upon Thames	10,783	55.7
Southwark	30,124	99.6
Sutton	10,970	55.4
Tower Hamlets	27,327	96.2
Waltham Forest	20,770	77.5
Wandsworth	22,587	72.4
Westminster	48,252	206.8
Met Police Area	705,767	82.7

Crime rate figures are per thousand population.

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- 269 Between conducting our analysis and publication MOPAC/the Met vacated seven properties taking the number of properties they own down to 374. However, the two properties, both very large, listed as 'in development' when we were compiling our valuation, and not included in it, became 'operational'. The 'operational estate' has increased in size and value since we compiled our figures despite the reduction in the total number of properties.
- 270 Prices have fallen in only one London Borough, Kensington & Chelsea, since we valued the estate. Applying the reduction in price per square metre to my estate valuation this means the value of the police property in K&C decreased by around £3.5 million (from just under £131 million to just over £127 million) but the value increased in all other London Boroughs.

Half of the Metropolitan Police Officers do not live in London and this badly affects the way our city is policed. The phenomenon of the “commuter cop” makes it harder to deploy officers quickly in emergencies, such as riots or terrorist attacks; reduces the police presence in London; reduces officers’ contact with the communities they serve; and contributes to the Met’s continued difficulty in recruiting a force that reflects the diversity of London.

In interviews with Capital City Foundation researchers, police officers told of having to sleep on the floor after they missed their last trains, and of slackening off in the last hours of late shifts for fear of incurring time-consuming, train-missing arrests. Most Met police officers we interviewed would like to live in London if they could afford it – though not in precisely the places they policed, due to the nature of their work. But, these police officers will not be able to live in London without help.

This report proposes that the Mayor’s Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC), and the Met, should work with housing associations and private developers to convert underused police properties into housing for discounted sale to police officers. Properties bought under the discount could only be sold back to MOPAC/the Met or other police officers. Between 3,350 and 5,380 new homes for officers could be created under these plans. The force should also provide low-interest loans and top up officers’ savings to help bridge the gap between their salaries and the amount needed to purchase a London home. Through these means, the Met should set itself a target of incentivising 3,000 more police officers to live in London over the next five years.

By converting police properties into housing for police officers we can ensure a greater off-duty police presence in London and a more productive on-duty police force. To avoid the scheme simply incentivising officers to live in leafy suburbs within Greater London the level of financial assistance and home discount available should be varied according to an area’s crime rate so police officers are incentivised to move to the areas where Londoners need them most – areas with a higher crime rate.

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