

Chief Constable Chris Eyre QPM

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Ref: CE/RC

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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
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Dear Home Secretary

In response to your letter of 15 July 2014 to David Shaw, I can advise that the consistent advice I have received from officers involved and experienced in the planning and command of public disorder incidents in Nottinghamshire, is that water cannon would not be a viable tactic for us.

Water cannon as a tactic would be considered during incidents of sustained urban disorder, during which the crowd were proactively engaging police resources and standing fast. Whilst this happened in London during the 2011 disorder, it was not our experience locally. Our experience in Nottinghamshire was of dynamic, fast-moving groups of protestors and this would have rendered water cannon un-deployable. This is consistent with other events we have policed in recent years. In addition, the need to protect the cannon with at least one Police Support Unit and for tankers to be available for refilling would make the tactic unwieldy for us.

There is a commonly held view that water cannon should be available for larger metropolitan forces, which would have the resources to accommodate this tactic and where the policing of types of disorder likely to occur might well benefit from this tactic. This would then make mutual aid options available, should the need arise for deployment in smaller force areas.

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

As I lead on Criminal Justice for the police service I thought it appropriate to consider the implications of water cannon for the justice system. The only experience of using water cannon in the UK is in Northern Ireland where the deployment in appropriate incidents allows increased evidence gathering from the 6 CCTV cameras deployed on each vehicle. This provides a unique additional perspective of the incident and enables the SIO to secure valuable evidence for presentation to the courts.

I hope this assists.

Yours sincerely



Chris Eyre QPM
Chief Constable