

Gun and Gangs Commission

A Commission had been set up, in Lambeth, under the chairing of Cllr Lorna Campbell, to address the issues of guns and gangs in Lambeth and to develop new approaches to the problem. The Commission, which has a wide membership, has met on three occasions since its inception on 24 July, when it heard evidence from some of Lambeth's front line workers. It is expected to report in October. CPCG is represented on the Commission by Chair Anna Tapsell and Canon Ivelaw Bowman.

Stockwell 2: IPCC Report

On 2 August the Independent Police Complaints Commission published its report into a complaint by the family of Jean Charles de Menezes in respect of information released by the MPS following the shooting in Stockwell, which has generated much interest and concerns in the borough. CPCG will be arranging a public meeting during September when key players are returned from holidays and available.

Copies of a correspondence between Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) Chair Len Duvall and CPCG Chair Anna Tapsell are available on www.lambethcpcg.org.uk and attached.

The letter from Len Duvall objected to Anna's use of the word 'dishonest' in a letter to the Evening Standard. In response, Anna apologised unreservedly for suggesting that the IPCC report had indicated any dishonesty on the part of the MPA, but set out widespread concerns about the MPA's involvement in the events of 22 July 2005 and its responses to the Stockwell investigations and decisions.

The CPCG Board, meeting on 21 August, supported the Chair in her apology and in the more general representations she made to MPA concerning Stockwell.

Safer Neighbourhood Panel

Notes of the meeting, in June, called by CPCG in response to Lambeth Council's proposals for Safer Neighbourhood Panels are now available and on the website. Subsequently a working group of Panel Chairs, together with representatives of Lambeth Council's Community Safety Division and Lambeth MPS, has met twice since, chaired by CPCG. The working group is developing a package of resources and support to help Safer Neighbourhood Panels deliver to a common standard, across the borough, in terms of representation, communication and administration.

Country Show

Lambeth's CPCG tent at the Country Show on 21st and 22nd July proved to be a bog hit and one which we will hope to repeat next year. On the Saturday we showed films, which was very popular with visitors seeking shelter from the rain, and on the Sunday we had two very successful public debates. Thanks are due to Councillors Steve Reed, Jackie Meldrum and Graham Pycock and barrister and MPA Member Peter Herbert for their spirited debating style and to former borough commander Brian Paddick for adept chairing of the Drugs debate.

The tent is an excellent opportunity to engage in a new way with a wide cross section of Lambeth residents and we shall build on the lessons learned for next year. The tent was shared this year with Lambeth Victim Support and Lambeth Panel of Independent Custody Visitors. We hope next year to involve the Safer Neighbourhood Panels and CPCG's from adjacent boroughs, especially Southwark.

Extension of the Use of Tasers

The Group first became aware of revisions to the guidelines for using Tasers following the alleged use of a Taser on an unarmed individual during the raid on the Rastafarian Temple. The Group immediately tried to get some clarity around these revisions, unsuccessfully to date. A self explanatory copy of correspondence with the MPA is attached.

Safer Lambeth: Lambeth Crime and Disorder Partnership

Minutes of the Board meetings of the Partnership, which CPCG Chair Anna Tapsell attends, are now available on the Council's website. This is something CPCG has long argued for. We shall continue to argue for the publication of supporting papers (except where there are legitimate reasons for confidentiality) and for the minutes to be kept in an informative style.

CPCG has been invited to interview by the Audit Commission, who are carrying out an assessment of the Partnership. If you have specific views or comments, please relay them to Anna Tapsell through the office.

Operational

CPCG members met with officers from British Transport Police and MPS Lambeth in the run up to the Notting Hill Carnival, in respect of policing in Brixton especially around the transport hubs and in the light of last year's deployment of armed officers. This was a productive meeting and in the event (in response to intelligence and risk assessment), police in Brixton was lighter this year.

CPCG provided observers to a knife arch operation (with drug dogs) at Brixton tube station on 10 August. The public response to the arch was generally favourable and we saw no undue disproportionality in those stops. We raised some queries regarding the efficacy of the passive drugs dogs. Full results will be presented by BTP at a future CPCG meeting.

Meetings Attended

Anna Tapsell attended two MARACs (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences), 18th July and 22nd August, which are chaired by the lead officer from the Lambeth Community Safety Unit. It meets every month to assess the risk, where people are repeat victims of domestic violence or who are deemed by the police and other front-line agencies to be in extreme danger. The MARAC Panel is tasked with devising a care-plan that reduces that risk with all agencies working together to ensure that the plan is implemented.

Anna also attended Lambeth's Domestic Violence Forum on 15th August. The Forum this month received a presentation from the Council's Muslim Liaison Worker, specifically related to the issues for Muslim women here. The Forum also learned that our Domestic Violence Coordinator, Julie Wilkinson, is leaving her post to work with Lambeth's Youth Council. Hopefully, the Council will waste no time in filling that vital DV post.

The Saturday after the DV Forum, local Muslim women held a day conference on 18th August at Charles Edward Brooke School which was a great success with excellent visiting speakers who were joined by Phyllis Dunipace Lambeth's Director of Children and Family Services. The speeches were interspersed with music, poetry and lots of fun activities, plus some excellent food! Anna attended for the CPCG.

On 20th August Anna attended a Community Meeting in the Salvation Army Hall in West Norwood. The meeting was called by the Norwood Forum, in response to anxieties following the tragic death on Anvil.....and the shooting of..... Present to answer questions from the packed hall were, Supt. Jonathan Trotman and his Safer Neighbourhood officers and various councillors, including Jackie Meldrum and Clare Whelan. It was clear from the complaints made by the audience that there is a part of Lambeth that feels very forgotten, yet has many problems: that is Upper Norwood. Many people commented on the poor facilities for children and young people there and the difficulties arising from being at the meeting point of four boroughs. What was nice about the meeting was the fact that no one sought to demonise the young people and were far more concerned about the poor environment and lack of opportunities for them.

Paul Andell attended the MPAs Equal Opportunity and Diversity Board on 12th July.

Jim Toohill continues to attend the Brixton Town Centre Safer Neighbourhood Panel as CPCG observer (Canon Bowman is also a member of this Panel).

Lambeth's CPCG has held two Board Meetings since the last Group in July: one on the 17th July and another on 22nd August at which Supt. Paul Wilson from Lambeth Police was present for the first hour and a half. The Chairperson, Anna Tapsell has also had two formal meetings with Lambeth's Borough Commander Sharon Rowe and a meeting with the Council Leader Steve Reed.

Letter from Anna Tapsell to Len Duvall re Tasers

22 June 2007

Dear Len Duvall,

Extension of Taser Use

On 12 April, the police raided the Rastafarian Temple in Lambeth. The raid was extensively covered in the media as you will know. At a public meeting on the following Friday (called I believe by the Safer Lambeth Partnership) an allegation was made by an individual arrested in the Temple that he was 'Tasered' whilst he was being restrained and on the floor.

In the period since the raid, the various judicial processes have followed their course, in the criminal courts (in respect of those charged) but also in the civil courts with regard to both the 'crack house closure' order sought by the MPS and repossession of the property by the local authority.

At the same time, a number of disturbing assertions and allegations have been circulating in the community, doubtless of variable provenance and motivation, but nonetheless damaging to community confidence, as well as genuine questions regarding the raid and particularly the use of Tasers in this situation.

In response to community anxiety about the raid Lambeth CPCG has called a public meeting for Tuesday 26 June, at 6pm and it would be very helpful if we could have some better information regarding the new parameters for using Tasers.

Our Board has been told that this is now a permitted use of Tasers, a so-called 'dry stun' which does not involve the use of the projectile barbs and utilises a lower voltage. This was news to us

At our CPCG Board meeting on 15 May, Supt John Corrigan of Lambeth MPS explained to us that use of Tasers in this mode, and in these types circumstances, had been sanctioned by the Home Office from April 1. He kindly undertook to obtain for us copies of the MPS guidance covering this extension in the use of Tasers but has subsequently informed us that the response from New Scotland Yard is that this guidance is 'restricted'.

We have attempted to establish what oversight the MPA has exercised in the introduction of this extension in London and what efforts have been made, by the MPA or MPS, to canvass community views or even to inform Londoners. From your website, the only references we can find are in papers relating to your Coordination and Policing Committee on 9 June 2006¹, where an MPS report states:

"1. Last summer, ACPO made representations to the Home Office that the trial be extended to other suitably trained specialist officers within the five trial forces **and deployed to a wider range of conflict management incidents. Potentially, these would include those incidents where an officer may have to face serious violence or the threat of serious violence.** Whilst it is not possible to give a definitive list, it would include incidents where a subject

¹ <http://tinyurl.com/3b6c28>

was carrying a weapon, such as a knife or sword.

2. A decision by the Home Office as to whether to allow forces to consider such an extension to the availability of Taser is still awaited.

Operation and effect of Taser

3. Taser works by discharging a pair of probes from an electrical device at an intended subject at short range. The probes, which contain a sharp barb, create a circuit by connecting to clothing or penetrating the skin. 50,000 volts is then passed through the conducting wire into the subject. **An additional feature of the weapon means that it can be used in a touch/drive [sic] stun mode, either after the barbs have been discharged or when the cartridge is removed.** In either mode, Taser delivers its electrical charge in a five-second cycle, which can be broken or repeated, but once the cycle ends or is broken, the direct incapacitation effect ceases. The overall effect is achieved through disruption of neuromuscular control, leading to disturbances in posture and balance. In most cases, this application will be sufficient to render a subject incapable of continuing an attack and is likely to result in the subject collapsing to the ground. The effect is not intended nor is likely to render the subject unconscious.

4. As with any potential use of force, there is a continuum. The simple drawing of the Taser, or use of the red dot aiming mechanism may be enough to induce compliance. 'Arcing' visually demonstrates the electric charge without discharging the barbs."

[my bolding]

By way of MPA response, the reference we can find is in the minutes of the same meeting:

"A report was submitted which provided an update on the trial of Taser and conversion to X26 model Taser.

Commander Kaye reported that since the report was written there had been four further deployments. It remained the case that the new X26 Taser was yet to be deployed. The Commander explained that the detailed information contained in the Appendix was based on paper records, it was intended that electronic records would be used in the future.

In reply to points from members Commander Kaye undertook to provide details of what would happen to the earlier version of the Taser i.e. are they to be retained or sold to another police force.

Members said they would find it useful to be advised of how the wider learning from the use of the device and any operational issues would be disseminated within the MPS and incorporated into training packages etc. Members also felt that more information should be sought on the risk associated with the "les controlled fall " which had been identified in paragraph 10."

It may of course be the case that the MPA's oversight has been much more extensive and probing, weighing all the issues in play, and that we have failed to find it. Likewise, there may well have been efforts by yourselves or the MPS to engage with Londoners on this issue, or at least to inform them, and that these have failed to reach us for whatever reason.

It would be very helpful if you could let us know, ahead of Tuesday's meeting:

- a) Has the MPA formally sanctioned this extension to the use of Tasers?
- b) In arriving at its decision, did the Authority canvass community views and from whom?
- c) How did the Authority weigh the potential operational gains against the risks to the suspect and more widely in terms of the damage that may be done to public confidence by the use of 'stun guns' on our streets by the police?
- d) How has this revision to the use of Tasers been communicated to Londoners.?

I would be most grateful if you could let me have an early response that could correctly guide Tuesday's meeting.

With many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Anna Tapsell

Chair, CPCG for Lambeth

Response from Len Duvall [received 28 August]

9 August 2007

Dear Anna Tapsell,

Thank you for your letter of 22 June 2007 in relation to the use of Taser. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The MPS have confirmed that a taser was used on an individual on 12 April 2007, which I understand is connected to the incident to which you refer in your letter. Taser has been available to all Authorised Firearms Officers (AFOs) since September 2004 as a less lethal alternative for use in situations where a firearms authority has been granted.

The taser has a very short range so officers are close to the subject in any event. I should confirm that the use of taser in drive stun mode is not a change, and use in drive stun mode has been available to police since 21 April 2003.

MPA Members support the use of taser as a less lethal option. The MPA have been consulted through all stages of the taser roll out to firearms officers and a report that outlined proposals for the extension of taser trials was presented to MPA Co-ordination and Policing Committee in June 2006,

The MPA agreed the MPS change to the X26 taser and its deployment to the MPS firearms commands. This allowed AFOs more generally (not just CO19, DPG and Heathrow) to have immediate access to a less lethal option (and so giving officers an alternative to potentially lethal force if appropriate). This might have been a wider distribution but was not an extension to the parameters of taser use, to which the MPS would need to seek MPA approval.

Since that widening, of those extra OCUs mentioned in the June 2006 MPA report, the Flying Squad SCO 7 have used taser on 8 occasions.

The Home Office' letter to ACPO (8.1.07) explains the change for AFOs to use taser in non-firearms but violent threat situations (e.g. knife wielding suspect). In that letter, the Home Office clearly stipulate that "officers would be facing violence or threats of violence of such severity that they would need to use force to protect the public, themselves and/or the subjects".

Home Office Minister Tony McNulty laid a written ministerial statement before parliament on 19 July 2007. It approves the deployment of taser for use by AFOs in operations to deal with violent incidents where the criterion for the authorisation to issue firearms does not apply. The ministerial statement is available from this link, <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-publications/publication/operational-policing/police-use-taser-wms?version-1>

ACPO and the Home Office have agreed a trial issue of taser to specially trained officers (ie non-firearms officers), for use in similarly violent circumstances requiring conflict management.

The MPS will present a report to the Authority before non-firearms officers participate in a 12-month trial of taser. The trial is scheduled to start in September / October 2007.

An update report on taser will be presented to the MPA Co-ordination and Policing Committee in September 2007.

Yours sincerely,
Len Duvall AM, OBE

Chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority

Stockwell 2 Correspondence**Letter from Len Duvall to Anna Tapsell:**

6 August 2007

Dear Ms Tapsell

Your letter to the Evening Standard about the Stockwell Two Report, published by them on Friday, was inaccurate and gravely mistaken.

I respect the right of individuals and groups – even groups wholly funded by the MPA – to be robustly critical of the Authority, and if necessary of me as Chair, where the facts justify it.

In the present case you accuse me of taking part in decisions to mislead the public. If you read the IPCC Report you will find not a shred of support for that assertion, and in fact paragraph 24.2 specifically states that the IPCC do not criticise me or any other person (apart from AC Hayman) who attended the meeting at Scotland Yard on 22 July 2005. You also suggest that the MPA has "been exposed" as incompetent and dishonest, clearly suggesting to a reader that that is what the IPCC have found. That is an untruth, and you have no basis whatsoever to justify your remark.

So I do not recognize your letter as legitimate criticism. It is a gross distortion, and defamatory.

You signed the letter to the Standard as Chair of Lambeth CPCG, although I understand that the CPCG Executive did not approve it. As it purported to be a letter on behalf of the CPCG, I am copying this reply to the CPCG Executive.

The MPA has throughout the past seven years, worked hard on behalf of Londoners to hold the Met rigorously to account for its actions and to scrutinise it at every level, while supporting its 50,000 police officers and staff to deliver a service that is effective, efficient and fair. We have made the Met more accountable to the people of London than it has ever been before. The work of the Authority across the range of policing issues of importance to Londoners - from stop and search to gun crime to counter terrorism community engagement - has led to changes being made that improve policing.

It is a great pity that you did not trouble to check any of your facts before writing your polemic, and that by writing as you have, you have chosen to mislead the public as to the truth and to identify the CPCG with your ill judged comments. I expect an apology. I trust you will not repeat any of your unjust and defamatory allegations.

Yours sincerely

[Len Duvall](#) OBE, AM

Chair, Metropolitan Police Authority"

Letter from Anna Tapsell to Len Duvall:

10th August 2007

Dear Len Duvall,

Thank you for your letter which was hand delivered to my home on 6th August. I understand that your letter was published on the MPA website with my full home address. Fortunately, this was seen by a CPCG colleague and quickly removed by MPA staff, for which I thank them.

I have carefully re-read the Stockwell 2 Report and fully acknowledge that it makes no suggestion whatsoever that either you or the MPA as a whole were dishonest. I was quite wrong to include that term in my letter to the Evening Standard and I apologise unreservedly.

The Stockwell 2 Report reflects, in my view and that of many others, an account of appalling disfunctionality at the heart of the MPS in a period of national crisis. That is very disturbing to those of us who have an innate respect for the constabulary and who rely on the Metropolitan Police Authority to ensure that Londoners have senior officers of the highest quality. As the body accountable for the Metropolitan Police the Authority needs, in my view, to question its objectivity in this regard.

*Not all of us who are elected or appointed to public office will have to face a situation such as that which pertained in July 2005 when, at a time of heightened security, a person is shot seven times in the head, after he has been followed from his home, onto the street, aboard a bus, into an underground station and down onto a train. That having happened, one would expect **the MPA** to immediately be asking the same questions as people on the streets in Lambeth at the time: have they got the right man and why did they have to kill him? These questions would surely involve detailed questioning of officers about his form of dress and his demeanour prior to the shooting, yet wrong information about both those things continued to be given out to the public over 24 hours later, well after the time when our MPA representatives had attended a meeting at which the form of the information to be put into the public domain was agreed.*

For those of us who are close to the MPA and who have admired its efforts to improve the accountability of our police force to Londoners, the Stockwell 2 Report comes as a shock. Particularly when considered with the earlier decisions by the MPA to request the Attorney General to quash the CPS's decision to prosecute the Commissioner's office under the Health and Safety legislation and later, it's decision to offer public funds in support of a Judicial Review by police officers that caused the Stockwell 2 Report to be delayed then amended. It is not surprising therefore if some of us question whether the MPA has lost its way on this matter.

My criticism, and I take personal responsibility for my views, is not about the body of the work performed by the MPA over the last few years nor with Lambeth's link member who is diligent in his duties. Our local police have worked very hard in Lambeth to improve community confidence and consequently their effectiveness. Immediately following the London bombings and the events of 22nd July, our borough commander and his officers were out on the street, into

the churches and mosques and at all our meeting places, calming, reassuring and, above all, listening to us. They deserve the very best from the MPA and the MPS leaders and so do all Londoners.

In your letter to The Guardian of August 4th you say that you understand why the family of John Charles de Menezes will never be satisfied with the explanations for his killing. You are right. However, you fail to demonstrate an understanding of why so many Londoners now feel anxious about the Commissioner's ability to inspire the confidence of his senior officers or why Londoners from ethnic backgrounds find the account of casual, and wildly erroneous, references to the ethnicity of Jean Charles de Menezes a chilling reminder of institutional racism.

You are completely justified in calling me to book for using the term 'dishonest' when referring to you or the MPA and I again apologise for the hurt I may have caused. But there are times when critical friends have their uses. I genuinely believe that the remaining content of my letter, which I have set out more clearly here, is widely held and I would be failing if I did not relay it to you. Your duty is onerous, but you would, I know, not wish to appear beyond criticism.

I expect that you shall publish this letter on the MPA website alongside your own. I shall ask for CPCG to post both letters, but not the original Evening Standard letter, on its website from this weekend and to distribute to its contacts. I hope this will mitigate any damage done to your reputation.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Tapsell

Letter from Jim Toohill to David Riddle (Deputy CEO, MPA)

27 August 2007

Dear David Riddle,

Evening Standard Letter

In my email of 6 August, I said I would let you have CPCG for Lambeth Board's settled view on this matter, after its meeting on 21 August.

This is to let you know that the Board shared Anna's regret at the use of the word 'dishonest', in the letter to the Evening Standard, and any hurt which that may have caused to the MPA or to your Chair, Len Duvall. The Board supported Anna in sending her letter of personal apology to Len Duvall, and also concurred with the more general context which she gave in that letter and her account of the widely held concerns with MPA's performance (as set out in the IPCC report) and with the damage done to confidence in the Met's senior command by the report's content.

More generally, having heard an account from Anna of the course of events on the day of publication of the report, the Board accepted that it will not always be possible to get full Board approval for statements in the media (in the case of broadcast interviews, for example or – as in this case – solicited contributions to

the print media against copy deadlines). Nonetheless the Board felt it should be considered good practice for any Board member making a contribution to the media, which may be associated with CPCG for Lambeth, to run it past at least one other Board member, where this is at all practicable.

The Board agreed to review its procedures in respect of the media and also to investigate if media training, which had been provided free by MPS in the past and which was much valued by those who attended, was still available.

We have published both Len Duvall's and Anna Tapsell's letters on our website (www.lambethcpcg.org.uk) and shall draw our members' attention to them. We anticipate that you will also wish to publish this letter, together with Anna's (copy attached), on your own website.

I hope that we can now draw a line under the issue of the Evening Standard letter and would be grateful if you could let me know that you feel this to be the case. We can then return to what has increasingly been a constructive and productive relationship, even if we occasionally need to say challenging things one to another.

Best regards,

Jim Toohill,

Honorary Comptroller

CPCG for Lambeth