

Minutes

Strategic Independent Advisory Group

Wednesday 19 July 2023 at 10.00am in G1/2, BTP Force Headquarters, 25 Camden Road, London, NW1 and via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Steve Reeves (Chair)
Kimberley Campbell-Lamb
Dov Gerber
Marisa de Jager
Neil McLennan
Catherine Poulton
Ritika Wadhwa

Apologies:

Lucy Kennon

In attendance:

British Transport Police Authority Executive
Hugh Ind (Chief Executive)
Kate Carr (Project Director)
Alistair MacLellan (Board Secretary / Minutes)

British Transport Police
Karen Wiesenekker (Head of Strategic Diversity and Inclusion)
Steve Morrison (Inspector, Inclusion and Diversity)
Darren Malpas (Superintendent, B Division South)
Marco Di Paola (Independent Advisory Group Co-Ordinator)
Gary Williams (Detective Chief Inspector, Proactive and Vetting)
Jo Channon (Prevention and Intervention Manager)

Welcomes and Apologies

Agenda Item 1

1. The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.
2. Apologies were received from Lucy Kennon.

Actions

Agenda Item 2

3. There were no comments on actions from previous meetings.

Independent Advisory Group and External Scrutiny Review

Agenda Item 3

4. The Head of Strategic Diversity and Inclusion summarised recent activity and outcomes under the Independent Advisory Group and External Scrutiny Review and the following points were made.
 - a. A review by British Transport Police (the Force) of the totality of its external scrutiny had concluded that the current proliferation of groups and panels lacked co-ordination and was insufficiently representative.
 - b. As a result, the Force was implementing centralised co-ordination of external scrutiny through its Inclusion and Diversity Team – specifically two external scrutiny co-ordinators. A decision within British Transport Police on where the two external scrutiny co-ordinators would be drawn from was forthcoming.
 - c. The Chair observed that the two external scrutiny co-ordinators would have a significant role in reviewing and disseminating information and therefore it would be helpful to have a transparent process for that decision-making for assurance purposes.
 - d. The Head of Strategic Diversity and Inclusion continued, noting that the Force was also simplifying and streamlining its external scrutiny framework, merging existing groups and panels to reduce duplication and recategorizing some scrutiny groups as focus groups to better reflect their function.
 - e. Finally, to improve the Authority's line of sight of strategic external scrutiny and oversight of issues, the secretariat and wider support for the Strategic Independent Advisory Group was being transferred from the Force to the Authority.
5. The Chief Executive and the Project Director were heard and noted that,
 - a. The transfer of secretariat support for the Group to the Authority was designed to ensure the Authority had joined-up oversight of issues that it could then cascade down into the Force.
 - b. The Authority was keen to ensure that the Group continued to develop its own meeting agendas and decide in what areas it should focus its scrutiny.

6. Strategic Independent Advisory Group Members discussed the outcome of the review and the following points were made,
- a. In response to a question, the Head of Strategic Diversity and Inclusion reassured Members that the Group would remain composed of independent Members, with an independent Chair.
 - b. The Chair noted that he had to date held regular calls in between meetings with British Transport Police to discuss and set meeting agendas. He would be meeting with the Authority shortly to determine how future agendas could be drawn up and the Group supported in its work.
 - c. In response to a comment, the Project Director noted that Independent Advisory Groups and their secretariats would continue as normal and would not be transferred to the Authority.
 - d. A Member noted that the Group should arrive at a clear view on its role and purpose – whether it was there to provide advice to the Authority and the Force when approached, or whether the Group should be proactive in scrutinising the Force and Authority.
 - e. A Member commented that the refreshed approach to the work of the Group should avoid a tick-box approach, and Members should give serious thought on how it could engage with those groups and communities that were disengaged from policing.
 - f. A Member commented on the challenge faced by many external scrutiny groups of recruiting and retaining the right people who could hold the Force and the Authority to account effectively. The Project Director agreed, noting that the refreshed approach to external security would permit the Force and Authority a more holistic picture of their external scrutineers.
 - g. A Member agreed with the comments made, noting that the Group could consider adopting a workplan setting out its ambitions for a 2-3-year period.
 - h. The Head of Strategic Diversity and Inclusion noted that the Group could be as flexible and responsive as it liked. There was no need to restrict itself to a defined meeting cycle and instead meetings could be called at short notice to e.g. review specific incidents.
 - i. The Chair summarised the comments made and noted that it would be helpful for him to review secretariat arrangements for the Group with the Authority, as well as reflect on whether the Group should adopt a long-term workplan informed by an overall strategy for the Group that was aligned with the Group's terms of reference (Action 4/2023)

Victim of Crime Survey Update

Agenda Item 4

7. The Superintendent (B Division – South) provided an update on BTPs Victim of Crime Survey (VOCS) and associated activity and the following points were made.
 - a. The VOCS project aimed to improve survey outcomes, given that the current survey did not provide enough data for the Force to determine what it was doing right, and in what areas it could improve.
 - b. Whereas previously victims of particular crime types were surveyed at the end of an investigation, the new survey would involve victims being surveyed after initial contact, during and after the investigation. The new survey would also introduce two further survey categories and be directed at victims across all crime types.
 - c. The Force was mindful of the need to engage appropriately with vulnerable victims e.g. with victims of domestic abuse.
 - d. Once a few months of data had been gathered, it would be reviewed at local performance meetings, and then the Force's monthly Management Information report that was submitted to stakeholders including the Authority and the Rail Delivery Group.
 - e. The data would be applied across all relevant departments including Contact Management, Justice and frontline, and could be used to improve productivity, within Performance Development Reviews (PDRs), and to highlight individual performance issues.
8. Strategic Independent Advisory Group Members discussed the update and the following points were made.
 - a. A Member cautioned that there was a risk of a disjoint between what the Force perceived to be a successful outcome to a reported crime, with what the victim perceived to be a successful outcome.
 - b. A couple of Members noted that there was a risk that the Force would capture dissatisfaction from victims of elements of the justice system that were not within the Force's control e.g. decisions made by the Crown Prosecution Service/Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.
 - c. In response to a comment, the Superintendent agreed that the Force would need to be mindful of how victims could be contacted and engaged with most effectively, given some may not choose to e.g. engage via text messaging.

- d. In response to a further comment, the Superintendent replied that the Force was interpreting the objectives of the new VOCS as broadly as possible, including e.g. down to the tone with which officers and staff used when first picking up the phone to victims.
- e. There was some discussion around the extent to which the Force had the capacity to monitor social media.
- f. A couple of Members noted that it was key for the Force to ensure it captured feedback from the victim on all elements of service delivery throughout the victim's journey through the justice system. This feedback should then be applied to a continuous learning and improvement cycle to ensure it was cascaded throughout the Force.
- g. The Chair noted that the Force could be invited to provide a further update on the VOCS project, including on how it had factored in the Group's feedback, at a future meeting of the Group (Action 5/2023).

Police Conduct

Agenda Item 5

- 9. The Detective Chief Inspector (Proactive and Vetting) and the Prevention and Intervention Manager provided an update on BTP activity following the Baroness Casey Report and the following points were made.
 - a. The Force had reviewed the Baroness Casey report to determine where its recommendations could be applicable to the Force. This included extrapolating relevant areas e.g. the risk that specialist units were subject to toxic cultures, acquiescence by mid-and-senior leaders, and power imbalances.
 - b. Whereas the Force was working hard to implement mitigations, the Professional Standards Department was conscious that some toxic aspects such as racism and homophobia continued to be at risk of under-reporting.
- 10. Strategic Independent Advisory Group Members discussed the issues involved and the following points were made.
 - a. In response to a question, the Detective Chief Inspector replied that figures suggested that female officers and staff were feeling increasingly empowered to report bad practice, but he was concerned that there were no comparable figures for other protected characteristics.
 - b. A Member commented that trends of internal underreporting from protected groups could reflect trends in external underreporting from protected group and/or communities where trust in policing was low – the

Force could reflect on whether this was the case and if so, what drivers there were to mitigate the issues underpinning these trends.

- c. In response to a question, the Prevention and Intervention Manager confirmed the Force was active in monitoring domestic violence among officers and staff but recognised it could do more. The Detective Chief Inspector added that one issue was the risk that, given instances of domestic violence were dealt with by local forces, if they were not aware the perpetrator was a British Transport Police officer or member of staff, they could not log that this was the case and therefore British Transport Police remained unaware of the incident.
- d. In response to a question, the Detective Chief Inspector confirmed that the Force had completed its data wash of officers and staff against the Police National Database (PND) ahead of schedule. The exercise had not revealed any cases of concern, albeit there were some low-lying issues that were being dealt with through education and administrative action.
- e. The Detective Chief Inspector briefed the Group on the Force's wider efforts to monitor for 'bad apples' among officers and staff. This included data trackers for sickness absence, records of complaints made etc that were scored and reviewed through a fortnightly tactical assessment process. The Force also utilised a Cambridge University algorithm to aid behavioural detection. The Force was also reviewing networks of peers that any 'bad apples' came into contact with.
- f. In response to a comment, the Prevention and Intervention Manager agreed, as per the Casey report, that the quality of leadership and management was key to addressing institutional issues within policing. Whereas the Force had some excellent leaders, it was clear that sometimes lower and mid-level leaders could be reluctant to enforce tough messaging and combat resistance to cultural change.

Any Issues Raised by Strategic Independent Advisory Group Members

Agenda Item 6

- 11. There were no further issues raised by Strategic Independent Advisory Group Members.

Any Other Business

Agenda Item 7

- 12. There was one item of other business.

Notting Hill Carnival Stop Search Dynamic Scrutiny – Reasonable Grounds Panel

- a. The Inspector (Inclusion and Diversity) noted there were opportunities for both vetted and unvetted Strategic Independent Advisory Group Members to participate in the forthcoming Notting Hill Carnival Stop and Search Reasonable Grounds Panel on 28 August 2023. Further details would be circulated outside of the meeting (Action 6/2023).

Date of Next Meeting

Agenda Item 8

13. The date of the next meeting (18 October 2023 at 10.00am – 12.00pm) was noted.

The meeting ended at 12.01pm.