

**Police Authority – December 20, 2011**

**Statements from members of the public**

**Statement one:**

At the September 2010 meeting of the Police Authority, in response to a public question I asked, the authority said it would investigate and monitor the force's use of powers under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002.

Since then I have regularly chased this up with authority member Cllr Wilkins when he has attended my local police priority setting meeting, Cambridge's North Area Committee. I'm still awaiting any action.

**Police Authority response statement one:**

The minutes of the meeting say the following in response to your question at the full Police Authority meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010:

“You have expressed concern regarding how front line police officers and PCSOs are using their powers under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, in a specific street in Cambridge. As this is an operational issue, I have asked the Constabulary to respond.”

Since then we understand you have shared with Cllr Wilkins your general concern regarding the legislation, but no specific complaints. If you are aware of any specific complaints that need attention that we are not aware of please let us know.

**Statement two:**

I hope when the force's proposed changes to TASER policy reached during today's meeting clarity will be obtained on what is proposed.

I hope members are able to ensure it is made clear, in public, if there a proposal to extend deployment of TASER beyond the Tactical Firearms Unit, or not.

The papers refer to training more officers to use TASER; it isn't made clear if this is expected to lead to more officers being routinely deployed with TASER.

If the proposal is to ensure all firearms trained officers are also TASER trained I would be surprised that wasn't already the case and strongly support it. I think a TASER ought always be available as a less lethal option than a gun.

I urge the authority to follow the lead of the Metropolitan Police Authority and consider the potential impact on police-public relations of a wider roll out of TASER.

I think that routine arming of front-line officers with TASERs is clearly a strategic decision, one for the authority, and not an operational matter for the chief constable. I think it's important that the decision on if it is a decision for the authority or not is made in public by the authority, and not as it was last time, between the chair and the chief constable in secret.

**Police Authority response statement two:**

In response to a report from the Scrutiny Committee of 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011, the Cambridgeshire Police Authority has called for a full report on Taser, to be considered in public at the Finance and Resources Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

### **Statement three:**

I was thrown out of police authority scrutiny committee meeting on the 13th of December.

I have published my comments on what happened at:

<http://rtaylor.co.uk/4730>

The committee were discussing the force's restorative justice disposal policies and procedures. They were referring to documents which the police and committee members referred to as committee papers which were not present either online or in the public documents pack available at the meeting.

I made clear that I wasn't seeking to enter debate, (I was aware that is not permitted), and simply pointed out the omission of the papers.

This resulted in me being thrown out, without any warning (which the standing orders requires to be given).

A particularly concerning aspect of what happened was the Deputy Chief Constable joining in, in asking me to leave. The authority are obviously happy to allow the police to control access to its meetings as they hold them in police HQ, but I don't think that's right.

Clearly lack of openness is one of the reasons the authority is being disbanded but I think it's important that it operates as openly as possible for remainder of its time in existence so that the public debates about how policing should be run, which I hope will occur next year, can be well informed.

### **Police Authority response statement three:**

With reference to the document you refer to the Police Authority has made available on our website ([http://www.cambs-pa.gov.uk/user\\_files/article/RJSOPv1.1.pdf](http://www.cambs-pa.gov.uk/user_files/article/RJSOPv1.1.pdf)) the Restorative Justice Standard Operating Procedure which was distributed to all members just prior to the meeting for them to read outside the meeting. This document was not part of the pack of papers placed on the PA website and distributed seven days before the meeting. This document was then referred to by the Deputy Chief Constable who read out the relevant section to ensure all those present had access to the relevant information.

With reference specifically to your eviction from the meeting, Standing Orders 6 and 12 are pertinent.

#### **Standing Order 6:**

“Question(s) from and statements by members of the public shall be included on all committee agendas as a standing item as the next item of business after the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Members of the public asking a question or making a statement will be allocated a maximum of 3 minutes to do so.

“The purpose of this ‘open forum’ is to enable succinct questions or statements to be made within the allowed time limit in the presence of members. This procedure does not enable a debate to take place involving the member of the public nor for public participation in other business of the meeting.”

Standing Order 12 relates to the expulsion of members of the public from meetings.

Standing Order 12:

“If a member of the public interrupts the meeting or behaves in a disorderly manner the Chairman shall give a warning. If the warning is disregarded, the Chairman may order that the member of the public be removed and may adjourn or suspend the meeting for so long as seems fit.

“In the case of a general disturbance by members of the public, the Chairman may order that all or part of the room be cleared.”

We note the following from the blog you have directed us to that you yourself believed what you were doing was ‘heckling’:

“The Chair, Cllr Lucas, refused, but I didn’t think he understood that wasn’t seeking to enter the debate, so I decided to heckle anyway...”

Cllr Lucas made clear on your first attempt to interject that he would not allow you to speak at that point. When you tried again, he again said he would not allow you to speak. You then said you would ‘heckle’ instead. Following this Cllr Lucas asked you to leave, which you initially refused to do. It was only when you refused to leave that DCC Feavyour reaffirmed that you had been asked to leave by the Chair.

We value public contribution to our work, but must ensure that the focus of our meetings continues to be the business itself.