

**Joanne McCartney**  
Chair, Police and Crime Committee  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
More London  
London SE1 2AA

07 January 2014

Dear Joanne,

**Re: Water Cannon**

Please find enclosed a letter sent today from the Mayor to the Home Secretary regarding the use of water cannon in London.

As you are aware, we have discussed the possibility of making water cannon available to the MPS on a number of occasions, including at your Committee and at a MOPAC challenge session in December 2012, so none of the issues are new. At these sessions, we were clear that some public engagement would be necessary before making a final decision. This approach was also supported in your recent 'Arming the Met' report.

In order to ensure that water cannon is available by next summer, something which the Commissioner has been calling for, it is important that this process of engagement starts soon. This will be based on the reassurance that the Commissioner has given that it will be 'rarely used and rarely seen'. So, I will be leading a short series of events to seek the views of Londoners beginning in the New Year. This will consist of a public meeting, discussions with stakeholders, and discussions with local representatives including MPs and local councils.

Previous research carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has shown support for the use of water cannon in the most extreme circumstances and so we will be taking into account this work – and the prior work outlined above – when engaging.

I am due to appear before your Committee on 20 January and would be happy to discuss the issues relating to the use of water cannon at that meeting, this would then allow me and the Mayor to consider your views in advance of a formal decision being made in mid-February.

Yours sincerely



**Stephen Greenhalgh**  
**Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime**

cc. London Assembly

## APPENDIX 5

## MAYOR OF LONDON

**Rt Hon Theresa May MP**

Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

**Date: 06 JAN 2014**

Dear Theresa

**Re: Water Cannon**

Following the disorder in August 2011, both the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary stated that there are some circumstances where water cannon may be of use in future, alongside a number of other public order tactics.

Following briefing by the Commissioner I am broadly convinced of the value of having water cannon available to the MPS for those circumstances where its absence would lead to either greater disorder or the use of more extreme force. Polling conducted after the riots shows that the majority of people are supportive of this. My support in principle for the police to have water cannon at their disposal in London is, of course, subject to the correct procedures for both deployment and use, and I would like to discuss these with Londoners.

In order to confirm the support in London for the use of water cannon in the most extreme circumstances, I will be undertaking a short period of engagement in the New Year. This follows a number of discussions that have taken place in the London Assembly and elsewhere over the past year.

I plan to engage the public, key stakeholders and elected representatives, including the Police and Crime Committee of the London Assembly and this will be led by my Office for Policing And Crime and Deputy Mayor, Stephen Greenhalgh.

The Commissioner has made it clear that he anticipates that water cannon in London would be rarely seen and rarely used. I am confident that, with the help of Londoners, the MPS will be able to develop a proportionate and responsible plan for potential future deployment, with sufficient democratic oversight.

Should the engagement plan reveal serious, as yet unidentified, concerns I will, of course, take these into consideration and share them with you before you make any decision to licence this non-lethal tool.

## MAYOR OF LONDON

Finally, I am aware that you have declined to make funds available for purchasing the interim water cannon solution as a national asset. Subject to the public engagement process that I have outlined above, I am happy to make the necessary funds available to the MPS for the most economical interim solution that allows the Commissioner to meet his desire to prevent disorder on the streets. I would expect to do this in February, following the engagement.

Were you to licence water cannon's use, I would be keen for my ethics panel, which will be established in the New Year, to undertake a study on the best engagement and use strategy in the event of deployment so that the best ethical framework is in place.

Yours ever,



**Boris Johnson**  
Mayor of London