

# MAYOR OF LONDON

**Rt Hon Theresa May MP**  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

**Date:** 19 March 2014

Dear Theresa

**Re: Water Cannon**

Following the public engagement programme led by MOPAC on water cannon, I am writing to share my conclusions. This letter sets out the situation in London as I see it and the conclusions which I have come to.

No one wants to see water cannon deployed routinely on the streets of London. It should only ever be used in response to the most extreme cases of public disorder. Throughout our consultation in London my team and I and the senior police officers involved have stressed that this tool, if and when licensed, will be "rarely seen and rarely used".

During our six week consultation period concerns were raised about the practicability and affordability of water cannon; and above all the operational regime, constraints and authorisation protocols which would apply. Prior to writing this letter, I have sought to satisfy myself that those concerns can be resolved.

Once the consultation was underway, and in order to check the extent of these concerns among the wider public, I commissioned a representative poll of over 4,200 individuals proportionate to the communities and range of age groups (over 16) which make up the population of this City. Well over two thirds of those who responded (68 per cent) were supportive of the use of water cannon in the limited circumstances in which we anticipate it would be deployed. Indeed, over half (52 per cent) expressed that they would have greater confidence in the MPS' ability to respond to serious public disorder if water cannon were to be available to the police.

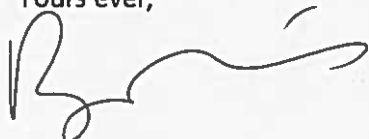
Therefore, I have taken into account both the professional advice of the MPS that water cannon is a valuable tool, and the broad public backing for its use, in my decision to support, subject to the necessary safeguards, the request from the police for you to authorise their use on the UK mainland, and for me to support the Commissioner's request for funding.

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I can also assure you that should you license it, I will be asking our nascent Ethics Panel (under the chairmanship of Lord Carlile of Berriew) to consider the ethical framework within which this tool will be deployed.

I have copied this letter to the Commissioner of the MPS, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, and to Chief Constable David Shaw of West Mercia who is leading the ACPO work in this area and who will, I understand, be writing to you to submit ACPO's formal request for authorisation to use water cannon in mainland UK.

Yours ever,



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London

Cc: Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service  
David Shaw, Chief Constable of West Mercia and Head of ACPO Water Cannon Project Board

Enc: *Water Cannon: Response to Consultation* including the summary of responses and GLA presentation of TNS poll