



**QUESTIONS FROM POLICE & CRIME PANEL MEMBERS TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER – FRIDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2018**

In accordance with Procedure Rule 11 (General Questions from Members of the Panel), the following questions had been submitted together with the responses from the PCC:-

**Received from Councillor Otten**

Do you believe it is a good use of police resources to intervene in peaceful protests regarding the felling of trees in Sheffield?

**Response**

The police have no reason to “intervene” in peaceful protests as long as they remain peaceful and within the law.

However, it is my understanding that the tree-felling contractors have employed a company (SIA) to remove protestors where they have been dismantling safety zones and trespassing within them (breaches of a High Court injunction).

In these circumstances it is prudent that the police are deployed on stand-by, not least so that they can de-escalate a situation, if possible.

**Supplementary Question from Councillor Otten**

Councillor Otten asked if the Commissioner was aware that the Police had successfully de-escalated tree protests in Sheffield. Additionally, was the Commissioner satisfied that the Police are sufficiently aware of their duty to protect protestors from inappropriate use of force by the security company employed by the contractor.

**Response**

The Commissioner commented that this was a very difficult area for the Police and that this situation had been ongoing for a considerable length of time.

He added that the Police have a responsibility to ensure peaceful protests can happen; problems arose when protests became un-peaceful and the Police have to intervene. The Police also have an equal responsibility to ensure that the contractor could implement the policy of Sheffield City Council in relation to tree felling and highway maintenance.

The Commissioner stated that his anxieties had increased more recently, due to the sheer numbers of people protesting, this had also been shared with Sheffield City Council.

The Commissioner understood that there was currently a pause in the works taking place. He hoped this would allow Sheffield City Council and its contractors to think about its policy and include dialogue with the peaceful protestors and the Police. The Commissioner concluded that, it was in everyone's interest to have a reasonable solution.