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**Lancashire Stakeholder Briefing**

**Updated: 9am Monday 5 August 2024**

**Approved**

**Lancashire Constabulary’s position relating to ongoing support for Merseyside Police, and disorder and protests in Lancashire over the weekend.**

This briefing document provides you with up-to-date information on the incident in Southport and the work being done by Lancashire Constabulary to support both Merseyside Police and our local communities.

The information in this document can be used in conversation with communities across Lancashire to aid understanding and reassurance.

You may already know a lot of this information, but it is important to step through the facts and to provide the context for Lancashire communities.

It is also important to remember that the appalling incident in Southport falls under a Merseyside Police investigation, but that we are working closely with them.

**Priority Update 05/08/24:**

**About our policing operations**

* Following the tragic incident in Southport on Monday 29 July and further outbreaks of violence across the country, we became aware of possible disorder and protests planned in the county over the weekend.
* We had a full policing operation in place to respond to any disorder, as well as maintaining our normal services to communities across the county.
* We also have a dedicated intelligence cell operating to identify any risks or threats to Lancashire communities and continue to work closely with our colleagues both regionally and nationally to inform our response.
* There was protest activity in Blackburn, Preston, Blackpool and Lancaster, with the most serious disorder taking place in Blackpool on Saturday, August 3.
* Dispersal orders were issued in parts of Blackpool, Preston, Blackburn and Lancaster, with a number of arrests made after some disruption.
* We can confirm that 22 people were arrested on Saturday, (August 3), with 21 arrests in Blackpool and one arrest in Blackburn. The arrests were for a variety of public order offences. All those arrested were taken to custody suites across the county.
* Our policing response was focused in Blackpool close to Talbot Square, with some minor disruption reported in Blackburn and Preston.
* In these fast-moving situations, sometimes disorder breaks out in areas where we aren’t deployed but we are able to respond quickly, which we did in St John’s Square in Blackpool. We made several arrests in that location.
* At this time, it is believed no officers were injured during this weekend’s operation.
* Business as usual policing remains ongoing and as always, the top priority is public safety.
* Officers will not stand by while mindless violence is carried out and community hubs destroyed. Arrests will be made either immediately or retrospectively and intelligence teams are working round the clock to identify those involved.

**Specific information regarding Blackburn arrest**

* Yesterday, as part of our response to possible protest activity and disorder in Blackburn, we received a report at around 5:40pm of a person thought to be in possession of a weapon on Jubilee Street, Blackburn.
* Upon searching, our officers located an axe.  A 17-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of possession of an offensive weapon. He has been charged with possession of an offensive weapon.
* We take offences like this very seriously and will continue to respond robustly to anyone planning disorder.

**Arrest updates**

* 22 people were arrested across the county: 20 of those people were arrested in Blackpool, one person was arrested in Blackburn and one person was arrested in Preston.
* Of those 22 detained, 18 have been released on police bail, one has been released under investigation, and three have been charged.
* Whilst a number of people have been arrested our enquiries into the criminality on Saturday continues. We have a dedicated team reviewing CCTV and I expect there to be further arrests.
* To anyone else who was committing these offences, let this be a message to you: we will identify you, we will find you, and we will bring you to justice.
* Those arrested come from Lancashire so for some reason it is local people who seem intent on causing harm to their own communities, which has nothing to do with legitimate protest or the tragic events of last Monday.
* The scenes in Blackpool yesterday by those intent on causing disorder will not be tolerated. People should be allowed to enjoy their town and city centres without the threat of violence or disruption.

**About our communities**

* To the members of our communities affected: thank you for your patience and understanding whilst our officers responded to the disruption. We will continue to put public safety first and we are grateful for your support.
* We would like to thank the good people of our communities for their support during this weekend’s operation.
* We will continue to work with our communities and partners to ensure that we are ready to respond to any concerns, or incidents within Lancashire.
* We have a strong tradition of community in Lancashire, and we are confident that they will stand united against anyone intent on causing fear, destruction or violence.
* We have established Community Cohesion Groups in each of our policing areas to bring together people from different faiths and backgrounds so we can listen, respond and collectively promote resilience in our communities.
* Our NHP teams are engaging directly with any groups that may have concerns and are increasing their patrol activity. We are particularly focusing on those groups and premises that may feel particularly vulnerable at this time.
* We really value the support of our local communities and community leaders, and we would very much welcome your help in reassuring communities and feeding back any concerns so we can address them and continue to keep you safe.
* We will continue to engage with our local communities and would urge anyone with any concerns to speak to us.

**About disinformation**

* Disinformation is a huge driver of these violent gatherings across the country, and we know a lot of those attending these so-called protests are doing so in direct response to what they’ve read online – often posts being shared and amplified by high profile accounts.
* Tensions are high and it is OK to have different views to someone else as long as you are respectful.
* Please think twice about what you read, share and believe from online sources. There are a lot of motivations for why people may be sharing information so be critical and if in doubt, look to trusted voices, your local police force, councillors, local leaders.
* Our approach is focused on getting information direct to our communities through established networks. Where there are factual inaccuracies about incidents in Lancashire, we will of course address this.

**About the Southport incident**

* Our thoughts remain with all the people affected by this appalling incident, and in particular those families who have lost loved ones.
* We continue to support our colleagues in Merseyside with the investigation.
* We are supporting residents in Banks through our local policing teams, ensuring they are kept up to date and reassured about any ongoing policing activity in that area.
* There is still search activity taking place at the scene in Banks, and this is led by Merseyside police.
* We continue to deploy officers to Merseyside in support of their wider policing operation where required but will always ensure we have adequate resources in Lancashire to respond to any issues that may arise here.
* We know that people in Lancashire will share in the grief of all of those affected by this shocking incident.
* At Lancashire Constabulary, our thoughts are with all those affected. We extend our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the victims and their families at this very sad and difficult time.
* We understand what has happened is unthinkable – people will be concerned and rightly so. I would like to reassure you there is no wider threat reported and there has been no specific threat to people attending holiday clubs.
* We know you will share in our condemnation of the violence and plea for our communities to come together to support the police and each other.

**Information about the investigation**

* Axel Muganwa Rudakubana, 17, is charged with three counts of murder, 10 of attempted murder, and one count of possessing a bladed article.
* He appeared in court in Liverpool and was remanded in custody.
* Reporting restrictions have been lifted, which is why the media can now name him.
* There has been some frustration about a lack of information being released. We would ask for understanding about why this is the case. Proceedings are active and any release could be prejudicial and jeopardise any future judicial proceedings.
* It is for this reason that you will not see any public information being released by Lancashire Constabulary. We do not, and will not, jeopardise the investigation or prejudice any future proceedings.
* Police resources remain at the home address in Banks, and searches continue by Merseyside police. Lancashire officers are assisting with the security of the scene and are offering reassurance to residents.
* We have supported our colleagues in Merseyside during this very challenging and distressing investigation and will continue to do so whilst the enquiry continues.

*ENDS*

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