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Date: 19th December 2025

Dear Sarah Jones MP,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 10th December 2025 regarding the Aston Villa v Maccabi Tel Aviv Fixture.

West Midlands Police are actively responding to both the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) requests and the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection requirements. This includes providing the Community Impact Assessment (CIA), which will provide clarity on how we engaged with community stakeholders.

We have had a number of queries in relation to this and the update we have provided is as follows.

West Midlands Police (WMP) undertook extensive community engagement prior to the fixture with consultation carried out with a wide range of individuals, organisations, and community representatives, both formally and informally.

Aston residents and local community forums, including charities and third-sector organisations, were engaged through Neighbourhood Teams (NHT) and the community intelligence development and collection plan. This also included consultation with the Birmingham City Council's Community Cohesion Lead who liaised with the local community as part of this operation.

Engagement with Muslim community leaders and mosque representatives—including the Muslim Reference Group, Bahu Trust, Green Lane Masjid, Masjid Al Falah, Witton Islamic Centre, Great Barr Muslim Foundation, Al Habib Trust, and Jamia Masjid Salam Hussain—was carried out through local meetings and dedicated stakeholder sessions to support wider community messaging.

Early engagement with the Community Security Trust (CST), both local and regional representatives, began in September to address concerns within the Jewish community. Subsequently, we engaged with key community figures such as the Chair of Birmingham and West Midlands Jewish Community, Ruth Jacobs, who supported engagement with the local Jewish community and other organisations, including Central Synagogue, Birmingham Progressive Synagogue, Singers Hill Synagogue and Friends of Israel (Birmingham and Solihull).

Following the SAG decision on the 16th October 2025, WMP continued with its community engagement. This included a meeting with the Board of Deputies of British Jews which took place to discuss the next steps and provided contextual information to explain the narrative and rationale behind the recommendation made by WMP. WMP also engaged with the Equality Council UK as part of key stakeholders meeting from the Muslim community.

We also worked closely with religious subject matter experts employed by WMP from both the Jewish and Muslim communities. Their expertise supported us in ensuring cultural and theological accuracy throughout the process. They provided guidance on religious practices, terminology, and sensitivities. To supplement this, we also engaged with the Jewish Police Association which saw representation from a national level.

On the day of the fixture, there were community observers present in the command hub including a representative from both the Jewish and Muslim community.

As detailed above, WMP utilises both formal and informal community advisers drawn from established partnerships, including faith leaders, local councillors, and representatives from community safety organisations. Engagement was aligned to guidance set out by the College of Policing's *'Community engagement, impact assessments and communication'*.

For transparency, I have appended our response to HASC for your reference which addresses the key points you have raised in your letter. You can see the chronology of events, the CIA document and our contact records. Furthermore, following the HASC session, Ruth Jacobs contacted WMP to seek clarification regarding one of Assistant Chief Constable O'Hara's responses. He immediately clarified his position via an email to personally apologise for any unintended confusion and consternation caused. This apology was very graciously accepted and subsequently shared with the community. The contents of the email exchange are attached for your reference.

Regarding the sensitive intelligence related to the fixture, my understanding was that Home Office officials had already been briefed by Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) and the Senior National Coordinator (SNC). However, it has been confirmed that this did not take place and so I will ensure you are briefed as soon as possible in this respect.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Guildford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Guildford QPM VR DL
Chief Constable

