

Report to: Full Authority
Agenda #: 7
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Subject: External Scrutiny (cover paper)
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1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 The Authority has collective responsibility to oversee the effectiveness of BTP's delivery and give appropriate scrutiny to its legitimacy to operate. The Force's paper, iteratively commissioned by the Performance and Delivery Committee (PDC), sets out issues of sufficient strategic importance as to merit consideration by the Full Authority.
- 1.2 Members will want to:
 - Be aware of the extent of external scrutiny of the Force's activity and to digest the current landscape, which may hitherto not have been visible.
 - Understand the Force's plan to improve the arrangements and the opportunities this may generate for greater Member engagement.

2. Background

- 2.1 To increase assurance around the legitimacy of BTP's operational delivery, the PDC has been seeking to understand the range and extent of public scrutiny over BTPs activity.
- 2.2 After initial high-level mapping of the full gamut of scrutiny, including statutory (HMICFRS etc.) focus narrowed to the non-statutory infrastructure including thematic panels and independent advisory groups.
- 2.3 BTP were encouraged to map out and describe the current landscape of non-statutory external scrutiny and Karen Wiesenekker (Head of Strategic Inclusion and Diversity) undertook this work on behalf of ACC Allan Gregory. The paper tabled today is the product.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 After reviewing the current landscape BTP have concluded that the current proliferation of groups and panels lacks coordination and may be insufficiently 'independent' or representative.

- 3.2 Whilst the groups are considered to provide useful input to decision makers in the Force, the process by which groups are created, their terms of reference and ways of working are inconsistent. Their activity is uncoordinated, which risks gaps and overlaps in the matters being considered. There is an opportunity being missed to take a holistic look at the themes arising and ensure learning is shared and applied across all relevant areas.
- 3.3 The work has benefitted from Karen's fresh perspective and this is probably the first time the picture has been pulled together in this way. There seems to be consensus amongst the thematic lead owners within the Force that they would benefit from a reset, with clearer purpose, better structure, and coordination.
- 3.4 PDC welcomed the report and encouraged the Force to act swiftly on the findings where possible, whilst noting the risk that any rationalization of scrutiny panels might be perceived as a reduction in scrutiny and that communications would need careful handling. In centralising management of the groups to bring about more consistent good practice the Force would need to ensure the coordination function properly understood the roles and unique characters of each group, so that local insight is not lost.
- 3.5 The current lack of strategic oversight means there is no managed route into the Force for the advice and perspectives coming from the groups, and likewise no mechanism to ensure feedback to the groups on how their input has been used. There is a risk therefore that COG misses the chance to digest and take account of these external perspectives in their decision making, and that volunteers become disenfranchised.
- 3.6 Likewise, the Authority has no clear line of sight to the group's inputs and insights and our oversight of legitimacy is poorer for it. Members may have a role to play in hearing and amplifying the feedback and supporting the groups to feel they have meaningful access and are valued.

4. Diversity issues

- 4.1 The paper that was before the PDC contained less information than is presented today on the demographic make-up of the scrutiny panels, which are of course intended to be representative of communities and of groups who are impacted by the activity/policy. This shows work in progress.
- 4.2 The Force acknowledges there is more to do to understand and improve representation generally, and specifically under the requirements of the Police Race Action Plan. Ethnicity monitoring, for example, is not undertaken in all groups and where it is, there are differences in terminology (e.g., BAME vs non-white.)
- 4.3 Leading this work from within the Head of Strategic Diversity and Inclusion team stands the Force in good stead to ensure external scrutiny work is established, developed, and managed with an inclusion lens at its heart and in a way that supports delivery of the Force's Inclusion and Diversity strategy and underpinning plans.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That Members reflect on the current arrangements and endorse the Force's plan to improve.
- 5.2 Members may wish to probe on next steps and timelines. Who is now taking this work forward and under whose leadership?
- 5.3 Members may wish to engage with groups dealing with the scrutiny of areas of particular interest and expertise, and to consider what they can offer, collectively or individually, in terms of support and drive on external scrutiny.