ANDREW MARR:
Two years ago Labour set up what it called a “heavyweight independent review” of policing. At that time, the Shadow Home Secretary said the review was Labour’s response to the Government’s “cack-handed reforms”. Yvette Cooper told her party conference in 2011 that the Tories were taking a “reckless risk” with a fight against crime by cutting budgets. Well the results of Labour’s police review, headed by the former Met Chief Lord Stevens, will be made public this week, and Yvette Cooper joins me now.

YVETTE COOPER:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
Good morning and thank you for coming in. The headline of this is an increase in neighbourhood policing, an increase in bobbies on the beat, but police officers have said that if you look at the numbers and you divide them by the number of police forces and then look at the rostering and so on, it only adds up to two more policemen on the beat in each part of the UK, which is hardly going to change things, is it?
YVETTE COOPER:
Well in fact what Lord Stevens is saying is that this is about a mindset, a change in attitude that seems to be taking place in policing, and that there’s a retreat going on from neighbourhood policing, a retreat from the bobbies on the beat, and that this reflects in part what Theresa May has said - is that policing is just about crime fighting pure and simple. What Lord Stevens and his commission are saying is in fact policing is about prevention of crime, it’s about working with communities, it’s about respectful law and order, it’s about public safety. And so …

ANDREW MARR:
So it’s not about numbers really? It’s not about more police on the beat, as we’ve been told? That’s not a big part of your proposal?

YVETTE COOPER:
I think it is certainly about having the numbers of police on the beat, and on the beat rather than …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) And are we going to see them anymore?

YVETTE COOPER:
… rather than in their cars. And we asked Lord Stevens to look at what could be done without additional resources because obviously we understand that resources are pressured. We do think that the Government has gone too far and too fast in the scale of cuts that they made over the course of this Parliament …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) See I remember you very vividly a couple of…

YVETTE COOPER:
(over) … but of course there are financial pressures on everybody right now.

ANDREW MARR:
I remember you sitting in that very chair a little while ago telling me that, you know
with the scale of the cuts, that we were taking huge risks with crime, and I think
we’ve lost 10,000 policemen (by the Government’s own figures) and crime has gone
down, not up.

YVETTE COOPER:
Well I think that the Government is being very complacent about what’s happening
with crime. You’ll see, for example …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) But that is true, isn’t it?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well just a minute. There are some areas where obviously it’s very good that we’ve
had a 20 year drop - for example, in some … volume crimes like car crime. That’s
very good. But you’ve also got increases in the level of domestic violence taking
place; you’ve got increases in economic crime and online crime - an awful lot of
which is not reported. You’ve got doubts coming from senior chief constables now
about the accuracy of the reported crime figures and in the North West they’re saying
that crimes, including serious crime, is starting to go up. So I think the Government
shouldn’t be complacent about this and what Lord Stevens is saying …

ANDREW MARR:
Though they have been able to cut the number of police quite substantially without
the kind of disastrous effects on crime that you suggested at the time.

YVETTE COOPER:
Well look at the impact, for example, on justice for victims. So, for example, we’ve
seen at a time when domestic violence is going up, the number of prosecutions for
domestic violence going down by more than 10 per cent. The number of cases being
referred by the police to the courts on rape has dropped by 33 per cent despite the fact
that those cases being reported to the police are going up. You’ve seen similar drops
in child abuse. So I think you are seeing a serious impact as a result of the cuts and
resources, but what Lord …
ANDREW MARR:

(over) And when we read … Sorry, when we read the Stevens Report …

YVETTE COOPER:

(over) … what Lord Stevens is saying that actually there are things you can do …

ANDREW MARR:

Okay.

YVETTE COOPER:

… even with the resources that you have.

ANDREW MARR:

When we see the Stevens Report, are we seeing future Labour policy or just another think tank type report?

YVETTE COOPER:

Well I asked Lord Stevens really to do what was the equivalent of a Royal Commission and that’s what I think he has done. We’re now fifty years since the last Royal Commission into policing, and he’s drawn together thirty different universities …

ANDREW MARR:

(over) But this is going to be policy is what I’m asking?

YVETTE COOPER:

(over) Well let me conclude. … thirty different universities, the Head of Europol, the former Head of Interpol and senior … you know former MI6 Chief and so on. What they’ve drawn up is a series of recommendations. We will now consult on those recommendations because they have done this independently, but …

ANDREW MARR:

(over) Okay, right, so it’s not necessarily going to be party policy?
YVETTE COOPER:
That’s right …

ANDREW MARR:
Right, okay.

YVETTE COOPER:
… we’ve got to have a consultation and then set out our manifesto plans next year.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) Let me move to the other great subject of …

YVETTE COOPER:
(over) So I think, you know, we shouldn’t underestimate the importance of this.

ANDREW MARR:
Right, okay.

YVETTE COOPER:
The fact that so many people have been prepared to get involved in this does show a serious concern about the direction of Theresa May’s really cack-handed and chaotic reforms.

ANDREW MARR:
Jack Straw said that Labour in government made a spectacular mistake on the number of people coming in from the EU, not introducing more controls and so on. Do you agree with that?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well Ed Miliband and I have already said it was the wrong thing to do not to have those transitional controls in place. I think it was a concern. There were obviously mistakes made about you know the impact in terms of the numbers, but also, you know, we should also have done more about things like the impact on the labour market as well.
ANDREW MARR:
Sure. Under Labour, I think two and a half million or so people came in. Was that too many people? You said in the past the rate of increase was too fast, but was it too many people overall during that period?

YVETTE COOPER:
What we said is that as a result of things like the lack of transitional controls …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) You’re going to have to yes or no on this, I’m afraid.

YVETTE COOPER:
… the pace of immigration was too fast, the level of immigration was too high …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) It was too high, so too many people - right.

YVETTE COOPER:
(over) … and so it was right … that’s why we’ve supported measures to bring immigration down.

ANDREW MARR:
And if David Cameron goes back to the EU and says he wants to change the rules on welfare and so forth to try to stop the number of Romanians and Bulgarians coming in at the beginning of next year, will Labour support him on that?

YVETTE COOPER:
Well we already said last year that there were changes the Government could make already within the existing rules and changes that they should argue for across Europe as well to make sure that the system is fairer. I do think when people are coming to this country, they should be contributing, and so we’ve already said there are changes you could make to jobseeker’s allowance so people can’t come and claim jobseeker’s allowance straightaway. If the Government had done that nine months ago when we
suggested it, you could have had more progress made on this right now. It’s important to recognise that most people who come to this country do come to work and to contribute.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Did you have any idea what the Reverend Paul Flowers was up to?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
No.

**ANDREW MARR:**
None at all?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
I mean I think this is completely shocking, I think what’s happened with these revelations.

**ANDREW MARR:**
I mean a lot of people are very, as we saw in the paper review, very confused that somebody like this could be running a bank. Do you think that Labour has behaved entirely well over the whole relationship with the Cooperative Movement and the regulation of banks and so forth?

**YVETTE COOPER:**
Yes, I think these are completely different issues. There is obviously a big question about what happened with the Cooperative Bank - why the problems with its sustainability weren’t spotted by the regulator and by the Treasury earlier. That is extremely important and it’s right that there should be an inquiry.

**ANDREW MARR:**
If …

**YVETTE COOPER:**
I think there’s a separate issue about the longstanding sort of generations … over
many generations relationship between the Labour Party and the Cooperative Movement, which you know that’s …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) And hence all these soft loans and so on. If …

YVETTE COOPER:
(over) Well no, no - no, that’s not about that because that’s a separate relationship. There’s commercial relationships with the Coop Bank …

ANDREW MARR:
Okay.

YVETTE COOPER:
… but there’s a separate issue, which is about our longstanding relationship with the Coop …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) With the Cooperative Movement.

YVETTE COOPER:
… shops - exactly, the funeral services and so on - which has been about a set of values and about the mutual societies, and it’s right that we should support that.

ANDREW MARR:
What happens to the Labour Party if you have to pay back all that money from the Coop Bank? The suggestions that you know it’s changed ownership, it’s now under control of hedge fund managers and so on and you’re going to be asked to pay that money back. Would that bankrupt the Labour Party? Pretty close to it?

YVETTE COOPER:
No, I mean the arrangements that have been … you know that the Labour Party’s got with its bank - and all parties have banking arrangements in place and those are, you know, on a long-term commercial basis and so on …
ANDREW MARR:
(over) So you don’t think you’ll have to pay back money?

YVETTE COOPER:
And what the party’s made clear is that the party’s on a sound, sustainable financial footing. You know it’s true that we don’t have the same scale of donations and resources that the Conservative Party gets from its hedge funds and things like that, but you know we’ve got sources of funding from all kinds of different areas.

ANDREW MARR:
The Shadow Chancellor, who in time I’m sure will speak for himself but has been asked to pay back £50,000, he said “We simply don’t have the money.” Is that going to be Labour’s general response?

YVETTE COOPER:
No, this is … Look, I think this is nonsense. You know you have a situation where you have a longstanding relationship with the Cooperative Movement - donations, as I said, from things like … you know as a result of the Cooperative shops, you know what you should have on every high street and so on. You know, it’s right that that longstanding relationship has got nothing to do with Mr Flowers and it is just smear and the politics of the gutter …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I was going to ask you …

YVETTE COOPER:
(over) … for the Tory Party to keep pushing with. This is what’s going on and I do think it is a nastiness that’s going on that …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) You’ve talked about that, but it does mean that in the future you can never say to the Tories look at that bank and look at the terrible behaviour that banker has adopted.
YVETTE COOPER:
No, I …

ANDREW MARR:
You can’t use the same sort of rhetoric against them as you could have done a week ago really.

YVETTE COOPER:
No, I think it’s right for us to be proud of the longstanding, very historic relationship that the Labour Party has got with the Co-operative Movement and the mutual societies and so on. I think look what we’ve seen recently is a real deterioration in the nature of the politics the Tory Party’s pursuing. It is a return to the Nasty Party. I don’t think John Major would ever have done this. I don’t think Margaret Thatcher would have done this.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) I’m just saying you …

YVETTE COOPER:
(over) She had a different style of politics. This is David Cameron’s approach.

ANDREW MARR:
(over) … you and your colleagues can never again look at the Tories and say that terrible banker, those terrible Tories - look how they’ve behaved. If it was a Conservative banker who’d been taking cocaine and using rent boys and so on, I think, as Iain Dale suggested, you would have probably mentioned it in the House of Commons. You can’t do that anymore. It’s changed.

YVETTE COOPER:
Yeah, but the point that we’ve made about the relationship between the Tories and some of their big financial backers and also some of the bankers and so on is about what they’ve done is they have cut taxes for their friends who are giving them donations - substantial tax cuts for the richest people in the country at a time when
those on the lowest income and those on middle income are facing a cost of living crisis. That is about fairness; it’s about our values.

ANDREW MARR:
Yvette Cooper, thank you very much indeed for joining us. That’s very kind of you.

YVETTE COOPER:
Thank you.

ANDREW MARR:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS