



Manifesto for the Met

**Mark
MacGregor**

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Manifesto for the Met

**Policing London
in the 21st Century**

Mark MacGregor



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About the Author

Mark MacGregor was Campaign Director for Steve Norris's 2004 campaign to be Mayor of London. Policing and crime were key issues during the election. Previously Mark was Chief Executive of the Conservative Party from 2002 until 2003 and is currently the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for South Thanet. In 1987, he set up a PR and events company, Marketforce Communications Ltd, which he sold in 2004. He was brought up in Clapham and was educated in London and Edinburgh.

1. Foreword

There is little doubt that crime is at the top of the political agenda. In every part of the country, regardless of background, age or income, significant numbers of people simply do not feel safe on the streets. Opinion polls confirm this trend: the MORI political monitor for November 2004¹ puts crime second behind the NHS as the most important issue facing Britain. An ICM Research poll for the Cabinet Office in 2004² found that more people believed the quality of police service was getting worse rather than improving, with two thirds believing that crime had not fallen. The Government has recognised these concerns, with new legislation on crime and security dominating the Parliamentary timetable. Crime is also likely to be one of the key battlegrounds at the next General Election.

Paradoxically, concern about crime has remained high despite record levels of expenditure on policing by the Government and a raft of new legislation and initiatives flowing out of the Home Office since Labour came to power. In 2003, the Government spent £19 billion on the criminal justice system – the equivalent of £316 for every person in the country – an increase of 65% since 1997. Since

2000, record numbers of police officers have been recruited across the country³.

Nowhere is the importance of the issue more evident than in the capital. With the Mayor of London responsible for setting the budget for the Metropolitan Police, tackling crime was a critical issue for all the main candidates in the 2004 London Mayoral elections. Crime trends and patterns in the metropolis tend to be an indication of what is to come for the country as a whole. The explosion in the use of knives and guns is only the most recent example of a problem starting in London before spreading to other parts of Britain. In addition, London has, by some distance, the highest population for the police force to cover as well as the largest concentration of businesses, Government buildings and foreign embassies. A complicating factor is that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is like no other police force in the UK having local, regional and national policing responsibilities. The Metropolitan Police is responsible for diplomatic and royal protection as well as taking the lead in tackling terrorism and specialist crimes. As a result, the challenge for anyone taking on the task of running the Metropolitan Police is immense.

This report assesses the record of the past four years and examines options for the new Metropolitan Commissioner of Police, Sir Ian Blair, who took over from Sir John Stevens on 31st January 2005.

2. The Last Four Years

When Sir John Stevens took over as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in 2000, the force was facing a crisis. Recorded crime in London had risen significantly over the previous three years, with violent crime in particular showing dramatic increases⁴. Police numbers had fallen to just over 26,000 with further falls in the pipeline because of a bulge in retirements from older officers. As a consequence, morale in the force was extremely low, exacerbated by the stinging criticism of the Metropolitan Police in the Inquiry conducted by Sir William Macpherson following the murder of Stephen Lawrence⁵.

More police with some impact on crime

With Sir John at the helm, the past four years have seen important changes in the force in London. First, the size of the police force has risen rapidly. From a low of 26,001 officers in March 2000, the figure reached 30,265 by March 2004 with further increases on the way⁶. Second, the Metropolitan Police has pioneered the use of Police

Community Support Officers (PCSOs), recruiting almost 1,500 since 2002 with the aim of giving a visible presence on London's streets⁷. Similarly, the number of civilian staff is up from 10,759 to 12,093 over the same period⁸. Third, on their website, the Metropolitan Police proclaims the resulting fall in crime, with overall crime down by 1.9%, gun crime dropping 7% in the past year and Operation Safer Streets leading to a fall in residential burglary by 10% and robbery by 16% since 2002⁹. The budget for policing in London has risen substantially to £2.7 billion a year for 2004/05¹⁰.

The period of Sir John's leadership of the Metropolitan Police also coincided with the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York as well as terrorist acts in other parts of the world. Part of the rising budget has necessarily been used to prevent a similar terrorist attack in London; the fact that there has been no incident here must reflect positively on the police and its leadership.

Safer Neighbourhoods

The Metropolitan Police has also been swift to implement the *Safer Neighbourhoods* initiative where six officers – three PCSOs, two Police Constables and one Police Sergeant – are allocated to specific local authority wards with the aim of providing a more visible policing presence¹¹. Beginning with the three wards in each borough with the highest crime levels, the initiative is designed eventually to cover every ward in every one of the 32 London boroughs.

Crime still rife

However, the increase in the strength of the force and the success in tackling certain categories of crime should not conceal the failure of the police to deliver significant reductions in crime levels in the capital.

Over the past four years, overall recorded crime figures are still higher than they were when Sir John took up his appointment. The total number of offences in London is up by 6.8% to more than one million a year. Violent crime has risen every year for the past four years and is now 20% higher than in 2000¹², with gun crime up 24%¹³. Rape has risen by 28% while drug offences are up 36%¹⁴. Even the falls in car crime and street robbery are, at least in part, due to improvements in security and technology by car manufacturers and mobile phone companies rather than the performance of the police.

Crime detection rates are also very poor in London. From a peak of 25% in 1997/98, clear-up rates have fallen in the capital to just 15%. This figure is among the lowest in the UK and compares poorly with other similar forces such as the West Midlands and Merseyside, both of which have detection rates of around 25%¹⁵.

There are some people who believe that rising crime is simply the price that you pay for living in a large urban metropolis. But experience elsewhere, and particularly in the USA, would suggest that, with record police numbers seen in the capital, London should have achieved the sort of crime reductions experienced in similar cities. Most famously in New York, during Rudi Giuliani's first four years, crime fell by 43% with violent crime dropping 26%, rape by 14% and murder by 60%¹⁶. These figures are in stark contrast to the rises in crime in London since 2000. Of course, New York remains a more dangerous city than London but crime has, even since Giuliani retired as Mayor, continued to fall year on year.

More of the same?

There have also been very few institutional changes in the organisation since Sir John Stevens took over in 2000. Although some claim

that he has strengthened the specialist crime and operations sections of the organisation – in part reflecting his background as a detective – the organisation is essentially the same as it was when he took over as Commissioner.

Against this background of extremely limited progress, the new Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, faces huge pressure to deliver the kind of step change in crime reduction achieved in New York. He must also produce results knowing that police strength and budgets are unlikely to rise in the next four years as rapidly as they have done since 2000. Another four years of the same would surely be regarded as a failure for the new Commissioner.

3. Making London Safer

So what are the challenges facing the new Commissioner to ensure that London becomes a safer place in which to live and work?

3.1 Change the culture of the police service

Cultural change in any organisation is hugely challenging. In the Metropolitan Police it is harder still because of the entrenched attitudes towards policing and the outside world. According to Steve Norris, former London Mayoral candidate, “it is achieving cultural change rather than just putting extra police officers on the street that is the real issue”¹⁷.

One advantage that the new Commissioner will have is the relative inexperience of most police officers. Six out of ten Police Constables, for instance, have less than four years service¹⁸ so there is a real opportunity to use the youthfulness of the officer team to reshape the culture and ethos of the organisation.

A less insular force

“The essential problem with the Metropolitan Police, as with other police forces elsewhere in the country, is the insular and defensive outlook of the organisation”, according to Simon Milton, Leader of Westminster City Council. He believes that, “it is only through intensive partnership work that this has been overcome to the point where, in Westminster, we have a very effective and close working relationship”¹⁹.

All too often the police are simply not used to working in partnership with other parts of the community. Of course, this is partly a reflection of the hierarchical nature of the organisation as well as the necessary command structure. Regardless of the cause, it makes the police an unwilling partner with those outside the organisation. Steve Norris believes that, “too many police officers regard the public with suspicion and view them as part of the problem rather than the solution. At best, this attitude makes the police reluctant to engage with the public in combating crime and, at worst, it brings out an overly aggressive approach towards them”. Sometimes referred to as the “canteen culture”, Steve Norris thinks this is, “not just an expression but reflects a whole attitude that police officers have towards the public they serve”²⁰.

Of course, those at the top of the police must drive cultural change but this will not guarantee that it feeds through to the rest of the organisation. Unless the change is embedded through techniques, processes and incentives that are designed to cause a shift in attitudes to take place, nothing will happen. The most prominent feature of the Metropolitan Police in recent years has been a huge amount of talk from the leadership about community involvement and engagement but very little buy-in from the ordinary officer on

the street. In short, it is just window dressing. Much of this isolation from the public comes at least in part from the lack of real democratic accountability in the service. The police nod at liaison with local councils and community organisations but too often only engage with them on their own terms.

The police are the public

Why does this matter? Because, at the most basic level, the police can never win the war on crime alone. One of the founding principles of policing in Britain is that ‘the police are the public and the public are the police’. But there is now a growing distance between the police and the public. More worrying still, there has been a gradual erosion of support for the police among the general public. Without enthusiastic public backing, making any serious progress in crime reduction is impossible.

Steve Norris believes that the two causes underpinning this loss of public support are, “police incompetence and incivility – the incompetence often being more structural (such as the inability to answer telephone calls to local stations swiftly or sometimes at all) while the incivility is driven by officer perceptions that the public are part of the problem”²¹.

This growing gulf between police and public has its roots in modern policing methods and structures. The most important of these has been the shift away from foot patrols so that officers spend most of their time in police stations and police vehicles and as a result have far less day-to-day contact with members of the population. Taking officers out of their cars and returning them to foot patrol would not only improve visibility, it is also the only way of rebuilding the link to the community. This should not just apply to

Police Constables and PCSOs either – those supervising the lower ranks should regard it as a critical aspect of their job to regularly walk the areas they are responsible for, to give them a better sense of what is happening on the ground. The police should also identify other ways of bridging this divide including regular secondments to community groups such as sports and youth clubs, schools, local authority and voluntary organisations.

The huge increase in paperwork that must be completed by officers and the public is another issue that creates conflict between the public and the police. Politicians and the requirements of the criminal justice system drive much of this increase, but better training would ameliorate the potential damage this can cause.

Call centres

One of the most glaring illustrations of police failure, which saps community support for the force, is the time taken by most police stations to answer telephone calls from the public. To combat this problem, the Metropolitan Police initiated the C3i project to direct callers to three call centres to handle both 999 and non-emergency calls. This may improve the ability of the police to answer callers but, again, it removes another link between the police and the local community. Barry Loveday, Reader in Criminal Justice Studies at Portsmouth University, thinks the Metropolitan Police will regret making the decision: “When the Kent Police opened the first centralised call centre in Maidstone it proved to be enormously damaging to public confidence in the police. It also demonstrated just how far removed the police were from the local community, something that the Metropolitan Police is likely to encounter too”²².

There are numerous councils in London that operate highly successful call centres to help residents and it may be that the police should consider using their facilities for non-emergency calls. After all, as Merrick Cockell, Leader of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, points out, “many of the minor problems that people report to the police are actually matters for the local authority to handle. It would certainly be a more local solution than anonymous London-wide call centres”²³.

Police and Community Support Officers

PCSOs too have a far greater value than just a more visible presence on the streets. The evidence so far is that, where effectively deployed, they can play an important role in information gathering²⁴. The very fact that they regularly patrol the same roads and estates means that they can build a much closer relationship with individuals, businesses and community groups – and that they can report back on action taken to combat particular criminal activities. This builds confidence that the criminal justice system is working for the citizen. In addition, the fact that PCSOs do not have the same status or powers as a fully warranted police officer makes them a friendlier and more approachable presence on the street. In Kensington and Chelsea, Merrick Cockell says there is evidence that the PCSOs are particularly effective, “in working with young people and in tackling low-level anti-social behaviour. One potential hazard of PCSOs developing a closer bond with communities could be that police officers are only ever seen in conflict situations like arrests and this might exacerbate the divide between police and the public. This is clearly something that needs to be kept under review but is not an issue at the moment”²⁵.

Community engagement

Dr Sohail Husain, Deputy Chief Executive of Crime Concern, acknowledges that, “there are good examples of the police working in collaboration with local communities, such as our Action 4 Youth Project that brings together young people and the police in Barnet. The police do not always engage with the community as effectively as they might. This partly reflects a lack of understanding of the scope, methods and potential of engagement, which may still be seen to be only about consultation. But it also reflects their training and ethos, which equips them to take control of situations, as a result of which they can find it hard to ‘let go’ and enable local people to play an active role that includes the shaping and delivering of solutions. Unless you allow those communities to have some ownership and involvement in the solutions, it is difficult to see scope for dramatic improvements”.

According to Dr Husain, “the presence and continuity of the new *Safer Neighbourhoods* officer teams may help deliver reassurance, which is very important, and break down the barriers but this is unlikely to be the catalyst for the fundamental cultural change that is required”²⁶.

Dr Husain also believes that, “too little money is spent on preventative early interventions that address risk factors associated with later offending (especially among children and adolescents). This is despite the success and cost effectiveness of such action. The police have historically been very effective at making the case for more resources to politicians and have exerted a powerful influence on budgets available for the crime reduction activities they can deliver”²⁷. In addition, many of the most effective crime prevention initiatives are organised by small, locally based voluntary and

community groups that by definition find it difficult to gain national recognition. Ironically, these are also the very groups that the police have difficulty engaging with. In London, championing some of these successful schemes might pay huge dividends to the leadership of the Metropolitan Police. Equally, ensuring that more police officers are seconded, even for short periods, to work in community groups would be a clear demonstration of a new and more collaborative approach. Jane Roberts, Leader of Camden Council, believes that, “such an approach would help bring police and local communities together. In the past, the police have had difficulty in participating in community forums and have at times tended to retreat into defensive mode when faced with any criticism”²⁸.

Steve Hitchins, Leader of Islington Council believes that, “while the last Commissioner was very effective at raising morale, Sir Ian Blair’s strength will be raising the reputation in the community. One of the keys to success will be how the police can engage the enthusiasm of local people in anti-crime initiatives. One route would be to develop further the structures that local authorities already have in place rather than trying to go it alone. This would also be the first major step to giving the Borough Commander greater democratic accountability.”²⁹

The police also can demonstrate a slightly patronising approach – even indifference – towards Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Again, this is indicative of an underlying mistrust of the public playing any significant role. Regardless of the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch, it is one of the few current ways for members of the public to play a role in crime prevention and therefore either needs to be fostered or to be replaced with alternatives that give members of the public direct involvement in crime prevention.

Decline of community policing

The 'withdrawal from the streets' has not only occurred in the decline in foot patrols; there have been other aspects of this trend. The number of local police stations has been in decline with the result that people feel they have no central focus for policing in their own areas nor do they have the reassurance that police stations are provided at least in their immediate area. The Metropolitan Police has already recognised the need to address this issue and is examining the option of establishing new stations or mini stations in supermarkets, post offices and community centres. This may not entirely replace the old stations, but it is a positive step that should be encouraged.

In the past, police officers used to live in or near the communities they served, sometimes even residing in police houses on estates. This gave the officers a direct connection with the communities they were policing as well as outstanding knowledge of their area. Now, police houses have been sold off and a significant percentage of officers, especially in outer London, do not even live in the capital but instead commute in from the counties adjoining London. A potential solution to this problem would be for local authorities and the police to work together with housing associations to offer police officers subsidised accommodation, either to rent or buy, in the communities they policed. Over time, this would ensure that more and more officers were embedded in their own communities; this would make it even more imperative that officers are allowed to work in one particular area for longer periods of time.

Finally, the police should review the 'corkscrew' system of promotion that requires police officers to move to different parts of the force as they move up the organisation. Part of the *Safer*

Neighbourhoods scheme is a guarantee that the six-officer team in each ward will remain based there for a set period of years. This recognition of the benefits of anchoring people in a community does however need to be continued higher up in the Metropolitan Police. While it may be important that officers gain experience of different types of policing in different parts of the capital and beyond, the requirement that they have to move on to move up should no longer be the norm – and the appointment of Sir Ian Blair himself, who was previously Deputy to Sir John Stevens, could be a useful example for change in the rest of the organisation.

3.2 Central Government should leave the police and the Mayor to get on with the job

Glen Smyth, Head of the Metropolitan Police Federation, argues that, “central Government crime targets and initiatives distort priorities and have little if any impact in altering the behaviour of policing on the ground. They also increase cynicism among public and police officers about the underlying motivation behind the initiatives. For the past two years, for example, the Government has set targets for reducing robbery and burglary”³⁰. While these crimes may be important in areas of London, such targets are completely inappropriate in many parts of the capital. The key driver of most crime, including burglary and robbery, is drugs. Yet ironically there are no targets for drug related crime. Nor has there been, in the parts of the capital most badly affected, any sustained and permanent effort to tackle the problem, raiding drug dens, providing addicts with more rehabilitation centres etc. Police are therefore always dealing with the symptoms of crime rather than the root cause.

So Ian Blair's first action on day one in charge should be to thank the Home Secretary for his appointment and then ask to be allowed to deliver a safer city without interference. Just as any new chief executive appointed would want time to develop their strategy and deliver results, the new Commissioner should say, in effect, "here are my goals for crime reduction - judge me on my record at the end of every year".

Whitehall knows best

The constant stream of initiatives from the centre is a huge distraction that has little if any impact on the front line. "Central targets can even be counter productive", according to Glen Smyth, "and just confuse police officers about what the real priorities are. They also make them cynical about the objectives of the politicians who set targets to generate a good headline in tomorrow's papers rather than because they make sense for policing in their areas"³¹.

Abolition of central targets and initiatives would certainly win support from those who work with the police at a local level. Tony Arbour, Leader of the Richmond upon Thames Borough Council and a member of the Metropolitan Police Authority, says, "the Government's bewildering welter of initiatives and targets can be totally irrelevant to the varying needs of different parts of the capital. It is self-evident that policing in Hackney and Lambeth is completely different to Richmond and Bromley but the Government still seems set on imposing national targets on these very different types of areas. The new Commissioner could make a start by scrapping such targets and leaving it to the individual Borough Commanders to decide their own priorities"³².

Who's responsible?

Another area that demands action but which is outside the direct power of the new Commissioner is the clarification of the lines of responsibility for the Metropolitan Police in London. The accountability of London's police has always been different to the rest of the country, with the Home Secretary having the role that police authorities did elsewhere. The GLA Act was supposed to bring London's police into line with the tri-partite arrangements of Home Office, Police Authority and Chief Constable, but it did not. Instead, it introduced a fourth element into the equation, giving the Mayor of London responsibility for setting the Metropolitan Police budget and the policing precept for London council taxpayers, as well as the power to appoint members of the Metropolitan Police Authority. However, because of the possibility of the first Mayor being Ken Livingstone, the Government inserted all kinds of caveats and restrictions on the powers of the Mayor over policing matters. For example, it is the Home Secretary and not the Mayor of London who appoints the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Mayor is not permitted to chair the Police Authority.

This has further confused lines of responsibility for the police. In effect, the Mayor has used his financial powers to increase council tax to hypothecate funds for his own initiatives, leaving the Police Authority as a pointless talking shop. As the Mayor's contribution to the overall Metropolitan Police budget has increased, so has his political control. This is not an unwelcome development, as it builds greater and much clearer democratic accountability between the police and politicians. It is time for the Government to recognise that, with the developing relationship between the Mayor and the police, there is no continuing purpose in retaining a Police

Authority. At the same time, local authorities have recognised that they too have financial muscle and, in purchasing PCSOs from the Metropolitan Police, they have bought the right to influence their deployment on the ground.

The new Commissioner should politely request that the politicians sort out a simpler and more transparent line of responsibility. It is time for the Government to have the courage of their original devolutionary convictions and give the Mayor full responsibility for the Metropolitan Police. In the USA, the Commissioner is appointed by the city's Mayor and answers directly to that individual; London would certainly benefit from such a system here.

Giving democratic control over the strategic decisions on policing to the Mayor is an important step to making the police accountable to local communities. If local authorities gain more leverage over police activity this provides another way for local people to influence how they are policed. However, in the longer term, we may want to consider giving local people the ability to call referendums – similar to the recall powers in California – if they are unhappy with the record and approach being used by the police service.

Lies, damned lies and statistics

One other consequence of the Metropolitan Police being beholden to the Government is the temptation to 'spin' each month's crime figures with a positive interpretation. This may keep the police's political bosses – the Government and the Mayor – very content and provide some good headlines in the media. But the technique has been used in the past to conceal rising crime figures and to downplay the explosion in violent and sexual offences. The new Commissioner should eschew

such an approach for the future and lay out from day one the measures by which he should be judged. Figures for the past three months, one year and three years should be published each month so that the public and the media can have confidence that the figures reflect reality rather than hype. One possible way of improving the credibility of the monthly crime statistics would be to ask an independent organisation to audit and publish the monthly figures.

Former Mayoral candidate Steve Norris believes that, “much more should be done to encourage people to report crime so we get an accurate understanding of crime levels in the capital. Significant numbers of people do not bother to report crime because they believe the police will take no action”³³. Such attitudes can only damage the level of trust for the police among the general public. In the light of the 2004 Audit Commission study on Crime Recording³⁴, which found that one in ten incidents are not properly recorded by the police – and that the Metropolitan Police’s performance has deteriorated over the past year – this may be a good moment to implement a more fundamental review of how the statistics are recorded and reported. The problem may indeed conceal a wider attitudinal problem with the seriousness with which police officers treat members of the public who report certain types of minor crimes or anti-social behaviour. People have to be persuaded that it is actually worth their while reporting crime – in short, that some action will be taken.

3.3 Learn the lessons from New York

In the end, making people safer in London depends on cutting crime, not just in certain types of offence but across the board.

With the huge extra expenditure spent on policing over the past four years, the public have a right to expect crime to fall significantly, ideally by the kind of levels witnessed in American cities, but most famously in New York. Fortunately, the lessons from that city's experience are well documented³⁵ but there is little evidence that the Metropolitan Police has applied these in London.

Compstat

At the heart of New York's policing revolution was the now renowned Computer Statistics (Compstat) system. This was introduced by New York Police Commissioner Bill Bratton to identify precisely where crime was taking place on a street-by-street basis across the city. It enabled the New York Police Department (NYPD) to target different crimes in different areas depending on the best way of tackling that type of offence. By providing detailed information on crime across the city, it allowed the performance of every part of the police operation to be managed, allocating police officers to where crime was actually being committed as well as identifying crime trends and patterns that could then help catch criminals and take preventative action in future. In fact, it was so important to Rudy Giuliani that he said he would trade a thousand police officers in exchange for Compstat.

London needs its own Compstat system and, critically, for it to be used in the same rigorous and systematic way that it operates in New York.

Compstat was used not just as a way of measuring crime but also as a management tool to increase pressure on the five NYPD Borough Commanders to reduce crime across the board month-by-

month and year-on-year. This culminated in the weekly Compstat meetings where one of the Borough Commanders would be grilled by the Commissioner about the performance in reducing crime over the previous month. Failure to deliver led to removal.

One example used by Rudy Giuliani as a microcosm of the effectiveness of Compstat involved drug offenders. Compstat enabled the central team to pinpoint not just the geographic areas where drug users and pushers were breaking the law, but also the times that most offences were taking place – and these were from early afternoon till late in the evening. As a consequence, the hours worked by drug enforcement officers were changed so that their work patterns more closely reflected those of the criminals they were supposed to apprehend³⁶.

One of the aspects of Compstat that many observers have missed, says Barry Loveday, Reader in Criminal Justice Studies at Portsmouth University, is that, “it empowered Precinct Captains with real power and responsibility to tackle crime in their own areas. Compstat also ensured that the precinct commanders and their officers were working to achieve precisely the same goals as the central Police Department and the Mayor of New York. Until then, local police officers in New York felt detached from initiatives emanating from the NYPD HQ and, as a result, most were never implemented”³⁷. By giving those on the ground real involvement in the project, this had a dramatic impact in New York and would have a similar effect in London. This is, according to Glen Smyth, Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, something every police officer in the boroughs would recognise: “There is a stream of top-down initiatives and targets that fail to engage the active and enthusiastic support of the police constable on the ground”³⁸. Interestingly, precinct commanders in New York were also

given control of the management of detectives, rather than hiving these off to specialist crime squads.

The Metropolitan Police claims to operate a system similar to – or even better than – Compstat in New York³⁹. Critics however believe that, while they have the ability to measure crime in different parts of London, the key to success is how you then use the information effectively, something the Metropolitan Police has signally failed to do. Former Mayoral candidate Steve Norris thinks Compstat should be used in the capital to set challenging performance targets to Borough Commanders: “In New York, Borough Commanders were given far greater responsibility for tackling crime as well as additional resources, but Compstat was then used to judge their performance in delivering major reductions in crime”⁴⁰. However, the New York experience suggests that one of the great advantages of the weekly Compstat meeting was that, as well as the Borough Commander, all the other players in that community would also be present. So, for example, a similar meeting in London would certainly need to include the local authority Chief Executive or Council Leader, the manager of the local train and tube operators, major business or community groups in the area. Because of the Metropolitan Police’s insular and inward looking culture, this has simply never been tried in London – and yet without this, Compstat in New York would never have been as effective.

The other aspect of Compstat that made New Yorkers feel safer in their city was that by putting the figures into the public arena, without any gloss or spin, it reassured them that, at last, someone was taking the issue seriously⁴¹. More importantly, because the falls in crime levels were so dramatic and reflected their own daily experience, they believed that the figures being used by the police and politicians were genuine. In short, the more public and transparent

the process of reviewing crime statistics is, the more it helps to build public confidence, a lesson that the Metropolitan Police could certainly benefit from learning.

To work effectively, Compstat cannot simply be a top down mechanism for measuring performance; it must also affect how the ordinary Police Constable patrolling the street performs their role. One of the features of a stratified organisation like the Metropolitan Police is that people do what they are instructed to do without thinking about the consequences even, frankly, if the instructions are absurd. The lesson from New York is that you need to engage the enthusiasm of officers on the ground, providing them with the information that allows them to target criminals more effectively.

Broken windows

An important benefit of the Compstat system is that, as well as highlighting crime trends and patterns, the system automatically flags up the kind of anti-social behaviour and vandalism that blights many parts of the capital. Barry Loveday thinks, “this helps to reinforce the importance of those issues for individual police officers. As it is often exactly these kinds of offences that increase fear of crime, anything that can highlight them must have a beneficial impact”⁴².

This allows NYPD to use another technique – what is often called ‘broken windows’ – that could also be usefully replicated in London. The success of the drive in New York to combat specific minor criminals – squeegee merchants, fare dodgers, beggars – was a way of demonstrating that no crime, however small, would be tolerated and that vigorous pursuit of minor offences had a knock-on effect in reducing more serious crime. There has been no attempt to pioneer a similar approach in London. Many of the people caught committing minor

crimes in New York were also found to be involved in more serious ones – fare dodgers were often found to be carrying concealed weapons or illegal drugs – or had information about more serious offences that they were willing to trade for a lighter sentence for their own offence.

In London, the Mayor and the Metropolitan Police are quick to trumpet the occasional sweep against illegal mini cab touts or fare dodgers. But these campaigns only demonstrate the inadequacy of London's approach in contrast to the sustained and permanent drive against low-level criminality that achieved such success in New York. The Commissioner should identify a couple of similar types of offences that could be used to the same effect in the UK. Simon Milton, Leader of Westminster Council, believes that illegal mini cab touting in the centre of London is, "the most flagrant example of an offence where the Metropolitan Police could achieve dramatic results – but only if the campaign was sustained and serious – and worked in co-ordination with other organisations like transport operators, local councils and businesses"⁴³. However, because anti-social behaviour is a much more prevalent problem in London, identifying a symbolic example of yobbishness might be a better target for the police to concentrate on. The current Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, has suggested that the Metropolitan Police should initiate a tough clamp down on spitting or littering in public and it may be that this would be a better offence to target in London⁴⁴.

3.4 A visible and permanent police presence on the streets

It has almost become a truism to claim that the easiest way of making people feel safer is to put a significantly higher number of police

officers and PCSOs on patrol in every part of the capital. This seems to be what opinion polling evidence suggests, as was confirmed most recently in ICM Research's 2004 poll for the Cabinet Office⁴⁵, which found that almost half those surveyed said that more police on the street would convince them that the quality of the service was improving. This is, of course, the aim of the *Safer Neighbourhoods* initiative, which has been largely driven by the incoming Commissioner. To date, most of the increase in the number of PCSOs has been in central London but, as the numbers rise, this is set to spread to other boroughs.

And visibility matters. When President Bush visited London in 2003 for example, there was a significant spike in crime in outer London from where most of the officers had been taken to patrol central London⁴⁶. So criminals at least noticed. There are also signs that putting more officers on foot patrol is attracting the support of some serving police officers – as one officer who had switched from patrolling in a car to patrolling on foot observed, “you don't get information on criminals and crime when sitting in a box”⁴⁷.

Police on the beat

There are, however, concerns about whether *Safer Neighbourhoods* will achieve its goals. First, in many parts of the capital, PCSOs do not operate at night. As they make up half of the patrolling force, that is clearly likely to have an impact on their effectiveness, especially as it is the absence of a police presence during the evening that makes people wary about using the streets at night.

Second, even when every ward is covered, there will still only be 3,744 police officers and PCSOs to cover the 624 wards across London⁴⁸. That will leave 17-18,000 other officers, allocated to

boroughs, performing their existing duties. This will fail to deliver the kind of visibility that is required to have the impact that would make people feel more secure. A vital element will be how to involve other officers in each borough in patrolling the streets. Only by a further increase in officer numbers on patrol will their presence reach a 'critical mass' so that people feel safer on the streets at all times of the day and night. One route would be gradually to increase the amount of officers working as part of the *Safer Neighbourhoods* teams until they became the dominant component of the organisation. The new Commissioner could make a start by committing the police in each borough to a minimum number or percentage of officers who would be on patrol at all times.

Such a change will involve a huge transformation in the attitude of the average Police Constable. The withdrawal from the streets by police officers, into police stations and cars, reflects the shift towards what is called 'response-led' policing where the police regard their role as detecting crime and responding swiftly to emergency calls. The failure of this style of policing is most apparent in the very low crime detection rates. Any attempt to shift even a proportion of police officers away from response-led policing will require a major attitudinal and cultural change in the organisation – precisely the kind of change that takes time and is extremely difficult to achieve.

Third, there is, even now, consistent pressure to divert the *Safer Neighbourhoods* teams onto other duties. Barry Loveday, Reader in Criminal Studies at Portsmouth University thinks, "a major challenge for Sir Ian Blair will be to see how he resists this pressure, particularly when confronted by Ministers or civil servants in the Home Office demanding action is taken about national initiatives"⁴⁹.

But while visible policing may provide reassurance to the public, it is only a part of the solution. In fact, what was interesting about the changes made in New York is that there were very few officers on foot patrol, particularly in central areas like Manhattan, and it was other changes that had the real impact in cutting crime so dramatically.

In short, the changes initiated through *Safer Neighbourhoods* are only the start of this process. It is highly unlikely that this initiative will deliver the levels of visibility that will reassure the public and very much larger numbers of officers will be needed to achieve the kind of critical mass required.

3.5 Give real power and involvement to local communities

The Metropolitan Police need to win back the confidence of local communities by demonstrating that they are addressing their concerns and reflecting their priorities.

Making London safer is not just an issue for the police; it requires the enthusiastic support of the whole community. Here the Commissioner can take a lead in acting as a catalyst for action with businesses, local authorities, community groups and voluntary organisations. Each of these organisations has a vital role to play and need to feel involved in the fight against crime.

Partnerships with local authorities

There are already a variety of models of local authorities working in partnership with the police at borough level. In Richmond upon Thames, the council effectively buys a team of PCSOs to patrol the area. The Leader of the Council, Tony Arbour, thinks this approach,

“allows the council to guarantee that PCSOs are on Richmond’s streets without having to recruit and train their own workforce. Being an outer London borough with relatively low levels of crime compared to inner London, it also ensures that the area does not get forgotten by the centre”⁵⁰.

There needs to be far more effective co-ordination of the various parts of the police “family”. At one level, this would mean handing over responsibility for the Metropolitan Police’s remaining traffic wardens to local authorities. Transport for London (TfL) PCSOs should be integrated within the police and council operation. Merrick Cockell, Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council believes this is one area where better co-ordination would deliver results: “It is absurd to have TfL PCSOs patrolling on precisely the same streets as those funded by borough councils or the Metropolitan Police without any co-ordination or integration of their activity”⁵¹.

Tony Arbour believes that the Borough Commanders have, “a far better understanding of the different crime patterns at local level. For example, in many outer London boroughs like Richmond, Havering and Bexley there is a huge difference between crime levels during the day and at night”.

In Westminster, there is a weekly meeting that has been designed to replicate the Compstat meeting in New York. They have recruited their own teams of wardens – called City Guardians – and are working effectively with the local police to identify crime trends and then agreeing on a co-ordinated approach to tackle the problem. Of course, as Simon Milton, Leader of Westminster Council, admits, “councils have no say in the appointment of the Borough Commander and this would be an issue if a Borough Commander’s

approach differed markedly from that of the local authority. In addition, the local authority has no real say over how money is spent by the police in their area, which can cause tensions especially when their activities are dictated by central Government regardless of the needs of the area in question⁵².

Kensington and Chelsea have set up a different model with the Safer Surer Board to co-ordinate police and local authority activity on crime. Chaired by a councillor, the Board has overseen the deployment of 100 PCSOs, bought from the Metropolitan Police with contracts that agree the work that they are to undertake in the borough. This has produced success already with much greater visibility in the five wards covered by the initiative⁵³. The Council is now looking at how to co-ordinate the activity of the vast network of its employees who work out in the community – parking attendants, environmental health officers, anti-graffiti teams, caretakers, PCSOs and police officers – so that, for example, an officer on patrol has a quick and simple way of alerting those responsible where graffiti needs to be cleaned off, abandoned cars removed or damage to council property repaired – and vice versa. The council are also examining how to give leaders of community groups the same direct access to this network.

One modest peripheral benefit from the Kensington and Chelsea Safer Surer Board may be the easing of the police's insistence that all police officers and PCSOs patrol in pairs as the teams in the borough are permitted to patrol on different sides of the road.

One common theme running through all the most successful of these joint boards is the genuine enthusiasm for them within both the local authority and the police. It is also apparent that the more senior the individuals involved, whether from police, local authority

or voluntary group, the greater likelihood of it delivering results. To demonstrate the police's commitment to local policing, Sir Ian should insist that Borough Commanders sit on these local boards.

Interestingly, these organisations that have evolved in different forms at a local level, have been far more effective than the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), which have been imposed by the Government. In many ways, groups like the Safer Surer Board in Kensington and Civic Watch in Westminster have simply by-passed the CDRPs – and are achieving real results as a consequence.

In the longer term, it is inevitable that organisations like Civic Watch will develop a dynamic of their own but they will always be held back until budgets are delegated completely from the centre to the individual Borough Commanders. This would make the partnership at a local level far more powerful and would enable real changes to be made to the structure and deployment of police and council resources at a borough level. Jane Roberts, Leader of Camden Council, thinks that it would make sense to have, “a single plan and single budget to deliver community safety – rather than separate plans from the council and the police”⁵⁴.

If power were to shift closer to the community in this way, it would leave the central leadership of the Metropolitan Police – New Scotland Yard – to assume a very different and smaller role. The primary function would be to utilise the data from Compstat to monitor and compare the performance of different boroughs, highlighting successful and unsuccessful initiatives from the local level and removing failing Borough Commanders. Delegating power in this way could represent a real opportunity for the new Commissioner to achieve dramatic change in the organisation. Critical to these relationships working is the appointment of new Borough Commanders.

It will be interesting to see whether the Metropolitan Police is willing to permit those from the local authority to have a say in the appointment of future Borough Commanders to particular areas.

Similarly, the business community has established retail crime partnerships in parts of London but not every major shopping centre is yet covered and, in any case, this scheme only assists retailers. Many businesses are willing to invest in measures that would reduce crime but there are few mechanisms for them to feel any sense of involvement in developing solutions that would provide direct or indirect benefits to themselves and, as a result, they opt out of the entire process.

Using the enthusiasm and support of volunteers has an important if limited role to play too. In Kingston, volunteers man a local police station to ensure that it can provide a service for the local community. There are similar examples elsewhere in the capital that need to be encouraged.

Civilianisation

Giving more power and responsibility to individual Borough Commanders over other areas of responsibility, such as the balance of officer and civilian staff needed at local level, would deliver real benefits. Over the past few years, the Government and the Mayor of London's emphasis on increasing police officer numbers has reduced the scope for employing civilians for particular tasks. Tony Arbour, Leader of Richmond upon Thames Council, has observed first hand highly trained police officers being used to perform tasks that would be better undertaken by civilian staff with specialist skills. His view is that, "civilian staff should be used not just for back office or administrative jobs such as HR, secretarial or finance functions but

also front office roles like custody officers. This already happens in a few boroughs but Sir Ian could encourage this trend by giving Borough Commanders a free hand in their recruitment policies locally and then championing the successful examples of civilianisation²⁵⁵. Such an approach would both save money and also allow more efficient delivery of these services, permitting highly trained police officers to concentrate on the job for which they were recruited. One of the consequences of this might be that police officer numbers fall in some boroughs; Sir Ian would need to make a robust case to politicians both at local and national levels that this was delivering a better result for the local community.

Glen Smyth, Chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, thinks, “more use could be made of civilians to undertake certain tasks but working conditions and technology in most police stations are woefully inadequate. Without significant investment, you will still have people wasting huge amounts of time on basic administrative work²⁵⁶. The lack of, for example, cell space in many police stations also contributes to the poor use of resources as prisoners are transported around from station to station during busy times. Without addressing these issues, it is hard to imagine major improvements in the effectiveness of the Metropolitan Police. Decisions about investment in such non-staff related functions should also be delegated to borough level.

Minority recruiting

The Metropolitan Police has made some progress in recruiting a higher proportion of officers from ethnic communities but much more could be achieved. Without advocating positive discrimination, it does mean adopting a far more active approach to schools,

churches and sports centres in ethnic communities to demonstrate that the Metropolitan Police is not a racist organisation and that officers from those communities have a vital role in tackling crime. It is encouraging that the number of PCSOs from black and ethnic minority communities is far higher than in the police force as a whole and lessons can be learnt from the approach adopted there. Equally, seconding officers to black and ethnic minority organisations would be a useful way of building trust among ethnic groups. As the recent Morris Inquiry⁵⁷ found, it is vital that the Metropolitan Police roots out the management practices that continue to discriminate against officers from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, but this is only part of the answer. The Commissioner is in a unique position to lead an aggressive and pro-active recruitment campaign.

In other countries, part of the role of police officers is to identify and encourage people in their own communities to join the police force and financial rewards can even be designed to provide additional incentive for those finding new recruits. Such an approach in London would provide another way of closing the gap between police and community, and may help raise recruitment levels among ethnic minorities.

3.6 Creating a police force for London

The structure of the Metropolitan Police has survived largely in tact since its inception but it is increasingly challenged by the growing complexity of criminality and local demands for policing.

A local police force

Two recent developments illustrate the tensions that affect the organisation and will need to be addressed by the new

Commissioner. First, the decision by the Government to establish the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) is a clear recognition that the Metropolitan Police can no longer handle serious crime alone. Moreover, although SOCA will not deal with terrorism initially, it seems inevitable that, over time, responsibility for tackling more and more aspects of terrorism will shift to SOCA. Sir Ian would do well to recognise this and accelerate the separation of powers to SOCA, slimming down the Metropolitan Police's role in this area.

Second, devolving responsibility to individual Borough Commanders for tackling crime at a local level will draw power away from the centre. While this is welcome, it makes it even more critical to define a narrower role for the leadership of the Metropolitan Police at the centre.

National, diplomatic and royal roles

In addition, it may be prudent to consider why London's police force maintains any role in royal and diplomatic protection, not just in London but across the country. Hence the odd situation that, for example, when the Queen is at Windsor Castle or Balmoral, it is the Metropolitan Police that has responsibility for her security. The sight of Sir John Stevens travelling to Paris to oversee personally the investigation into the death of Princess Diana was merely the latest example of what a diversion this responsibility has become. Although undoubtedly prestigious, it is a huge drain on resources and a constant distraction from their primary responsibility of protecting the safety of the capital's seven million people. The Commissioner should consider handing over all the royal and diplomatic protection to the Home Office in a separate unit. It is also

unclear whether the Metropolitan Police receives adequate funding to pay for the police and management time taken to undertake these national responsibilities – any transfer would automatically make the costs properly transparent.

In contrast, the decision by the police to assume responsibility for the Royal Parks Police is self-evidently beneficial. It would be equally sensible for the Metropolitan Police to assume responsibility for the London section of the British Transport Police. The fact that the two organisations use separate, incompatible radio systems to communicate is just one example of why the continued separation is damaging to operational effectiveness.

4. Manifesto for the Met: Recommendations

4.1 Change the culture of the police service

The Metropolitan Police has, in common with other police forces in the UK, developed an “insular and defensive” culture that has been exacerbated by many modern policing methods and structures that isolate the police force from the public.

There has been much talk in the past few years about community involvement but little real action. Two of the most visible problems that have undermined support for the police – incivility and incompetence – have to be tackled as part of this process of cultural change.

- **Recommendation 1:** Officers should be put back on foot patrol not just to provide reassurance to the public but also to help rebuild links with community. This should not just apply to Police Constables and PCSOs – those supervising the lower ranks should regard it as a critical aspect of their job to regularly walk the areas for which they are responsible.

- **Recommendation 2:** The police has to find new and innovative ways of engaging with the community – voluntary groups, residents’ associations, local businesses – as well as reinvigorating or replacing schemes, like Neighbourhood Watch, that actually engage the public in crime prevention activity. The key to success will be altering the attitude of police officers towards the public.
- **Recommendation 3:** Police to identify other ways of bridging the ‘them and us’ divide, including regular secondments to community groups such as sports and youth clubs, schools, local authority and voluntary organisations.

Too many parts of the police organisation are also poorly managed and require a dramatic overhaul, particularly where this involves direct contact with the public. The clearest, but by no means only, example is how telephone calls are handled at local police stations. Better training and technology would help but this problem is driven primarily by police attitudes to the public – and is only likely to be exacerbated by handing over the role to anonymous centralised call centres.

- **Recommendation 4:** The police should examine whether it is practical to share the handling of non-emergency calls with local authorities.
- **Recommendation 5:** The trend towards ever-larger police stations, increasingly separated from the community, should be reversed with stations or posts developed in supermarkets, post offices and community centres. This may mean allowing businesses, volunteers and community groups to man the stations.
- **Recommendation 6:** In the past, police officers used to live in or near the communities they served, sometimes even residing in

police houses on estates. Restoring that link, at least in part, could be achieved by providing subsidised accommodation for police officers through housing associations, either to rent or to purchase, to allow officers to live in the areas they police.

- **Recommendation 7:** As part of building a link between officers and their community, the police should review the “corkscrew” system so that it is no longer the norm that promotion requires police officers to move to a different geographic location – in fact, the assumption should be the reverse.

4.2 Central Government should leave the police and the Mayor to get on with the job

Centrally prescribed crime targets are at best a distraction and at worst counter-productive. It is absurd to assume that what is the right approach for Hackney is also correct for Richmond – London’s diversity requires a different approach, determined at local borough level, not by central Government.

- **Recommendation 8:** All central police targets should be abolished, allowing the Commissioner to get on with his job unhindered by political interference from central Government.
- **Recommendation 9:** At the same time, the Commissioner should delegate increasing power and responsibility to individual Borough Commanders to set their own targets – with the leadership of the Metropolitan Police holding them to account.

There needs to be far greater clarity about the accountability of the police – and in particular the Commissioner.

- **Recommendation 10:** The Commissioner should be directly accountable to the Mayor. Ken Livingstone has effectively used his financial powers to shape policing in the capital and that is where democratic accountability should lie.
- **Recommendation 11:** The Metropolitan Police Authority has become irrelevant and should be abolished altogether.
- **Recommendation 12:** To restore faith in crime statistics, the new Commissioner should eschew the ‘spinning’ of crime statistics, and lay out from day one the measures by which he should be judged.
- **Recommendation 13:** Figures for the past three months, one year and three years should be published each month so that the public and the media can have confidence that the figures reflect reality rather than hype. The credibility of the monthly crime statistics would be further enhanced if an independent organisation audited and published the monthly crime figures.

4.3 Learn the lessons from New York

The Metropolitan Police claims to have a similar system to Compstat but it has not been used to effect the kind of changes that delivered success in America. While using Compstat to pinpoint where crime is being committed so that police resources can be aligned with criminal activity, the real benefit of the system was that it empowered officers working on the ground – from the Borough Commander to the ordinary police constable on the beat – and gave them real responsibility for crime reduction. Crucially, introducing Compstat would allow the leadership of the Metropolitan Police to concentrate on who was succeeding in delivering lower crime levels – and removing those who consistently fail.

- **Recommendation 14:** London should implement its own Compstat system and use it in the rigorous and systematic way that it operates in New York.

In New York, targeting small time criminals like squeegee merchants and fare dodgers had an immediate impact as many of these people were wanted for more serious offences. But it also deterred low-level offenders from moving up the conveyor belt to more serious offences. In London, identifying similar offences, such as illegal mini cab touting, could have similar benefits. Instead of one-off, temporary sweeps against cab touts, what is required is a sustained and permanent campaign involving the police, businesses, local authorities and transport police. However, because anti-social behaviour is a much more prevalent problem in London, identifying a symbolic example of yobbishness, such as spitting or drinking in public, might prove more effective – something that Mayor Livingstone has recently called for.

- **Recommendation 15:** The Metropolitan Police need to identify a number of low-level but symbolic offences that are flagrantly breached every day in the capital to demonstrate that law breaking will not be routinely tolerated. Potential low-level offences that could be targeted for a sustained crackdown might include illegal mini cab touting, spitting or vandalism.

4.4 A visible and permanent police presence on the streets

Putting a large and highly visible policing police presence on the streets is a pre-requisite to making people feel safer in their own

communities. However, to achieve the kind of ‘critical mass’ required to provide that reassurance, the Metropolitan Police will need to put considerably more officers on the street than the 3,700 that are being allocated to the *Safer Neighbourhoods* teams. The Commissioner must take a lead in reversing the withdrawal from the streets, supporting initiatives that take police officers out of police stations and vehicles and put them back on highly visible foot patrol.

- **Recommendation 16:** The Metropolitan Police needs to increase the number of officers and PCSOs working in *Safer Neighbourhoods* teams until this becomes the dominant component of the organisation in the boroughs.
- **Recommendation 17:** Officers working in the *Safer Neighbourhoods* teams should not be taken away to police central London or other duties, except in absolute emergencies.
- **Recommendation 18:** There needs to be a high, minimum numbers of officers who will be on foot patrol at all times in every part of the capital. PCSOs also need to be able to work in the evenings and at night, not just during the day.

4.5 Give real power and involvement to local communities

The police can never bring crime under control alone; it requires the enthusiastic involvement of the whole community. The Commissioner can take a lead in acting as a catalyst for a new collaborative approach by championing the crime partnerships that have evolved at a local level. Many of the specific models, like the Surer Safer Board in Kensington and Chelsea or Civic Watch in Westminster, are producing

results precisely because they are not top-down initiatives but driven by the local authority and police organisations at a borough-wide level.

- **Recommendation 19:** To achieve their full potential, local crime partnerships should be given total control of budgets and complete responsibility for implementing local community safety plans.
- **Recommendation 20:** Local authority leaders should have a say in the recruitment and appointment of Borough Commanders.
- **Recommendation 21:** Borough Commanders should be given total responsibility for budgets in order to start a bottom up revolution within the organisation.
- **Recommendation 22:** Borough Commanders should also be given the power to decide how many officers and civilians should be employed in their areas, and whether to use civilian staff not just for back office or administrative jobs such as HR, secretarial or finance functions but also front office roles like custody officers.
- **Recommendation 23:** Transport for London's PCSOs and the British Transport Police operating in London should come under the direct day-to-day management of the local Borough Commanders.
- **Recommendation 24:** Responsibility for the Metropolitan Police's remaining traffic wardens should be passed to local authorities.

Such an approach would both save money and also allow more efficient delivery of these services, permitting highly trained police officers to concentrate on the jobs for which they were recruited. Similarly, decisions about non-staffing issues, like technology,

station location, number and type of cell space provision should also increasingly be taken at a local level.

This would leave the leadership of the Metropolitan Police with a much reduced role. Having delegated far greater power to those on the ground, the centre should concentrate on monitoring and comparing the performance of each borough, highlighting successful and unsuccessful initiatives implemented at a local level.

The police need to adopt a far more active approach in working with schools, churches, businesses and sports organisations to recruit new officers and PCSOs who will then work within that community. This is especially important in increasing recruitment among London's ethnic minority communities.

- **Recommendation 25:** The Commissioner to lead an aggressive and pro-active recruitment campaign and give serving officers direct financial incentives for persuading new applicants to join the police.

4.6 Creating a police force for London

The establishment of the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) is likely to mean that responsibility for serious crime and terrorism will move away from the Metropolitan Police.

- **Recommendation 26:** The Commissioner should accelerate the accretion of responsibility by SOCA and welcome the reduction of the Metropolitan Police's role in fighting serious crime and terrorism.

- **Recommendation 27:** The Metropolitan Police should hand over responsibility for royal and diplomatic protection to the Home Office, as this is a serious diversion away from its core function.

In short, the Metropolitan Police should become the local police force for London charged with the single task of delivering a safer city.

Notes

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- 19 Interview conducted with Simon Milton, November 2004
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- 21 Interview conducted with Steve Norris, November 2004
- 22 Telephone interviews conducted with Barry Loveday, November and December 2004
- 23 Interview conducted with Merrick Cockell, December 2004
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- 27 As footnote 26
- 28 Interview conducted with Jane Roberts, December 2004
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The appointment of Sir Ian Blair as the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police provides an opportunity to examine the way that London is policed and challenge some of the prevailing orthodoxies about how crime in the capital should be tackled.

Following Policy Exchange's influential report on the future of policing in the UK, *Going Local*, Mark MacGregor offers a hard-hitting assessment of the recent record of the Met and its apparent inability to make a significant impact on crime in London. He recommends a number of practical measures that could enable the new Commissioner and his officers to give Londoners the police service they deserve.

These include:

- Change the culture of the Met by rebuilding links with communities through greater use of foot patrols and intensive engagement with residents' associations, youth clubs, businesses and other local institutions.
- Encourage police officers to live in the communities they police and reverse the trend of closing local police stations.
- Make the police presence on the streets visible and permanent.
- End central government interference and allow the Mayor and the Met to determine police priorities.
- Make the Metropolitan Police Commissioner directly accountable to the Mayor.
- Abolish the Metropolitan Police Authority, which has become irrelevant, and encourage priorities to be set at borough level wherever possible.
- Learn the lessons from New York where Compstat – a radical new computerised crime fighting system – has helped to slash the rate of offending.
- Focus on the core task of crime fighting by handing over other responsibilities such as royal and diplomatic protection to the Home Office and accelerating the passing of national policing matters to the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

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