

25<sup>th</sup> July 2022

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Dear Assembly Member Russell,

Re. Operation Hillman Investigation

Thank you for your letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022 requesting further information in respect of our investigation.

Firstly, I would again like to reassure you that our investigation was thorough and impartial. A team of twelve detectives worked through 345 documents, including emails, door logs, diary entries and witness statements, 510 photographs, questionnaires and CCTV images as part of a careful and thorough enquiry. The team investigating this acted diligently, proportionately, without fear or favour, taking decisions based on the factors I set out during the Police and Crime Committee session on 26<sup>th</sup> May and outlined in my published letter<sup>1</sup> of the same date to the Mayor of London.

In answer to your four questions, I can provide the following information.

- 1. Why did officers in Downing Street who witnessed partying not use the 4 Es approach to engage, explain, encourage and enforce with attendees at any of the Downing Street lockdown parties while they were happening, when this was the approach that was taken with members of the public?*

It is not correct to state that officers in Downing Street witnessed partying. Officers in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command are posted outside No 10 Downing Street. Their role is primarily to provide armed security outside the building, albeit they do support the Downing Street Security Custodians should, for example a security related matter which requires their presence in the property take place. During the relevant period of COVID restrictions, should a member of the MPS have had concerns regarding a situation within Downing Street, raising concerns to their line management through the established escalation process together with the 4E approach would have been appropriate.

- 2. In January I asked the former Commissioner whether any concern was raised by Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) officers working in Downing Street while coronavirus laws were in place. You said no concerns were raised with you or the former Commissioner, so when did the MPS leadership first become aware that parties were happening at Downing Street.*

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<sup>1</sup> Operation Hillman: Acting Commissioner Letter to Mayor of London:  
[https://resources.mynewsdesk.com/image/upload/f\\_pdf,fl\\_attachment/owuws9nqrxqb2cvq73k](https://resources.mynewsdesk.com/image/upload/f_pdf,fl_attachment/owuws9nqrxqb2cvq73k)



It is correct that no concerns had been raised internally within the MPS established escalation processes with regards to events in Downing Street. The MPS first became aware of alleged gatherings on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021, at a similar time to the press coverage about these events in early December 2021. The MPS held its first Gold Group on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021. The MPS carried out its own assessments and liaised with the Cabinet Office inquiry regarding the evidence gathered, on the back of which the MPS launched a formal investigation in January 2022 in relation to alleged events on specific dates.

3. *Today you said you thought it was "Impossible to expect an officer walking through a room with a lot of people in it to work out whether or not these people are breaching coronavirus regulations when it's taken a team of 12 experienced detectives many, many weeks to do the same." Did this officer raise the incident with any manager at the time or ask for advice?*

As outlined above, at no stage did an MPS officer posted to Downing Street raise concerns with their line manager.

4. *You also said you would write to me with details of the evidence that you took from the officer who responded to the panic button alarm at the Downing Street event on 18 December 2020.*

This officer provided a statement to both the Sue Gray Inquiry and the Operation Hillman investigative team. The officer explained that he did enter the premises of Downing Street with one of the custodians, following the activation of a panic alarm button, and provided details of what he saw within the offices. This included that at that time the way of working by individuals who were working in Downing Street did not appear unusual or raise any concerns.

I understand the strong interest, feelings and opinions on this case given the pandemic affected so many people in so many ways. Therefore, I can assure you and the public once again that the small but skilled team investigating this matter have acted diligently, proportionately, carefully and impartially.

**Sir Steve House QPM  
Acting Commissioner**