

POLICING LONDON IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Introduction

The central pledge in this manifesto is to continue to reduce crime in London by 6 per cent a year over the next four years.

This pledge can be made entirely realistically on the basis of the policies which have already resulted in crime in London falling for five years in a row. The rate of decline is accelerating with crime falling by 1.9 per cent in 2004, 4.4 per cent in 2005, 5.9 per cent in

2006, and 6.1 per cent in 2007.

The average annual decline in crime for the last three years is 5.5 per cent. With the drop accelerating, the pledge to reduce crime by 6 per cent a year is realistic both on the basis of existing policies and of the extra ones announced in this manifesto.¹

Other candidates at this election have claimed that this drop in crime is merely due to under reporting. That this is false can be shown most clearly by looking at murders. For obvious reasons, there is no evidence of under-reporting of murder – nobody seriously claims that there are any significant numbers of murders taking place which go unreported. The number of murders in London has fallen every year for the last five years, from 222 in 2003 to 160 last year. This is a reduction in murder by 28 per cent – even more than the 19 per cent fall in crime in the same period. Rape has fallen by 25 per cent. Gun crime by 22 per cent. Racist crime has been reduced by 55 per cent while I have been in office.

The claim by Boris Johnson that London government has not paid central attention to reducing crime are contradicted by facts which even his own party leader has recognised, praising the leading role of London on policing. David Cameron said on Newsnight on 29 August 2007 that London has seen: ‘a faster role out of beat based policing than we’ve seen in other parts of the country and the police will agree with you about that as well.’

Indeed, David Cameron was fulsome in his praise of what has been done to tackle crime in London. Speaking in East London on 16 January 2006 David Cameron said: ‘the principles of local democracy, accountability and strong leadership should be universal. Already there is evidence that proactive, neighbourhood policing can deliver solutions that work in the UK. In London, an increased police presence on the streets after the terrorist attacks of 7/7 led to a significant fall in crime, leading the Guardian to admit the value of high profile, visible patrolling.’

¹ Figures in this introduction are for chronological years as are all references to numbers of crimes except where specifically stated otherwise.

‘The Metropolitan Police has a Safer Neighbourhoods initiative. Each ward has a dedicated team of police and community support officers responsible for the reduction of crime and disorder in their area... It’s already yielding results here in Hackney.’²

Candidates who deny the facts about the reduction in crime in London are trying to score cheap political points for the election rather than discussing the reality of London and the serious issue of reducing crime.

My approach is the opposite. It has been, and will continue to be, to take the hard decisions to adopt practical policies that are the only way that crime will be reduced. The reason we can be confident that crime will continue to fall is because these results have not been achieved by gimmicks but by tackling the single most important factor that led to the crime wave in London that started in the mid 1990s – the steady reduction in the number of police which meant that police virtually disappeared from the local beat all over London.

The reduction in the number of police to only 25,000 before I came to office in 2000, because of policies inaugurated by the Tory governments of that time, unleashed a serious crime wave in London. For example murders increased by 70 per cent and rapes by 72 per cent.³

It was my decision to finance an increase in the number of police officers by 6,000, and to add more than 4,000 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), meaning an increase by 10,000 in uniformed officers, that has led to the reduction in crime in London. I will continue this by adding a further 1,000 officers this year.

The increase in police numbers has made possible the introduction of local neighbourhood police teams in every part of London. We now have more police in London than any at other time in history, dedicated teams of officers in every neighbourhood and 21 new Safer Transport Teams working to make public transport safer in London’s outer boroughs.

The Tory Party in the London Assembly voted against every one of the budgets that increased police numbers in London. Richard Barnes, leader of the Conservative Group on the London Assembly, has said too much money is spent on police officers.⁴

The reduction in crime that has taken place in London does not mean that serious problems do not have to be tackled. The most serious crimes are the hardest to eradicate. Therefore while the decline in murders is substantial the same reduction has not yet been achieved in specifically gun and knife murders and the very serious issue of youth murders remains.

² <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/jan/16/conservatives.ukcrime>

³ Figures for comparison of murder and rape on a longer term basis before 2000 in this document are for financial years not chronological ones due to the way data was recorded before 2000. All other figures are for chronological years.

⁴ http://www.ealingtimes.co.uk/news/localnews/display.var.2011705.0.too_much_cash_on_new_cops.php

The murders of young people are a critical issue we have to bear down upon by a combination of tough policing targeting the possession of knives, in particular, and policies to get young people off the streets by providing them with safe places, like youth facilities, to go outside school hours.

Hard core crimes will not be reduced by gimmicks but by building on the methods that have reduced overall crime. Growing police numbers, the growing experience of the new officers, and the roll out of neighbourhood policing are the most important means that will allow increased targeting of the most serious crime. There is no cheap way to reduce crime.

This growing ability to use the increasing police numbers to target the crucial issues on crime was shown at Christmas when special operations by the Met directed at night clubs ensured there were no shootings at all in the Christmas and New Year periods. A special operation aimed at young people this spring half term led to 780 arrests, a 50 per cent reduction in gun enabled crime, and a 26 per cent reduction in knife enabled crime in 11 London boroughs.

It is the ability to deploy increased resources, made possible by far greater police numbers, and coupled with funding to provide more youth facilities and other safe places for young people that will crack the serious issue of teenage murders.

It is the key to further progress in dealing with crimes against women – rape, domestic violence, and ensuring safe travel at night

The increasing number of ethnic minority officers, by making the police force more resemble London, will also increase intelligence from and ability to effectively police, London.

The overall success in reducing crime achieved by increased police numbers now allows extra resources to be specifically targeted. This Manifesto therefore concentrates on deploying these extra resources to:

- build up London's defences against terrorist attacks
- deal with the issue of murders of young people
- deal with drug crime
- continue progress made in crimes against women including rape and domestic violence
- continuing progress to make sure that the make up of the Met reflects London.

Because of the extra resources that are available targeting these issues will not mean that the progress made in reducing wider categories of crimes will be put at risk. This manifesto therefore explains how these extra resources will be used to continue to reduce crime in London by 6 per cent a year. Over a four year term this means that crime will be reduced by almost a quarter in London, building on the 19 per cent reduction that has taken place since the effect of increasing police numbers began in 2002.

Making London a safe city for all

Under Tory governments in the 1990s a series of disastrous decisions refusing to finance adequate police numbers in London were taken.

These policies unleashed a huge crime wave in London that started to unfold in the mid-1990s and which only the impact of my decision to start increasing police numbers in London immediately after my election in from 2000 reversed. Police numbers had been reduced to a low of 25,000 when I came to office in 2000.

The resulting increase in crime can be seen graphically in the most serious offences. The number of murders in London increased by 70 per cent between 1996-97 and 2003-4 – up from 120 to 204. The number of rapes went up by 72 per cent between 1996-97 and their peak in 2002-3 – up from 1,587 to 2,731.

By the time I was elected in 2000 London was in the grip of a very serious crime wave.

When I took office, Sir John Stephens, then the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, told me honestly and bluntly that he could not police London properly with the existing number of police officers.

As I was determined to defeat this build up of crime I negotiated with government, and was prepared to take tough decisions on council tax with a single minded determination to reverse the previous disastrous policy and get police numbers up to the level Sir John told me were needed – around 35,000.

This year, after my budgets have invested year after year in extra police and the new police community support officers, we now have over 35,000 uniformed officers in London – 10,000 more than when I was first elected.

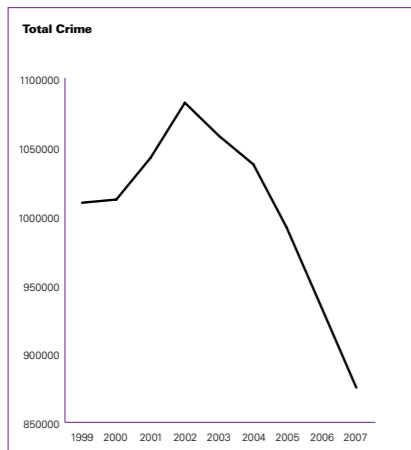
This 40% increase in officers has been achieved despite opposition every year from Conservatives on the London Assembly to the budgets which paid for it.

This increase has allowed the Met to introduce neighbourhood police teams city wide. Each one of London's 624 council wards now has its own Safer Neighbourhood Team of at least 6 officers with more in larger wards. These teams meet regularly with the communities they serve and all are agreeing together the local priorities for fighting crime and anti social behaviour.

London is leading the UK in its approach to neighbourhood policing and our model is now attracting international attention, as other cities seek to emulate our success in reducing crime.

Crime cut for five years in a row – 200,000 fewer crimes

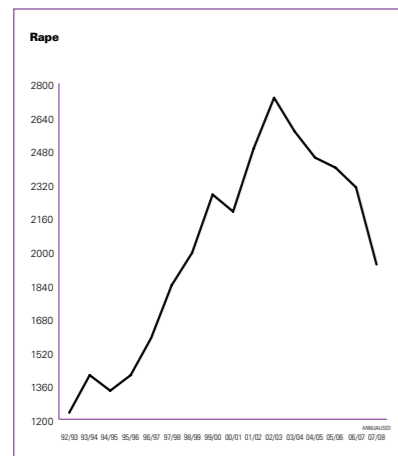
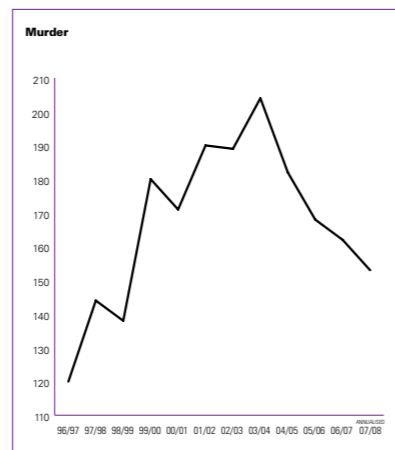
Putting more police on the streets in local neighbourhoods has succeeded in cutting crime and anti social behaviour. Crime in London has fallen for each of the last five years with last year's drop of over 6 per cent the biggest fall yet.



Overall crime is down 19 per cent since 2002; that is 200,000 fewer crimes last year than in 2002.

The most serious crimes have fallen sharply too.

Murder is down by 28 per cent, gun and knife enabled crime by 22 per cent, robbery by 23 per cent.



Investing in specially trained sexual offences teams has also paid significant dividends, achieving a 25 per cent fall in rape.

The Metropolitan Police Public Attitude Survey has just shown the highest level of public satisfaction with local policing since the surveys began in 2004 with 65 per cent of Londoners satisfied and 17 per cent dissatisfied. The Annual London Survey, the largest opinion poll carried out in London, shows that people who consider fear of crime a problem has fallen by 6 per cent since last year.

Over half of all Londoners now say they see a uniformed police presence at least weekly – up 13% on the position just two years ago.

The budgets to increase police numbers have been particularly vital given the new challenges the Met and London face, especially to counter the terrorist threat. Without the 10,000 extra officers it simply would not have been possible to keep London protected from terrorism and simultaneously to keep up the battle to cut crime.

More police on buses, tubes and trains

In addition to neighbourhood policing we have invested in more resources to combat crime on the transport system.

Transport for London now invests £140 million a year in transport policing. This provides:

- more than 1,200 uniformed officers in the Transport Operational Command Unit with responsibility for policing the bus, taxi and road network
- 450 additional uniformed officers in Safer Transport Teams providing visible policing and reassurance on the transport system in outer London
- more than 700 uniformed British Transport Police officers on the Underground and DLR
- 100 uniformed officers in the British Transport Police on the overground rail in London, providing reassurance and rapid deployment to crime hotspots.

As a result crime continues to fall on the transport system.

Since the Safer Transport policing teams were introduced in outer London boroughs in March 2007 crime on buses has fallen by 11 per cent and crime committed by under 16s is 19 per cent lower.

The next four years

A part of the 6 per cent a year reduction in crime will come from existing measures as the extra police numbers continue to bear down on crime, as the 10,000 new officers become more experienced, and as the Safer Neighbourhood Teams bed down further. But I shall continue to take further measures in order to achieve the target of 6 per cent a year reduction in crime and in particular to use the extra resources to target key crime issues without putting at risk the reduction in wider categories of crime.

1,000 extra police

The extra officers and Safer Neighbourhood Teams have made a big impact in cutting crime and anti-social behaviour. But more needs to be done to ensure we keep crime coming down and to combat the threat of terrorism.

That is why with support from government my budget for next year will fund an extra 1,000 police.

The extra police will focus on two main tasks – additional counter terrorism duties and partnerships with boroughs to boost local Safer Neighbourhood Teams where this is needed to address particular community concerns.

We will give a high priority to dealing with anti-social behaviour and continue to expand the Community Payback scheme which is now operating in every borough across London to support the Met's Safer Neighbourhoods local policing programme, with over 200 projects taking place each week. The scheme requires convicted offenders, serving community orders, to carry out unpaid work to bring derelict areas and buildings back into public use, making the local community more pleasant and safer.

We will build on the success of the Safer Transport Teams by extending the borough based approach to Inner London and setting up eleven new borough policing teams in the central boroughs. We will maintain specialist 'Bus Tag and Dip' teams that combat criminal damage and pick-pocketing.

More resources for high crime areas

In neighbourhoods with high crime rates we will pilot new approaches to reduce offending especially by previous offenders.

We will pilot a new scheme in 10 areas of London with high offending rates which will provide three additional police officers in the Safer Neighbourhood Team together with dedicated probation, resettlement, youth and domestic violence staff.

Unite London against terrorism

One of my proudest moments as Mayor was the way that Londoners responded to the terrorist atrocity of 7 July 2005. No one who lived through this terrible event in our city will forget it. But Londoners refused to be divided or scared and stood together. We showed the world how to tackle with pride our worst moments. As we said then "7 million Londoners - but one London".

London continues to face a serious terrorist threat. Our defence against it continues to rely on two things. First because we have invested properly in the Metropolitan police and the superb professionalism of its anti-terrorist units. But second even these officers would not be able to operate blind, without the information and intelligence which freely comes from every community in London.

That is why the vision that has been fought for more than 20 years of a London where every single Londoner, with all their differences, is able to live their life as they want it is not only a social ideal, but part of our anti-terrorist defences.

There will, regrettably, always be small groups of criminal fanatics prepared to kill Londoners to promote their warped ends. We saw this most seriously on 7 July 2005, but also in the bombing at the Admiral Duncan pub. It is imperative for the defence of London against terrorism that such criminal fanatics remain small in number and isolated so that the police can concentrate resources against them. If such criminals were to have a wider pool in which to swim due to the alienation of communities in London the anti-terrorist defences of the city would be overwhelmed. Good community relations are therefore not only a goal in themselves but a crucial part of London's anti-terrorist defences.

We will continue to provide the police and emergency services with all of the resources they need to protect London against terrorist attacks and next year we will deploy hundreds of extra police officers to boost London's defences.

I will continue my policy of engaging with and seeking support from all community and religious leaders who make clear their unequivocal opposition to terrorist attacks. To do otherwise would be to let Londoners down and increase the risks the city faces.

Stopping violent youth crime

Although crime overall is down Londoners are rightly especially concerned about serious violent crime involving young people. Effective measures to reduce such crimes are top of the priorities I will be giving the Met. It will require many different solutions – enforcement, intervention and prevention - and working with a wide range of partners. The key to dealing with youth crime is not gimmicks but the availability of large resources of both police and to increase youth provision.

We have to start with good intelligence and effective targeted operations against known criminals and gang members. For example, over just two weeks during this February's half term the Met's Operation Kartel led to 780 arrests and big reductions in gun and knife enabled crime in the 11 London boroughs that it worked in. Operation Alliance in five boroughs in south east London has involved the targeting of 357 known and potential offenders, 94 of which are now in custody and another 72 being dealt with by the criminal justice system.

This programme of action will be intensified through:

- targeting of and robust enforcement against known and potential offenders with zero tolerance of any offences
- extra resources to improve police intelligence on those involved in gangs, to identify young people most at risk of becoming involved in serious violence and to intervene to prevent this
- establishing a Youth Engagement Team in every borough of uniformed officers working alongside council and voluntary sector youth workers. These teams will talk with young people on the streets and liaise with Safer Neighbourhood Teams to identify young people involved in serious violence and those at risk of becoming so. They will gather intelligence and deal robustly with offenders, but also work with partners to intervene to divert young people at risk away from violence
- a new Youth Violence Operations Group chaired at Commander level to co-ordinate intelligence and enforcement across the Met.

At the same time as we invest in extra police we need to invest more in preventing young people from becoming involved in gangs and violence, offering routes out to those who are involved out on the fringes, supporting families of those at risk and work in schools and colleges.

I will ask the Met to work with local Councils, schools and colleges, youth projects and community groups to ensure there are comprehensive local plans for cutting gang activity and violent youth crime in every area of London affected by high youth crime.

I will ensure the Met increases significantly the number of police officers involved in its successful Safer Schools programmes and agrees programmes of action with any school or college affected by gangs and violent crime.

These will give particular priority to measures, including the use of scanners and arches, to ensure guns and knives cannot be brought on to the premises undetected.

We have also made it possible for the Metropolitan Police Service to invest more than £4 million as part of their new Youth Strategy, to fund a range of projects aimed at engaging with young people and tackling serious youth violence and preventing crime and anti social behaviour.

I will provide funding in the Met's budgets to supplement government support to ensure they have all the equipment and technology they advise is necessary for weapons searches and detection.

A £79 million programme to start rebuilding facilities for young people

Since Mrs Thatcher abolished the statutory duty on Councils to provide youth services there has been a steady decline in funding and in the range and quality of positive activities for London's young people. As a key part of my overall programme to reduce youth crime and violence I am determined to reverse this decline and rebuild London's youth provision.

In partnership with government I have already launched the London Youth Offer with major new funding from the London Development Agency to provide £79 million over the next two years to invest in new youth centres, facilities and services.

This includes a ring fenced Young Londoners' Fund for the voluntary sector to bid for projects and programmes that will particularly aim to help the most disadvantaged young people at most risk of being drawn into crime.

I will maintain and increase the Youth Offer over the following two years with new funding streams to support extending programmes which have demonstrated success, especially in diverting young people away from crime.

I have also already launched the London Summer of Sport and London Winter of Sport, successful programmes funded by the London Development Agency to encourage young people to become involved in sport and to set up new after school clubs to provide more sporting activities.

I will expand both these programmes and work with the Olympic Games Organising Committee to ensure the Olympic sponsors make major investments in new community sports activities and facilities focused on London's young people.

Support for families affected by gangs and violence is an important area for further investment. In too many parts of London there is no effective support available for mothers who fear their children are being drawn into gangs or crime and do not know what to do.

I want to ensure that in every area with high levels of youth crime there is an effective support service and helpline available for parents building on the successful service already developed in south London. Effective family support and intervention must be a priority in local youth crime reduction plans.

Case Study: Operation Argon

An example of the kinds of operation that a better resourced Met is able to carry out is 'Operation Argon' to tackle nightclub shootings.

The Christmas party season has previously been a period when several shootings took place. This Christmas the Met were able to mount a targeted operation against nightclub shootings, Operation Argon. As a result there were no shootings in and around nightclubs in London at all over the Christmas party season, including on the night of 31 December / 1 January - usually a night when a number of shootings occur.

Work took place across the capital between 21st December 2007 and 1st January 2008 with police officers working throughout the night to target criminals who intended to carry guns into London's nightclubs.

The initiative, named Operation Argon, was a partnership between a number of sections of the Met, including the Trident anti-gun crime unit, Clubs and Vice, Territorial Support Group, Specialist Firearms, the Met Intelligence Bureau, Traffic, the Dog Section and local borough police. On certain nights, the City of London Police and the British Transport Police ran complementary operations.

A special night bus was also dispatched to nightclubs to provide rapid assistance and expert advice. The bus consisting of Clubs and Vice officers and TSG, who used their powers to assist with searches, and to close premises down quickly where problems arose.

A total of 124 licensed premises were contacted during this operation by Clubs and Vice, and over 800 music events were risk assessed.

During the party season four nightclubs/bars closed as a result of intelligence and the rapid action of the Operation Argon officers and partners. The success of this work led to no shootings in and around nightclubs during this time - including New Years Eve.

Operation Argon also carried out a series of 'Neons' (where the Met use intelligence to direct armed stops on cars believed to be associated with firearms) resulting in 10 arrests including cash and drug seizure. In addition to this a stun gun, a replica weapon and a firearm were also seized. The operations make full use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology.

Previous shootings over the Christmas period:

- in 2004/5 there were 7 shootings in total. One of these incidents involved a murder and 3 of the shootings happened in nightclubs.
- in 2005/6 there were 5 shootings in total. One of these incidents was a murder and four of the shootings happened in nightclubs - innocent people were caught in the crossfire.
- in 2006/7 there were 3 shootings - all of the incidents happened in Nightclubs.

Tackling the link between crime and drugs

Much of the crime that still takes place in London, including that involving gangs, is linked to the trade in illegal drugs. I will ensure tackling this is another top priority for the Met.

I want to see a continuing drive to close down crack houses, more local operations targeting dealers at street level and priority given to enforcement against dealers in the vicinity of schools, youth clubs and other locations used by young people. Again the Safer Neighbourhood Teams will play a critical role in developing intelligence to target operations.

I will also ensure the Met have the resources for more financial investigations of dealers so that the assets they have built up through trafficking drugs can be confiscated and used to help communities combat drug and violent crime.

Further action against rape and domestic violence

Another area where investing in the Met has achieved important results is in tackling rape and domestic violence.

Rape convictions have increased by a fifth since the introduction of specially trained sexual offences investigating teams. The Met have now introduced Project Sapphire teams in every borough in London - specialists in investigating rape and sexual assault whilst providing victims with the support and care they need. And the whole of London is now served by the network of Havens, funded jointly by the NHS and the Met, to provide specially trained professionals who can offer support to anyone who has been the victim of rape or sexual assault.

I will ask the Met to continue to give priority to increasing the effectiveness of rape investigations through better forensic techniques and ensuring services for victims continue to be as good as possible, providing extra resources as necessary to the specialist investigating and victim support teams.

A significant number of rapes and sexual assaults on women have been carried out by illegal mini-cab touts. In 2000, the London mini-cab trade was entirely unlicensed. Londoners could not distinguish between a legitimate mini-cab firm and the small number of dangerous touts.

Since 2000 we have licensed over 2,100 private hire operators, along with 40,000 mini-cab drivers, all of whom have to undergo a full criminal record check in order to gain a licence.

We have run a highly successful 'Safer Travel at Night' campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of illegal mini-cab touts and to inform Londoners of the safe travel options to get home. This has contributed to a significant reduction in the number of women using illegal cabs - down from 18 per cent in 2003 to 4 per cent today.

Cab-related sexual offences have fallen by almost half since 2003, and last year the Cab Enforcement Unit made more than 1000 arrests, 90 per cent of them for taxi touting.

We will continue to take rigorous enforcement action against illegal cabs and to run schemes such as late night marshaled taxi ranks which make it easier to find safe transport home at night.

We have seen progress by all agencies in developing more effective policies to deal with crimes of domestic violence in line with our domestic violence strategies.

Domestic violence murders have been cut by more than 50%. We will continue to take the lead with a London domestic violence strategy to co-ordinate and give a lead to the work of the police, Councils, the NHS and other agencies.

Priorities for the future will include ensuring that all boroughs achieve the levels of good practice now set by the best, more work with the education and health sectors and strengthening community involvement by developing work with Safer Neighbourhood Teams, local community and faith groups.

A police force that represents London

The Met can only police London successfully if they have the confidence of Londoners. It is important that all Londoners feel that the Met is representative of them.

London is an incredibly diverse city with many different communities. Historically, the lack of representation of many of London's black and Asian communities in the police has been a cause of tension and reduced the Met's ability to police effectively.

The MacPherson report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence revealed serious deficiencies in the Met at that time which it has since worked to attempt to overcome. Enormous effort working with community leaders over two decades and big changes to the Met has moved London forward.

That is why we have worked with both Sir John Stevens and Sir Ian Blair to create a police force that looks more like London.

In the last five years there has been a 53 per cent increase in black, Asian and ethnic minority police officer numbers, and a 34 per cent increase of women police officer numbers.

We will continue to build on this progress by working with the Commissioner to accelerate progress towards the targets that 30 per cent of officers should be from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and 25 per cent should be women.

Action against hate crime

It is fundamental to good community relations that all of London's diverse communities have the right to live free of hate crime – whether the victims are targeted due to their race, religion or sexual orientation.

Maintaining such community relations is essential to a civilized and decent city, but also vital to London's economic success in allowing us to attract talent from right across the world in the knowledge they can be safe and welcome in London. That is why I have made this such a high priority for the police.

As a result racial and religiously motivated incidents in the city have declined by more than 50% since 2000 while rising in the rest of the country. Last year racist crimes fell by 14 per cent in London while rising 12 per cent in the rest of the UK. We will continue to work with the police to crack down on such attacks and to work with London's schools to counter racist or homophobic bullying.

Invest in London's fire services

I have ensured all the requests for additional resources for the fire and rescue services to combat terrorism have been met and will continue to give them the equipment they need to deal with whatever threats London faces.

We will continue to focus on preventing fires and fire deaths, not just responding to incidents and to invest in community fire prevention, including through free fire assessment and smoke alarms for pensioners.

Conclusion

Rhetoric does not reduce crime. Nor does ignoring the real reduction in crime that has taken place in London or the serious issues that remain.

What reduces crime is investing in our police, which is what I have done for eight years and will continue to do so for another four.

It is on the basis of what has been achieved in the last five years, and the new policies building on these in this manifesto that I make entirely realistically at this election my central pledge to continue to reduce crime in London by 6 per cent a year for the next four years.