

Scrutiny by the Metropolitan Police Authority of communication and media at the Metropolitan Police Service with particular reference to the handling of media and communications during the Forest Gate incident of June 2006

Aftermath of the Anti-Terrorism Police Raids in Forest Gate on 2 June 2006

Submission of Newham Monitoring Project

27 September 2006

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1. Terms of Reference

- 1.1. On Friday 2 June, 2006 police carried out raids on 46 and 48 Lansdown Road, Forest Gate, London. In the weeks following these raids the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) amended its existing scrutiny programme of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) for 2006/7 to include the media and communications strategy of the MPS.
- 1.2. The stated objectives of this amendment to the MPA's scrutiny programme is to :
 - a) Assess the extent to which the MPS has the strategies, policies, protocols and processes in place to ensure efficient and effective communication, media and reputation management, particularly in the context of the 24 hour news environment.
 - b) Undertake a detailed analysis of the handling of the media and communication during the Forest Gate incident in June 2006.
 - c) Assess how effectively the MPS engages internally to manage communication to the media, Londoners and stakeholders, particularly during sensitive operations.
 - d) Understand the culture of the MPS towards communication and media management and the impact this has on the delivery of an effective service.
 - e) Evaluate the use of resources available to the MPS to deliver this key function, including understanding the division of resources and lines of accountability between central and local directorates.
 - f) Understand the legal context within which the MPS operates and the implications this has for the organisation.
- 1.3. The submission of Newham Monitoring Project is primarily focused upon providing the MPS with our perspective as it relates to 1.2(b), though indirectly, our submission may touch upon the wider remit of the MPA's scrutiny

2. About Newham Monitoring Project

- 2.1. Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) is a community-based civil liberties organisation that has worked with black communities in east London for 25 years. It provides advice and support to local people suffering racial harassment or who have complaints about police misconduct, through a casework service and a 24-hour emergency telephone help line. NMP has developed a particular expertise on the impact of rapidly changing anti-terrorism legislation, providing training and advice to voluntary, community and faith sector organisations on the implications for their members.
- 2.2. In the aftermath of the raids in Forest Gate, NMP has provided practical and emotional support to the families from both 46 and 48 Lansdown Road, including arranging doctor's appointments and hospital visits, assistance with rehousing and advice on the legal process.

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3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. Immediately following the raids on 46 and 48 Lansdown Road, an 'information vacuum' was created by the Metropolitan Police Service's refusal to provide any meaningful information to local people, coupled with repeated and unattributed leaks to the media. At best, the MPS condoned selective briefings and leaks to the print and broadcast media, but at worst, was responsible for orchestrating them. Such a strategy inevitably – and perhaps deliberately – led to rumours and speculation within Forest Gate. The strategy directly fuelled a process of character assassination of the two brothers that were arrested and by implication other family members.
- 3.2. Much of the responsibility for the media strategy following the raids must rest with members of the senior management team in New Scotland Yard. Amongst this group of officers were personnel who had virtually total control of the operational information finding its way into the media and credited as police sources.
- 3.3. Local Newham police were to all intents and purposes sidelined and excluded from details of the police investigations, the reasons for the raids themselves and the policing of the public in their aftermath. Very soon after the raids it was apparent to NMP, other community organisations and many local residents and that Newham police could offer nothing in terms of concrete and useful information. Attempts by senior local officers to stay 'loyal' to Scotland Yard in public even as the grounds being used by the MPS in justification of the raids began to unravel was highly damaging to the credibility of the local force.
- 3.4. The MPS media strategy in this respect has contributed further to growing scepticism about the reliability and veracity of 'intelligence' acquired as part of general anti-terrorism operations and increased the likelihood that members of local communities are less likely to believe the information they are given about the nature and extent of 'terrorist threats'.

4. Selective leaks to the media

- 4.1. Individual responsibility for selective leaking of misinformation is difficult to pin down or prove, particularly in an organisation like the Metropolitan Police Service that has shown a great reluctance to explain its actions following the raids in Forest Gate, choosing instead to hide behind the generalised comments about not wishing to compromise an ongoing investigation or 'intelligence sources'. Nevertheless, NMP would argue that the 'corporate' media strategy implemented after the Forest Gate raids further illustrates a much broader shift towards undermining one of the prime objectives of a public body - providing meaningful, understandable, accurate and timely information for the benefit of the public. A key objective of the MPS 'news management' process after the raids appeared to focus on reducing and or eliminating any cause for members of the public to pass informed and perhaps even critical comment on police performance or its operational priorities, which the MPS seems to see as its exclusive preserve.
- 4.2. NMP has little doubt that the MPS will deny that it has deliberately set out to obscure or mislead the public about the Forest Gate incident. However, we note from

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experience that the MPS media strategy when it is seeking information from the public related to say, a child abduction or a major robbery is very different from its overall strategy for anti-terrorism raids, a death in police custody or allegations of police officers assaulting members of the public. Where there is a high degree of interest into the conduct of MPS personnel, one can identify an organised and consistent practice of misinformation that is clearly differentiated from and far more damaging than a maverick 'off the record' briefing to the press by an individual officer. Journalists have long had their individual contacts within the force – this is not going to change and it is not the chief concern of this submission.

- 4.3. If the constant stream of unofficial briefings that appeared in the press following the Forest Gate raids as 'police sources' were not officially orchestrated, then the MPS has by allowing them condoned the actions of a small group of police officers who have anonymously fed information to the media in return either for cash, the conducting of inter-agency feuding between the Met and the security services over apportioning blame or simply in order to undermine the accountability of a public service. In either scenario, police officers based at Scotland Yard have been responsible for misconduct and this needs to be investigated urgently.
- 4.4. Whatever the actual reason for these leaks, one outcome in terms of public perception was the widespread assumption that silence on the part of the MPS was an admission that leaked information attributed to police sources **was** the official view of the MPS. That some of these details were known to be false from the outset by local communities and others later 'proved' to be false did nothing to engender confidence and trust in the MPS and significantly undermined local policing initiatives to build such trust.
- 4.5. A further outcome of the selective leaking of misinformation, half truths and unrelated associations was to place further strain on the slender strands of public accountability over the MPS by the Metropolitan Police Authority. Those with a role in holding the MPS to account appear to have no effective means of rescuing a media strategy that is seemingly out of control. Moreover, after the Forest Gate raids, there does not seem to be mechanisms available to the MPA to effectively evaluate the basis of what MPS 'thought was true', even when the police's presentation of information contradicted common sense and the reality of physical evidence.
- 4.6. Appendix A of this submission contains a brief sample of several media reports that we maintain were based on unofficial briefings by serving police officers. Regrettably, this was the only information available to local people urgently wanting to know more in the fortnight that followed the raids.

5. A failure to inform

- 5.1. It has now been nearly four months since an 'anti-terror' raid on two homes in Lansdown Road in Forest Gate led to the closure of streets, the shooting of an innocent Forest Gate resident and two families found their lives turned upside down. However, despite admitting that they need to 'learn the lessons' of the failure to communicate with local people, the Metropolitan Police at both a central and local level have continued to fail to provide answers to the concerns that have been raised about both the raids themselves and their aftermath.

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- 5.2. The Metropolitan Police say they have spoken to 'community leaders' but no efforts were made to communicate with residents whose roads were suddenly closed. Whilst briefing what might be described as 'opinion-formers' is important, the basis for choosing who receives information remains very much in the hands of the MPS. The Met has also consistently refused to provide a senior officer to respond publicly to local people who are not considered 'important' enough to be hand-picked as community leaders.
- 5.3. Following the raids, Newham Monitoring Project canvassed local residents on the seven streets where access was severely restricted and held a residents meeting in the area. Another community group, the Asian Friendship Centre, also held a meeting at its offices on Katherine Road. It was clear from both meetings that local people are looking for answers, both on the circumstances that led to the shooting of a neighbour and on the way that the immediate area was policed over the following week.
- 5.4. At the Asian Friendship Centre's meeting on 8 June, residents expressed concern that the police had given no explanation of what was happening, and had responded to some residents initial questions by simply telling them to 'watch television'. Other officers stated in response to residents' questions that they had undertaken diversity training, and so are aware that they are a 'service' to the public – although residents felt that they were far from being answerable to the public. Although more junior police officers had probably not been fully briefed about the situation, it was felt that more senior officers should have been able to inform residents of what is happening.
- 5.5. On Tuesday 13 June, a previously scheduled public meeting on crime and anti-social behaviour was organised by the Green Street Community Forum at the Katherine Road Community Centre, within walking distance of Lansdown Road. It was addressed by Newham's senior officer in charge of Operations, Superintendent Phil Morgan. Despite having potentially the most significant police operation in recent months in his area and knowing that on the subsequent Sunday, 18 June, a large protest march had been planned in Forest Gate, Superintendent Morgan admitted that he was unable to add any more information than was available to the media. He was effectively saying the same thing that residents on 8 June had reported been told by police officers – that if you want to know what is happening, you'll have to follow the media for answers.
- 5.6. On 15 June, Newham Monitoring Project organised a residents meeting, also at the Katherine Road Community Centre. Residents were invited from the roads affected by police cordons controlling access to their homes - Prestbury Road, Lansdown Road, Jephson Road, Rothsay Road, Marlborough Road, Woodstock Road and Cromwell Road. The following are examples of the information we were given:
 - 5.6.1. **Resident of Jephson Rd:**

On Friday morning I woke to go to the mosque. The roads were blocked. The police shouted at me to 'go back!' I did not know what was happening. After the mosque I asked someone what is happening and I switched on the news. I saw the house and recognised it. I knew the father. Then I went to work. I could not bring the car back out on Friday. On Saturday evening when I was asking the police officers for directions, there was a one policewoman who

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tried to explain but a male officer started to shout at me, 'Move! Move!' I was embarrassed and many people started looking. The police shouted at me like a criminal. Later in the week the police would ask me where I was going if I came out of the house. 'If you don't have anything to do go back in,' they said. They said that they did not want the media to come in.

5.6.2. Local councillor

We asked the police to make sure to let us know what happened. The police won't talk to us as councillors. We spoke to people in the mosques. But the police refused to let us speak to the residents in the area. The way it happened the media had more information than the police.

5.6.3. Resident of Jephson Rd:

People had no information about the second family in No. 48 and how they were affected or why. People elsewhere are now thinking that Forest Gate is full of criminals, that they are bad people living here.

5.6.4. Resident of Lansdown Rd:

We feel like criminals. People come knocking on our doors looking for information, asking things like 'were they religious people?' So what if they were religious? You can be Christian, Hindu and be religious. People who see us escorted by the police during the search may think that we have something to do with it. They will think that we are criminals as well.

5.6.5. Rothsay Road resident:

We need to critically assess the situation and need to ask bigger questions, as well as focus on specific issues related to the incident – such as: at least the local police know the area, so why weren't they involved? They could also have explained why we were being escorted to our homes.

5.6.6. Resident of Lansdown Rd:

We felt like we were criminals when we have to show our driver's license to get into our cars or to park our cars.

5.6.7. Jephson Rd resident:

When I asked the police what was happening they told me to go in and watch the TV to find out. The police should have opened up a 'communication centre' or information point so we could have had clear information.

5.6.8. Rothsay Road resident:

I feel that the 'media' line is an excuse to cut off residents from the outside world. The residents were barricaded. Mistrust was bred by secrecy, and the vacuum left was filled with speculation. This enabled the police to dictate the agenda.

5.7. Following the residents meeting on 15 June, Newham Monitoring Project wrote to Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman on 19 June and said:

5.7.1. *NMP is concerned that the Metropolitan Police's strategy of speaking only to councillors and selected 'community leaders', important though this is, has*

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excluded those most affected by the raid – local people. Over a week after the cordons around Lansdown Road were lifted, there has still not been any written communication from the police to residents. Equally, there is no mechanism for local people in Forest Gate to raise their concerns and receive informed responses. On 13 June at a meeting of the Green Street Community Forum, Superintendent Phil Morgan from Forest Gate Police spoke briefly and expressed his wish for dialogue with local communities but acknowledged that he was unable to provide any information that was not already available in the press. Superintendent Morgan was placed in the impossible position of trying to kick-start a dialogue, by its very nature a two-way process, with no means of responding to the questions put to him about an operation planned and carried out centrally under your direct command.

We feel that the only realistic solution is for you, as the senior officer in charge of the operation on June 2, to come to Newham and address a public forum where all local concerns, not just those of selected individuals, can be raised.

- 5.8. The steering group of the Green Street Community Forum also passed a resolution on 18 July **[Appendix B]** to write to Assistant Commissioner Hayman, asking him to come to the borough and answer the questions that the police in Newham are unable to address. Michael Johnson, the Borough Commander for Newham, agreed at a meeting of the Newham Community and Police Forum on 24 July to pass on this request to his superiors.
- 5.9. Unfortunately, Assistant Commissioner Hayman has continued to refuse requests for him to speak in the borough. In a letter to Newham Monitoring Project dated 27 June, he said:
 - 5.9.1. *“I and other senior officers have visited Newham on a number of occasions to meet community groups. An outcome from these meetings has been that the Metropolitan Police is undertaking a review of the Operation conducted in Forest Gate... In the course of this review we have canvassed a wide selection of the community through a variety of methods.”*
- 5.10. Unfortunately, Assistant Commissioner Hayman did not elaborate on what ‘variety of methods’ were used or what he considers a wide selection of the community to be. Nevertheless, he claims they constitute *“action already in progress [that] will provide a suitable vehicle for local officers to maintain an informative dialogue with their local community”*. All the evidence we have seen both before and after Assistant Commissioner Hayman wrote this bland and unfounded statement suggest that, in reality, local officers have found it extremely difficult to enter into anything approaching meaningful dialogue with local people on the impact of the raids.

6. Communicating directly with residents

- 6.1. On the day of the raids, 2nd June, the Metropolitan Police press bureau issued a statement (bulletin 413, subsequently altered on the Met’s website) saying *“local Safer Neighbourhoods’ officers will be working closely with affected residents and members of the community to provide support, advice and reassurance.”* This turned out to be untrue. The sergeant leading the Green Street East Safer Neighbourhood team was

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on holiday but no other efforts were made to ensure that local officers with knowledge of the area were involved in providing reassurance to the local community.

- 6.2. As residents soon discovered, the officers patrolling the cordons of the roads that were closed were from across London. These officers had been given no information as to why, in the first place, there were road closures when there was no threat to the safety of the public, or why residents had to be escorted to their homes. This led to considerable confusion about whether visitors were allowed to enter homes behind the cordon, whether they had to be met at the cordon and (in the case of Lansdown Rd) whether they had to provide identification.
- 6.3. The local paper, the *Newham Recorder*, and national press reported that the police would be delivering a letter to local people, answering some of their questions. At the meeting of the Green Street Community Forum on 13 June, Superintendent Phil Morgan, said that a letter including 'questions and answers' had been drafted but that *the MPS at Scotland Yard had refused to agree its wording*.
- 6.4. At a meeting of the Newham Community and Police Forum on 24 July, Superintendent Morgan repeated this earlier astonishing admission and went further, saying that the police had been unable to write to residents because 'logistics' could not keep up with 'changing events'. However, as our Timeline (**Appendix D**) makes clear, a small local community organisation like Newham Monitoring Project was able to repeatedly provide information to local people in response to 'changing events', so why was this impossible for an organisation with resources many thousand times greater?
- 6.5. Moreover, when it came to the information that was really needed – about the cordons, about escorting residents to their doors, about how long the police operation might take – nothing fundamentally changed between 2 June and 10 June, when the cordon was finally lifted. *Why was it so difficult to communicate with homes in just seven streets?*
- 6.6. On 22 July, a letter from Chief Inspector Derrick Griffiths was finally drafted, but it has never been delivered by the police. Its contents are set out in **Appendix C**.
- 6.7. Although Chief Inspector Griffiths' letter was far from adequate and far too late, Newham Monitoring Project took the decision to pass it on to local people as part of a 'Residents Update' delivered to every household on the streets that were affected by closures. Two volunteers completed this task within 90 minutes, making something of a mockery of the claims that 'logistics' made it impossible for the police to keep people informed.
- 6.8. It is interesting to note that when, on 3 August, information that the MPS *wanted* to be circulated to local people, because it appeared favourable to the MPS' news management – namely the decision of the IPCC that the circumstances of the discharge of a police firearm during the raids was accidental – a Police Community Support Officer was suddenly available to hand-deliver leaflets to homes in the area around Lansdown Road.

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7. Why did the police actively refuse to say anything?

- 7.1. There are many questions that need answering about the raids themselves and understandably, some information will not be available until after an investigation by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). This is to ensure that any possible disciplinary or legal action is not put in jeopardy. However, this only applies to the complaints that the IPCC are investigating, **not everything to do with events from 2 June onwards.**
- 7.2. At the meeting of the Newham Community and Police Forum on Monday 24 July, long after Assistant Commissioner Hayman had promised a review of the raids in Forest Gate, Newham's Borough Commander Michael Johnson was extremely unwilling to answer questions from the public about any aspect of the policing operation following the raids. He repeatedly took refuge behind the IPCC's investigations and possible future legal proceedings as an explanation for why he will not comment in more detail.
- 7.3. Newham Monitoring Project contacted the IPCC to clarify whether their investigation prevented any discussions about the aftermath of the raids. The IPCC told us:
 - 7.3.1. *"The Metropolitan Police are not prevented from providing information to the community about the aftermath of the Forest Gate incident. We are aware that, in some quarters of the police, the perception exists that they are prohibited from divulging any information; however, the IPCC has clarified the correct position to the police whenever possible.*
- 7.4. They added, *"The policing of the containment areas around Lansdown Road forms no part of the IPCC investigations."*
- 7.5. Regarding the raids themselves, the IPCC said:
 - 7.5.1. *Our current media protocol states that the MPS may comment on matters surrounding the IPCC investigations subject to our prior agreement; however, they remain responsible for the media strategy for all other issues connected to the counter-terrorist operation, including the justification for the Forest Gate raid and its planning.*
- 7.6. In the IPCC's view, decisions about answering questions on the planning and justification for the Forest Gate raids are for the Metropolitan Police to make.
- 7.7. Newham Monitoring Project wrote to Borough Commander Michael Johnson on 28 July and said:
 - 7.7.1. *If you do not have the answers to questions about the raids on Lansdown Rd, then we suggest that those responsible for planning and carrying out the police operation either brief you properly or come down to Newham and speak to local people in person.*

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The helpful guidance from the IPCC means that in future, it will neither be possible or acceptable for Metropolitan police officers to use the IPCC investigations as an excuse to divulge nothing.

8. Newham Police sidelined

- 8.1. Maybe part of the reason that senior officers in Newham have hidden behind the IPCC investigation is that, despite the assurances from Assistant Commissioner Hayman that “*action already in progress will provide a suitable vehicle for local officers to maintain an informative dialogue with their local community*”, they simply did not have the answers. It is clear that our local police were shut out of an operation planned and directed from Scotland Yard, making a mockery of the idea of ‘community policing’.
- 8.2. Borough Commander Michael Johnson said at the Newham Community and Police Forum, on Monday 24 July, that he does not feel his role has been undermined by the exclusion of local officers from one of the most significant and high profile police operations in Newham. He described the raids as “*a very tiny part of the work of the police in the borough*”, but that sounds unconvincing. When these comments were made by Commander Johnson, some seven weeks on from 2nd June and despite promises that the police will ‘learn the lessons’ from the poor communication to local residents, it looked very much as though Newham’s police were still shut out. Michael Johnson looked like a man struggling to talk about issues without so much as a briefing from his superiors.

9. Making the raids a ‘Muslim’ issue

- 9.1. Much in the same way that the government has emphasised the ‘special responsibility’ that British Muslims have for identifying potential terrorist threats, engagement by the MPS with ‘community leaders’ in Forest Gate has focused chiefly on those representing Muslims or Pakistani or Bengali origin – as if this section of the population in Newham, in a ward with a diverse community, was somehow separate from other residents.
- 9.2. Clearly, the MPS’ media and communications strategy reflects the likelihood that anti-terrorism raids will disproportionately target Muslims, the focus of the ‘war on terror’. However, this ignores the wider concerns from different communities in Forest Gate about the shooting of a local man and the implications of severe disruption to regular patterns of community life. It also heightened the feeling that local Muslims were becoming associated with criminality, a theme that appeared regularly in our discussions with local people.
- 9.3. In terms of any potential backlash resulting from the negative publicity the local area had received (largely as a consequence of the unattributed briefings to the media), this was a concern for local Asians of all faiths. As the chair of the Green Street Community Forum, a prominent member of the Sikh community, told us:
 - 9.3.1. *Sikhs in America were murdered after 9/11. I am as much a target and there are other people who have long beards. The authorities have jumped on the bandwagon and portrayed this as a single community issue when it is not.*

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- 9.4. In reality, local support of the two families who were the direct targets of the raids on Lansdown Road brought over three thousand people out onto the streets of Forest Gate on 18 June. That support might have been rooted amongst younger members of Newham's mosques but from the very beginning the unity march organisers looked outward. They sought a united response from everyone in the area who wanted to express their support and solidarity with the two families. Every church in the borough listed in the recently published Newham Directory of Religious Groups was contacted and the local Sikh temple gave away free drinks to the marchers, whose numbers reflected the huge diversity of nationalities locally.
- 9.5. Perhaps the police's approach would have been different if officers with knowledge of the neighbourhood had been involved in the aftermath of the raids: we shall never know. But the one-dimensional response to who 'the community' are in Forest Gate clearly had an impact on the media, who treated Muslims communities as separate, insular and isolated and who went looking for Muslims – any Muslims – to explain local feeling and emphasise Muslim opposition to support for terrorism.
- 9.6. We believe the simplistic approach to dividing local communities and then finding their 'leaders' continues to inform the MPS media and communication strategy for the aftermath of any issue it deems 'sensitive'. It explains Assistant Commissioner Hayman's belief that speaking to 'The Alliance of Mosques' elders at the Minhaj al-Quran mosque in Forest Gate and a meeting with the Newham Bengali Community Forum in East Ham constitutes a 'variety of methods' to consult a 'wide selection of the community'. It also explains his refusal to address the concerns local residents in person at a public forum in the borough.

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Appendix A

Selection of news stories in the aftermath of the Forest Gate raid indicating active briefing from within the Metropolitan police

Saturday 3rd June

Daily Mail: "Hunt for the 'Poison Bomb'"

The Times: "Police hunt for lethal chemical suicide vest"

Despite the fact that local residents had not been evacuated from the streets around Lansdown Road, both the *Daily Mail* and the *Times* ran with the story that the police were looking for a "suicide vest", that would either pump out a deadly poison, or that would have poison inside it that would be released when the person set off his explosives. The *Times* quoted a source claiming, "The police believed a terrorist was close to launching an attack. The fear is that if chemicals were to be used then a likely target could be a train compartment on the London Underground.... Another theory is that a suicide attacker... could trigger the device in a crowded venue such as a pub full of people watching an England World Cup match."

Sunday 4 June

Sunday Express: "Anthrax Terror Bomb Hunt".

Sunday Times: "Cyanide fear triggered terror raid"

The *Sunday Times* quoted 'Scotland Yard sources' had suggested that the police were looking for "a single bomb overlaid with cyanide". The newspaper's journalists had also been briefed that "two Ministry of Defence scientists – one male and one female – who are working on producing a vaccine for bubonic plague have been called to the house to check for plague spores." This information can only have come from a source close to the investigation.

Wednesday 7 June / Thursday 8 June

Evening Standard: "Brother of terror suspects in anti-West suicide bomb demo"

Daily Mail: *Masked antics of raid pair's brother*

A number of newspapers print the same uncredited photograph leaked to them by an unnamed source of Mohammed Addullah Hasnath at a demonstration in February 2006. He is the step-brother of the two men arrested and was a clear attempt to link the two brothers to support for terrorism. The same reports quoted 'police sources' claiming, "computer hard drives were encrypted"

Saturday 10 June

The *Times* alleged that at least one of the brothers had a criminal record and the *Sun* alleges that one of them committed offences while a juvenile. Neither statement is correct.

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Sunday 11 June

As it became clear that no evidence had been found to justify the raids, the *Mail on Sunday* reports a source saying, "the police did not think the intelligence was good enough. The whole thing was cranked up. There was a row between the Met and MI5 but the operation went ahead because the police had no choice". The *Observer* had the same emphasis to its story, but another police source "familiar with the situation" claiming that the police "had only expected to find a trigger or mechanism".

The *Sunday Telegraph* meanwhile quoted a further police contact contradicting claims that the source of the intelligence was an MI5 informant, which had been repeated continually for the previous week, saying instead "the original tip-off was a call to the Met's Anti-Terrorist Hotline".

Thursday 15 June

The *Sun* lead with the story that could only have come from a source close to the investigation that £38,000 had been found in the house, the only major find apart from a bottle of aspirin

Friday 16 June

Mohammed and Adul's sister Humeya Kalam told the *Guardian* that *she had informed police about the money two hours after the raid took place*. She said it was accumulated income, which the family was reluctant to store in a bank because they felt that to do so would conflict with their religious beliefs. The leak to the *Sun* was carried out despite the information that Humeya Kalam had provided and can only have been carried out to create the impression that the money implied some degree of guilt.

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Appendix B

Green Street Community Forum Steering Group resolution passed 18 July

The Police Raids on Lansdown Road on 2nd June

On 29th June, Sir Ian Blair addressed members of the Metropolitan Police Authority and defended the raids that took place on Lansdown Road, refusing to accept that the Metropolitan Police had been a mistake. He told MPA members:

"There will be other raids but the lesson of Forest Gate is that we have to find new methods of engaging with the Muslim community in particular to reassure them of the necessity and appropriateness of police actions."

This is entirely the wrong lesson to draw from the events of that took place on June 2nd. Shooting an innocent man was neither a 'necessary' or 'appropriate' police action and assuming that local disquiet about the raids – from both Muslims and non-Muslims alike – is simply a matter of reassurance fails to understand the genuine concerns that local residents feel.

Nor is it appropriate for Sir Ian Blair to present the general goodwill shown by residents towards the individual police officers on the cordons of the roads closed following the raids, who had a thankless task with no knowledge or information to pass on to local people, as evidence of overwhelming support for Scotland Yard's conduct in planning and carrying out the raids.

It would have been more appropriate for Sir Ian Blair to demonstrate a greater degree of reflection on the impact the raids have had on the Kalam and Dhogra families at 46 and 48 Lansdown Rd. On 1st June they were just like any other members of our local community. On 2nd June, their lives were turned upside down. As well as physical injuries, members of both families are suffering from symptoms of post-traumatic stress, including an inability to sleep, flashbacks and depression. Several have yet to return to work and the Kalam family remain in a hotel outside of the borough, cut off from the network of support provided by their neighbours and unable to return to a home that was damaged in the course of the raid.

As the Steering Group for the Community Forum covering Lansdown Road, we wish to add our support to the families' request for Sir Ian Blair to make a formal apology in person to the Kalam and Dhogra families, not simply for the 'inconvenience' of the raid but for the raid itself, the shooting and how the experience has transformed their lives.

Additionally, we feel that it is unfair to place the burden of building continued dialogue following the raids solely on Newham police. It was clear from the Community Forum's Public Meeting on 13th June that senior officers locally played no part in the raids or their immediate aftermath. We therefore support the call for Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman to come to Newham and address a public forum in person, where questions about the raids on 2nd June can be answered.

Will the chair write to Sir Ian Blair and Andy Hayman outlining the decisions of the Steering Group contained in this motion?

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Appendix C

The following is the text of the letter from Newham Police that was never delivered to local residents

Dear Resident, Business Owner

This message seeks to address some of the current issues that have been raised by the local community following the Police operation in Lansdown Road on Friday 2nd June.

First of all let me reassure you that your local Police understand your concerns and understand why such an operation can be unsettling to the local community. We apologise for the lack of information that has been available in respect of this operation, which is due to circumstances beyond our local control. The Muslim community is one of many that co-exist peacefully in Newham. The contribution of all of these communities is highly valued and makes Newham the vibrant place it is. The fact that so many different communities live together in peace and harmony is our greatest strength and it is only by us all continuing to speak and work together that we can grow ever closer and resist pressure from those who would seek to cause unrest and division. Despite the tensions of the past couple of weeks we find that the community are still united and we therefore seek your continued support and confidence

I would personally like to thank those residents who kindly supported the officers staffing the cordons with drinks and other refreshments. These officers were from other boroughs, but they have asked me to pass on that your kindness was very much appreciated.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY WERE 250 OFFICERS NEEDED FOR THE OPERATION?

Only a small number of officers were needed for the actual search of two premises. The vast majority (about 200) were never deployed. Their presence was essential in order that we could ensure the safety of local residents should events have unfolded differently. Fortunately their deployment was not necessary.

HOW MUCH DAMAGE HAS BEEN CAUSED TO THE HOUSES?

Recent media reports suggested that a lot of damage has been caused. This is not the case. In fact, given the extent of the searches little damage has been caused to the houses during the operation and subsequent search. Immediately prior to handing the houses over to the control of solicitors acting for the families I arranged for them to be viewed by the Chair of the Barking and Dagenham Independent Advisory Group. This person is entirely independent of police in Newham and is also a Muslim. He shares my views about the extent of the damage, however, I do understand that any such event must be very traumatic for the families concerned and so even small amounts of damage can seem significant.

WAS THIS OPERATION CARRIED OUT BY LOCAL NEWHAM POLICE OFFICERS?

Local police had no part to play in this operation and the search of the premises. Our role was to ensure that the community were kept informed of events (as far as was possible) and to protect the local Muslim community

Aftermath of the Police Raids in Forest Gate on 2 June 2006

WHAT IF I STILL HAVE CONCERNS?

I acknowledge that such a high profile incident happening on your doorstep must have an unsettling effect. However, if you still have any outstanding concerns then please feel free speak to one of your local Safer Neighbourhood officers or contact me at East Ham Police Station (0208 217 4372). If you do not wish to speak direct to police then you can contact one of your local councillors at their advice surgeries, they have agreed to help address any concerns that you may have. Your local councillors are Cllr Sharaf Mahmood, Cllr Rohima Rahman and Cllr Abdul Shakoor. Details of their surgery times can be found on Newham Councils website, www.newham.gov.uk

WHAT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE EVENT?

On a daily basis local police have contacted and sought the advice of members of our local Independent Advisory Group and community leaders both elected and otherwise. On the day of the event the local Borough Police Commander visited five of the local Mosques to explain what had happened and why. We have also worked closely with the Alliance of Mosques, other community leaders and local ward councillors to listen to community concerns. May I take this opportunity to thank all of these people and organisations for their continued advice and support.. Finally, being under the media spotlight brings with it the risk of inaccurate information being circulated within the local community. Your local Police work very closely with the people mentioned above in order to ensure that through this community consultation process we can keep people as informed as possible.”

Aftermath of the Police Raids in Forest Gate on 2 June 2006

Appendix D

Timeline

Friday 2 June

Raid on 46 and 48 Lansdown Rd. Mohammed Abdulkahar, a resident of No. 46 shot in chest. Police inflict injuries on household members of No. 48. Mohammed and his brother Abdul Koyair (also resident of No. 46) arrested under anti-terrorism legislation. Road blocks of surrounding streets, with residents escorted by police to and from their homes.

Widespread press reports (print and broadcast) of police looking for chemical factory and suicide chemical vests. Police claim to be acting on 'specific intelligence'.

Sunday 4 June

Channel 4 broadcast interview with Dogha family who lived at 48 Lansdown Road.

Tuesday 6 June

'Respect Coalition' meeting in Harold Road Community Centre in Upton Park. This meeting was arranged prior to the raids, with former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzem Begg as guest speaker. Meeting attended by journalist Yvonne Ridley, who calls for total 'non co-operation' with police.

Thursday 8 June

Meeting of a number of local groups and individuals agrees to organisation a unity demonstration in Forest Gate on Sunday 18 June.

Birnberg Peirce engaged as solicitors for Mohammed and Abdul

Community meeting organised by the Asian Friendship Centre raises concerns about the lack of communication by the police.

Friday 9 June

Newham Monitoring Project distributes information to mosques in Newham about the implications of anti-terrorism legislation. At 2pm, there is a picket of Forest Gate Police station that officially has not been called by any named group, but is clearly organised by the remnants of the disbanded Muhajiroun. The Kalam family issue statement to press disassociating themselves from the picket and call supporters and concerned members of the public to join the cross-community unity demonstration on 18 June.

Newham Monitoring Project distribute information to houses on all streets immediately affected by the raids, with the exception of Lansdown Road, which remains closed to residents only.

At around 8.30pm, Mohammed and Abul are released from Paddington Green Police Station without charge.

Aftermath of the Police Raids in Forest Gate on 2 June 2006

Saturday 10 June

Newham Monitoring Project distribute leaflets about a residents meeting to houses on Lansdown Road, under police escort. At lunch time, the police lift the cordon of Lansdown Road, the last street to have its cordon lifted

Sunday 11 June

A number of national organisations hold a picket at Scotland Yard in protest at the raids..

Tuesday 13 June

The first press conference given by Mohammed and Adul is held at St Emmanuel's Church in Forest Gate. A broadcast of the conference is carried extensively on all major channels

Following the press conference, the Metropolitan police issue its first official public 'apology'. This amounts to an apology only for any inconvenience caused, not for the raid itself.

In the evening, the Green Street Community Forum holds a public meeting attend by local police.

Wednesday 14 June

Newham Monitoring Project re-leaflet affected streets and conduct a witness search on Lansdown Road, obtaining a number of comments from residents about their experience of living under police cordon for the previous week.

Thursday 15 June

A meeting of some of the residents of affected streets and their local councillors is held at Katherine Road Community Centre.

Friday 16 June

The Sun run a story questioning the presence of large amounts of cash found in 46 Lansdown Road on the basis of information leaked by police.

Saturday 17 June

Severe criticism by local and national organisations, including Newham Monitoring Project, over the announcement of the CBE awarded to Assistant Commissioner Andy Hayman, who had led the anti-terrorism operation in Forest Gate.

Sunday 18 June

Community demonstration starting at Plashet Park in East Ham attracts around 3000 people, including relatives of Jean Charles De Menezes.

Aftermath of the Police Raids in Forest Gate on 2 June 2006

Monday 19 June

Newham Monitoring Project write to Andy Hayman suggesting that he personally addresses concerns of local people at a public meeting in the borough.

Thursday 22 June

UNISON national conference passes an emergency motion resolving to express directly to the Home Secretary and Prime Minister its concerns about the impact of the raids, specifically “number of police officers involved in the raid and whether, given that local residents were not evacuated, the scale of the operation was proportional to the threat,” the “holding of local residents behind a police cordon for many days following the raid and “leaks to the press of false, slanderous and alarming misinformation.”

Tuesday 18 July

The steering group of the Green Street Community Forum pass a resolution to write to Assistant Commissioner Hayman, asking him to come to the borough and answer the questions that the police in Newham are unable to address.

Monday 24 July

Michael Johnson, Borough Commander for Newham, addresses meeting of the Newham Community and Police Forum and claims that the IPCC investigation prevents him from talking about anything to do with the raids.

Wednesday 26 July

Newham Monitoring Project receives guidance from the Independent Police Complaints Commission on their investigation and its impact on the information released by the police.

Friday 28 July

Newham Monitoring Project writes to Commander Michael Johnson calling on him not to hide behind the IPCC investigation as a means of refusing to answer questions.

Thursday 3 August

A Police Community Support Officer hand-delivers leaflets, on the IPCC decision regarding the discharge of a police firearm during the raids to homes, in the area around Lansdown Road.

Friday 4 August

Newham Monitoring Project delivers ‘Residents Update’ to each of the homes affected by the road closures.