

5.15 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the date on which the Metropolitan Police commenced work on their report into the historic abuse investigation:

Will the Minister inform Members of the exact date the Metropolitan Police commenced work on their report into the historic abuse investigation; how many officers were assigned to it and the rank of the officers involved?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):

I am not absolutely sure of the exact date, although I have come across an invoice which suggests that it was 8th August 2008. That appears to be the date from which a financial charge was made, for work done. I understand that at least 6 members of staff were assigned with additional support supplied by specialists, headed by a detective superintendent who I referred to in a previous answer without naming, but details of the rank of contributing staff is not, in fact, known.

5.15.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

A supplementary in that case. The Minister may be aware of the expression that work expands to fill the time allotted, I think it is something like that, although in this case it may be to meet deadlines as they are required. Can the Minister explain why there seems to be, at least to me, a discrepancy because if we do take the date as 8th August to 10th November when the actual suspension of the current Chief Constable was initiated, that is a very short timeframe considering that we have got a very long process going on at the moment which is still yet to be resolved. So why is it that this report seems to have been done very quickly, been given lots of resources and this current one is still yet to be resolved?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I think I can express an opinion on that. My opinion is simply because the degree of thoroughness involved in the work of Wiltshire is greater than the degree of thoroughness involved in the work of the Metropolitan Police. That is no criticism of the Metropolitan Police but in terms of the degree of detail that is what I would expect.

5.15.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

If I may, we already know that the Minister is on record for saying that the Chief Constable was removed too hastily, does that extend also to the Met report? I know the Minister will not want to be critical of it but presumably if the Met report was done too quickly then surely that is also questionable. In particular, given that the suspension was done on the basis of that report.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I have not said that the Met report was done too quickly. It was produced for particular purposes, the disciplinary investigations have been produced for another purpose. My impression is that they were gone into in greater detail in relation to the latter, bearing in mind that the future and the integrity of the current Chief Officer of Police rested on the disciplinary reports to a great degree.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary, Deputy.

5.15.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister think it is coincidental that the Chief Constable is suspended on 10th November and that the report was produced for that date, when it was so close to the election?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

The suspension of the Chief Officer was on 12th November, not the 10th. I do not think there was any relevance to the election whatsoever.