

Cindy Butts Race and Faith Inquiry Launch Speech
7th July 2010

As chair of the Race & Faith Inquiry I'd like to welcome you all here this afternoon. As is customary on these occasions, I'd like to begin with some thank-yous. Firstly, to the Mayor and his staff for hosting this event in London's living room. Next, to all of the people who shared their experiences and impressions with the panel and to the MPA staff for their support. And lastly, and for me, most importantly, I'd like to thank the panel for their contributions and commitment to this difficult but ultimately rewarding process.

As the Mayor has just described, today is the 5th anniversary of the tragedy of the 7/7 bombings, a day of immense loss for London, which is recalled with great sadness by us all. As a Londoner, it's impossible for me to recall the events of that day without revisiting those desperate emotions, as I rang the mobile phones of loved ones who may have been on one of those ill-fated trains or bus, and then the bittersweet feeling of relief that I felt when I discovered that everyone I knew was safe, but at the same time I was intensely aware that many people would not be so fortunate on such a day of so many innocent victims.

Coupled with the sadness that I feel as I recall the events of that day, however, I also remember feeling a stirring pride at the collective **response** of Londoners in their moment of extremis. As a city, I feel that we really showed our mettle that day, pulling together; individuals, communities, working in unity with the Emergency Services to respond to the crisis and bring safety back to London's streets.

In my 10 years of working on the MPA, this is the key moment when I believe that we truly worked together to achieve a safer London for us all.

So for me the manner of London's response to the acute crisis of 7/7 stands as an example of our collective potential, to work together; the Met working in partnership with all of the communities of London, to make our city as safe as possible.

This then is the vision. And in order to achieve this vision, it is clearly essential for the Met to gain and retain the trust of all of London's diverse communities.

The Met has travelled a long and difficult path in order to get to this

point, where such a vision can realistically be achieved, and although there are still many, many challenges to face, we all remember much darker days. A particularly 'dark' day in the Met's history was the tragic murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the subsequent failure to investigate this terrible crime, which was a damning indictment of a Met which was branded as 'Institutionally Racist' by the Inquiry which followed.

The Lawrence Inquiry forced the Metropolitan police service and British society-at-large to look in the mirror. The image which was reflected back was a very disturbing one, reminiscent of a trip to the 'Hall of Mirrors' at a fairground, in which the familiar and trustworthy image of the Met was distorted, unrecognisable, grotesque-even. Where we expected protection and justice, instead we were confronted by racism, incompetence & organisational arrogance. An ugly image, I'm sure you'll agree? And one which ensured that whole sections of London's communities were often over-policed yet **left** feeling vulnerable and under-protected.

This was a time of consternation and introspection for the Met. Initially resistant, they then showed tremendous courage and gazed squarely at their own reflection; committing to make the changes

which were necessary.

Yes progress has been made; **but the Met is still a work in progress.** And having concentrated its efforts on external service delivery the Met now has to look again into the mirror of self-reflection; gaze unremittingly at itself and recognise that **'all is not well at home.'**

In recognising this fact the Mayor launched the Race and Faith Inquiry. The Inquiry had a remit to examine the experiences of officers and staff from BME and Faith groups; focusing on the areas of recruitment, retention, progression and the access to specialist units. Additionally we explored the relevant aspects of the MPS's organisational culture, and analysed the manner in which the organisation both celebrates and manages difference.

The Inquiry Panel heard testimony from many people representing perspectives from all levels of the Met, from staff associations and from external groups and statutory partners. This testimony was received in the form of personal interviews, focus groups and via the submission of written evidence and I am extremely grateful to all of those who contributed to our work.

I am proud to say that this report is available today, and I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that I don't intend to take you through it verbatim, but I would like to give you a flavour of what we heard:

- We discovered an organisation which lacked a vision and direction in its diversity and equalities commitment, compounded in confusion about who was leading at a senior level.
- A Lack of confidence in the promotion processes and development opportunities from BME staff and officers
- We encountered real strength of feeling from the focus groups in particular about the need for officers and staff seeking a lateral move into other posts to obtain approval from their line managers. No comparable public sector organisation of which we are aware operates a veto policy of this nature.
- With regard to Temporary promotion and 'acting-up' to a more senior rank. The current devolved system gives too much power to individual line managers and is not perceived as fair or transparent. The Panel is firmly of the view that the process for deciding who should be given temporary or acting promotion should be managed centrally.

And We were told of an organisation which is Obsessed with promotion. Leading to:

- a tendency for staff, and officers to move post frequently which negatively impacts on service delivery and destabilises relationships and partnership arrangements.
- senior officers spending inordinate amounts of time preparing for selection processes, which distracts them from their duties.
- an inability to put in place effective succession planning strategies and mechanisms; and
- encourages short term policies and practices as many new incumbents into the vacant roles seek to make their mark.

After hearing and digesting these contributions the Inquiry panel believe that we have made a number of important and practical recommendations which if accepted and implemented, will enable the organisation to achieve its goal of developing a diverse workforce to build partnerships with, and to effectively police the diverse communities of London.

One recommendation in particular which the panel believes has the

potential to transform the Met is the development of a Multi-Point Entry recruitment process.

As the Inquiry progressed, the Panel became increasingly convinced that multi - point entry could bring a wide range of benefits to the Met , which go far beyond increasing diversity. In our view the potential benefits could include:

- enhancing the Met's ability to attract the brightest and the best individuals;
- improve the culture of the organisation, by opening-up the Met to a much broader range of skills and experience in specialist and non-specialist areas;
- And it will also allow the Met to better position itself within an increasingly competitive London Labour market

It is clear, then, that the way in which the Met treats its BME & Faith staff is **pivotal** to gaining and retaining the trust of London's communities. The level of perceived respect given to officers and staff is seen by BME and Faith communities as an **indicator** of the levels of respect that they should expect to be given. And of course;

communities and Met employees are not necessarily separate entities; police officers are people too after all, and as such, often live in the same communities they police. This report, then has relevance for all Londoner's, as we strive to get the Policing of London right for **all of us**. Everyone here tonight has a role to play in ensuring that this becomes a reality.