

Malcolm Coall
OCU Commander Central Birmingham
West Midlands Police; Police Station
Steelhouse Lane
Birmingham
West Midlands
B4 6NW

27 March 2008

Dear Chief Superintendent Coall,

The Fountain Inn

As you are aware, the view is taken that aspects of this case give rise to concerns about the conduct of certain police officers.

Having considered the matter carefully, it is no longer considered appropriate for a complaint to be addressed to Force Professional Standards. It will instead be addressed to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

The reasons for the decision are as follows:

- (a) The complaint is about very senior officers
- (b) One of those officers has received a promotion since the incident at the Fountain, signalling that this open matter may not have been treated as seriously as it ought to have been by the Force
- (c) The complaint will contain allegations of homophobia, as already made by John Hemming, Liberal Democrat MP, a number of local politicians, and others. As such, it potentially affects the whole of the LGBT community
- (d) A serving West Midlands Force officer Inspector McEldowney has recently expressed the view that some senior officers in the West Midlands Force are homophobic and that this has been the case for a number of years. These comments have received extensive press coverage and give rise to a concern that Force Professional Standards (which comprises senior West Midlands Force officers) may not be impartial when investigating complaints of this nature.
- (e) Since the application made by West Midlands Police to close down the Fountain, there have been other incidents that are clearly homophobic in origin. There is a perception that there may be a connection between some or all of those incidents, and the fall-out from the treatment of the Fountain

These matters all give rise to a concern that West Midlands Police Force has an ongoing problem with institutionalised homophobia. Accordingly, we believe it is appropriate to request that the Independent Police Complaints Commission appoint an external force to investigate the conduct of the force generally in this regard, as well as the matter of the Fountain and the probity of Force investigations into complaints made as a result.

This letter is being copied to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

Yours sincerely