



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

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Operation Augusta

Update on the Fake Golf Club conspiracy

Environment Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

7 November 2013



Operation Augusta

- This case came out of Havering Council's 'Operation Augusta' investigation. The focus was primarily on the sale and distribution of counterfeit golf clubs, clothing and accessories, but also Qantas Complimentary Lounge Invitation Cards.
- Over the course of approximately five years, between mid-2003 and early 2008, the ten-strong gang sold the fake goods around the world and duped hundreds of thousands of customers.



Operation Augusta

- The case concerned a conspiracy on a global nature. Contacts were thought to have been based in the UK, Thailand, Australia, Germany, Singapore, the USA, Hong Kong and China.
- It is thought that the fake goods had been distributed globally via their Ebay shop to countries including Australia, Italy, France, Canada, the Netherlands, Brazil and New Zealand.



Operation Augusta

- The value of the conspiracy has been difficult to determine, due to its sheer size, but the PayPal accounts alone used by the conspirators received over \$3 million during the relevant time



Trial in July 2013

- The previous trial in 2009 saw the successful prosecution of the seven original defendants.
- Three defendants had been resident in Thailand for a period of years prior to the start of the case. After the conviction of the seven, Havering Council started proceedings to extradite the remaining members.
- Paul Biggerstaff surrendered himself voluntarily to Court. Brian Ferrigno and Raymond Crook were extradited from Thailand.



Trial in July 2013

- In July, at Basildon Crown Court, the final three were found guilty for their part in the conspiracy.
- Paul Biggerstaff was sentenced to 18 months
- Brian Ferrigno was sentenced to 10 months
- Raymond Crook was sentenced to 9 months
- The starting point for Mr Ferrigno and Mr Crook was expressed to be 20 months, reduced by 50% to reflect the time spent in a Thai prison awaiting extradition. The draconian conditions endured by the defendants and the obvious ill effects it has had on Mr Crook (he has lost 60kg in weight) helped the defence.



What Next

- Two of the latest defendants have lodged an appeal – a decision on whether that will be allowed is expected soon.
- We will proceed to gaining orders for the forfeiture of proceeds of crime from the three
- Collection of previous confiscation orders will continue.



Cost recovery so far

- So far we have received costs of £158,600 which have been returned to central funds
- We have also received £123,606 in proceeds of crime.
- All of the above has been in instalments over the years since the trial.