

Letter to Mayor of London on Ridley Road Market raid

Key information

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Ridley Road Market raid

Dear Mayor of London,

I am writing to you in relation to the police raid that took place in Ridley Road Market in Dalston, Hackney, on 21 July 2023 – which we discussed during Mayor’s Question Time on 14 September.

I appreciate you are constrained in what you can say or do, given the ongoing investigations in relation to this operation. Nonetheless, the points I raised during MQT were about the context of the raid and wider fallout on the community.

As we discussed, the Met’s heavy-handed approach – deemed “brutal”, “traumatising” and “vandalising” by locals – resulted in a range of lasting emotional and economic impacts on the community. Local people I spoke to did not perceive the raid to be something that would protect the community from crime, but as another example of their community being subject to an unjust assault, this time from the police rather than developers or the local council. It is an example of “over policing and under protection” described in the Baroness Casey Review and felt keenly by many marginalised communities in London, and a failure of the police to understand what is good for the community and treat them with respect and dignity.

I was dismayed to hear you say during our conversation that, “policing by definition has an impact, negatively, on individuals and others.” The Met should always be striving to be a positive service for our communities. Accepting the negative knock-on effects of policing “on others” condones the Met acting with a degree of impunity, something that has eroded trust in policing across London over many years, especially in London’s Black communities.

One of MOPAC’s stated priorities is, ‘Increasing trust and confidence’. The scale of the disconnect here between the police’s actions and this stated aim of MOPAC should be incredibly concerning for you, as it is to me – and demands proper reflection about the approach taken by Met.

When I raised with you the lasting emotional and economic impact of the raid on the community, you said, “I am very happy for the MPS and City Hall to look into this matter.”

I hope to understand from you how the Met and City Hall are looking into this, how each party are planning to listen to the affected community, and how the experience will inform approaches to policing going forward.

In the context described in the MQT and recapped in brief here, I hope you understand why it is so important to make sure this vulnerable community are heard and to take action.

I will look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Zack Polanski AM