



Mr Andrew Allison
Head of Campaigns
The Freedom Association
(via email)

5 December 2017

Dear Mr Allison

Thank you for your letter dated 27 November concerning the police response to the Katie Hopkins appearance at The Lewes Speakers Festival on Saturday 25 November.

You asked within your letter for me to investigate two specific points regarding the policing methods used during this event and I have provided answers to these points below.

1. Why the protesters were not kept back from the main entrance?

The protesters were kept back from the main entrance but entry was forced via a separate side entrance.

2. Why, after it was clear the protest may turn violent, the police officer in charge did not call for the presence of additional officers, in order to, if necessary, forcibly move the protesters away.

As is normal practice for any pre-arranged event, Sussex Police were due to provide support at the Lewes Speakers Festival. In the lead up to the event, research was conducted on prior appearances of Ms Hopkins and there was no intelligence to suggest that any unlawful protest should be expected.

On the day, a small number of individuals were masked and involved in public disorder. Additional officers were called to assist resulting in approximately 30 police officers attending. The organisers, Lewes Town Council, also had 5 security officers and Ms Hopkins had her own security team consisting of 3 security officers.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the policing of such events is operational and, in my role as Police & Crime Commissioner, I am not able to make such decisions. However, I can challenge the Chief Constable where appropriate and, whilst I appreciate your concerns regarding the message to future protesters, I would like to provide some context to the police involvement in this instance.

Sussex Police have a role to facilitate peaceful protest and this is seen at events across the county. However, the safety of all involved and the local community that may be affected is paramount. Due to the level of disorder and subsequent risk of harm on the day, Sussex Police made a recommendation to cancel the guest appearance and evacuate the premises. Lewes Town Council and Ms Hopkins' security team were all in agreement and collectively made the decision to remove her safely from the premises.

Thank you for contacting me about this important matter and I hope this response will provide clarification and reassurance.

Yours sincerely
Katy Bourne

Katy Bourne
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner