



Home Office

Kit Malthouse MP
Minister of State for Crime,
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John Mutch,

170919

Death of Sophie Louise Lyons

Thank you for your letter of 19th June to the Home Secretary regarding the death of Sophie Louise Lyons. I am responding as the Minister for Policing.

I was sorry to read about the circumstances of Ms Lyon's death. Ensuring that our roads are safe is a key element of policing and any death as a result of the actions of another is all the more tragic. I am sorry for the delay in my response.

In your report, you raised concerns that enforcement through the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) was ineffective in Manchester. PSPOs are intended to deal with a particular problem or nuisance in a specific area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of that area that apply to everyone. They can prove effective in stopping people committing anti-social behaviour in a public place by applying restrictions to how that public space can be used.

PSPOs are one of a range of options and tactics which can be used to tackle car cruising. There are a number of public order and road traffic offences that individuals can be charged with and those driving recklessly or inappropriately can have their vehicles seized. As well as anti-social behaviour legislation, some forces have obtained court injunctions covering whole areas which carry a power of arrest for a breach. Although these injunctions have not stopped illegal activity at car cruising events, they have provided a valuable tool to reduce them with regular enforcement operations taking place using local Neighbourhood Officers, Operational Support Teams and drone support. How and when to use these enforcement options is an operational matter for the police to determine in line with local policing plans.

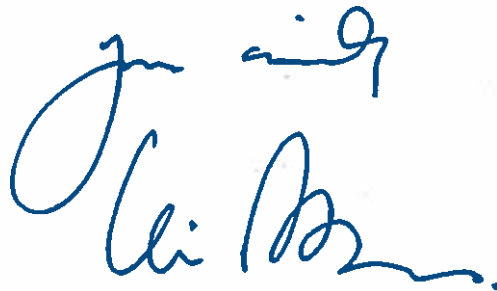
It's worth stressing that these events themselves are not illegal and the majority of those attending are genuine car enthusiasts, law abiding and respectful to the local community. Some forces have had success in policing these events by engaging with the organisers through social media or by distributing leaflets and letters to those in attendance, reminding and educating them of their responsibilities and asking for their support in targeting those intent on engaging in illegal activity.

In terms of a national approach, the police have recognised the need to work closer together on car cruising to prevent success in one area simply moving the problem to another. A national practitioners group has therefore been set up, bringing together car cruising leads from across the country to share best practice and discuss methods for tackling illegal activity at these events. The first national forum was hosted by Essex Police last year with Greater Manchester Police hosting a meeting this year. Reflecting the importance of this issue, the National Police Chiefs' Council have also agreed to discuss car cruising at the next Roads Policing Intelligence Forum in October. This will provide the opportunity to facilitate between working between police forces to tackle car cruising and my officials have agreed to attend.

More broadly, the Home Office will continue to work closely with the police to ensure that they have access to necessary support to deal with car cruising so our response to illegal activity at these events improves and we help to prevent future deaths arising in similar circumstances to Ms Lyons.

You also raised a number of local matters of concern in your report which, I understand, will be covered in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's response.

Thank you again for raising these important issues with me.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kit Malthouse', with a stylized flourish at the end.

KIT MALTHOUSE MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and the Fire Service