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Summary of meeting

Response to Guardian Article re phone tapping

Friday 10th July 2009 at 12 midday

Room 556 (ACSO Office) – Victoria block, NSY

Attendees:

AC John Yates - Chair (JY)
DCS Clive Timmons (CT)
DCS Phil Williams (PW)
D/Supt Keith Surtees (KS)
D/Supt Dean Haydon - minutes (DH)
Sara Cheesely (SC)
Mark Spanton (MS)
Emma Harraway (EH)

Meeting convened to seek update from yesterdays meeting.

Previous minutes agreed and all actions updated and completed as follows;

ACTION - DLS to retrieve High Court papers to confirm what was disclosed.

DH arranged in conjunction with Naz Saleh and Derbyshire Constabulary and relevant papers retrieved. Complete.

ACTION - PW to confirm if John Prescott was subject to interception.

PW confirms he was not. Complete and John Prescott informed by JY prior to his press release on 9/7. Complete.

ACTION - DPA to review Guardian article in full to provide definitive response to points raised.

Complete.

ACTION - DPA to prepare JY press lines for release to camera outside NSY this afternoon.

Complete.

Stephen Rimmers letter discussed. He mentions 27 other journalists and JY requested confirmation of what this related to in event this were fresh allegations and involvement of others. SC stated this was highly likely to relate to the previous Information Commissioners investigation - Operation Motorman refers, as this ran in parallel at about the same time. The ICO are a designated prosecuting authority in

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their own right and hence are the appropriate body to act of breaches of data protection, invasion of privacy etc. PW confirmed there were no other journalists identified, involved in the criminality, in the MPS investigation.

The original enquiry team (Op Caryatid) were aware that the defendant - Glen Mulcaire was speaking to numerous people and other journalists to the very nature of his job. The MPS sent a letter to News of the World asking them to reveal the phone numbers for their journalists so a comparison could be made on the seized data. It appeared he often used the News of the World switchboard so it was difficult to confirm who he was speaking with. They refused to co-operate. Telephone data went into 50,000 + and although further analysis could have been conducted to identify other journalists etc, it was decided in conjunction with CPS / Counsel, to set parameters and from a proportionality point of view, to focus on evidence that would support charges and attract suitable penalty at court for the level of criminality involved. Effective use of Police resources was also considered at the time and discretion to investigate (R v Blackburn). The data examined did not unravel a conspiracy with other journalists so was not extended.

If the MPS were to consider extending remit now then the phone companies no longer hold the data so it would not be feasible to investigate. It is also worthy to note that the victims subject to interception, apart from the two convicted defendants, they did not have any other suspect / target numbers attempting to intercept their phones.

KS stated that during the S18 searches of News International the Police team met resistance and threats to use force to remove them from the premises. There was a general lack of co-operation on their part.

Discussion on whether the MPS writes to the Guardian as we must be seen to be receptive to fresh allegations and act accordingly. They have not approached MPS direct. To date in the two recent articles no new evidence has come to light to justify re-opening or approaching the Guardian. There could be criticism as to why the MPS did not do this yesterday but this could be justified on the no new evidence issue. It was agreed that the MPS will write to the Guardian to encourage sharing of any new evidence, in light of continuing publicity and allegations being made.

Action - SC to draft letter for JY agreement.

It was agreed that JY previous press statement still stood and it must be re-enforced that the MPS is not conducting a review. JY was tasked with finding out the facts on Mulcaire and Goodman case only.

On the 3000 names issue, PW confirmed that as a result of seizing vast data, the MPS populated a list which is approximately 4-500 long. Most names and numbers were aspirational targets of Mulcaire and Goodman, and most there was no evidence to support any criminality around.

Action - DLS to prepare legal advice on how the MPS deal with requests from people to confirm if their name is on the list, legal challenges, FOIA requests etc.

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Action - DH to draft response to Stephen Rimmers request and JY to clear.

Further Gold Group to be convened next week. Date and time to be confirmed.