
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Andrew Dilnot CBE

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
LONDON
SE1 2AA

18 March 2013

Dear Mr Johnson

POLICE OFFICER STRENGTH STATISTICS FOR LONDON

The Statistics Authority has been asked by Joanne McCartney AM to investigate some apparent differences in the statistics about the number of police officers in London presented in your Draft Police and Crime Plan and published on the Greater London Authority (GLA) London Datastore website, compared to the National Statistics on police officer strength published by the Home Office. I enclose a copy of my reply to Ms McCartney about this matter which sets out my conclusions.

I would like to invite you to arrange for publication of a reconciliation between the different sets of GLA figures and the corresponding National Statistics published by the Home Office. I believe that this would assist informed public debate on this important matter and avoid any confusion that may have inadvertently been generated about the true picture in respect of policing numbers in London.

While I note that neither your office nor the GLA is a producer of official statistics and that the Code of Practice for Official Statistics does not apply in respect of statistics produced by your office or the GLA, the Statistics Authority endorses recent proposals from the GLA to prepare a formal document setting out how you will approach more generally the production and publication of statistical material about London. I would like to see this document as closely aligned with the principles in the statutory Code of Practice for Official Statistics as practicable, with any areas of difference set out publicly alongside the reasons.

I look forward to hearing from you about this and would be pleased to meet you to discuss further.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Dilnot CBE

Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Andrew Dilnot CBE

Joanne McCartney AM
London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
LONDON
SE1 2AA

18 March 2013

Dear Ms McCartney

POLICE OFFICER STRENGTH STATISTICS FOR LONDON

Thank you for your letter of 14 February 2013, in which you raise concerns about apparent differences in the statistics about the number of police officers in London presented in the Mayor's Draft Police and Crime Plan and on the Greater London Authority (GLA) London Datastore website. I apologise for the delay in replying to you, but I wanted to check this matter carefully before responding.

The Home Office publishes the National Statistics bulletin on Police Service Strength¹, which includes statistics based on data provided by the Metropolitan Police Service. On the basis of the three available sets of published figures on the number of police in London, it appears that the numbers on police service strength for the Metropolitan Police published by the Home Office are highest, the figures published on the London Datastore are slightly lower, and the Draft Police and Crime Plan figures are slightly lower again.

There are various explanations for differences between the published Home Office statistics and those published by the GLA and Mayor's office, particularly in terms of definitions and time periods. I am told that these differences may include the treatment of staff who are on maternity leave, career breaks and those seconded in from elsewhere. There are also differences in the way that police staff on external secondment are accounted for, and the statistical treatment of recruits who are yet to take up post.

I am writing to the Mayor of London suggesting that he might arrange for publication of a reconciliation between the different sets of GLA figures and the corresponding National Statistics published by the Home Office. I believe that this would assist in informed public debate on this subject.

I should point out that the Statistics Authority does not have any powers formally to require the Mayor to publish statistical information of this kind and that the work of the Mayor's office is not covered by the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The Statistics Authority endorses

¹ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/police-research/hosb0113/?view=Standard&pubID=1149405>

recent proposals from the GLA to prepare a formal document setting out how it will approach more generally the production and publication of statistical material about London. I would like to see this document as closely aligned with the principles in the statutory Code of Practice for Official Statistics as practicable, with any areas of difference set out publicly alongside the reasons, and I invite the Mayor and GLA to take this forward at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'D'.

Andrew Dilnot CBE