



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

24 January 1983

My dear Prime Minister

..... When Sir Kenneth Newman took up his office as Commissioner at the beginning of October, I asked him to review, and report to me on, his plans and priorities, within three months. He has given me a major report, which is incisive and well-directed to the serious problems of persistent crime. I enclose a personal copy of the summary he has prepared of his report, which I am today placing in the Library, accompanied by a Written Answer welcoming the report.

I am very anxious to engage Members with constituencies in the Metropolitan Police District in discussion of Sir Kenneth's approach, and in support of it. I have, therefore, written personally to each Member with a copy of these documents. This is not only right in itself, in view of the constitutional relationship between myself, as Police Authority, and the House, but is directed towards countering the campaign by the GLC, and others, against police and Government on accountability.

Yours truly
M Thatcher

The Rt. Hon. Mrs Margaret Thatcher, M.P.

Monday, 24th January, 1983.

Written No. 139
(21/1/83)

Mr. John Hunt (Bromley, Ravensbourne): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if, following his reply to the honourable Member for Chipping Barnet on 16th December 1982, Official Report, column 472, he will publish the recommendations of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis in his report on his problems and priorities; and if he will make a statement.

MR. WILLIAM WHITELAW

On 1st October 1982, as Police Authority for the Metropolitan Police, I invited the Commissioner on taking up his office to give me within three months a preliminary report, outlining his plans and priorities. I asked the Commissioner, in determining his objectives and priorities, to give particular attention to the present high level of crime, including street crime and burglary; the problems of maintenance of public order in the capital; community involvement; and the organisation and structure of the force. The Commissioner was fully aware that I wished his assessment to take place against the objective of improving police effectiveness in the Metropolis, and of ensuring that the resources now allocated to the Metropolitan Police were thoroughly reviewed and properly utilised.

The Commissioner has presented his report to me. I have given it careful study, and fully discussed his proposals with him. I have thought it right to place in the Library of the House his summary of the recommendations and of the arguments which give rise to them.

I believe that the Commissioner's proposals, and the action that will follow, will respond to the primary concerns of the majority of the people who live and work in the Metropolis through focusing more directly both on persistent crime problems and on improving co-operation between police and public.

The Commissioner has emphasised to me that his report is preliminary, and that it is not comprehensive. His proposals represent a programme of selective action for the next twelve months, and in implementing them he and I look forward to taking account of the views of hon. Members, especially those with constituencies in the Metropolis. From my discussions with a number of hon. Members already, I am confident that the Commissioner's present proposals are attuned very much to their constituents' practical concerns. The same message came from the majority of local authority representatives in my recent discussions with the London Boroughs Association and the Outer Districts Consultative Association.

The Commissioner intends to present to the range of consultative groups which have been, and which are being, set up in response to the guidelines I issued on 16th June, specific proposals for action in their areas. He and I look forward to the engagement of these and other local groups in practical proposals for joint action on the ground.

I have indicated to the Commissioner that he will be able to count on building up Metropolitan Police manpower by the end of the financial year 1983/84 to a total establishment figure of nearly 27,000. With my Department there will be, during the course of this year, a thorough review of manpower and expenditure. This work will be done against the essential policy requirement that resources should only be increased where both the need for them, and their value in use, is proven.

I accept the Commissioner's decision to tackle the managerial and organisational arrangements of the Metropolitan Police very deliberately. Again, in conjunction with my Department, the force's rank structure and the relationship of headquarters and districts will be thoroughly re-examined in the light of the operational policies the Commissioner proposes to adopt. In discussing his report with the Commissioner I have emphasised the need for the closest possible co-operation between the Metropolitan Police and H.M. Inspectorate of Constabulary.

The Commissioner, and I, are both determined to ensure that whatever criticisms may be levelled at particular aspects of Metropolitan policing, London is provided with a programme of effective law enforcement, springing from close community involvement and consultation. I have asked the Commissioner to review annually the objectives and priorities of the force in the light of his assessment of the needs of the people who live and work in London, the views of this House, of the Boroughs and Districts who pay the precept, and against the background of general Government policy. He will report to me annually with any proposals for change, and his recommendations will be made public in future.



METROPOLITAN POLICE

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE
OF THE METROPOLIS TO THE HOME SECRETARY
A SUMMARY OF A PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT
OF PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES

1. The Commissioner describes his proposals as "first aid measures" designed to :

- make the Force more responsive to the needs and feelings of the local communities;
- secure a better balance between levels of police command;
- improve the performance of police in dealing with street robbery and burglary; and
- initiate a more corporate style of police management.

2. Demands on the Metropolitan Police

The conventional demands of crime, public order, traffic and general assistance to the public have grown markedly in recent years. In terms of crime, the offences of chief concern to the general public are robberies and burglaries. As a demand on the police, these crimes represent an immense burden, involving more visits to victims, more interviews with witnesses and others; more reports and more court attendances. In terms of public order, between 1972 and 1981, demonstrations requiring the employment of more than 100 police officers increased from 55 to 354, from an average of one per week to one per day. The traffic density is about ten times the national

average in outer London, rising to 50 times in central London. There are also the Metropolitan Police's activities in assisting the public more generally; these include: domestic disputes; landlord/tenant disputes; dealing with lost and found property; helping stranded persons; non-traffic accidents; fires; lost children; missing persons etc. It is difficult to measure the trend in these areas, but it is assessed that some 70% of uniformed police activity is devoted to responding to these demands from the public.

3. Taken together, the growth in these conventional demands has led to irresistible pressures to take policemen away from routine patrolling, and to make them led by demand, rather than able to give a policy lead, for example in crime prevention.
4. At the same time, the social and political demands on the police in the Metropolis have changed and developed. In recent years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of formally constituted associations and groups representing a range of special interests. In many Districts, Commanders and their senior officers have to take in contact with at least 40 representative and pressure groups. While this liaison is a necessary and valid role, it is one which is making large in-roads into the time available for command and supervision.
5. It is fully recognised that the level of public support and confidence in the police bears importantly on the effectiveness with which the police task is performed. While the police still stand high in opinion polls, these are pitched at a very general level, and perhaps obscure the fact that the pattern in London is variable. Research studies are in hand to assist in assessing this pattern, but it is already apparent that the Metropolitan Police must guard against a deterioration in public confidence, and that there is a problem with young people, particularly young West Indians. Of course, there are external factors which affect confidence over which the police do not have direct control, including the tendency of the media to underplay police successes and positive initiatives, and the cumulative effect of criticism directed against the police in support of a political position for greater control over operations.

6. In this context, the highest priority should be placed on conveying to the Force the critical importance of maintaining at all times, and to all people, high standards of courtesy and professionalism. This needs to be linked, in order to improve public perception of the police, with a greater understanding of the nature of crime and of the limitations of the police's capacity. It appears that there is a widespread feeling that the police are "losing the battle against street crime and burglaries". This points to the need for a programme to educate the public that the "battle" analogy is inappropriate, and that the increase in crime is a matter for both the police and public.

7. There is a growing problem for the police in the decline of positive cooperation from the public. Witnesses are reluctant to come forward - partly from apathy, but partly because of fear of reprisals by criminals or their friends. In some areas, there is a brand of obstruction and hostility which has led to deliberately engineered confrontations with the police. It is, therefore, a priority to restore order to such areas. There is also public reluctance to take a positive approach to crime prevention. Improvements in this situation must obviously be a priority, and the post-Scarman consultative committees must be used as a vehicle for promoting a more positive contribution by the public to their own safety.

The Problems in Responding to these Demands

8. During the last two decades, the police have responded to rising work loads in an environment of growing complexity by increasing specialisation of their functions, especially in relation to crime and public order. This has resulted in significant increases in the number and size of central squads. While this degree of specialisation has proved of real and justifiable benefit, over time it has led to a serious imbalance in the deployment of manpower between New Scotland Yard and police districts. This, in its turn, has led to unacceptably thin ground cover, and to a lack of continuity and sympathetic inter-action in police/public contacts in areas where this would provide the most effective method of policing. Although the size of the Force has increased substantially, particularly in the last two years, changes in working hours and overtime have severely limited the additional police manhours available to deal

with the rising workload. There is a case for a further increase in the size of the Metropolitan Police; but the Commissioner recognises that pending the outcome of the current review of the effective use of existing manpower it is not possible to go beyond the comparatively modest increases already approved for the coming year. His strategy is therefore directed towards making the best possible use of the available resources.

Future Strategy

9. The future strategy has two main thrusts, each complementary to the other; crime prevention and crime detection.
10. The crime prevention thrust will have two main facets, the rationalisation and redeployment of manpower and the utilisation of consultative committees as a vehicle for directing the overall strategy. District Commanders will be responsible for deploying their resources as dictated by their own professional judgment, taking full account of the views of the local community. Problems identified locally will be tackled systematically by coordinating the contributions of police, public and local agencies. The concept of a corporate strategy is vital.
11. The crime detection thrust will concentrate on improved information gathering, analysis and targeted action, backed up by better management of the detective function. This will result in a higher quality of investigation and a greater certainty of conviction.
12. In the light of this general strategy, and of the resources likely to be available in the coming year, there are six main objectives which need to be pursued :
 - To increase directed foot patrols in priority areas (areas with the highest incidence of street robberies, street disorders and burglaries) with a view to reducing criminal opportunity through police/community cooperation and contact, and to improving the maintenance of order.

- To maintain and improve police capability for policing demonstrations, ceremonial occasions and outbreaks of spontaneous rioting, but with a more economic use of manpower.
- To increase the detection of offences of street robbery and burglary by reorganising and concentrating detective manpower, by coordinating other relevant manpower resources (e.g. crime squads and the Special Patrol Group), and by upgrading the status and quality of information gathering and use.
- To maintain the present standard of performance of squads centrally deployed against organised and specialist crime, but with less manpower.
- To maintain present performance in regulating traffic, and in traffic law enforcement, but with less manpower.
- To improve management and organisation to support these aims, and to achieve the most cost-effective use of resources and value for money.

Ground Cover and Crime Prevention

13. The first objective is set on the assumption that the police alone cannot make a major impact on crime, and that major resources for crime reduction reside in the community itself, and in other public and voluntary agencies. A number of steps are proposed to support this.

They are as follows :

- A redeployment of police manpower, from savings elsewhere, of a minimum of 650 constables to mitigate the shortages in ground cover.
- The allocation, by the Deputy Assistant Commissioners (DACs) in charge of the four Areas, of their manpower on the basis of high incidence, moderate incidence and low incidence of

street robberies, street disorder and burglaries. Areas of special difficulty will receive the highest priority.

- A new programme to identify and inculcate high levels of police ethics, conduct and professionalism.
- A focus on consultative committees to discuss and develop the reduction of criminal opportunities, and develop crime prevention by asking District Commanders to identify specific problems to the committees.
- Close contact with other statutory and voluntary agencies to harness their efforts in crime prevention and reduction, especially in relation to victim support, designing-out crime, and jointly tackling high crime locations.
- The planning and implementation of specific crime prevention programmes; a neighbourhood watch scheme and a property marking scheme.
- Specific steps to obtain the public's views on policing needs and priorities through consultative committees and other liaison groups, and through surveys of public opinion.
- More purposeful tasking of uniform patrol officers, e.g. cooperating with other agencies in Priority Estate Projects; servicing and monitoring neighbourhood watch schemes; liaison with victim support groups, and tackling specific problems, e.g. racial harassment, vandalism and hooliganism.
- The revision of the training programme to support such actions, and to elevate crime prevention to the mainstream of policing.
- A study of the ways in which the status and role of the uniformed police constable can be upgraded.

- A determined attempt to identify suitable candidates (particularly among ethnic minorities) for increased recruitment to the Special Constabulary.
- Improvements in first line supervision by increasing the number of sergeants in Divisions.

Public Order

14. The maintenance of public order must remain of central importance and priority. Nonetheless, the secondment of police officers from Districts for ceremonial and public order duties is a serious withdrawal from routine policing, and the following steps will be taken to maintain overall effectiveness for public order purposes, while absorbing less manpower :

- There will be a conscious effort to reduce the level of manpower required for major planned public order events.
- A re-definition of the role and responsibilities of Instant Response Units, by giving them specific and continuing roles in Districts when on standby :

anti-burglary patrols;
rowdyism patrols;
searches;
road blocks;
observations;
execution of warrants.

To emphasise their role, they will be re-named District Support Units (DSUs). In order to provide support for DSUs, a pool of young officers on training courses (but not those on initial training) will become available as an additional reserve to handle public order contingencies.

- The role of the SPG will be concentrated on anti-burglary patrols.

Crime Detection

15. Street robbery and burglary are of primary concern to the public. These crimes are random and opportunist in character, and often offer little opportunity for detection after the event. Performance can be improved by better information, better analysis, and better targeting of those who commit these crimes. The steps to be taken are as follows :

- An analytical and targeting unit will be established in each of the four Metropolitan areas, appropriately equipped with technical support.
- Divisional crime squads will be reduced from their present total (partly supplying savings for directed uniform patrol), and reorganised on a District basis, to compensate for the reduction.
- There will be better coordination of the activities of crime squads, DSUs and the SPG, based on the work of the analytical Areas units.
- The capacity of Divisional detectives to cope with growing workloads will be increased by transferring a number of senior officers to CID command posts where case loads are high.
- Case loads will be modified through a Force-wide screening system, and by giving more crime cases for investigation to uniformed officers.

Organised and Specialised Crime

16. There must be no deterioration in performance of central specialist squads as a result of the reductions necessary to concentrate on persistent crimes in Districts. In order to do this, personnel will receive additional training in more advanced methods for the analysis of sophisticated crime.

Traffic

17. The importance of maintaining movement in the capital, and of preventing accidents, is clear. But in view of the necessary priority to be given to other demands, there will be reductions, by wastage, in the Traffic Department, made good by improved traffic management schemes. The task will be to maintain existing standards of performance and services.

Management and Organisation

18. A number of these steps carry with them some immediate management and organisational changes. In the longer term, there is a need for a more thorough management review and, during the next twelve months, a number of central issues will need to be addressed.
19. There is a long-term need to introduce a disciplined system for formulating objectives and priorities which involve rank levels from chief superintendents upwards. This will not only generate a better appreciation of planning, but will fit in with the requirements for budgetary control, and value for money in the light of close restraints on public expenditure. There is also a need to strengthen the strategic planning and corporate management of the Metropolitan Police and a small unit will be formed for this purpose.
20. There will need to be a re-examination of the role of chief superintendents in view of the need at that level for a full response to the demands of crime prevention and links with consultative committees. Similarly, the relationship of District Commanders to Area Deputy Assistant Commissioners, and of both to Headquarters departments, will need to be thoroughly reviewed.
21. The role of central departments at New Scotland Yard will need to be examined against the test that their primary concern is with :
- Force-wide planning and organisation of crime prevention programmes.
 - Liaison with other agencies.

- Providing information to the public about overall Metropolitan Police strategy.
- Relating training to that strategy.
- Relieving Divisions of more complicated and protracted investigations of specialised crime.
- Monitoring progress, and changes in the police environment, and revising objectives and plans.
- And providing logistical support and coordination.

Against these tests, there may perhaps need to be a redistribution of functions and a reorganisation of departments.

22. These issues will be thoroughly reviewed in the coming year, in close consultation with the Home Office. Similarly, there is a requirement on the Metropolitan Police to re-examine both the levels and use of manpower, and of the role and range of technological support before any decisions can be taken about increases to establishment or resources beyond those which will already be available by the end of the financial year, 1983/84.
23. The Commissioner concludes his report by paying tribute to the way in which the Met has coped with the rapidly escalating workloads and challenging problems over the last two decades, during the majority of which it has had to manage with severe manpower shortages. After nine years absence from the Metropolitan Police, he sees evidence of substantial improvement in performance and technique in all departments.

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