

Three men admit Willowbrae murder



Three men have admitted murdering 25-year-old Mohamad Abdi in the Willowbrae area of Edinburgh last May.

Mr Abdi was shot dead during a confrontation with a number of other men at 1am on Sunday May 26 at Willowbrae Road in the Duddingston area of the capital.

Detective Chief Superintendent Gary Flannigan, of the Specialist Crime Division, said the investigation which took place into the murder had used telephone records, CCTV footage, forensic science and eye-witness testimony to trace those suspected of the crime.

He said: “The investigation was large-scale and complex – this was a fatal shooting on the streets of the capital city, something which is thankfully a very rare event but which resulted in one man being murdered.

“Those involved set out with the intention of causing serious harm and engaged in a course of conduct, which put members of the public at risk through the discharge of a high-powered weapon, their violent behaviour and a vehicle pursuit which showed recklessness in the extreme.

“The span of our investigation crossed UK – from Willowbrae to London – and abroad in terms of our search for those responsible and significant witnesses and involved a number of other agencies including the National Crime Agency.

“Using a combination of highly technical methods, surveillance and eye witness accounts, the investigation established the identities of those involved, their movements and their

intentions.”

The murder took place against a backdrop of a dispute between rival factions of a London-based organised crime group which was operating in Scotland. The victim and associates had been pursued through Edinburgh by men in two vehicles. One of the vehicles which had been involved in the chase crashed at Abercorn Avenue. Mr Abdi was shot in the street during the confrontation after a MAC-10 machine gun was fired from within a VW Sharan vehicle.

Officers on a passing patrol arrived at the scene, along with members of the public, initially believing they were dealing with the aftermath of a road crash. However it became apparent immediately that a number of men had been involved in a violent incident involving firearms.

Mr Abdi was pronounced dead at the scene and efforts took place to trace a number of others who had fled.

The complex investigation which then followed traced the journey of the gang responsible for his murder from London to Glasgow and then on to Edinburgh where the shooting took place.

The journey was pieced together using technology which allowed officers to track mobile phones and link them to individuals. The route of the two cars which the gang used was tracked in parallel to the mobile phone data using a network of CCTV cameras.

Forensic analysis of the interior of the VW Sharan identified certain individuals as having been in the car at the time of the incident. Members of the public also told officers about the confrontation, hearing “firecracker” sounds which were the reports of the gun being discharged and seeing a number of black males running off.

Det Chief Supt Flannigan said: “The murder of Mohamad Abdi

took place within weeks of the formation of Police Scotland and the establishment of Major Investigation Teams throughout the country as part of the Specialist Crime Division. A significant number of investigative resources were used to progress the inquiry in order to bring those suspected of such a violent crime to justice.

“I’d like to thank members of the community in Edinburgh for their patience and understanding as their streets were cordoned off for significant periods to protect the crime scene.”

Edinburgh Police Commander, Chief Superintendent Mark Williams, said: “We welcome today’s verdict, which comes at the end of a long and very professional enquiry into what was an incredibly serious but rare incident.

“Throughout the police response, the local community has rallied together and provided a huge level of support both to Police Scotland and to each other.

“Without this considerable support we could not have reached this point today, and I would like to reiterate that my officers continue to work with and listen to local residents right across the city because their support is invaluable to us in fighting crime and keeping people safe.

“Police Scotland will not tolerate organised criminals blighting local communities and putting residents in danger, and we will continue to target our efforts at tackling such groups and bringing them to justice.”