

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Zack Polanski AM**  
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**Our ref:** MGLA251023-9095

**Date:** 15 February 2024

Dear Zack,

Thank you for your letter about the police operation that took place in Ridley Road Market in Dalston, Hackney, on 21 July. I apologise for the delay in replying to you.

Staff in my Office for Policing and Crime have been in touch with the local BCU leadership team in response to the concerns local residents raised, and they have explained the circumstances of this operation, which had been planned for some time and was carried out under the Misuse of Drugs Act. In total, eight business premises were searched, following which six arrests were made for drugs offences and possession of offensive weapons, and a large number of drugs were seized in response to evidence of organised criminal activity.

I understand that much of the intelligence that led to this operation came directly from communities in response to increasing public concern over a period of time regarding potentially dangerous activity happening on the site. The police have a responsibility to investigate and respond to public concern and intelligence and I am reassured that their response was justified in this case.

However, how the police exercise their powers is rightly a subject of substantial public interest, and this case was also raised and discussed by my newly launched Hackney Community Police Scrutiny Panel. This panel represents a wide cross-section of Hackney's communities, including young people and youth leaders, who meet monthly to scrutinise data and practice in the use of police powers and explore in detail incidents of community concern. This case was discussed at length between the panel and the BCU Commander. As a result, the MPS is looking at how the local police teams communicate information about operations such as this and how they engage with communities during and following such activity, both to provide reassurance to communities and address the spread of misinformation that often circulates following such incidents. The scrutiny panel will, at one of its future meetings, review some examples of community impact assessments the police carry out to examine where it might make improvements to community engagement and dialogue.

Ensuring groups of community representatives can regularly and robustly hold the police to account for how they exercise their powers in communities is fundamental to fair and transparent policing, which is why I made the reform of community scrutiny in London one of my priorities in my Action Plan for Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing.

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Hackney's scrutiny panel is proving to be a successful pilot, and my teams are working with other boroughs in London to build similar programs so that all communities – and in particular those most negatively affected by policing, can hold their local police service to account.

Thank you for your concern in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

**Sadiq Khan**  
Mayor of London