



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 October 1985

Dear Stephen,

METROPOLITAN POLICE MANPOWER

The Prime Minister yesterday discussed with the Home Secretary his minute to her of 22 October about Metropolitan Police manpower. The Prime Minister had also seen the Chancellor's minute of 29 October on this.

The Home Secretary explained that the Metropolitan Police were some 300 below strength, and they also had to recruit to compensate for wastage of about 110 a month. On present plans the gap would be closed around the middle of next year. This timetable could perhaps be accelerated, but there were risks in too great an increase in recruitment since the result could be to bring in below standard people. There should therefore be time to examine requests for extra complement. The Home Secretary also explained the particular difficulties in, for example, Birmingham, where the Police authority, which was itself about to be replaced by a joint board, would be unsympathetic to the provision of extra manpower. Requests from the Police for more money and increased complement should be examined quickly and not in a curmudgeonly way. But they needed careful study if progress towards greater value for money were not to be thrown away.

The Prime Minister agreed. She had told Sir Kenneth Newman that he would be granted any reasonable request. But in giving him this assurance she had emphasised that he must expect his requests to be thoroughly scrutinised.

I am recording the remainder of the discussion separately.

I am copying this letter to Tony Kuczys (Treasury), John Graham (Scottish Office), Jim Daniell (Northern Ireland Office), David Morris (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Robin Young (Environment), Leigh Lewis (Employment), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office) and to Michael Stark (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
David

(David Norgrove)

Stephen Boys Smith, Esq.,
Home Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

31 October 1985

Dear Stephen,

MEETING WITH HOME SECRETARY

I have recorded separately yesterday's discussion with the Prime Minister about Police manpower. A number of other points were discussed very briefly.

The Home Secretary explained the different modes in which water cannon could be used and that research on their use in the "drench mode" was in hand. The Prime Minister reiterated that Sir Kenneth Newman should know that he would be granted any reasonable request if he made out a convincing case for it.

On the use of plastic bullets the Prime Minister noted that this had been cleared by the European Court. They should, in the last resort, be used. The Home Secretary explained the conflict between the Manchester Police force and the Police authority over their acquisition and the necessary training for their use. The Prime Minister agreed with the Home Secretary that it would be sensible to make provision for a centralised training facility in the use of plastic bullets.

The Prime Minister noted that the House of Lords had rejected the legislation to allow the Attorney General to approach the Court of Appeal about sentences given in particular categories of case. It would be worth considering whether another attempt should now be made, this time starting the legislation in the House of Commons. It was also agreed that the possibility of extending to England the Scottish system of Procurators Fiscal would be worth study: this could help reduce the present pressure on the jury system. Similarly, the introduction of special juries for commercial cases or even the setting up of commercial courts, as there had been at one stage in the City, should be further considered.

Yours ever

David,

(David Norgrove)

Stephen Boys Smith,
Home Office

Prime Minister 2

This is the note left by Mr Ford.

DLW

30/10

METROPOLITAN POLICE MANPOWER

FACTSHEET

	Police	Civil Staff	Total
Present establishment/ ceiling.	27,165	13,482	40,647
Strength on 30.9.85	26,681	13,143	<u>39,824</u>
Effective shortfall on 30.9.85	406 (1) (2)	339	745
Increases agreed for 1986/87	50 (changes) (3)	43	93

WASTAGE: Currently running at 23 per week (some 100 per month or 1,200 a year).

RECRUITMENT: Bulk intakes of 160 every 6 weeks (approximately 1,400 a year). The Met can also run additional ad hoc intakes of 100. ~~was~~ Wansford.

AVERAGE NET COST: Of a police officer in London, £25,688 per annum. (Approximate national cost yardstick: 1,000 police officers cost £20m per year.)

- (1) Some officers - eg those on secondment to overseas forces - are, by convention not included in the strength figure. But they do count against the establishment and so are not part of the shortfall.
- (2) A recent intake of recruits has reduced the shortfall to about 300.
- (3) The Met expect to reach their existing establishment by 30.6.86 and the increased establishment by the autumn of 1986.