

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Briefing: Taser incident

- On Saturday January 14, Mr Adunbi, known to friends as Judah, was tasered by a police officer who was looking for a man who had failed to turn up at court. Following the scenes that I am sure you have all seen in the media, Judah was arrested on suspicion of public order offences and was due to appear at Bristol Magistrates Court on February 20.
- The following week, commencing Monday, January 16 the charges against Judah were dropped and on January 17 the police voluntarily referred the incident to the IPCC. In the afternoon of Thursday, January 19, the IPCC confirmed to the police that they would independently investigate. ITV West Country ran a story on this incident in their evening bulletin and on January 20 the story had been picked up by national media outlets.
- Media coverage continued over the coming days and a justice for Judah campaign was launched on social media. On Monday, January 23, police in Bristol held a tension monitoring group meeting with Bristol City Council staff and councillors and on Friday, January 27 the police held an extraordinary Independent Advisory group meeting to discuss the matter which my CEO attended. During this week the IPCC confirmed that they would not authorise the release of body-worn footage the officers were wearing at the time and they also confirmed Cindy Butts as the lead IPCC officer on the case.
- On Saturday, January 28 there was an extraordinary community meeting in Bristol, which I attended to hear first-hand the concerns of local people. This was well supported, constructive and positive. It highlighted a number of issues in relation to the policing people had experienced in Bristol and showed real engagement to push for positive change and better understanding between the police and local communities. Following this meeting I have written to the Chair for the Justice for Judah, and the Bristol Manifesto for Race Equality Steering Group. I am absolutely committed to working with local communities to tackle the issues raised.
- I have put forward a number of suggestions for engaging local people with the issues particularly in relation to the use of police powers, from setting up a new Independent Residents' Panel to look specifically at controversial police powers such as stop and search, taser and use of force - to providing residents with information and materials regarding their rights. I look forward to taking these actions forward following feedback from the following groups. I have also suggested that future dialogue also involves Avon and Somerset Constabulary and I know they are also keen to engage on this matter.
- I have also written to Cindy Butts at the IPCC and asked for her assurance that the IPCC understand the importance of addressing this issue as swiftly as possible and devote the appropriate resources to the matter. I have also asked her to consider rescheduling the community meeting as soon as possible and lastly to explore the appropriate communication the Constabulary and I can make during IPCC investigations and to perhaps agree protocol for future investigations.