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Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley DBE MP
Chair Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

26 August 2026

Dear Dame Karen,

Re: Update on the IOPC investigation regarding the conduct of West Midlands Police officers, staff and the former Chief Constable in relation to decisions to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv football fans from a UEFA Europa League fixture at Villa Park on 6 November 2025.

As you are aware, the IOPC began its independent investigation into the conduct of members of West Midlands Police in January 2026 after using its Power of Initiative to proactively call the matter in for independent scrutiny. We subsequently received a conduct referral from the West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner in relation to Mr Guildford. As we have reached a significant milestone in our investigation, I thought it would be helpful to update you on our progress and inform you of our decisions regarding the investigation of conduct matters.

Since our investigation started, a dedicated investigation team has examined more than 600 pieces of evidence, including operational documents, reports, intelligence research, minutes of meetings, and a large volume of correspondence including emails and messages. We have also taken witness statements and sought expert witness advice.

I have enclosed the terms of reference for our investigation which set out the scope of our enquiries and I set out below in precis the alleged conduct matters for the former chief constable, all the police officers and police staff under investigation by my team.

We have assessed that there is an indication Mr Guildford, a senior officer, and a senior staff member potentially committed gross misconduct. They have been served notice that we are investigating their conduct.

Evidence indicates that Mr Guildford may have overseen an intelligence briefing presented to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) that was later reported to have contained inaccuracies and misleading information. We consider Mr Guildford may have failed to ensure due diligence and the highest level of scrutiny over such an influential document. It is alleged the briefing – presented to the SAG on 24 October and which underpinned the decision to ban Maccabi fans – gave an imbalanced view of the risk away fans posed compared to risks they may have faced.

A senior serving officer, who played a lead role in compiling the briefing, is under investigation for allegedly failing to ensure its accuracy, and for potentially not accurately representing some information which could have resulted in the briefing lacking impartiality. We will also examine

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whether the officer may have failed to appropriately handle sensitive intelligence contained in the report before it was shared with SAG members.

The staff member, who was involved in researching and compiling intelligence for the game, is alleged to have sourced inaccurate information from AI searches and to have taken no subsequent action to help ensure it was not included in briefings.

Two other senior serving officers who played important roles in the force's planning for the game have been notified they are being investigated for potential misconduct. It is alleged one was not sufficiently diligent in the exercise of their duties in overseeing the operation, including balancing operational needs alongside engaging with local Jewish communities, and that they displayed a lack of impartiality towards Maccabi fans in both external and internal communications. The other officer will be investigated in relation to their oversight of the briefing document and an allegation they too lacked balance in references to Maccabi supporters.

The IOPC investigation team will now proceed with interviews for Mr Guildford and the staff member and officers served with notices. We will consider and act on any issues arising from those interviews, while continuing to progress other lines of enquiry in this investigation

We currently anticipate completing our investigation and drafting our final report by early 2027, though this timeframe will remain under review as our investigation progresses. I recognise the anticipated duration of our investigation is significant, particularly when considered alongside the scrutiny of these matters by HMICFRS or by your Committee in the Commons. However, in contrast to previous scrutiny these matters have received, our investigation is the only one tasked with arriving at a determination of whether there is a case to answer for misconduct. As a consequence, we must ensure it is carried out in line with the procedural safeguards required by relevant legislation, which provides for elements of consultation with appropriate authorities and appropriate opportunities for response by those under investigation alongside gathering evidence in a way that will withstand scrutiny in potential proceedings.

These considerations also mean that whilst we will work to complete all outstanding lines of enquiry and our final report as soon as we are able to, it may be some considerable time until we can publish either a full report or a summary of our investigation. The timeframe for publication will be heavily influenced by any potential proceedings arising from the investigation as it is usually only when proceedings have concluded that we can publish our report so as to minimise the risk of prejudice.

I would be very pleased to meet with you to discuss our work and our progress in taking forward our transformation programme when parliament returns in September.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Watson
Director General
Independent Office for Police Conduct.

Encl: Terms of Reference

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Terms of Reference:

To investigate the role West Midlands Police officers, staff and the former Chief Constable played in the decision to ban Maccabi Tel Aviv fans from attending a Europa League match in Birmingham on 06 November 2025, including:

- a) The quality and accuracy of the information provided by WMP to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) between 07 and 24 October 2025 and the methods used to check the accuracy of the intelligence.
- b) Whether relevant information was appropriately recorded, retained and made available to help inform the intelligence and associated risk assessments.
- c) The use of AI for the purposes of obtaining intelligence for inclusion in briefings to the SAG (in circumstances where AI had not yet been approved for use).
- d) The extent to which local community groups were consulted prior to the decision being made.
- e) Whether, and if so, the extent to which discrimination may have been a factor in how the intelligence briefed to the SAG was gathered and presented by WMP.