

An aerial photograph of London, England, featuring the Tower Bridge and the City Hall building. The image is overlaid with a dark blue vertical bar on the left side. The text is positioned on the white background of this bar.

RSA

Action and Research Centre

Overview of Evidence

**Safer Together:
Policing a global
city in 2020**

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The RSA in
partnership with



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

TOTAL POLICING

Background to the consultation

In autumn 2014, the Metropolitan Police embarked on a major consultation exercise designed to understand how to best provide the service that London needs as a global city in 2020.

To help the Met steer, gather, and analyse the range of responses to the consultation, the Met partnered with the Royal Society of Arts. The RSA is independent and has extensive experience in managing consultation processes that lead to proposals for organisational change. It was agreed that the final report would be produced independently by the RSA.

The first phase of consultation officially launched in November 2014, and took place across the Met. Staff, officers and senior leaders deal with a changing landscape on a day-to-day basis; reflecting on their own experiences, they articulated the challenges the Met faces, as well as where the service is performing well and where there may be opportunities for new ideas in the future.

The second phase of the consultation involved the Met's range of partners and stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors in recognition that the maintenance of a safe city is a partnership endeavour. As the Met prepares for further budget cuts and confronts new scenarios posed by a changing city in terms of demography and advances in technology, a strong, cooperative relationship with partners is paramount to achieving collective impact.

As part of this second phase, the RSA reached out to an extensive network of individuals and organisations connected to the Met, inviting responses to four key questions:

- **How can the Met ensure that it has a trusted relationship with all stakeholders and the general public?** As the threat from extremism, transnational crime and localised crime operations is ever present and relative threats are shifting all the time, the constant enhancement and replenishment of trust is a critical public safety and crime reduction imperative.
- **How can the Met better work with partners and stakeholders to ensure London's safety?** The Met faces a series of challenges that transcend a single organisation – and not just in a policing setting. The NHS (including the ambulance service), and local authorities have particular overlap. How can we work together with other public agencies, the private and voluntary sectors to meet London's needs?

- **How is the Met better able to meet and manage demand?** This requires an open discussion about the expectations of what it is the Met is there to achieve, its priorities, and how it can work with London's citizens and a range of stakeholders to achieve its goals in a manageable fashion. This includes the new threats and opportunities afforded by new technology.
- **What approaches should we take to create an efficient and fit-for-purpose organisation?** Here we are looking to learn from approaches taken by others over the last few years to meet financial and operational pressures. What approaches are others taking looking forward?

In response to these questions, 41 written submissions were received, representing a wide breadth of public services, local government, businesses, interest groups, third sector organisations and community groups.

A series of focus groups were also held, encompassing the views of 27 participants. A further 35 individuals were engaged on a one-to-one basis.

Alongside the consultation, there was academic exploration of the changing nature of crime types and threats, supported by a reference group of 19 experts.

The following sections provide a balanced overview of the responses to the consultation, based specifically on the written submissions, focus groups and one-to-one meetings. To be clear, the statements made by respondents are illustrative and should not necessarily be interpreted as fact. Statements have been anonymised to ensure that the focus is on the substance of the responses rather than the individuals themselves.

We are incredibly grateful to all those who generously contributed their time to the consultation.

1. Information sharing and learning

Demonstrating openness and transparency

The Met's ambition to nurture a culture of transparency was universally valued by respondents to the consultation. All responses encouraged the Met's efforts to develop a relationship with the public through greater openness, and much thought was given to how to further progress. Many of the recommendations revolved around information sharing, whether this was information which could enable citizens to protect themselves or improve the ability of partners to respond to shared challenges such as terrorism. It was suggested that more than quantitative data is of interest to stakeholders and the public; for example, an aspiration for the Met could be to publish data on more than the number of crimes reported by expanding on how they happened, focusing on patterns or trends (such as burglars targeting rear windows) that might inspire citizens to proactively adapt their behaviour as a preventative approach.

Stakeholders were also interested in operational transparency, including information on the delivery of local policing outcomes (for example, detections, successful prosecutions and other sanctions); the number of police officers allocated to boroughs, and the baseline used in calculating changes to the establishment. A number of them voiced concerns about the Met's resources by 2020 and encouraged the Met to initiate an honest dialogue about what this will mean for the number of officers on the ground.

“The Met needs to have a strong and honest dialogue about what resources it will have by 2020 (eg if it will have 5,000 fewer police officers it should say so). The Met should be honest about what impact the resource reductions, whatever they are, will have, so that it sets the context for the difficult decisions that will then need to be made.”

Local authority consultee

The need for a clearer understanding of the Met's operational structure was justified based on considerable confusion as to 'who does what and who is responsible for the ownership of community engagement'. One respondent contended that this confusion has bred community and stakeholder discontent and has diverted the Met from its previously understood engagement and consultation mission.

Similarly, there was a respondent to the written consultation and a number of focus group participants who expressed frustration at a lack

of clarity about the distinctions between the Met's agenda and that of national agencies. For instance, it was explained that while the majority of cyber, fraud and terrorist related offences in the UK may present themselves in the capital, given their national and international dimension it was not understood why law enforcement agents who tackle them come from the Met. The assumption was that other national assets, such as MI5 and GCHQ (and the military), recruit nationally those whose qualifications and attributes are better suited to the task. There may be less speculation and conjecture about what the Met is doing and if the Met could be more explicit about the logic underlying their operational and strategic priorities in this regard.

Improving use of technology and service design

It was suggested that the Met explore how technology can deliver efficiencies through other partner technologies, for example databases and programmes used by local authorities, hospitals, probation services, London Fire Brigade, London Ambulance Service, and the Ministry of Justice. There could be a five year plan that best combines the technology plans of all the organisations, to deliver efficiencies of scale and common technology platforms.

Examples were drawn from councils that are experimenting with innovative solutions to increasing their efficiency and effectiveness. Havering's customer insight programme was spotlighted, which supports policy interventions targeted to meet the needs of individuals rather than attempting to drive improved outcomes through a single model of intervention. The programme is informed by the borough's data and intelligence hub, and was described as using data to drive intelligent service design.

Case study: Havering Customer Insight Programme

The London Borough of Havering needed to save as much as £40m by 2014. The challenge of making significant budget savings was further complicated by the fact that council tax was already high and there were low unit costs to run services. The council thus became concerned with the question of how to deliver services more efficiently while protecting those that really mattered to local people. It was decided that the council would move away from universal, prescribed services towards personalised services targeted at people who really need them. However, in order to fulfil this ambition there was a need for greater insight that would allow the council to target customers more effectively.

Havering council began developing a tool to target residents based on their characteristics and preferences. In 2011, the council built a bespoke segmentation using their own customer data sets and from PCTs, as well as new data from Mosaic (a generic customer profiling tool designed by Experian). The council created 12 different segments, specific to the population of Havering, which allowed them to pinpoint at a household level the communication preferences of residents and which services they used and didn't use. This segmentation tool enables the council to "target the right services at the right people in the right way."

The tool was successfully put into practice through the council's over 65s consultation project, which was designed to ascertain the needs of residents aged over 65, and increase this group's awareness of services available to them.

Managing data and information flows

A compelling reason for the Met to better manage its data and information flows is that doing so will enable the force to be “confident in its competence”. This relates to an earlier point made about the hesitation among staff to promote the service (it was claimed that only a third of the staff would recommend the service to families); the police at present are not confident in their colleagues’ competence and this lack of trust internally exacerbates the challenges they face. As intelligence gathering improves through technology, officers also need to be able to make strides in how they get to grips with the data and utilise it to strengthen their performance.

The other point that was continually raised by focus group participants is the need for the Met to take a data-led approach to understanding their demand and, consequentially, inform how they manage their resources. There was a plea for the police numbers allocated to boroughs to fully reflect local needs. An example given to illustrate the current disconnect between data and demand is that there are some stations which are open from 9am to 5pm when the majority of residents of working age have commuted elsewhere for the day.

“There needs to be a mindset to police a ‘day in the life’ of a Londoner; looking at where and when the Met can make an impact, visual and otherwise. However, currently the policing model is territorial, based on London boroughs, which is not the most effective solution. Wandsworth ‘loses’ 60,730 people per day to work elsewhere (20 percent of its population); Tower Hamlets ‘gains’ 114,381 people, (a 41 percent increase.). One million Oyster card journeys are made in London between 7am and 10am. Yet police support does not follow those served, it does not ‘commute’ across London, unlike the inhabitants. Indeed the police station in Wandsworth is only open Monday to Friday from 9 to 5, when a fifth of its population is out of the borough. It is closed when they return from work.”

Business consultee

It was argued that in a 21st century urban environment where populations are constantly shifting, technology should be used to follow congestion and human flows, to help determine where resources are deployed. It was suggested that the Met’s allocations should be decided by more robust mechanisms, to avoid the need for the repeated abstraction of local police to tackle public order and capital city issues.

Sharing data with partners

Some of the responses explored how information sharing with stakeholders, particularly for preventative purposes, could happen. It was suggested that an agreed, standard pan-London approach to information sharing would helpfully alleviate the need to develop local agreements (that may vary) in every borough. Some respondents explicitly stated their understanding that robust vetting, monitoring and review by the Met of stakeholders who are able to access police intelligence will be required and stated they would be willing to cooperate in exchange for information.

There are obvious areas where data sharing between partners would be especially beneficial and thus enforced; for example, violent crime. However, not all partners in this instance are willing to cooperate, including the Met at times. At present, partners do not trust one another with the data they each hold. However, from the Met's perspective, it is not the names they are most interested in – it is about identifying the problem and where the gaps are.

MOPAC similarly runs into issues obtaining the data needed from partners to evaluate strategic initiatives. For example, they have funded Redthread to support young people who come through emergency rooms because they have been the victim of violent crime. In order to evaluate whether this has made a difference to policing they must be able to access data that would indicate whether injuries were related to drug and alcohol dependencies, gang membership, and so on. This evaluation would hopefully enable everyone in the round to see what their contribution to a solution has been or might look like, but it is currently being held up by a lack of data sharing.

There may be legal barriers to sharing data even within Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), which need to be urgently addressed. But partners and any intermediary organisations with oversight of data, for example, in MASH, also need to enable more *useful* sharing of data. The challenge here is that there are differences in what is collected, which means that there are gaps when trying to combine or compare data (ie for evaluations). A fundamental priority task may be for the Met and their partners in safeguarding boards, local authorities and the NHS to meet and determine some basic shared categories for data that would be useful to collect for the benefit of all. However, syncing data is only part of the solution; more time needs to be dedicated to analysis as partners have pointed out.

“MASH captures data on very large numbers of cases. The system needs to be much more about analysis, not just collecting data. We need analysts to map demands and needs. In essence, don't just share, but analyse data.”

Community and voluntary sector consultee

Utilising data effectively

Although the Met has a lot of intelligence and some of it is very useful, it is not set up to filter this data for quality and, in particular, some changes to their structure have weakened the ways in which they communicate this intelligence to partners. For example, it was said that the Met's intelligence reports are not as good as they once were since they have now reorganised into hubs. Reports tend to address centrally driven targets, which is not always helpful in responding to local need. The data and intelligence does not seem specific enough to the local area to be useful, but rather appears to be driven by the seven MOPAC Priority Crimes for London. It was said that if the Met was able to share some of the underlying data used in these intelligence reports with local authorities, the local authorities could draw on their existing skills and resources to improve these reports and help build an evidence base for policing.

It was argued that improving the Met's wider understanding of the ways in which technology is both changing policing and the nature of demand would lead to better utilisation of their data and intelligence. One example relates to the Met's understanding of e-commerce, specifically, the ramifications that e-commerce has in terms of new types of crime. Online payments are subject to scams and fraud, but there could also be increased risks of delivery vans being targeted for theft and drivers being attacked. This new era of policing in the city poses a different set of challenges than policing on a high street. In general, the Met should be engaging with the concept of 'smart cities' and how developments in technology could enable them to become a force with 24/7 capacity to respond to dynamic needs.

Capturing and spreading learning

The Met's institutional memory was viewed as weak. It was suggested that the Met was not learning enough from past mistakes and that money could be saved through trying to retain lessons (for example, by re-engineering training of recruits to incorporate this knowledge).

There are instances of police working in partnership in other parts of the UK that have achieved impact. However, these examples of partnership working have been difficult for other forces, including the Met, to replicate because there are few ways to share this learning. One instance in particular was highlighted to us by the Director of Clinical Commissioning Groups in London, who referenced the success of Cardiff A&Es in playing a role in violence prevention.

There are also lessons that can be learned from partners. For example, other public sector bodies are managing demand through rolling out successful programmes that channel resources effectively. Notable mentions included the Adoption Social Impact Bond and the Carers Social Action Support Fund.

2. Collaboration

Enabling collaboration at a local level

It was pointed out that each borough's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) provides a framework for collaboration, and that the CSP offers a means to work with parties to ensure safety and leverage resources from these stakeholders (although it was stressed that this should not be confused as taking over someone else's budget). However, the Met also needs to channel more of its resources locally. There was a view that more central control of resources has negatively impacted on local policing discretion and engagement, and that in particular the removal of dedicated partnership roles within local police senior leadership teams has reduced effective liaison and partnership working.

“... The pooling of some functions in headquarters-type teams to reduce costs has at the same time reduced the opportunity for local collaboration and exploitation of local solutions. In short, the shift away from local policing discretion to centralisation needs to be re-balanced, to give local police the opportunity to develop innovative solutions with local partners. Those solutions would vary from borough to borough.”

Local authority consultee

Respondents were also keen to progress co-location initiatives. One of the responses noted that co-working had been successful when it came to licensing functions, but that more could be done to improve the service and deliver better results. There was acknowledgment that co-location is difficult, given the infrastructure, IT and security requirements; but there was also assurance from partners that they would help the Met see it through.

Strengthening key relationships

The basis of successful partnerships is shared objectives (as opposed to shared values or other factors), but there is sometimes conflict here that complicates the Met's relationships.

“At times, the Met's priorities can compete with those of partners, for example: imposing sanctions for minor offences on young people can impair their ability to engage in education; or arresting known offenders (who in some cases perhaps suffer from mental health difficulties) carries dis-benefits for adult social care and health authorities.”

Community and voluntary sector consultee

To align objectives and improve their work with partners, it was suggested that the Met recognise the value of police officers being seconded to partner organisations. It was also recommended that the Met employ more ‘systems thinkers’ in its leadership; these were described as “men and women who will be able to see the whole raft of measures needed to prevent and reduce crime, beyond simply policing efforts.”

There were multiple pleas for either introducing a single point of contact within the senior ranks for the Met’s essential partners; or, at the very least, making greater efforts to maintain continuity of conduct and ensure adequate handover of relationships when there is churn.

Referring the vulnerable to appropriate partners

It was mentioned that there are missed opportunities to refer vulnerable suspects (and offenders of low-level offences) onto valuable support, for example, when they are released from custody or charged without a court arraignment. It was suggested that the Met could aim to expand links with health and community support services so that, where appropriate, these individuals could be diverted into services to help tackle their underlying problems. Many of these offenders struggle with poor mental health, for example, and are often victims of crimes themselves. Lord Victor Adebowale’s 2013 report as the Chair of the Independent Commission on Mental Health and Policing found that an average of 25 percent of individuals taken into police custody are on record as having a mental health problem. Estimates from Met police officers specialising in mental health are that mental health issues account for at least 20 percent of police time; while an additional 20 percent of police time involves people vulnerable in other ways (eg because of age, learning difficulties or being subject to exploitation).

One response from a representative in the community and voluntary sector noted specific partnership opportunities for the Met to develop a more effective diversionary approach, including:

- Mental Health Liaison and Diversion Services, which are being rolled out across the country, currently commissioned by NHS England in the Justice System teams. Operating at police custody and courts, these services provide an opportunity to identify a range of health and social care needs, ensure this information informs any criminal justice proceedings, and facilitate diversion into support where appropriate. Over the next five years, it will be crucial to continue to push this agenda forward, seeking to further expand pathways into support from these services; ensure data and information gathered informs local commissioning for a range of partners; and explore opportunities for greater integration with other services.
- Reviewing out of court disposals. Proposed changes to the out of court disposal framework, including the piloting of ‘suspended prosecution’, present an opportunity to improve links into support through this route for low-level offences. A number of areas are also championing more effective use of out of court disposals for key groups such as women offenders (often linked to women’s centres) and young adults (18–24), where learning

from promising practice in youth diversion could help to inform a more effective approach that takes account of varying levels of maturity. More creative use of out of court disposals holds potential to link people into the kind of support that can help to reduce reoffending earlier.

Adebowale's report also highlighted the "lack of robust systems for the police to identify and refer vulnerable people at high risk but who are not offenders to appropriate multi-agency services." In his research, there was one case where the multi-agency risk assessment (MARAC) should have been used but was not, and in another there was no multi-agency system that could apply; his conclusion was that there is a need for a new system. It was recommended that the Met embrace mental health liaison officers (MHLO), taking a standardised approach across the service. It was advocated that the MHLO job should be full-time in its own right, with clear roles and responsibilities and provision for training and continuing professional development. At the moment, MHLO officers are especially needed because the police themselves are not confident that they possess sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver a professional service to people with mental health issues. In a questionnaire Adebowale posed to the MPS, only 22 percent of officers and 28 percent of borough MHLO agreed that their training effectively prepared them to work with people with mental health problems.

Focusing on early intervention and preventative problem-solving

A number of respondents were concerned with early intervention and refocusing resources on prevention. Some appealed to the police to continue participating in and further developing the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, which could enable the Met to use their resources more efficiently in future.

"The MASH must be placed at the centre of the organisation. Standing alone and deciding the extent of the remit of the police will result in gaps in service provision, degradation of the quality of life of many Londoners and ultimately an increase in demand across services. Standing together with partner agencies, the most appropriate response can be determined and initiated, accountability will be clearer and failings will be more apparent. These can be learned from and responses tailored. Without this shift in ethos the police will continue to hold responsibility for activity beyond their remit and ability."

Business consultee

One respondent highlighted the success of problem-oriented partnerships, noting however that the model tended to be reserved for a small number of relatively contained issues identified by local communities. It was suggested that there was more scope to expand this approach to tackle larger policing challenges, and that in doing so more resources could be shifted from agencies of enforcement to early intervention.

Another respondent noted that there would be opportunities to engage early given that further devolution of powers at a pan-London level

are likely. It was sensed that there is potential for significant devolution of health budgets (as in Greater Manchester), and recommended that the Met engage from the onset with key health partners and mayoral structures at a strategic and city-wide level to shape these agendas.

Other respondents suggested that the Met consider its own training for staff and its role in the training or development of potential allies. In terms of training for staff, it was said that police officers need to be more aware of potential vulnerabilities and health and social care issues (including poor mental health or learning disabilities) when they come into contact with people, and there should be greater understanding of how to behave and react to these issues. As for allies, it was recommended that improving the Met's relationship with private security staff could help manage demand. A crime prevention strategy could entail private security staff being a part of the Met's overall vision and more embedded in their planning, especially at a time when other resources are facing cuts. For example, nationally the police could improve the quality of the UK private security sector by setting higher standards for the Security Industry Authority and at a local level the Met could 'approve' sites (such as retail malls and business districts) as partners and support security companies at the local level with advice and closer interaction.

It was mentioned by several respondents throughout the consultation that the Met devotes a very small fraction of its time to prevention (some estimates have been as low as 4 percent). However, this was challenged by a participant from the third sector working with young offenders. It was argued that the Met does spend a fair amount of time engaging with young offenders to prevent reoffending; however, there is no reflection of this time spent in the official procedures because after informal conversations with young people they will likely tick 'no further action' and close the file. This investment in time is not recorded or evaluated in any way. There was an offer from the organisation to help the Met evaluate the impact of its preventative strategies with young people, especially to help make the case to retain resources for Youth Offending Boards in light of cuts.

While the Met is involved in restorative justice practices with young people to some extent, a couple of respondents have argued that the Met still has a long way to go in fully embracing these practices and realising the full benefits of doing so. It was hoped that this would be a major area of focus for the Met over the course of the next five years in terms of its preventative strategy. It was repeatedly mentioned that the Met actually spends an enormous amount of time (up to 60 percent) dealing with a very small proportion of the population that is particularly troubled, and that restorative justice might help ease this burden.

“Restorative justice has been demonstrated to reduce the frequency of reoffending by at least 14 percent, meaning fewer victims and less crime in the future. And this reduction in reoffending saves a significant amount of money. For every £1 spent on delivering face to face restorative justice conferences, £8 is saved to the criminal justice system through reductions in reoffending.”

Restorative justice expert

Case study: Restorative justice practices in Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has significantly increased the use of restorative justice in recent years. In 2013, restorative justice as part of out of court disposal has determined the outcome in 16 percent of all solved crimes in Manchester. GMP estimates that on average a Level 1 restorative process takes one hour, in contrast with a reprimand (four hours) and a warning (almost five hours). The use of restorative justice at GMP was estimated to have saved £700,000 over a 12 month period in a 2010 evaluation.

Partnering with the private sector

The private sector can bring expertise, economies of scale and global market knowledge to the Met. A focus group participant commented that the Met might perceive itself as global, but businesses (particularly those that operate transnationally) believe it is a siloed organisation.

The Met is not working as well as it could with industry on fraud and cyber issues, considering that companies have the resources to help. For example, a participant from a technology company contended that the organisation is happy to share individual customer data when there is a warrant to do so, but they could also provide general data to help with analytics without giving away individual information. Private sector firms might often even be willing to share advice for free because they see this as relationship building. At present, there is no dialogue with the Met about this, although the Home Office has begun making requests.

In general, the way the public sector and emergency services acquire the skills and the capabilities of the private sector is poor. The Met (and National Crime Agency) have a monolithic procurement process. They buy systems that take a long time to implement, and are out of date by the time they are ready. They are then tied in for too long to these technologies by contracts.

“The procurement process is usually a winner takes all system – this limits how many firms can share ideas and input on improving the Met. Things only open up to competition every five years – perhaps a new model should be introduced that is more open and competitive.”

Business consultee

An ask of focus group participants from businesses was for more clarity on where responsibilities lie – both internally and in terms of organisational boundaries. This level of openness would enable the private sector to better offer strategic assistance.

3. Confidence and legitimacy

Proposing a new collective agreement

There are new crime types and threats emerging in London. The implications of these changes for policing are significant and warrant a new collective agreement with the public. While the responsibilities of the Metropolitan Police continue to evolve, the Peelian principles set out in 1829 when the force was founded remain relevant. In particular, the following principle stands out: ‘the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect’. As a number of our respondents have voiced, the Met cannot effectively police without the consent, as well as active support, of communities and the general public. The example of efforts at counter-terrorism was given to highlight that policing in this arena can be especially difficult or inefficient if the Met lacks legitimacy with communities.

It was suggested that a dialogue should be initiated with the public to reach an agreement or set out mutual expectations. Respondents expressed that more could be done to explain and account for the threats of modern crime types to the public. This openness might also spark interest from the public in being involved in prevention. Another ambition of this dialogue could be to co-create a common public view of the role of the police. However, this would entail a greater level of outreach – requiring the Met to engage with more than the slim minority who have reason to interact with them regularly.

“You cannot achieve a dialogue without engagement and for the public to feel inclined to engage there must be a number of pre-conditions. The public must feel that their views are genuinely going to be of interest; that they will be accurately and completely conveyed; that they will be acted upon, and that the overall result is going to be improvement (or stopping a decline) that will positively affect the lives of them and their families.”

Business consultee

To create an inclusive dialogue, there must be recognition that generational and cultural differences drive the need for diverse forms of engagement. There was encouragement for the Met to continue exploring various means of conversing with the public, and a suggestion that this insight could be used to build consent and a shared understanding of

public safety priorities. It was made clear that no one channel of engagement will suffice on its own and that the Met should devote resource to ensuring that there is breadth to their engagement.

The overarching point here is that dialogue is the key to empowering the public to play a larger part in fighting crime and keeping London safe. It is at the very least a precondition in forming a contract of sorts with the public, but ideally should be ongoing.

Renewing a shared sense of purpose

In negotiating a social contract the Met has an opportunity to determine and communicate a sense of purpose. Many of our respondents and focus group participants have complimented the Met in its success in policing the London Olympics in 2012, but, equally, a number in the same breath have commented that the Met typically fails to match that level of performance in their day-to-day duties. One possible explanation for this divergence might be that not enough police officers, and particularly new recruits, are either aware of or embracing the Met's mission. It was hoped that by rearticulating the Met's purpose there might be a renewal of enthusiasm among officers, reminding them of why they had chosen this line of work in the first place.

Valuing the vulnerable, victims and witnesses

A number of focus group participants questioned whether the Met is doing enough for the most vulnerable, as well as victims and witnesses. Participants from businesses and the third sector were in favour of the Met making a firmer commitment to prioritise the needs of victims and witnesses and provide a higher level of service to these groups. Several participants from the private sector suggested that the Met could improve their interactions with these groups by training their frontline staff in customer service, similar to many businesses.

Although a few participants remarked that the scale of the Met was enormous, one participant in particular characterised the police force as a monopoly of sorts in the public sector. The Met's 'monopoly status' was seen as an explanation for why it has been slow to improve and standardise the quality of service. Comparatively, in the private sector where there is more competition there is greater incentive for a company to offer a premium service since it risks being outcompeted for business. It was expressed that the speed at which the Met has adopted new technology, such as body-worn videos, or apps that simplify the experiences of victims and witnesses, is an indication that the service is designed more around officers rather than the needs of the public. Even in instances of market-led innovation (for instance, to provide an app for the public to map and record crimes they are witnessing), the police have refused to adopt or endorse them without clearly outlining an alternative. This level of complacency was considered less likely in the private sector.

In one focus group, there was an emphasis from participants on the role of technology in providing victims and witnesses with more control and a sense of ownership over the justice system. For example, technology could enable victims to view uploaded statements and track the progress of their cases. Footage from body-worn videos could also offer evidence that might ease the pressure on victims to testify, such as in trials

concerning domestic abuse. Apps that are designed for witnesses to record incidents are a particularly welcome introduction because real-time video can be trusted more than a witness' recounting of the incident from memory, and allows witnesses to lessen the burden of reporting a crime. It was imagined that investing in the development of these technologies would save the Met money in the long-term, as well as create additional benefits, such as greater transparency and accountability in criminal cases. One of the participants argued that the changes are inevitable even if the Met (or police more generally) are slowing take-up; the example of the police being reluctant to move onto using mobile phones when they were first invented signifies some historical precedent for resisting technological change.

A participant from the third sector raised the point that there is more that the police can do to show that they care for victims. For instance, it was argued that missing people in particular 'provide a window for police to look into crime culture'. Although the Commissioner has publicly questioned whether the Met should continue to devote the same level of resource to investigating reports of missing people, the counterpoint is that many missing people can offer police clues about crimes committed once they are found if officers use the time they have with them wisely. It was said that police are quick to dismiss young people who have been missing, especially those connected to gang activity; their interactions with them are stern and rushed rather than sympathetic and strategic. The participant wished to underline that there is no expectation that the police should be entirely responsible for the welfare and support of victims; rather, the ask here is for police to change their outlook on missing people from viewing them as a 'waste' of resource to helpful leads in finding and convicting criminals.

"Going missing is often the first sign that a person has been the victim of crime or is at serious risk of crime, and therefore we believe that every incident must be fully investigated, even when there is no known risk. [For example], going missing is recognised as a risk factor for sexual exploitation within successive research and evaluation studies, both as a cause, and consequence of going missing.¹ An Office of the Children's Commissioner for England report published in 2012 stated that 70 percent of victims of child sexual exploitation had also gone missing.²"

Community and voluntary sector consultee

According to focus group participants from the third sector, the Met would benefit in particular from training in how to support victims because they too often reinforce a culture of shaming through their interactions. Participants provided a number of examples where victims and their families are often reluctant to come forward because of shame,

1. Nicola Sharp, "Still Hidden ? Going Missing as an Indicator of Child Sexual Exploitation," 2012, [www.oakfnd.org/sites/default/files/Still Hidden 2012 Report FINAL-1.pdf](http://www.oakfnd.org/sites/default/files/Still%20Hidden%202012%20Report%20FINAL-1.pdf).

2. Sue Berelowitz and Carlene Firmin, "I Thought I Was the Only One. The Only One in the World.' *The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups*," 2012, http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/16067/1/FINAL_REPORT_FOR_WEBSITE_Child_Sexual_Exploitation_in_Gangs_and_Groups_Inquiry_Interim_Report__21_11_12.pdf.

including people who are ashamed to admit when they have been scammed; people who have been abused by their partners, and parents who are missing a child, such as in recent cases where the young person has been caught up in extremism. More empathy and cultural sensitivity is needed from police officers to navigate these situations and avoid shaming that undermines that path to justice.

A number of participants recalled a survey from years ago where the police were the only service and/or organisation to be rated worse by the public after interacting with them (in contrast, the findings are opposite for politicians and health professionals). However, more recent anecdotes from participants revealed a lack of confidence in the police from within the service itself. The strength of an organisation is in part reflected in how willing its workers are to promote its services to their friends and family. It was suggested that a staff-wide survey might provide a more accurate barometer of the Met's health than the public's perceptions.

Agreeing and prioritising core police functions

There was some questioning of whether the Met will be able to meet demand. It was said that the Met could try to manage demand through managing people's expectations as to what it will and will not do, but the risk is that public confidence may suffer if people do not feel they are getting an appropriate level of service from the police. A new collective agreement could be used to mediate the public's expectations.

It was pointed out that communities expect the police at the very minimum to enforce the law and keep the peace, but there is no agreed set of core functions nor a consistent approach to delivering ancillary functions. However, identifying functions does not necessarily have to translate into targets.

“We would suggest the Met stops focusing on seven specific crime types and has a reduced number of central targets which include issues around risk as this would allow much more effective partnerships from external agencies. This might for example mean having two performance priorities around tackling domestic violence and abuse and child sexual exploitation alongside say two high volume crime types.”

Local authority consultee

There was an understanding that prioritisation will need to take account of emerging and increasing areas of demand, such as those related to new technologies and the internet. However, some challenges, such as those related to mental health, persist, and require continued commitment from the police as well. One response in particular highlighted that victims with poor mental health needed more care from the police, citing a joint report by Mind and Victim Support. The report revealed that victims of crime with severe mental illness who reported their experience of crime to the police were much less satisfied with the police than the general public, and less likely to report fair or respectful treatment. It was expected that following consultation, the Met will set out robust criteria for what will be prioritised and why, and make it clear what will no longer be dealt with by the police service. The

hope of a number of respondents was that the public would also be adequately consulted with, reinforcing the point about the need for a constructive dialogue.

“People with mental health issues may come to the attention of the police as witnesses; victims of crime or suspects. A survey of Met officers indicated ‘daily or regular’ encounters with victims (39 percent), witnesses (23 percent) and suspects (48 percent) with mental health conditions, and 67 percent encountered unusual behaviour, attributed to drugs and/or alcohol. Individuals with mental health issues have a significantly increased risk of being a victim of crime, particularly serious crime.”

Independent Commission on Policing and Mental Health Report (2013)

The Met was urged to maximise the involvement of local communities and their locally elected representatives in identifying priorities and overseeing performance. It was explained that this would help ensure that the problems are better prioritised and potential harm can be reduced and that the police are held to account, which would also have a direct impact on managing demand.

Involving the public in managing demand

Participants in our focus groups made practical recommendations for involving the public in managing demand. One attendee stressed that older people are not just vulnerable; many are very active and can provide a wealth of knowledge and experience that should be considered a great resource within their local areas. It was recommended that the Met give some thought to how it might enable older people to better look after themselves and their neighbours. There is potential here to reinvigorate Neighbourhood Watch groups by drawing on a network of older people, and thereby reducing the demand for police presence.

Another attendee drew on the experience of his charity to highlight that service users like to use peer groups. His suggestion was that police could refer vulnerable people to these community groups for more support in managing and coping. However, there will initially need to be greater engagement with vulnerable groups to support them in playing more of a role in managing demand.

“The MPS must also make a particular effort to engage with the most excluded individuals who too often feel the police are not there to serve them, and find ways to involve them in developing the solutions that will lead more effective responses, reduced crime, and better outcomes for the most excluded people by 2020.”

Community and voluntary sector consultee

The public still expect and depend on police to support their democratic right to protest. Activists from the Time to Act/Million Women Rise climate change march that was held in early 2015 explained that the Met are putting them in an uncomfortable position when they refuse to police peaceful demonstrations that have been planned and that they have been properly informed about. The local authority expects that there must be security and/or stewarding for large crowds, but if the Met

refuses to support the protests in this way then sourcing this privately will cost thousands of pounds that small campaigning organisations cannot afford. The alternative is to hold the demonstration without informing the local authority or the police, but the risk is that a surprise demonstration will be unwelcome and met with hostility, thus changing the nature of the event to less peaceful protest. This tension in decision-making is difficult for activists and is felt to be an unnecessary burden – the firm view here is that in the absence of other state mechanisms for assuring safety among a crowd of demonstrators, the responsibility lies with the police.

Reflecting the public in the police force

There was some recognition of the Met's progress in recruiting a more diverse workforce that reflects the city it serves. However, it was also said that more needs to be done to continue improving the Met's reflection of diversity in its workforce, as well as in its consultations and local meetings. One of the respondents reasoned that this is an important objective for the Met not only because London's population is increasingly diverse, but also because diversity has benefits in the workplace. A 2014 report, 'The diversity of the Met's frontline', was referenced to highlight that a diverse workforce can lead to better decision-making, bring a broader range of skills and improve operational capabilities.

Black and minority ethnic (BAME) women are particularly under-represented on the Met's frontline. It was suggested that the Met use community advocacy schemes to directly target potential BAME women recruits. There was also support for developing progression routes for BAME and women officers to specialist and senior positions. The lack of BAME officers is particularly evident at senior levels in the Met, where only 6 percent of its officers are ranked Inspector or above; similarly, only 18 per cent of officers ranked Inspector or above in the Met are women. Strategies for diversifying the Met at higher levels could include mentoring, sponsorship, and introducing more flexible working practices. However, considering the pace of change, more radical proposals (such as the Commissioner's proposition for a form of affirmative action that would restrict future applicants to London residents) may need to be adopted. It was advised that the Met acknowledge and address discrimination to help build the public's confidence in a modern, inclusive police force. An interviewee noted that the Met has not re-engineered itself in a way that appeals to a more diverse applicant pool (both in terms of skills and demographics) which would entice them to join.

A council representative commented that groups who are disproportionately victims of crime, such as young black men, will only come to trust the police if they are confident that their concerns and priorities are heard. The ensuing recommendation was that Safer Neighbourhoods Boards should be open to all residents and not invite-only. Similarly, the police could be doing outreach to ensure that panels and their chairs are more representative of their communities. Alongside this, a clearer strategy and action plan for engaging with community groups who are not involved in Safer Neighbourhoods Boards is needed.

“Ultimately, the diversity of an organisation is not just a measure of how it looks but also how it behaves. Our primary focus has been on what the Met is doing to support the recruitment, retention and progression of BAME and women officers, given this is where the Met and the Mayor’s focus lies. However, we recognise the Met must have in place processes to support officers from other protected groups... For this to succeed, it must be supported by strong leadership and a robust accountability mechanism to ensure momentum is sustained.”

From ‘The diversity of the Met’s frontline’ (2014)

Engaging the public in practice

Public engagement was one of the four key drivers of public confidence highlighted, the others being fair treatment, perceived effectiveness, and dealing with anti-social behaviour. Respondents defined successful engagement as entailing a willingness to listen to the public and respond to questions and criticism. It was expected that the Met make an ongoing effort to communicate local issues and police activity to the public, as well as the success of particular actions taken. Regular correspondence with victims, witnesses, and (where appropriate) suspects about the status of their incidents and next steps was advocated, as was greater efforts to signpost the most vulnerable to available help, support and guidance.

One of the respondents questioned whether engagement with the public was happening too frequently at a top-down level; for example, when sharing knowledge of local problems and trying to command community support for identified solutions. It was asked whether engagement could be facilitated at a grassroots level and if this would be more impactful. MOPAC’s remit at present includes engagement and presiding over the Safer Neighbourhoods Boards, but it was argued that this agenda should be fully owned by the Met, especially if they are seeking to strengthen their local relationships.

It was noted that greater engagement is very much in the best interests of the police, especially in terms of driving strategies for crime prevention. During a focus group, one respondent assessed that investing incrementally more time in engagement now could save the Met a greater amount of time in future. Building relationships with London’s communities sustains crucial intelligence that supports the police in both stopping and solving crime.

Maintaining consistency and continuity of conduct

Several respondents referenced the idea of trust being ‘earned’ or ‘built’. One respondent highlighted that there are legacies of trust and distrust and that the difference comes down to communities’ historic relationships with the police. It was suggested that any attempt to strengthen trust would need to happen within a consistent and transparent framework of working. Even a seemingly minor and innocuous point such as uniformity and care in appearance was considered extremely important in maintaining and/or gaining credibility.

A number of respondents expressed a wish for continuity in neighbourhood policing. Their rationale for this was that maintaining police presence in neighbourhoods is critical to sustaining public trust and confidence in policing. However, they also stressed that this was not merely

about visibility, but also about police interactions with residents (ie getting to know local people while on the beat). It was explained that neighbourhood policing is especially appreciated by vulnerable and excluded individuals, who are most at risk of being victims of crime, and that they would like to see some stability in the number of officers on the streets.

Appendix

Stakeholder engagement

The following is a list of organisations that we engaged with through a process of consultation through written submissions, one-to-one interviews and/or participation in focus groups. We are deliberately choosing to identify organisations only rather than, or in addition to, individuals because we want to protect the anonymity of all those who generously contributed to our consultation as well as focus on the substance of the responses as opposed to drawing attention to particular individuals.

We thank everyone sincerely for taking the time to contribute to the consultation.

Accenture
Age UK
Barking, Havering and Redbridge Trust
British Transport Police Safer Neighbourhood Board
Camden Safer Neighbourhood Board
Canary Wharf Group
Capita
CBI
Federation of Small Businesses
G4S
Hackney Council
Havering Community Safety Partnership
Havering Safer Neighbourhood Board
Hillingdon Safer Neighbourhood Board
Lambeth Council
Lewisham Safer Neighbourhood Board
London & Partners
London Assembly Police and Crime Committee
London Borough of Sutton
London Communities Policing Partnership
London Councils
London First
London Safeguarding Children Board
London Stop and Search Community Monitoring Network
Missing People
MOPAC
NHS (Health in the Justice System – London Region)
NHS England Medical Directors for London
NHS Mental Health Network
Northgate Information Services
Only Connect
Redbridge Community Safety Department
Restorative Engagement Forum
Restorative Justice Council

Revolving Doors
SafeLives (previously CAADA)
South West London Neighbourhood Watch
Telefonica O2
Vodafone
Wandsworth Council
Westminster City Council
William Collis
Witness Confident
Youth Justice Board for England and Wales

The RSA: an enlightenment organisation committed to finding innovative practical solutions to today's social challenges. Through its ideas, research and 27,000-strong Fellowship it seeks to understand and enhance human capability so we can close the gap between today's reality and people's hopes for a better world.



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