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Our Ref:
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Dear Dame Karen Bradley,

Further to the Home Affairs Committee (HAC) session which took place on the 6th January 2026, as promised, I would like to take the opportunity to clarify some points which arose.

1. The Committee expressed concern arising from the SAG minutes from the 7th October 2025, that the recommendation was made in the '*absence of intelligence*'. That is something I can clarify. On the fourth page of the minutes it states:

'in absence of intelligence, based on conversations, my professional judgement is no concerns with villa fans'.

I have spoken to the Silver Commander who confirms that his comment related only to Aston Villa Football Club (AVFC) fans. This was made during a discussion regarding the various options available to WMP in policing the fixture.

He confirmed that at that time AVFC had no identified risk groups and had not been involved in significant disorder at home or abroad for at least 4 years. There was no intelligence at that time to suggest that AVFC fan behaviour would be different for this fixture. With the lack of any specific intelligence relating to AVFC fans, it was the Silver Commander's professional judgement that they would not cause any significant issues at this fixture.

We are grateful to Birmingham City Council for agreeing to share the recordings of the SAG meetings and hope that they will provide the Committee with more detail.

2. There was a suggestion from the Committee that the recommendation to ban MTA fans was based solely on the meeting with the Dutch Police on the 1st October 2025. Whilst it held a level of significance, it was not the sole basis. As discussed during the session, there was a range of information and intelligence that supported the risk assessment and decision-making process. I have attached a summary of the information and intelligence your reference (*Appendix 1*).

3. The Committee asked questions and raised concerns regarding WMP's engagement with local mosques and the timing of that engagement.

The police are the most visible public authority and usually the first point of contact when community tensions arise. As a result, the engagement was for the purpose of communication and reassurance. As discussed, please find attached a summarised timeline of the community engagement that took place (Appendix 2). Within this document the Committee will see that WMP were contacted on the 4th September 2025 by Green Lane Mosque, with a request *'to assure them of the extra safety measures WMP is putting in place.'* The subsequent meeting with the Muslim Community Stakeholders took place at 19:00hrs on 16th October 2025 (after the second SAG made its decision).

4. In response to the Committee's request for the contemporaneous notes made by CI Wilkinson, I can confirm handwritten contemporaneous notes were made during the meeting with the Dutch Commanders on 1st October 2025. CI Wilkinson verbally briefed the Silver Commander on the same day and the Gold Commander the following morning. CI Wilkinson's handwritten notes were then transferred into email form on the 9th October 2025 and were not retained. The contents of this email have already been shared with the Committee within my letter dated 19th December 2025.

I have carefully considered the preliminary findings from the HMICFRS dated 14th January 2026 and acknowledge the concerns about the force's record keeping and retention.

5. As requested, I have attached the Gold Strategy (Versions 1-3) and the Silver Tactical Plan which were generated during the operation. Further to this I have also provided the Silver incident management log. These documents have been appropriately redacted (Appendix 3, 4 and 5).
6. As requested by the Committee, I would like to provide further information in relation to the timing of the research which returned the erroneous information regarding a West Ham fixture and when it was introduced to the operation.

On Friday 9th January 2026, I was made aware that Microsoft Co Pilot had been used by the Intelligence Manager in relation to research pertaining to the last time MTA played in the UK. This was in addition to the Dedicated Football Officer's (DFO) Google search.

The Microsoft Co Pilot search was conducted on the 5th September 2025 and the results of this were subsequently emailed to the Silver Commander on the same day. This was noted in the Silver Commander's Silver Plan and was also briefed into the first Gold Meeting by the Intelligence Manager on the 17th September 2025. The erroneous fixture was subsequently included in the SAG document dated 23rd October 2025.



7. In relation to the discussion on taxis, the relevant information I was referring to during the HAC session can be found in the CIA (page 4) which cites information received from the CST.

I underline my apology for the error referenced above and would like to reassure the Committee that I am committed to addressing the concerns raised in HAC and by HMICFRS.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Guildford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Guildford QPM VR DL
Chief Constable

