

Witness: Lynne Owens
Statement No: 1
Exhibits Referred to: LO/1, LO/2, LO/3, LO/4, LO/5, LO/6,
LO/7, LO/8, LO/9, LO/10
Date Statement Made: 26 January 2012

The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture Practices and Ethics of the Press

This is the exhibit marked 'LO/3' referred to in the statement of Lynne Owens,
dated this 26th day of January 2012.



News; Front Page
Yard adopts 'polite' new riot tactics; Police leaflet to advise protesters of rights

David Leppard
597 words
27 February 2011
The Sunday Times
ST
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1,2
English
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THE most senior female officer at Scotland Yard has helped to draw up a new "friendly" approach to policing violent demonstrations.

It includes explaining politely to demonstrators why helmeted riot police sometimes have to shout at them and warning them over Twitter when they are about to be "kettled" — confined to the spot for hours at a time.

The new "consensual" tactics aim to comply with human rights demands and respond to criticism of the Metropolitan police following the series of recent demonstrations in London.

The Met's reputation was badly damaged when a mob attacked the car carrying the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, the storming of the Tory party headquarters at Millbank and the death of Ian Tomlinson, a newspaper vendor, during the 2009 G20 riots.

The "softly softly" strategy is designed to address what Met chiefs say is a new period in public order policing, one which is faster moving and more unpredictable.

A report by Sir Denis O'Connor, the chief inspector of constabulary, warned this month that protests could be organised in a matter of hours and assemble greater numbers of demonstrators than in the past, thanks to mobile phones and social media services such as Twitter.

Now the Met has decided to tweet back to try to get the upper hand and recover control of the streets.

In a glossy four-page brochure to be handed to thousands of protesters, the Met will explain that it is committed to supporting the right to protest. The brochure tells demonstrators what they can expect to see, what officers will be wearing, whether they will be contained — or kettled — and what to do if they want to complain.

It says that if events turn violent, police may switch their traditional police uniform into riot gear.

"If violence or disorder takes place the officers may change their headwear to a helmet with a visor. Please be aware that when an officer is wearing a helmet... they may not hear you and they may shout," it says.

The brochure says police will use Twitter to alert protesters to plans to kettle disorderly elements, giving them a chance to leave the area. The tweets will explain why police are drawing up lines, such as at the end of Whitehall. The leaflet provides a hotline number for complaints.

The tactics have been drawn up by a committee chaired by **Lynne Owens**, the assistant commissioner in charge of the Met's central operations command. She is expected to unveil them in evidence this week to parliament's joint human rights committee.

Owens said the new "communications and engagement" strategy was designed to give protesters live information about what was happening. It would also explain police tactics as they developed.

Increased communication via Twitter and leaflets would also help to counter scare tactics used by some protesters' groups to provoke violence against the police.

Owens, who has been tipped as a possible successor to Sir Paul Stephenson, the Met commissioner, cited a recent demonstration in which the arrival of police horses had been misconstrued to suggest

police were getting ready to charge protesters. In fact the horses were being brought out for exercise.

The tactics will be tested next month in the TUC's day of action against spending cuts. Police say they expect only peaceful protest from the unions, but there is a risk that the event will be hijacked by activist groups looking to cause trouble.

Document ST00000020110227e72r000pv