

WILTSHIRE POLICE MINUTES

MEETING: BAME Advisory Group

VENUE: SKYPE

DATE: Tuesday 28 April 2020

TIME: 18.00 hrs

Wiltshire Police:

Deputy Chief Constable Paul Mills	(Chair)
Jerry Herbert	Deputy PCC
Inspector Ben Huggins	EDI
Sergeant Megan Kenzie	WEPA
Detective Sergeant Tamara Campe	EDI
Liz Cook	Communications
Police Constable Mandie Ball	Positive Action Officer
Sgt Eirin Martin	Staff Officer to Mr Mills
Wendy Colyer	PA to Mr Mills (minutes)

Current BAME Advisory Group Members:

Hollie Green	In attendance
Faro Nhamo	In attendance
Samuel Pearce-Kearney	In attendance
Farzana Saker	In attendance
John Saunders	In attendance
Iris Segall	In attendance
Perdeep Tanday	In attendance

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

PM thanked all for giving their time to attend this virtual meeting. There was to be a BAME Advisory Group a few weeks ago which was delayed due to COVID-19. Today's meeting is to give IAGs an overview of the impact on policing, change in demand and also working with local communities to keep them safe during this period. PM introduced the deputy PCC Jerry Herbert who will be a standing member of the group going forward.

As an update from the last meeting where it was discussed there should be a co-chair to this meeting, with 2 putting themselves forward. The proposal going forward is for MK to send out the statements prepared by the 2 candidates; attendees are asked to look through these and indicate their preferred choice by 31 May. From a recent Public Service Board, now chaired by the Chief Constable, that brings local IAGs together, it was wholeheartedly agreed that a member of the BAME Advisory Group should have a seat at the table to ensure diversity of thought to the forum; and through the co-chair, would then look to feed information back down to the BAME Advisory Group.

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The presentation sets out a response to the unprecedented pandemic crisis, Force approach and an overview on how this has impacted by way of service delivery. A command structure was set in order to oversee the response using a GOLD/SILVER/BRONZE approach. On a daily basis senior leaders/managers in Force virtually meet to give an overview of the impact on staff, services and demand; with the

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SILVER Commander being ACC Maggie Blyth. The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) are working on the external and stakeholder engagement.

There is a BRAGB status, using the traffic light system that the Force holds itself to account against. Through the daily meetings it is assessed where the Force is and thus far, have stayed in the blue and green boxes.

A number of difficult decisions have been made recently around how the Force deliver their services, and now has a slightly reduced level of resource in line with social distancing. Enquiry Offices have been closed, but members of the public can still access the police through the yellow telephone outside police stations or online reporting. Community Speed Watch schemes have been suspended as have volunteers in public contact roles. The training of new police officers have had their basic training reduced from 25 weeks to approx. 18-19 weeks, in line with national guidance. Scoping work is being carried out around opportunities to bring back retiring/retired police officers who may be able to help with the response.

Internally, in addition, there is the Local Resilience Forum, chaired by Chief Constable Kier Pritchard, that brings together partners, such that we can understand the impact in the community, ie, personal protective equipment (PPE), stresses and strains etc. where agencies work together to ensure appropriate levels of kit for all organisations that require them.

JH explained that if it gets more difficult the Force may adjust the way it does policing, in consultation with the PCC.

JS sought clarity in relation to training. PM explained the College of Policing (CoP), who are responsible for training across the police service, reviewed the curriculum, resulting in how essential training can be done in line with national guidance. The reason is to put officers out on the front line where they will work alongside a tutor constable who will further develop their skills. FS explained they will be doing Faith and Cultural training online in May. PM expressed his thanks to FS and IS for supporting the Force with this core and critical training. Finally, PM explained there are stipulations in place to ensure these officers are not deprived of training, the plan is to bring them back for a week for mop up period, ie cyber training.

HOW WE ARE DELIVERING OUR SERVICES

Slide 15 shows the impact on police services during the last 5-6 weeks of the COVID lockdown period. The 101 number is the non-emergency number that shows a small incline at the start of lockdown due to members of the public coming to terms with what the new world looks like, then showing a decrease. The 999 calls decrease over the 6 week period and spike over the Easter weekend but has dropped comparatively to this time last year. Although the organisation has slightly less deployable staff, response times remain below target.

There is a facility where members of the public can contact the police by way of online forms to report any concerns relating to COVID. Members of the public utilised the service around 120-140 times in a day raising concerns over those not complying with lockdown. These are looked at to see if there is a requirement for a staff member to attend and are reviewed on a daily basis to look at trends coming out. A letter will be sent to repeat highlighted individuals to make them aware the police are aware and encourage compliance.

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FS asked if there had been any reporting on Domestic Abuse (DA) and if it is a concern. PM explained there has been a small increase in DA, adding how important it is for this to be reported. PM highlighted concerns nationally that members of the public may not be reporting due to fear. Further on in the presentation, PM will look at the campaign, linked to the national campaign, where they ask people to come forward. PM went on to add the national hotline has seen an increase by 120% of demand to them as a step before it is reported to police.

FS said it is pleasure to see to the PCSOs around whilst she has been on her daily walk.

CHANGES TO OUR DEMAND

Nationally there has been 21% fall in reported crime comparable to the period of last year with a 27.5% fall in Swindon and Wiltshire. Work is ongoing looking at trends coming out and how this may change when lockdown ends.

FS and HG expressed concern around the level of under reporting of DA and asked if anything further could be done to highlight this. LC explained Mark Jones in the Corporate Communications office, is looking at doing radio advertising in order to get the message across to a broader audience; there will be a lot more on this subject in the coming weeks. PM asked members if they would be willing to assist members of their communities, who do not feel confident coming forward.

JH asked the meeting if the DA campaign has managed to reach all communities and if they can suggest ways to reach some of the harder to reach communities. JS has seen nothing in terms of DA, not even through SPLITZ. SPK has seen the national campaign on Facebook and Instagram. LC will feed this back to Corporate Communications.

FS believes members of this forum have a responsibility to act proactively with their communities in relation to DA, hate crime etc. Those not confident should be able to go to their IAG for help and support. PM thanked FS and believes that support is vital. Any concerns or language conversions should be brought back to this forum through MK. Finally, JH asked if members have a newsletter or a specific Facebook site that could assist with raising awareness.

WORKING WITH THE PUBLIC TO KEEP YOU SAFE

Legislation from the government are broken down into 3 areas:

- Restriction of movement.
- Restriction of gatherings.
- Closure and change to the operating of businesses (responsibility of local authorities).

The first 2 gave the police certain powers to levels of non-compliance whereby the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) can be given to members of the public. At the heart of police communities, it was recognised early on that regulations have varying levels of interpretation and the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and CoP implemented the 4E's in order to work with our communities and police by consent – PM refers to this as the 3E's plus one

- Engage
- Explain
- Encourage
- Enforce

An example would be officers trying to explain legislation to members of the public and try to work with them to encourage compliance. The final one, Enforce, is used as a last resort.

Our purpose: To prevent crime and protect the public

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FPNs that have been issued during the period of lockdown have been around the blatant flouting of regulations. In terms of ethnicity breakdown, the majority of FPNs have been given to white people with males between the ages of 18-25 receiving the most.

PM is aware this is topical in the media and that not all police forces have got this quite right. Usually, a change in legislation given to police sees a long lead-in time in order to embed, hence the reason for the variances of approaches across the country. Wiltshire Police have taken a considered approach and are the first police service to arrange for scrutiny of FPNs issued, by a local group, independent of issuing officers, who assess around lawful and reasonable; this has resulted in 2 tickets being rescinded. As a step further, the findings will be published on the Force and PCC websites

Once again, JH asked the meeting to feedback anything they feel the police can do to ensure policing is visible, as well as any feedback around the profile of policing witnessed over the last few weeks. SPK said it was good to see the police out on the streets and FS has been engaging with her community asking if any have suffered any incidents, and has not had anyone come back. JS has noted an increased presence of police that has not been over the top.

PT sought clarity on slide 25 with local figures of 10% and nationally 10% of the Asian community. MK explained she is the Wiltshire Ethnic Police Association (WEPA) Chair and the figures are difficult to split into Swindon and Wiltshire; Swindon is 5.4% BAME. This is a piece of work that is ongoing and will be picked up in the scrutiny of FPNs for BAME to ensure there is no disproportionality. PM further explained it is the responsibility of the diversity, equality and inclusion team to continue to review how services are provided and gain an understanding of those figures. MK will share with the meeting the scrutiny report for the first 3 weeks of the lockdown period with PM encouraging the members to feedback to MK. The 'not stated' box is for those individuals exercising their right not to state their ethnicity. TC explained, as further assurance of transparency, officers' body worn cameras are turned on.

JS asked if there opportunities as a Force to feedback to central government. JH explained there is a weekly meeting the Policing Minister is chairing with all PCCs, where these issues are already on the agenda and is useful for discussion where guidance is/not working.

HOW WE ARE ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

LC gave a brief overview of some of the activity Corporate Communications have been doing over the last few weeks. The early stage was around restrictions, what people can/cannot do. A poster went out to all Community Police Teams (CPTs) and has since be slightly modified and sent out again. Social media activity has included cybercrime and fraud awareness, encouragement given to CPTs to post on social media when they are carrying out target activity and posting results for public assurance. Up to now, the promotion of the national DA campaign 'you are not alone', joint media with local authorities has been promoted. A lot of work has also included supporting the 'clap for carers' weekly, the Chief Constable's Vlog, and some good news stories.

JH explained that Corporate Communications are also working on normal business, as is the rest of the Force and if members of the public need to contact, the police service are there to support communities. JS highlighted the electronic forms and the good reach and wondered if there is an opportunity to target queues at supermarkets, ie posters on DA, explaining some people may not have access to electronic devices. LC noted JS' comments and will feed that back to Mark Jones.

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YOUR VOICE – YOUR COMMUNITY – YOUR CONCERNS

TC explained the relevant slide shows where the organisation stands now we are in the period of Ramadan, what the key points are and what the implications are. Places of worship have remained closed with national faith leaders supporting that lockdown position, providing practical ways to support communities. The Force will continue to encourage compliance from all communities and support the Muslim Councils' guidance in relation to Ramadan. Key messages have gone out on all media platforms.

A joint open letter, using the Chief Constable as the main spokesperson, has gone out to LRFs and has also been shared widely on social media platforms and websites. LC asked the meeting to feedback any other ways the information can be shared.

JH would be interested to know if any other faith groups have anything the Force need to consider and understand. FS explained the decision to close the mosque and community centre as a difficult one, but all are staying in their homes and there are no issues; Eid is celebrated as part of the lunar year where people should not gather if lockdown is in place.

TC explained the Muslim Wiltshire Leadership and Muslim Council are issuing a statement in relation to Eid, in the same context as Ramadan (Eid is 23 May) and will review nearer the time. IS highlighted the potential for families to get together virtually, by way of Zoom. JS explained that all major faiths have had festivals over the lockdown period and it would be an excellent opportunity to bring it all into one place to ensure common ground is not lost.

JH asked the meeting if there are any other issues around community cooperation and what else can be done. PT has messaged 50 families in his community in Salisbury, asking if there are any issues, none have come back. All appear to be abiding by the rules and are practicing their faith within their homes.

After discussion the meeting agreed it would be beneficial to hold a virtual meeting on a monthly basis as a touchpoint for both the Force and communities. MK will arrange and asked the meeting that any concerns should be raised with her in the first instance.

YOUR FEEDBACK

PM once again, thanked all for giving up their valuable time to join the meeting this evening and for the valuable contribution members have provided.

End 19.35 hrs