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pirc

Police Investigations &  
Review Commissioner

OP A'CLEIT  
NOVEMBER 2018

# PIRC Investigation Findings

Serious incident in Greenock  
1 June 2018

## **BACKGROUND**

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On Friday 1 June 2018 a 43-year-old man was deliberately struck by a marked police car during an attempt by Police Scotland officers to arrest him.

The incident took place on a road in Greenock, and the man received minor injuries as a result of the collision.

Shortly before this, two police officers were stabbed and sustained serious injuries while trying to arrest the man in his home in Greenock. During the course of the initial attempts to arrest the man in and outside his home they discharged PAVA spray at him but it appeared to have no effect.

Both officers broadcast several radio messages requesting immediate assistance and provided updates to the Police Control Room.

The man then left the property in possession of a knife and went into the street where there were a number of members of the public.

A number of police officers responded to the request for assistance and made their way to the scene. The first officers arrived in a marked police car. They said they saw the man walking towards their car, armed with a knife.

The driver was aware that two of his colleagues had been seriously injured and he assessed that the man presented an immediate risk to the lives of police officers and members of the public.

Due to a lack of any other options available to him, the driver decided to use the police car to hit the man in an attempt to either disarm or incapacitate him.

The officer stated that he drove the car at low speed and struck the man, who hit the car's bonnet and fell to the ground. The man was then seen getting back on his feet and moving towards the driver of the police car, attempting to stab him, before running off again.

The man was eventually arrested after a short chase.

As a result of the incident, the two officers who initially attended the incident received serious stab wounds to their neck, arms and face.

## **REFERRAL TO THE PIRC**

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Police Scotland referred the serious incident to the Police Investigations & Review Commissioner (PIRC) on 2 June 2018 in terms of the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 as amended, and the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (Investigations, Serious Incidents and Specified Weapons) Regulations 2013.

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## **PIRC INVESTIGATION**

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The PIRC carried out an investigation into the circumstances that occurred immediately after the two officers were injured. In particular, the investigation focussed on the actions and decision making of the other police officers attending the incident scene and an officer's decision to use a police vehicle to deliberately strike the man and subsequently arrest him.

During the course of the investigation, PIRC investigators visited and examined the incident scenes and vehicles, obtained statements from police officers, police staff, and members of the public and interviewed key witnesses. They also seized and examined Command and Control incident logs, telephone and Airwave recordings, briefing papers, Scottish Police Authority photographs, PAVA Discharge report, Use of Force form and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

## **PIRC FINDINGS**

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Following investigation the Commissioner finds that:

- Two police officers were seriously injured during the incident;
- Police officers discharged PAVA spray at him on three occasions during the incident but it had little effect on him. In the circumstances, the discharge of PAVA spray was necessary, proportionate and justified;
- The officer driving the police car made a dynamic risk assessment of the situation and having considered all his available tactical options and the level of threat posed by the man, who was still armed with a knife, he deliberately drove at and struck him with the car. In the circumstances, the officer's action was proportionate and justified;
- Police officers subsequently arrested the man. He sustained minor injuries during the course of his arrest. During the arrest an officer struck him several times with a police issue baton. In the circumstances, the use of the baton was necessary, proportionate and justified;
- The police officers involved in the initial incident with the man and his subsequent arrest, displayed professionalism, sound judgement and extreme bravery.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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No recommendations were made.