Metropolitan Police Authority

MPA DIRECT

March 2009

MPA full Authority discussion of Babar Ahmad case

Unanimous support for independent oversight of the review into MPS procedures

At the MPA full Authority meeting on 26 March members unanimously called for an inquiry with external independent oversight to investigate MPS procedures in the Babar Ahmad case, with a formal report coming back to the Authority.

Chair of the MPA, Mayor of London Boris Johnson, said:
"An inquiry has my full support. It was bizarre that officers involved in this case were able to decide not to give evidence. It is crucial that community confidence in policing in London is maintained and therefore the Authority will now consider the options to review this case."

Reshard Auladin, MPA member, said:
"The MPA relies on the MPS to give the Authority and its members correct information. But in this case it appears that I was not fully informed and regrettably passed on reassurances that were not valid to communities.

"This case may have a critical impact on public confidence as members of the public may assume an element of guilt if officers involved in a court case decline to give evidence. Maintaining a position of innocence without giving evidence could be construed as showing total disregard for public concern.

"Additionally the cost to the public purse of this case – in the region of £200,000 including £60,000 compensation - is unacceptable in our current economic climate.

"We welcome the Commissioner's internal review but it is important that the MPA ensures an independent external input to the inquiry so that Londoners can be assured of impartiality.

"Integrity, justice and fairness must be seen to be done. And they are the issues that go to the heart of the Commissioner's policing ethos."

In conclusion Reshard Auladin said:
"This Authority relies on a working relationship with the MPS built on trust and we cannot allow this to be undermined.

"The Authority will now consider all available options and detailed discussions will be held next week with the MPS. The decision about the way forward will be taken at the next full Authority."

MPA Chair, Mayor Boris Johnson paid a visit to the Met's Central Communications Command in Lambeth to see the Special Ops Room from where G20 operations were coordinated. He said:

"This has been one of the biggest operations the Met has had to deal with in recent years. People have the right to demonstrate peacefully and the majority will - but if a minority incite violence they will be dealt with in a commensurate way. Most importantly this [operation] must not undermine ordinary policing. I have every confidence in all the Met officers and staff involved in this operation."

MPA Race and Faith Inquiry : seeking the public's views

For policing in London to be successful, the MPS needs the trust and confidence of all communities. The MPA Race and Faith Inquiry wants to know what the people of London think of internal MPS employment issues, so has asked them to send in responses to the following questions:

Have MPS employment issues changed your opinion of whether the police can do a good job? If so, how has it affected you and why?

What information helped to form your views about race and faith issues within the MPS – the media, personal experience or other sources?

These questions were advertised in the METRO and posted on the MPA website at http://www.mpa.gov.uk/scrutinies/race-faith/views/

Responses will be treated confidentially and needs to be returned by 15 April.

… and who appeared this week

On Monday 30 March the MPA Vice Chair Kit Malthouse and Catherine Crawford Chief Executive answered questions from the panel in the morning, while the Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson and the new HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Denis O'Conner, appeared in the afternoon.

On Tuesday 31March unforseen circumstances meant the sessions for the Met Black Police Association and Martin Tiplady, MPS Head of Human Resources , have had to be rescheduled.

Next week

On Monday 6 April the following will appear before the Inquiry: Martin Tiplady, Sir Ian Blair, MPS Assistant Commissioner Bob Quick, Dr. Richard Stone, Vice Chair of the Runnymede Trust and Trevor Phillips

Kirsten Hearn appointed first chair of London Deaf and Disability Organisations

A new body to support organisations working with Deaf and disabled people has been launched by London Councils. The London Community Interest Company (CIC) of Deaf and Disability Organisations has appointed Kirsten Hearn as its new chair.

Kirsten has 30 years' experience as a disability activist. An MPA member since June 2002, Kirsten was previously a member of the Transport for London Board for eight years where she championed social inclusion. Commenting on her appointment, Kirsten said:

"I am extremely excited to have been appointed as the first chair of the London Deaf and Disability Organisations CIC. I'm a Londoner, I've been a disability activist for more than thirty years so this is the perfect role for me.

"Deaf and disabled people's organisations are experiencing real difficulties, not the least of which is funding challenges which have sent some of them to the wall, whilst others are really struggling. One of my first priorities will be to work out ways in which we can begin to support Deaf and disabled people's organisations in London to become stronger.

Our community is very diverse. I want to make sure that we hear from and support all sections of the Deaf and disability communities. I want us to celebrate that very diversity as Deaf and disabled people and to challenge discrimination wherever it arises."

The London Community Interest Company (CIC) of Deaf and Disability Organisations has been set up to provide policy, campaigning and capacity building support for deaf and disabled people's organisations in the capital. For more information see: www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/grants/ciclaunched.htm

Prince William attends Hendon passing out parade

On March 6 Prince William reviewed the 216 new recruits graduating after 25 weeks of training and presented awards to the top trainees during the passing out parade at the Met training college in Hendon. As usual the MPA was represented by an Authority member, this time Clive Lawton.

The Prince said: "It is an enormous privilege for me to be standing here taking the salute at your passing-out parade.

"I must say though that you have done yourselves proud, and all your instructors, this afternoon with your immaculate smartness and bearing on parade."

He praised the recruits for their achievements and wished them the "very best" for their future careers. Hundreds of family and friends cheered and clapped as the trainees marched around the parade square in their uniforms, hats and white gloves.

The band of the Prince's old regiment - the Blues and Royals - provided the music for the hour-long parade with motorcyclists, dogs and their handlers, and members of the mounted branch, as well as a helicopter fly-past, added to the spectacular.

One police horse, Kensington, showed republican tendencies in the Royal presence and sneezed as the Prince came to inspect them. The Prince laughed and jumped out of the way - but not before his jacket sleeve was caught.

Making a joke of the incident, Sir Paul Stephenson said: "Can I say thank you today for what you have done. I think you have made it a very special day for all our recruits and families here. I do have to say I have to apologise for the behaviour of our horses, for using your suit as a handkerchief. But sir, money is tight, and the dry cleaning bill will have to stay with you."

The Met's training college is in Aerodrome Road, Hendon. The first organised college in London was opened in 1907 at Peel House in Regency Street, Pimlico, where recruits undertook a four-week training course before being posted to their beat. In 1934 the foundation stone was laid for a new training school in Hendon. Exactly 40 years later, on May 31, 1974, the Queen officially opened the new Peel Centre at Hendon.

The introduction of the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme in 2006 marked another change in police training. Recruits now spend 25 weeks at locations across the Met, with Hendon playing an integral role as the headquarters.

MPA Domestic Violence Board expands remit to take on sexual violence

The MPA Domestic Violence Board is formally expanding its remit and oversight responsibilities to include sexual violence and will re-launch as the Domestic and Sexual Violence Board on 3 April 2009.

Cindy Butts, MPA member and chair of the board said:

"This is an exciting and challenging step forward. I hope we will have the same success with supporting the development of the MPS response to sexual violence as the Board achieved with domestic abuse. We will support partnership work across the MPS to ensure safety for victims and to increase public confidence that domestic and sexual violence will be dealt with most seriously by the MPS.

The board will perform a key role in supporting and scrutinising the MPS as it prepares to move the Sapphire Teams, which investigate sexual violence, into one central command. The board is also the independent mechanism by which the MPA monitors and scrutinises the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) performance in these crimes.

The MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board is developing in tandem with the upcoming Mayoral London Violence against Women Strategy. The board will also ensure that any issues resulting from the National Violence against Women Strategy are integrated fully into police practice.

The MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board requests Borough Operational Command Units to report their response to domestic and sexual violence within their borough, and invites guests and professionals from the community to facilitate open discussion of local issues. It also brings together national and pan-London organisations such as the Crown Prosecution Service, Greater London Authority, the Havens and Greater London Domestic Violence Project in order to harness their specialist knowledge and expertise.

HOW THE MPA WORKS: The first in a series about MPA departments

Internal Audit

Internal Audit's function is integral to the MPA's statutory duties and essential to enable the Authority to carry out effective oversight of the MPS. Director Peter Tickner leads the Internal Audit (IA) team of forty people, plus certain contractors, which comprises over a third of the Authority's staff.

Overall, IA reviews the internal business of the MPS (and MPA) and passes an opinion about the effectiveness of systems in place to safeguard against failures and corruption. Reporting to the Corporate Governance Committee and regularly informing decisions made by members, the Director's opinions are published annually and help to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address any areas for improvement. The Audit Commission provides an external review of this work. This is an important statutory function of all public authorities.

Sixty per cent of IA's work looks at MPS internal systems and makes recommendations to improve controls. At any one time 200 business systems are under review. All command units across the Met, ranging from individual boroughs to those at the centre, can expect to have their systems examined by IA which will review anything from security issues to financial controls. Advice can also be provided for new and in-development systems to prevent missing vital controls in the first place.

IA has been working with the Met to raise standards and introduce effective counter-fraud methods, and is currently training several hundred senior Met staff – including the Commissioner and senior management.

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MPA Committee Meetings

Full Authority meetings are held at City Hall, all other meetings at 10 Dean Farrar St, London SW1H 0NY

April committee meetings

2 April
Strategic and Operational policing

Professional Standards Cases sub c'ttee

9 April
Professional Standards Cases sub c'ttee

23 April
Olympics and Paralympics sub c'ttee

Finance and Resources

30 April

Full Authority City Hall

Community Engagement and Citizen Focus sub c'ttee

Human Resources and Renumeration sub c'tee

MPA Domestic and Sexual Violence Board
meets on 3 April

Race and Faith Inquiry panel
meets on 6 April

The following information is on our website
Details of MPA members
www.mpa.gov.uk/about/members

Committee and sub committees membership
www.mpa.gov.uk/committees

Borough link members
www.mpa.gov.uk/about/members/link-members.htm

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www.mpa.gov.uk

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And finally…..

New look MPA website

We hope you will have had a chance to view the revamped MPA website and agree with us that it is more customer focussed and enjoyable to use.

We would appreciate your feedback

Please contact us by email at communications@mpa.gov.uk or telephone 020 7202 0216