

Specialist Crime and Operations

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Re: Police and Crime Committee Meeting - 9th February 2017

Dear Mr O'Connell,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 February 2017 and the opportunity for me to attend the Police and Crime Committee on the 9 February 2017. This letter incorporates the MPS response to the requests made of both myself and Detective Inspector Gail Granville.

Copy of emails between the MPS and MOPAC, regarding information set out in Appendix A of the letter from the Deputy Mayor, as appended to the Committee's report.

At the Police and Crime Committee both Robin Merrett and I were asked about communication between the MPS and MOPAC. To ensure you are provided with all correspondence, the MPS has provided its emails to Robin Merrett who has agreed to respond on behalf of MOPAC and the MPS.

Copy of the training presentations provided to Borough Commanders on election issues.

As Detective Inspector Granville explained at the PCC, the MPS Special Enquiry Team (SET) performs the function of single point of contact for electoral fraud and malpractice. All police forces in England and Wales have an equivalent unit or officer(s) that undertake this function. The SET work closely with the Electoral Commission who regularly provide advice and guidance to police forces. The National Police Chiefs Council have developed Authorised Professional Practice in conjunction with the Electoral Commission and this is available to all forces through the College of Policing.

Within London the SET works closely with the Electoral Commission and Local Authorities, with the aim of preventing electoral fraud offences and ensuring free and fair elections. The SET provides

specialist expertise and guidance to local police in relation to the policing of elections, this includes the provision of training and briefings for officers, for example with regards to police powers and policies.

Attached to this letter are two PowerPoint briefings that were used in the 2016 Mayor of London and London Assembly elections. There have been some minor redactions for operational reasons, and you will see that each briefing is designed to include specific local information, which would vary dependent upon the borough. These are an example of how MPS boroughs and local commanders receive training in relation to electoral offences and policing powers.

These briefings are used in all police boroughs with clear direction and expectation that police officers are trained, in particularly those officers who may be deployed to, or respond to incidents at polling stations. In addition to the face to face briefings, leaflets published by the Electoral Commission and detailing police powers were issued to every officer who attends the police briefings. The SET has also presented to police Borough Commanders through the MPS monthly crime performance forum, which is known as CrimeFighters.

Data on the number of witnesses interviewed by the MPS, in relation to the 2014 election in Tower Hamlets, and the number of statements that the MPS took in relation to the 2015 election in Tower Hamlets.

I assume that the requests for the number of witnesses and statements both relate to the 2014 elections in Tower Hamlets, as opposed to 2015.

As I explained to the committee, the MPS received 164 allegations in relation to the 2014 mayoral election in Tower Hamlets. During the police investigations, 250 witnesses were contacted and spoken to by the MPS. The information and evidence provided by each witness was then assessed and consideration given as to whether the witnesses had evidence they were willing or able to provide in a statement for a criminal investigation. From these 250 witnesses, 32 evidential statements were obtained and there were a number of reasons why a formal written statement was not, or could not be taken.

Whilst no matters were referred to the police for investigation by HHJ Mawrey or the Director of Public Prosecutions, the MPS reviewed the Election Court judgement to identify any further evidence of any new or previously investigated offences. This identified 4 new investigations and 47 cases for reinvestigation under the Representation of the People Act 1983.

As part of these investigations following the Election Court hearing, the MPS contacted a further 85 witnesses. Some of the 47 RPA cases relating to polling stations were identified as duplicate allegations, which left 36 people to be contacted. Of these, 29 agreed to speak to police officers and

the other seven (7) failed to respond to repeated police contact. None of these 29 witnesses provided any additional evidence which could identify person(s) responsible for intimidation and/or disruption at polling stations.

In total, the MPS contacted and spoke with 335 witnesses. In each case the police considered what evidence the witness could provide, which resulted in police taking 34 evidential written statements, in addition to over 170 police officer statements who were on duty on election day. There were a number of different reasons why evidential written statements were not obtained for use in a criminal investigation.

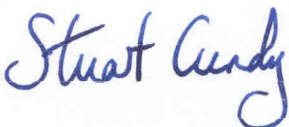
Police undertaking to meet Councillor Golds and other potential witnesses

During the PCC I gave evidence that the MPS could have communicated and engaged better with a number of key individuals connected to Tower Hamlets. Immediately following the committee hearing I met Councillor Golds and personally reassured him that investigators would meet him to secure any evidence he has of criminal offences.

A Detective Superintendent had previously met Councillor Golds on 1st February and the day after the PCC police contacted Councillor Golds to arrange a further meeting. Due to conflicting commitments and at the request of Councillor Golds, senior detectives met him on 16 March 2017. I'm grateful that Councillor Golds has agreed to a series of meetings with the police to secure evidence and provide the details of witnesses who may not have not been spoken to during the police investigations. In addition I am meeting, or have offered to meet, a number of other individuals connected to Tower Hamlets and this includes the four election petitioners.

I trust this information meets your expectations following the Police and Crime Committee on 9 February 2017. If there are any aspects of the response that you would like clarification on, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Stuart Cundy

Commander - Specialist Crime Investigations