

# POLICE

## Police Magazine Update

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### **Met commissioner will need to tackle use of force issue**

The new commissioner of the Met will face a number of challenges including tackling the 'demasculisation' of the service when it comes to robust policing tactics.

A panel which included Bob Quick, former assistant commissioner at the Met and former Home Secretary Jacqui Smith debated the challenges the Met commissioner, who will be announced on Monday, will face as they take up their post.

At an event organised by think tank Policy Exchange, Mr Quick raised the issue of policing tactics in the wake of the riots which broke out across cities in August.

He said the commissioner will have to face issues relating to use of force after calls for robust policing tactics during the riots which previously would have been branded 'police brutality'.

Mr Quick told the conference: "There seems to be some degree that there has been a demasculisation of the police."

He said there is a 'clinical application' of the law which is sometimes inappropriately applied to people under stress – such as officers in public disorder situations. He added that police officers should be accountable but it is 'very unhelpful' when the line keeps moving [as to what is acceptable force and what is not].

Those thought to be in line for the job include current acting commissioner Tim Godwin, former Merseyside chief constable Bernard Hogan-Howe, ACPO president Sir Hugh Orde and Stephen House, chief constable of Strathclyde.

Jacqui Smith, former Home Secretary, said a commissioner's success will be measured in terms of their ability to reduce crime, to respond to new sorts of crime and be "particularly effective in low level and more serious crime, gain the confidence of the public after the riots".

She added that the new commissioner would have the challenge of how to face funding cuts and that neighbourhood teams are already being depleted.

Being a 'good communicator' will be essential, added Ms Smith and the commissioner would also have to have a relationship with the Home Secretary and with the Mayor. "The moment there is disagreement the relationship becomes more tricky," she warned.