

The IAG Question

Transparency, Protest Policing and the Missing Discussion

Independent Oversight During Operation Talla

A briefing based upon official documents

Author: Ian Clayton

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Executive Summary

Operation Talla was the United Kingdom's nationally coordinated policing response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Within Scotland, that operational response was accompanied by an extensive framework of governance and independent oversight. The Scottish Police Authority (SPA), HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), senior Police Scotland officers and the Scottish Government all participated in arrangements intended to promote public confidence, proportionality, transparency and accountability.

The documentary record demonstrates that significant attention was given to matters including emergency powers, protest policing,

human rights, policing by consent, officer welfare, public confidence and organisational learning.

The same record also demonstrates that Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs occupied an important position within those arrangements, both as Operation Talla Silver Commander and as a senior officer responsible for assurance and organisational learning.

However, a separate body of documentation later disclosed through targeted Freedom of Information requests reveals a different operational issue.

In January 2022, Police Scotland issued internal operational guidance directing officers how certain Covid-related reports from members of the public were to be handled. That guidance made reference to the Metropolitan Police's handling of Crime Reference Number 6029679/21 and was subsequently confirmed by Police Scotland to have been issued following advice originating from the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and through Gold Command decision-making.

The presently disclosed oversight material appears, however, to contain little or no discussion of that operational reporting policy.

This paper does not suggest that the Independent Advisory Group considered, approved or endorsed the January 2022 guidance. Nor does it suggest that the absence of discussion establishes concealment or wrongdoing.

Its purpose is more limited.

It examines what the documentary record presently demonstrates, identifies where two separate documentary streams appear to

emerge and asks whether the available oversight record presently provides a complete picture of the operational issues which later became apparent through targeted disclosures.

That is a constitutional question.

It is also an evidential one.

Chapter One

The Oversight Framework

One of the defining features of Scotland's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was the extent to which Police Scotland's operational response was accompanied by formal governance and oversight arrangements.

Those arrangements extended well beyond ordinary police management.

The Scottish Police Authority established the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to provide independent advice and challenge concerning Police Scotland's response to the pandemic.

The Group was chaired by John Scott QC (now KC) and included representatives drawn from a wide range of organisations, including HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Human Rights Commission, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, NHS Scotland, academia and the voluntary sector.

Its purpose was not simply to observe.

It existed to provide independent scrutiny and challenge whilst maintaining public confidence in policing during an unprecedented national emergency.

Alongside the IAG, the Scottish Police Authority continued its statutory oversight responsibilities.

HMICS also maintained scrutiny, adapting its inspection programme to reflect the extraordinary operational pressures created by the pandemic while continuing to monitor matters including the exercise of emergency powers, custody, workforce wellbeing, organisational learning and public confidence.

The documentary record therefore demonstrates that Operation Talla was not conducted in the absence of oversight.

Quite the opposite.

Scotland established what appears to have been one of the most comprehensive governance and assurance frameworks associated with pandemic policing anywhere within the United Kingdom.

That observation is important.

It provides the context within which the remainder of this paper should be read.

The question addressed in the following chapters is therefore not whether oversight existed. It plainly did.

The question is whether the documentary record presently available demonstrates that all significant operational issues arising during Operation Talla received equivalent levels of documented scrutiny.

Chapter Two

Alan Speirs Within the Oversight Structure

The documentary record demonstrates that Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs occupied a significant position within Police Scotland's Operation Talla governance arrangements.

This is not a matter of opinion. It is reflected consistently across the official documentation.

During the period relevant to this paper, Assistant Chief Constable Speirs held responsibility for Professionalism and Assurance within Police Scotland whilst also undertaking senior operational responsibilities associated with Operation Talla.

His role extended beyond frontline command, as it also encompassed organisational assurance, learning, governance and accountability.

That broader responsibility becomes apparent from the evidence later provided to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

Within his Rule 9 witness statement, Assistant Chief Constable Speirs explained the establishment and operation of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG), the mechanisms by which assurance information was gathered and the processes intended to promote organisational learning throughout the pandemic response.

The Inquiry material explains that the Independent Advisory Group was supported by Operation Talla Information Collation, Assurance and Liaison (OpTICAL).

That title deserves careful consideration.

It was not described simply as an intelligence function. Nor merely as an information repository.

Its stated purpose combined four distinct functions:

- Information;
- Collation;
- Assurance; and
- Liaison.

Those functions suggest that OpTICAL operated as an organisational mechanism through which operational information could be assembled, analysed and made available to support wider assurance and governance activities.

Whether every operational issue entered that process is a separate question.

The documentary record presently demonstrates only that such a mechanism existed.

The Independent Advisory Group itself represented an unusual feature of Police Scotland's pandemic response.

Its membership extended well beyond policing.

Representatives were drawn from the Scottish Police Authority, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Human Rights Commission,

the Equality and Human Rights Commission, NHS Scotland, academic institutions and voluntary organisations.

Its purpose was to provide independent advice and constructive challenge regarding Police Scotland's exercise of extraordinary policing powers during the pandemic.

The existence of such a body reflected an important constitutional principle - Exceptional policing powers should be accompanied by exceptional public accountability.

The documentary record demonstrates repeated emphasis upon:

- openness;
- transparency;
- proportionality;
- public confidence;
- legitimacy;
- organisational learning; and
- policing by consent.

Those themes recur consistently throughout the material disclosed by the Scottish Police Authority and within evidence presented to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry. They are therefore not isolated aspirations. They formed part of the declared governance philosophy surrounding Operation Talla.

For that reason, Assistant Chief Constable Speirs occupies an important position within the documentary record examined in this paper.

He appears not merely as an operational commander. He also appears as a senior officer closely associated with the systems established to provide assurance, facilitate learning and support independent oversight.

That distinction matters.

The constitutional question considered in the later chapters of this paper does not arise simply because Assistant Chief Constable Speirs later issued operational guidance during January 2022. It arises because the same officer appears within two separate strands of the documentary record.

The first concerns transparency, assurance, organisational learning and independent oversight.

The second concerns operational guidance relating to the handling of particular categories of Covid-related reports made by members of the public.

This paper does not suggest that those two strands are necessarily inconsistent. Nor does it suggest that the Independent Advisory Group considered, approved or even knew of the later operational guidance. The presently disclosed documents do not establish any such proposition.

What they do establish is that both strands form part of the same wider Operation Talla documentary record.

Understanding how those strands relate to one another is therefore a legitimate matter for constitutional examination.

The following chapter considers another aspect of that oversight framework which assumes particular significance when read alongside the January 2022 operational guidance.

Specifically, it examines the Independent Advisory Group's documented consideration of protest policing, public confidence and events involving the Metropolitan Police Service.

Chapter Three

Protest Policing, Public Confidence and the Metropolitan Police

One of the recurring themes within the Independent Advisory Group's work was the importance of maintaining public confidence whilst policing extraordinary public health restrictions.

The documentary record demonstrates that the Group did not confine its attention solely to the application of emergency legislation.

Its discussions extended more broadly to legitimacy, proportionality, human rights and the manner in which policing actions might affect public confidence.

That wider context is important.

Operation Talla was never presented simply as an operational policing exercise. It was repeatedly described as requiring the careful balancing of public safety, public confidence and policing by consent.

Those principles appear consistently throughout the material disclosed to the Scottish Police Authority and later provided to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry.

Within that context, the documentary record demonstrates that the Independent Advisory Group considered developments beyond Scotland itself.

Among the matters discussed were significant protest-related events involving the Metropolitan Police Service, including public concern arising from policing tactics employed during the pandemic.

Those discussions were not incidental. They formed part of the Group's wider examination of proportionality, legitimacy and the maintenance of public confidence during an unprecedented national emergency.

The significance of those discussions does not lie in any criticism of individual policing operations. Rather, they demonstrate that the Independent Advisory Group was actively considering how operational policing decisions elsewhere within the United Kingdom might affect confidence in policing generally.

That broader perspective becomes important when another part of the Operation Talla documentary record is considered.

A Second Metropolitan Police Connection -

Almost one year after many of the Independent Advisory Group's discussions concerning protest policing and public confidence, an entirely different Metropolitan Police matter appeared within an internal Police Scotland publication.

On 25 January 2022, Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs issued an internal operational communication concerning Covid-19 anti-vaccine related activity.

The publication stated:

"The Metropolitan Police Service received a complaint and a number of documents on 20 December 2021. The MPS provided the complainers with a crime reference number and is reviewing the content of the documents."

It continued:

"However, the MPS has been clear that nothing has been found to suggest any offences or grounds for an investigation, and that no such investigation is taking place."

The publication then directed:

"Should any officer or member of staff be approached or contacted by people requesting assistance in line with any of the above, then these requests should be rejected."

It further instructed that:

"A SID entry should be submitted and marked for the attention of Operation Norden, and Operation Talla should be informed via a CVI entry."

These passages are reproduced because they establish an objective documentary fact.

The Metropolitan Police's handling of Crime Reference Number 6029679/21 had, by January 2022, become part of the operational reasoning recorded within an internal Police Scotland publication.

The document itself does not explain how information concerning the Metropolitan Police's handling reached Police Scotland. Nor does it identify the mechanism by which that information was communicated.

Police Scotland itself later explained the provenance of that publication in a Freedom of Information response dated 20 March 2025. Responding to a request asking both for the publication itself and for the basis upon which it had been issued, Police Scotland stated that it had been published *"on the advice of the National Police Chiefs' Council and the UK Gold Command Structure"*, that *"advice stemmed from NPCC"*, and that *"the decision to issue the directive came via the Gold Command."*

Those disclosures explain part of the governance background. They do not, however, explain the precise route by which information concerning the Metropolitan Police complaint became incorporated into Police Scotland's internal operational guidance.

That distinction is important.

This paper does not speculate upon the answer. It merely records that the connection is expressly evidenced within the disclosed documents themselves.

Two Separate Metropolitan Police Narratives

The documentary record therefore reveals two separate contexts in which the Metropolitan Police appears within Operation Talla oversight material.

The first concerns public confidence, protest policing and the wider legitimacy of police action during the pandemic.

Those matters were openly discussed within the Independent Advisory Group as part of its assurance function.

The second concerns the operational handling of reports made by members of the public alleging criminality connected with the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

That second issue appears not within the disclosed oversight discussions, but within an operational instruction disclosed almost a year later.

The distinction between those two documentary strands is central to this paper.

It demonstrates that the Metropolitan Police features in the Operation Talla record in more than one way.

One concerns the public exercise of policing powers.

The other concerns the internal operational handling of information presented by members of the public.

Both form part of the wider Operation Talla documentary record.

Whether those two strands were ever considered together within the established oversight framework is not presently demonstrated by the disclosed documents.

That observation leads directly to the question examined in the next chapter.

If extensive independent oversight existed throughout Operation Talla, where, within the presently available documentary record, is the discussion concerning the January 2022 reporting policy and its practical operation?

Chapter Four

The Missing Discussion

The documentary record examined thus far demonstrates that Operation Talla was accompanied by an extensive framework of governance, scrutiny and independent oversight.

The Independent Advisory Group considered matters including policing by consent, proportionality, equality, human rights, public confidence and protest policing.

The Scottish Police Authority maintained statutory oversight.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland continued to scrutinise the exercise of emergency powers.

Police Scotland established organisational learning programmes, debrief processes and assurance mechanisms.

Operation Talla Information Collation, Assurance and Liaison (OpTICAL) existed specifically to support the Independent Advisory Group through the provision of operational information and analysis.

Taken together, those arrangements demonstrate a substantial commitment to governance and accountability during an unprecedented national emergency.

That conclusion is fully supported by the documentary record. Yet it is precisely because those arrangements existed that another feature of the documentary record becomes increasingly difficult to ignore.

A Different Operational Issue

The January 2022 operational publication issued by Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs concerned a subject fundamentally different from those ordinarily discussed within the disclosed oversight material.

It was not directed towards enforcement of Coronavirus Regulations and it did not concern Fixed Penalty Notices.

It was not guidance concerning proportionality. Nor was it advice concerning protest policing.

Instead, it addressed how officers should respond when members of the public sought to report what they believed were criminal offences relating to Covid-19 matters, or requested police assistance connected with those allegations.

The publication expressly instructed:

"Should any officer or member of staff be approached or contacted by people requesting assistance in line with any of the above, then these requests should be rejected."

It further directed:

"A SID entry should be submitted and marked for the attention of Operation Norden, and Operation Talla should be informed via a CVI entry."

Those instructions concern operational report handling.

They are qualitatively different from discussions concerning public confidence, proportionality or policing by consent.

The Present Documentary Position

The purpose of this paper is not to suggest that the Independent Advisory Group should necessarily have considered those operational instructions.

The presently available documents do not establish what material was, or was not, placed before the Group.

Equally, there is presently no evidence demonstrating that the Scottish Police Authority, HMICS or other oversight bodies were specifically asked to examine the January 2022 reporting policy.

That distinction is important.

This paper does not seek to fill evidential gaps through speculation. Instead, it records what the presently disclosed documentation demonstrates.

At present, the publicly available oversight record appears to contain extensive discussion of many aspects of Operation Talla. However, the operational reporting policy revealed through later Freedom of Information disclosures does not appear, on the presently available material, to feature within those discussions.

That observation is neither a finding nor an allegation. It is simply an accurate description of the documentary record presently available.

Two Documentary Streams

Viewed as a whole, the evidence increasingly appears to divide into two distinct documentary streams.

The first consists of governance and oversight documents.

These explain constitutional structures, operational philosophy, accountability arrangements, public confidence, organisational learning and strategic oversight.

The second consists of operational documents.

These include operational publications, targeted Freedom of Information disclosures, internal guidance and instructions concerning the practical handling of particular categories of reports.

Both sets of documents concern Operation Talla.

Both are official.

They appear however, to illuminate different aspects of the same national policing operation.

That distinction may explain why some operational practices become visible only through highly targeted disclosure requests rather than through routine governance publications.

Whether that reflects ordinary administrative separation between governance and operational documentation, or whether additional records remain to be disclosed, cannot presently be determined.

Why This Matters

The significance of this apparent absence should not be overstated.

Governance bodies cannot reasonably be expected to discuss every operational decision taken during a prolonged national emergency.

Equally, where an operational policy later assumes constitutional significance, it is legitimate to ask whether the existing oversight record demonstrates any corresponding consideration of that issue.

That question is particularly relevant where the operational policy concerns the handling of reports made by members of the public alleging criminal conduct.

The issue is not simply operational. It potentially engages wider questions concerning:

- public confidence;
- access to policing;
- institutional accountability;
- transparency;
- access to justice;
- protection of the integrity of the Rule of Law; and
- the relationship between operational practice and public oversight.

These include precisely the kinds of constitutional themes which the wider Operation Talla oversight framework repeatedly identified as important.

The Constitutional Question

The documentary record therefore gives rise to a narrow but important constitutional question.

If Operation Talla was accompanied by extensive systems of independent oversight, organisational assurance and public accountability, where within the presently disclosed oversight record is the discussion concerning the January 2022 operational reporting policy?

At present, the available documentation does not answer that question. Nor does this paper seek to answer it.

It merely identifies that the question arises from the documentary record itself.

That observation leads naturally to the next chapter, which considers whether subsequent disclosures concerning Gold Command, NPCC advice and later correspondence assist in understanding how this operational policy came into existence and how it should now be viewed within the wider constitutional framework of Operation Talla.

Chapter Five

The Provenance Question - Gold Command, NPCC and the Metropolitan Police

The previous chapters have demonstrated two important features of the Operation Talla documentary record.

Firstly, Scotland established an extensive framework of governance, assurance and independent oversight throughout the pandemic.

Secondly, the January 2022 operational publication issued by Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs introduced a separate operational reporting policy in which was implicated the Metropolitan Police Service's handling of Crime Reference Number 6029679/21.

A further question therefore arises.

How did information concerning a Metropolitan Police crime report become incorporated into an internal Police Scotland operational publication?

The presently disclosed documents do not provide a complete answer to that question.

They do, however, provide important context.

The Provenance Question

One aspect of the documentary record requires careful distinction.

The January 2022 publication and the subsequent explanation given for its issue are not the same thing.

In March 2025, Police Scotland responded to a Freedom of Information request which did not simply seek a copy of the January 2022 publication.

It also asked for:

"Details of the basis for the issue of the directive referred to and also details of the party or parties responsible for directing Assistant Chief Constable Speirs to issue the directive..."

Police Scotland answered:

"This was published on the advice of the National Police Chiefs' Council and the UK Gold Command Structure in place to support Covid 19, PSOS engaged with the forum and advice stemmed from NPCC. The decision to issue the directive came via the Gold Command."

That response is significant.

It does not describe the wording of the January 2022 publication itself. It explains the basis upon which Police Scotland says the publication came to be issued.

This distinction becomes increasingly important when the later correspondence is considered.

During late 2025 and January 2026, Deputy (formerly, Assistant) Chief Constable Alan Speirs observed that:

"...nowhere is it stated in that publication that the approach taken by Police Scotland was on the advice of the NPCC and the UK Gold Command."

That statement concerns the wording of the Directive publication.

That response from Deputy Chief Constable Speirs does not expressly address the earlier Freedom of Information response explaining the provenance of the publication.

Recognising that distinction, I replied to DCC Speirs, advising him that the issue under consideration was not the wording of the publication itself, but rather:

"...provenance, authority and consistency of account across official disclosures."

The correspondence then sought confirmation that Police Scotland continued to stand behind its earlier explanation concerning the basis upon which the publication had been issued.

No substantive response to that specific question appears within the correspondence subsequently disclosed.

Instead, Police Scotland concluded:

"Please be advised that you have our position and we do not intend to engage any further on this matter."

This exchange is important for one reason - It demonstrates that two distinct questions exist within the documentary record.

The first concerns what the January 2022 publication actually says.

The second concerns the official explanation later given for why that publication came into existence.

Those questions should not be conflated.

The Metropolitan Police Within the National Picture

The January 2022 publication is unusual for another reason.

It does not merely refer generally to reports received elsewhere. Instead, it specifically summarises the handling of a Metropolitan Police crime report before directing Police Scotland officers how comparable approaches should be handled.

That reference is constitutionally noteworthy.

The Metropolitan Police was not simply mentioned in passing. Its handling of CRN 6029679/21 formed part of the operational context presented to officers and staff within Police Scotland.

Whether that reference was included because of information shared through Gold Command, through NPCC coordination, through operational liaison or by another mechanism is not established by the presently disclosed documents.

Nevertheless, the documentary connection itself is plain and clear.

The Metropolitan Police's handling of CRN 6029679/21 had entered the operational documentary record of another United Kingdom police force during Operation Talla.

That observation is one of fact. It requires no speculation.

National Coordination and Operational Independence

The Freedom of Information disclosures also assist in understanding a broader constitutional issue.

Throughout the UK Covid-19 Inquiry, considerable emphasis was placed upon the operational independence of individual Chief Constables and Police Services.

That constitutional principle remains fundamental.

At the same time, the documentary record now demonstrates the existence of:

- nationally coordinated operational structures;
- Gold Command decision-making;
- NPCC operational advice;
- nationally disseminated guidance; and
- operational publications produced in consequence of those arrangements.

Those two propositions are not necessarily inconsistent.

Operational independence has never meant institutional isolation.

National coordination during a national emergency may be both lawful and appropriate.

The constitutional question is therefore not whether coordination existed. The documentary record clearly demonstrates that it did.

The question is how nationally coordinated operational arrangements functioned alongside the continuing constitutional responsibility of individual police forces for their own operational decisions.

The January 2022 publication provides one practical example through which that broader constitutional relationship may be examined.

The Limits of the Present Evidence

It is important to identify the limits of the present documentary record.

This paper does not contend that the National Police Chiefs' Council directed Police Scotland to issue the January 2022 publication. Nor does it contend that Gold Command instructed any individual officer to reject reports.

The available documents do not establish those propositions.

Equally, this paper does not suggest that the Metropolitan Police directed Police Scotland's operational response.

The documentary record presently demonstrates only that:

- Police Scotland confirmed the guidance followed NPCC advice;
- Police Scotland confirmed the decision came through Gold Command;
- the internal publication relied upon the Metropolitan Police's handling of CRN 6029679/21 as part of its operational explanation; and
- those matters now form part of the official documentary record.

Those facts are sufficient to justify careful constitutional examination.

They are not, however, sufficient to support conclusions extending beyond the evidence itself.

A Constitutional Observation

Perhaps the most significant feature of the documentary record is not what it conclusively proves. Instead, it is what it reveals about the complexity of modern policing governance.

The traditional constitutional model often describes policing in terms of individual operational independence exercised by individual forces.

The Operation Talla documents reveal something more nuanced. They demonstrate extensive national coordination, structured governance, shared operational guidance and Gold Command arrangements operating alongside that principle.

Understanding precisely how those constitutional elements interacted during Operation Talla remains an important subject for public examination.

The documents assembled in this paper do not provide every answer. They do, however, explain why the questions now arise.

Chapter Six

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper has been deliberately limited. It has not sought to determine criminal liability. It has not sought to establish misconduct. Nor has it attempted to attribute responsibility for operational decisions beyond what is demonstrated by the documentary record.

Instead, it has examined one specific constitutional question.

How should an extensive framework of governance, assurance and independent oversight be understood when read alongside operational documents which later emerged through targeted Freedom of Information disclosures?

Perhaps the most important lesson emerging from the documentary record is the need to distinguish carefully between operational publications and their provenance.

The January 2022 publication speaks for itself.

Equally, the March 2025 Freedom of Information response speaks for itself.

The former contains operational guidance.

The latter explains why Police Scotland says that guidance was issued.

These are different documents answering different questions.

Subsequent correspondence demonstrates that the distinction between those two issues remained central to the discussion.

Rather than challenging the wording of the January 2022 publication, later correspondence sought clarification regarding the provenance of the publication and the consistency of Police Scotland's official explanations.

The correspondence concluded without further substantive engagement from Police Scotland.

In consequence, the constitutional question identified in this paper remains unresolved.

The documentary record demonstrates beyond doubt that Scotland established comprehensive oversight arrangements throughout Operation Talla.

The Scottish Police Authority exercised statutory governance.

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland maintained independent scrutiny.

The Independent Advisory Group brought together policing, legal, human rights, health and academic expertise to provide advice and challenge.

Operation Talla Information Collation, Assurance and Liaison (OpTICAL) existed to support those arrangements through the collection, collation and analysis of operational information.

Collectively, these structures reflected a clear commitment to transparency, proportionality, legitimacy and public confidence.

That aspect of the documentary record is both substantial and impressive.

Equally, a different strand of documentation has now emerged through targeted disclosure.

The January 2022 operational publication issued by then Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs introduced guidance concerning the handling of certain Covid-related reports made by members of the public.

That publication referred to the Metropolitan Police Service's handling of Crime Reference Number 6029679/21.

Subsequent Freedom of Information disclosures confirmed that the publication followed advice originating from the National Police Chiefs' Council and that the decision to issue it came through Gold Command.

Those facts now form part of the official documentary record.

The presently disclosed oversight material does not, however, appear to contain corresponding discussion of that operational reporting policy.

This paper makes no assertion as to why that may be so. There are a number of entirely possible explanations.

Operational reporting guidance may simply have fallen outside the matters placed before the Independent Advisory Group.

Separate governance mechanisms may have existed.

Additional records may remain undisclosed.

Alternatively, future disclosures may demonstrate that the issue was considered after all.

The present documentary record does not enable those possibilities to be resolved and that uncertainty should not be mistaken for proof of concealment.

Equally though, it should not discourage further examination.

One of the enduring principles of constitutional accountability is that significant operational policies should be capable of being understood through the official record.

Where two related documentary streams appear to exist - one concerning governance and oversight, the other concerning operational practice, it is both legitimate and responsible to ask how those two strands relate to one another.

That is the question which this paper leaves with the reader.

The investigation has reached a stage where the principal challenge is no longer identifying governance structures. Those structures are now well documented. Nor is it simply identifying operational policies.

Some of those have also now entered the public domain.

The remaining task is to understand how those two bodies of documentation interact.

- *How were nationally coordinated operational decisions communicated?*
- *How were they scrutinised?*
- *Through which governance mechanisms were they reviewed?*

- *And does the presently available documentary record provide a sufficiently complete account of that process?*

These are constitutional questions, which are deserving of constitutional answers.

They are questions capable of being explored without accusation, without speculation and without departing from the documentary evidence.

That approach has been adopted throughout this paper.

The documents demonstrate extensive oversight.

They demonstrate nationally coordinated operational structures.

They demonstrate later disclosures concerning operational report handling.

What they do not yet demonstrate, on the presently available material, is how those strands came together within the wider framework of independent oversight.

That is why the IAG Question remains an important one - Not because the documents answer it, but because the documentary record itself now demonstrates why it is a legitimate constitutional question.