Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

Minutes of the Community Scrutiny Stop and Search Panel meeting 29th October 2015

Present: Amie Birkhamshaw, Stuart Nagler, Muna Sabbagh, Sam Hale, Dec Supt. Peter Fulham, Jagtar Singh Dhindsa, Sherma Batson and Rosie Alphonse
Apologies: Tina Faraji, Jeffrey Burke, Curtis Sage-Passant, Brenda Griffiths

1). Welcome and introductions

Due to apologies from JB it was agreed that SN would stand-in for the meeting acting as Chair. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies.

2). Approval of minutes of previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2015 were approved by the Panel and will be posted on the Police and Crime Commissioner's website.

The action points from the last meeting were reviewed. All actions have been completed with some being covered on today's agenda.

Action 6 - is to be carried forward - Chair to make contact with JSD workplace to assist with attendance of Panel meetings.

Action 8 - AB updated the Panel members on this action which sought to enquire whether it would be possible for the panel to view body worn camera footage alongside the Stop Search forms. Due to legal issues related to the protection of individuals' identity, and the current capacity within the Constabulary to ensure individuals' identity is anonymous it was not possible at the present time for the Panel members to view any footage. Panel members reiterated the value of viewing some footage even if a certain part of the footage is protected or removed. DS PF will follow this up although it is likely that in order to accommodate a technical way around this the resource and time required would not be feasible.

ACTION 1. Carried Forward - Chair to make contact with JSD workplace to assist with attendance of Panel meetings.

ACTION 2. DS PF to follow up on the request to view a sample of Stop & Search video footage.

3). Annual Stop & Search report for the Commissioners Safety Board Meeting

AB updated the Panel members regarding the Annual stop & search report advising the next Community Safety Board Meetings are in December 2015 and March 2016. AB advised the report should be prepared by members in early January 2016 in preparation for the Commissioner's Community Safety Board meeting on 5 March 2016. It has been agreed that the Chair will draft a report which will be sent to Panel members for review and comments.

ACTION 3. Chair to provide draft Annual Stop & Search Report in early January 2016 and circulate to Panel members for review in preparation for the Commissioner's Safety Board Meeting on 5 March 2016.

4). Recruitment of Panel Members

AB updated the Panel members that interviews were taking place today for recruitment of more Panel members from the University of Hertfordshire. AB advised an external recruitment process will be put in place for the future and will be advertised via the PCC's website. It was suggested that the quorum of panel members should be no less than 12 in order to make the dip sampling viable and representative of the population. The University students give us a good age democratic within the Panel members.

AB advised the Panel members of the requirement of a Deputy Chair for occasions such as today when the Chair is not present. The members agreed a Deputy Chair is required and it was agreed that SN would take on the Deputy Chair role.

ACTION 4. Panel members to note that SN is taking on the role of Deputy Chair.

5). Scrutiny Role around the Community Trigger Complaints Process

AB updated the Panel members of an opportunity for them to be involved in some further scrutiny work around Community Triggers which are set by Agencies. When there is a Community trigger on the subject of Stop & Search the Panel members would be emailed the complaint and asked to provide views and feedback on it. It was noted that the numbers would be very low based on the amount received last year- approximately less than 1 per cent.

Panel members asked how much influence they would have on the outcome of the cases. AB advised the influence would be quite significant considering the Panel members are trained independent members completing Stop & Search dip sampling.

Panel members agreed to taking on the scrutiny role around the Community Trigger Complaints process based on the expected volume of complaints and contribution the Panel members could make to the Stop & Search practice.

It was noted that all Stop & Searches are now captured on the Constabulary body worn cameras and DS PF would provide a full update on the use of body worn cameras at the next meeting.

ACTION 5. DS PF to provide update on the Constabulary's use of body worn cameras at the next Panel meeting to include how the Constabulary use the cameras, any reviews and learning's from camera

usage.

ACTION 6. Panel members to note that email communications will come through via the Community Trigger Complaints process as part of taking on this additional scrutiny role and are asked to provide views and feedback.

6). Feedback from Constabulary on Panel points

AB provided some feedback from the Constabulary following a review of the feedback dip sampling forms which asked Panel members to place more emphasis on whether the Stop & Search was legal and proportionate and less focus on the spelling and grammar used by Officers, understanding that some of the stop/search forms would have been completed during very long shifts and often late at night or early in the morning. The main concern is around officers being able to justify and evidence the nature of the Stop & Search.

7). Consistent completion of Stop and Search forms by Panel members

AB made a general comment on completion of the forms and questioned if the information completed by Panel members is sufficient and perhaps members should record more detail to give more comprehensive feedback so that if/when someone was to review their feedback they would be able to came to the same conclusions. Panel members were requested to complete forms as clearly as possible. This will assist the OPCC to correctly interpret the information

8). Report on Trends on Stop and Search Practice

DS PF provided information to the Panel members on Stop & Search trends. (Copy of Presentation attached)

Key points included –

- Considerably lower volume of Stop Searches in Sept - Aug 2014/15 than in Sept - Aug 2013/14 reflecting a downward trend over the same period
- Breakdown of monthly Stop & Arrest shows positive disposal rates which are slightly higher in Sept 15 than Sept 14 but general trend over Sept 14 – 15 is fairly steady
- Decrease of Stop & Search against previous 12 months since introduction of Best use of Stop and Search (BuoSS)
- Information showing Hertfordshire compared to Most Similar Forces (MSF) and MSF breakdown. Other forces in the MSF group have generally seen a rise in stop searches over the February-August 2015 period whereas Hertfordshire has seen a slight decrease

9). Review of Stop and Search Summary Data

The Stop & Search Summary Data will be reviewed at each meeting.

10). Dip Sampling of Stop and Search Forms

There were 5 Panel members completing dip sampling. Dip sampling was completed in two groups, one group of 3 and one of 2. One group worked on samples from those numbered 1 – 500, one from 500 upwards.

Discussion was held over the dip sampling process and the following suggestions were put forward:

- Rather than work in small groups that the Panel work as one group when reviewing the cases. It was agreed this could be trialled at the next meeting.
- Groups could update their findings on the data spread sheets held on the laptops if relevant columns were added for completion. Columns could be placed in the middle. Wider columns and larger font required.
- Time could be spent reviewing the Stop & Search Summary data and it could be sent out in advance of meeting for review. It was agreed this should be reviewed and would be circulated in advance.

There were some duplicates found on the Stop & Search data which will be flagged to the data analyst at the Constabulary. A list of acronyms used within the data will also be requested so that the data can be easily interpreted.

ACTION 7. Note at the next meeting the Panel members will complete dip sampling work as one group on a trial basis.

ACTION 8. SH to circulate the Stop and Search Summary Data in advance of the meeting for review by Panel members.

ACTION 9. SH to flag duplicate cases to the data analyst and request a list of acronyms for circulation to Panel members.

11). Discussion of stop and search cases / where no consensus reached & Feedback to the Constabulary

MS and RA worked 11 cases and found that 3 of them were considered not to have reasonable grounds. They found the detail completed by officers had improved. One case had lots of detail but not the right detail and could have had more information on the original reason to stop the individual. They found there was some good practice where the Officer stated the individual response and gave key detail in bullet points.

SN, SB and JSD worked 13 cases and found 3 cases where they were not too happy with the justification provided. They found the quality of information had improved from previous information. In some cases it seemed the order of information was written back to front.

SN questioned whether our Community Safety Partners were being made aware of certain issues as we should be working in partnership.

ACTION 10. AB to feedback key points to the Constabulary.

12). AOB

Future meetings dates were provided to Panel members and requested to confirm availability against the dates provided. Following return of this information the 2016 meeting dates will be placed in the diary early to enable early notification and maximum attendance.

ACTION 11. Panel Members to provide availability against the dates provided before or at the November meeting.

AB advised a request had been received from a member of the British Transport Police asking to join the Panel meeting as an observer in November 2015 or January 2016. Panel members had no objection to this request.

ACTION 12. AB/SH to arrange attendance of British Transport Police member as an observer to future meeting.

SH reminded Panel members to complete their expense forms on a timely basis.

ACTION 13. Panel members to complete expenses in line with procedure and send to SH at OPCC for processing.

Date of next meeting:

Tuesday 17 November, 10.00 am – 12.30 pm

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Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, Training & Development Centre