

Suggested lines to take:

- We understand this is an emotive issue, and while we respect people's democratic right to freedom of expression / protest, however the level of disorder seen prior to the temporary stop, means that in order to ensure everyone's safety, we now have to maintain a more visible presence. This means taking already stretched resources away from more serious crime that each of our districts in tackling [REDACTED]
- We have not previously needed the level of resource you will see when the felling begins again. Due to the level of disorder seen on Meersbrook Park Road, there will now be a notable police presence, to ensure a balance between allowing the rights of people to peacefully protest, and allow the rights of SCC and their contractors to carry out their lawful business.
- **In relation to why we are talking now, when we have refused to in the past:** Previous protests have been generally peaceful, and we have only needed to get involved on a few occasions. What was seen on Meersbrook Park Road shows that the atmosphere at the protests has definitely changed – and new groups have taken on this cause, which has resulted in people getting hurt. This means our level of response needs to change, and as part of 'no surprise policing', we want to make sure that anyone who turns up to protest when the felling begins, they will not be surprised to see us there.
- Ultimately, the work being carried out by the council and its contractors has been found by a court to be lawful. People have a democratic right to freedom of expression and peaceful protest. Our hope for this is that we can get back to the position where everyone's rights are respected, and the type of criminality and disorder seen on Meersbrook Park Road, does not happen again.

Agreed key messages from media strategy:

- South Yorkshire Police has continued to review its response plans around the ongoing tree protests in Sheffield. Previous, peaceful, protests has meant a permanent presence from SYP officers was not required.
- Following the recent disorder on Meersbrook Road, and following reports of violent and harmful tactics now being observed at tree felling sites, our officers will now have a more visible, ongoing presence.

- Our main priority is public safety.
- South Yorkshire Police remains a neutral party in this matter. Our intention is to ensure a balance between the rights of people to lawfully protest, together with the rights of the wider public to go about their lawful business.
- Our officers will aim to prevent, where possible, crime and disorder, but where it does occur, we will provide an effective, lawful and proportionate response.
- We will continue to review our plans to ensure our policing response to activity at the tree-felling sites remains proportionate.

Q & As:

- **Why did the police officers, including a sergeant, turn their back on the disorder taking place on Meersbrook Park Road?**

The SIA team, under section 3 of the Criminal Law Act 1967, have the power to use reasonable force to remove those they believe are committing a criminal offence. Having reviewed the use of force used by the SIA team during the Meersbrook Park Road disorder, we are comfortable the force used was reasonable, which meant the officers were not required to take action.

We work with SIA teams on a regular basis – particularly as part of the night-time economy. They are well trained and understand the limit of their powers – however should they overstep those powers, it will not be tolerated and action will be taken.

- **Whose side are you on – are you just part of AMEY's private army?**

We are not on anyone's side, our role is to remain neutral and balance the rights on both sides. We recognise this is a highly emotive issue, and we are fully aware of people's democratic rights around freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, but this has to be balanced with the rights of SCC and AMEY to go about their lawful business. What we will not tolerate is criminality and disorder, from anyone.

- **We have seen videos of people being pulled about – fingers being peeled from railings – how can you say that is reasonable force?**

Where people are breaching the terms of the injunction, the SIA team is working within their powers to remove people from designated areas, to allow the contractors to go about their lawful business. They are using an appeal process, warning people of the action that will be taken should they not leave of their own accord, with the final action being that of removal. By resisting the removal action, they are potentially putting themselves, and others, at risk of injury.

- In one video it looks like a protestor receives an 'uppercut' from one of the security team, again how is that reasonable?

It is important to remember that a lot of the footage circulating shows only one side of what is happening and at times from a distance. We are aware of the video but no victim came forward to report it as a crime [REDACTED]

Specific to BBC Radio Sheffield - Toby Foster's main lines of questioning:

Toby generally changes his line of questioning based on who he is talking to. [REDACTED]

Key information:

A person who wilfully obstructs any person acting in the execution of this Act or any byelaw or order made under it is, in any case for which no other provision is made by this Act, guilty of an offence and liable to a fine.

The offence is complete when a Temporary Traffic Order is in place.

Mr Justice Males who granted the injunction to Sheffield City Council stated that protesters occupying the safety exclusion zones to protest the felling of the trees committed the tort of trespass because their peaceful assembly there could not be said to be reasonable and lawful because it amounted to the S.303 Highways Act 1980 offence.

Try not to be drawn on:

- **Specific details of the injunction** – it is the council's injunction, they can talk through that detail, take it back to our role / plan of action.
- **Opinion** on whether or not it should be happening / if you have sympathy for either side – this work has been deemed by a court to be lawful, people have a right to protest, take it back to the balance.
- **Individual cases of assault** - we are investigating a number of reports relating to the protests, but no detail around those who have been previously arrested / spoken to.