

INQUIRY INTO THE RETIREMENT OF THE FORMER COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

OPENING STATEMENT

1. **Retired Superintendent Paul Richardson** hopes, above all, to be able to assist Sir Peter Openshaw and his team with first hand evidence of what happened in the criminal investigation known as Operation Delhi.
2. Mr Richardson has provided three witness statements, directly answering all the questions asked of him by the Inquiry team. He has been helped immeasurably in doing so by grant of access to his RGP papers, e-mails and Outlook calendar, the contents of which he had last seen when he was still serving (he retired, after 36 years of service, in November 2021).
3. Putting the RGP information together with his own day books, Mr Richardson has recovered, to the best of his ability, a reasonably refreshed memory, of what happened in 2019/20, when and why.
4. Mr Richardson hopes that his statements will have already given the Inquiry some insight into
 - (a) the Delhi chronology,
 - (b) the evidence provided to the Inquiry by other witnesses and
 - (c) lines of questioning which the Inquiry may want to consider.
5. Delhi was a long and complex investigation. It generated a great deal of evidence. Six officers and a dedicated barrister worked on the unused material alone for about six months. Mr Richardson was Senior Investigating Officer for the case from late December 2018. This was one of the many tasks that he performed as Head of RGP's Crime Division.
6. Mr Richardson attended Mr McGrail's meeting with the Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Minister for Justice, the Chief Secretary and the Director of Public Prosecutions in May 2019. He regularly discussed the conduct of the investigation with the DPP and with the Officer in Charge. He briefed the Commissioner about the outcome of those discussions.

7. Mr Richardson sought advice from the DPP about questioning Mr Levy under caution as a suspect in the criminal conspiracy. He sent a National Decision Making assessment to the DPP with a full summary of the evidence. The DPP acknowledged the police's operational preference for search warrants over production orders. Mr Richardson attended the warrant application before the Stipendiary Magistrate. He attended at Mr Levy's office and home with the warrants and agreed to receive the material sought without formally executing them.
8. Mr Richardson was present at four meetings with the Commissioner and the Attorney-General, one before and three following the warrants. He responded to the Attorney-General's canvassing of ways in which Mr Levy could avoid being formally interviewed under caution.
9. After Mr McGrail retired, Mr Richardson and the Officer in Charge persevered with the criminal investigation. They assembled the evidence. The DPP confirmed that both the evidential sufficiency and the public interest tests were met in relation to a number of offences committed by three individuals. Criminal charges were laid against them, and those three defendants were arraigned to appear before the Supreme Court for trial. Before the evidence could be heard the Attorney-General discontinued the proceedings.
10. Mr Richardson may also be able to contribute to the Inquiry, to a lesser degree, by describing his limited role in 'The Incident at Sea' (Operation Kram). Mr Richardson was Superintendent Crime at the time of this incident and second officer on call over the long weekend. He was a member of the Gold Command Group. He attended several meetings, including with the Attorney-General, the acting Governor and the Metropolitan Police Service. He made notes and wrote a briefing note, all of which have been provided to the Inquiry team.
11. Mr Richardson is a member of the Police Superintendents' Association for England and Wales, who support him in these proceedings following his designation as a Core Participant.