

Executive Summary

Investigation into how Greater Manchester Police were first notified about the shooting of Jessie James, what actions were taken and what information was disseminated to the media and public

Executive Summary

Overview of incident

Jessie Marvyn James was shot dead in Broadfield Park, Moss Side, Manchester at approximately 1am on Saturday 9 September 2006. Jessie was 15-years-old at the time of his death.

At 1:19am on 9 September 2006, Witness A, who had been working with Greater Manchester Police on an operation relating to gun crime, rang the mobile phone of an off-duty Greater Manchester Police officer, Officer A. In this call Witness A reported witnessing a dispute between males in Broadfield Park in the Great Western Street area of Moss Side, Manchester. Witness A advised that there had been flashes and a body had fallen.

Officer A tried to ensure Witness A was safe, noted the content of the call and returned to bed.

Greater Manchester Police received a 999 call at 2:38am in which the caller reported that a friend was dead and requested the police attend the scene opposite the Powerhouse Centre in Moss Side. The first Greater Manchester Police officer arrived on the scene of the shooting at 2:44am.

Officer A contacted Longsight CID at 8:30am in relation to the information received from Witness A. Officer A was advised at this time that there had been a shooting incident in Moss Side overnight.

In the days following the shooting Greater Manchester Police advised the community and the media that the first call they received about the shooting was at 2:38am.

Overview of investigation

Due to community concerns, Greater Manchester Police undertook a review of the incident and what initial contact had taken place. The review highlighted the call to Officer A at 1:19am reporting an incident which seemed to relate to the shooting of Jessie James – 79 minutes before the first 999 call was received.

As a result of this, Greater Manchester Police referred the matter to the

Independent Police Complaints Commission on 25 September 2006. Naseem Malik, IPCC Commissioner for the North West, decided that an independent investigation should be undertaken into how the off-duty officer had dealt with the call.

The investigation quickly expanded to cover the information that was given to the public and media in subsequent days advising that the first call about the incident was received at 2:38am.

The Independent investigation identified the following chronology of key events.

Chronology of Key Events

9 September 2006

1:00am/1:01am

Jessie James shot dead in Broadfield Park, Moss Side. He sustained gun shot wounds to his chest and abdomen.

1:15am

Greater Manchester Police officers attend at the West Indian Sports and Social Club on Westwood Street, Moss Side, adjacent to Broadfield Park, in response to a call about under-age youths trying to gain access. It was reported that a large number of people were in attendance when the uniformed officers arrived. At no point did anyone suggest there had been an incident or shooting in the nearby park.

1:19am

Witness A telephoned Officer A to report an incident in Broadfield Park. Officer A, who was off duty, was at home in bed having taken medication for a chest infection and also consumed alcohol. Officer A was also caring for an ill daughter.

2:38am

A 999 call was received at Claytonbrook Operational Communications Room. The caller, who was using a mobile telephone, advised that a friend was dead on the floor. The caller was opposite the Powerhouse, Raby Street, Moss Side. The caller was very distressed and did not respond to the call handler's questions. The call handler ranked the incident as Grade 1 and despatched officers.

Due to technical problems with Greater Manchester Police's computer systems, the 999 call made at 2:38am and approximately 700 other calls were not recorded.

2:44am

The first Greater Manchester Police officers arrived at the scene.

8:30am

Officer A contacted Longsight CID and spoke with a Detective Constable. Officer A enquired whether there had been any incidents overnight. Officer A advised the Detective Constable of the call received during the night but did not give any further information. The Detective Constable advised Officer A that there had been two incidents overnight - a shooting and a stabbing.

12:05am

Officer A contacted Longsight CID again and spoke to another Detective Constable. Officer A gave more information about the call received at 1:19am including the fact that the witness had claimed to have seen a "possible shooting" on Great Western Street, near the park. The Detective Constable advised a senior officer about the call and the information was recorded and passed to the Major Incident Room dealing with the shooting.

12:30pm

Greater Manchester Police held a press conference in Raby Street, Moss Side. The media were advised that police had been called "just after 2:30am this morning" to reports of a shooting.

2:00pm

Greater Manchester Police officers attend a meeting with the Moss Side and Hulme Independent Advisory Group at Greenheys Police Station. The meeting was advised that the first call made to Greater Manchester Police about the shooting was at 2:38am.

2:15pm

Officer A contacted Longsight CID again to give more information from the 1:19am call. Again this information was disseminated.

14 September 2006

A meeting was held with the community of Moss Side at the West Indian Sports and Social Club. The community was told that the police were informed about the incident at 2:38am on 9 September.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Officer A

Officer A received a phone call in the early hours of the morning from a vulnerable witness reporting a serious incident. The officer appears to have been more concerned about the safety of the witness, who was working with Greater Manchester Police on a serious crime operation. As a result Officer A appears to have missed the fact that the incident reported by the witness was potentially a shooting and that someone may be injured.

It is noted that the officer in mitigation explained that illness and domestic circumstances influenced the actions taken. However the conclusion reached is that the officer failed to appropriately action the information given by Witness A.

Recommendation – Officer A receives a superintendent’s written warning.

Use of Mobile Phones

Officer A was using a mobile phone for both work and personal purposes. On Saturday 9 September the phone was by the officer’s bed as a phone call was expected from the officer’s partner, who was out of the country on business.

The investigation concluded that by using a work mobile phone for personal use, Officer A had failed to recognise the potential of having to take a significant work-related call while unfit to do so.

Recommendations – All Armed Crime Unit officers dealing with witnesses should not use work mobile phones for personal purposes to negate the possibility of taking a significant work related call while unfit to do so. Greater Manchester Police consider a policy to provide guidance to officers on taking work related calls outside of their operational tour of duty.

Dissemination of Information

A Greater Manchester Police officer was aware by 12:05pm on Saturday 9 September of the phone call made to Officer A at 1:19am.

Although aware of this information, the officer was unsure about the reliability of the information given by Witness A. As a result the officer wanted more

enquiries made into the reliability of the information and made a policy decision not to inform the family or community about the 1:19am call.

It was not until Wednesday 13 September that the officer was satisfied that the information provided by Witness A related to the shooting of Jessie James. Despite this the information about the 1:19am call was not immediately conveyed to other officers who had responsibility for dealing with the community or media.

These GMP officers relied on the information in Greater Manchester Police's computer systems about the first call being made at 2:38am and had no reason to question this information. As a result, the media and community were informed in the days following the shooting that the first call about the incident was received at 2:38am.

The officer failed to appraise colleagues about the new information in a timely fashion and as a result misleading information was given to the community and media.

Recommendations – the officer should receive words of advice.

Recording of 999 calls

While accepting that the failure to record the 2:38am 999 call and approximately 700 other calls was the result of a technical fault, the investigation concluded that Greater Manchester Police should ensure that systems are in place to ensure such vital information is not lost.

Recommendation – Greater Manchester Police has responded to this technical fault by committing funds to install a new digital recording system.