



**Use of Force Scrutiny Panel Meeting
Friday 27th September 2024, 10am – 1pm
Dacorum District Council Offices
Minutes**

Attendees

Chris Cowdrey (Chair)	CC	Paulette Reed	PR
Andrew Taylor	AT	Lesley McArthur	LMc
Andrew Hatton	AH	Godfrey Minsky	GM
Mohammad Islam Ruman	MIR	Anne Griffiths	AG
Russell Dyke	RD	Valerie Shrimplin	VS
Elaine Dyke	ED	Eddie McCarroll	EMc
Supt Owen Pyle	Herts Constabulary		OP
Sgt Adrian Pikett	Herts Constabulary		AP
Keeley Smyley	OPCC (CRT)		KS
James Coady	OPCC		JC
Phoebe Allsopp	OPCC		PA
Catherine Boon	OPCC		CB
Sue McNeill (Minutes)	OPCC		SMc

Also present: Insp Fenge, PS Game.

1	Welcome and introductions
1.1	The Chair (CC) opened the meeting and welcomed the panel, officers and observers. He thanked Dacorum District Council for hosting the meeting.
1.2	Apologies were noted from Ch Supt Dean Patient, Ch Insp Ricky Bartlett, Insp Clare Cray, John Gillett, Daren Power, Marian Mendez da Costa, Lorraine Edwards, Nicole Moran, Zoe Wright, Phil Diamond, Megan Holland, Martin Jackson, Jeffrey Burke, Lorraine Edwards, Dennis Elam, Tara Bullworthy, Penny Buckman and Asha Vesudevan.
2	Minutes, actions and matters arising from the last meeting
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting were agreed (pack item 1.) The action tracker was updated (item 2) and Constabulary feedback provided (para 2.3 below.)

2.2	<p>In respect of the minutes, VS noted that in the last set of minutes, the record scrutinised were numbered consecutively rather than recorded by group. CC asked scribes to identify the groups on the feedback sheets.</p>
2.3	<p>In respect of Constabulary feedback, AP stated that whilst none of the footage had been flagged red (serious concerns), the panel had raised questions relating to two incidents. As a result, AP viewed footage from other officers to better understand the engagement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The circumstances included officers waiting for 4 hours for the ambulance service to conduct a capacity assessment on the detainee and, in the panel’s view, the incident appeared to escalate very quickly. Having reviewed several clips of footage, AP noted that during the time the individual was detained, she had actively self-harmed. Four capacity assessments were completed, attempting to calm the detainee before taking action. She was consistently rude to officers. Clips last a standard 40 mins and in the recording before that viewed by the panel, a different officer is seen speaking to the detainee and advising that ‘... the ambulance crew has said you haven’t got capacity. If you don’t get up from your bed, we’re going to have to use force to remove you.’ This shows clear notice of the intent to use force was given. The panel had also expressed concern regarding an officer pushing a member of the public. Viewing additional footage for context, it was noted that the individual had used violence and threats of severe harm towards the officers. The force was applied to create space and was reasonable in the circumstances. <li>2) Context provided for the custody footage flagged: detainee was under arrest and an argument ensued in the holding cell. During this, the custody officer pushed the detainee. The pressure applied was not excessive, the detainee did not fall backwards. Prior to arrest, the detainee had assaulted two police officers, including biting the thumb of one. Footage immediately preceding that reviewed by the panel showed the detainee’s threatening behaviour. For this reason, he was taken to the floor to gain control. The incident is fully recorded on the custody record.
2.3.1	<p>Discussion followed regarding the length of clips offered to the panel and concern expressed that, if context is missing, officers could be unnecessarily criticised. It was acknowledged that a balance had to be struck between volume of footage scrutinised and ensuring sufficient information for measured decisions. Having been assured that, at the time of review, if the</p>

	<p>panel feels that watching more of the specific clip would be helpful, this can be made immediately available. If graded amber/red, OST further review in more detail, also using other camera perspectives. AP added that complete context is reviewed before approaching officers.</p>
3	Chair and OPCC Updates
3.1	<p>Chair's update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although not available to update, CC advised that JB had represented the panel at the last Police Powers Board meeting. No major issues were raised. - The data subgroup currently has a vacancy. Interested members should contact either James.Coady@herts-pcc.gov.uk or Catherine.Boon@herts-pcc.gov.uk. The next subgroup meeting is scheduled for 30th October 2024.
3.2	<p>OPCC update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The draft copy of the Communications and Engagement Strategy has been circulated. All observations welcomed, particularly regarding the metrics. Panel members interested in joining the engagement subgroup (or data subgroup) should contact the Office. - The PCC's meetings holding the Chief Constable to account are now live streamed on a basis and subsequently uploaded to the OPCC website. The meeting on 17th September 2024 specifically mentioned the scrutiny of police powers and can be viewed: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6jfMmb1i6g - The Police and Crime Plan is currently being drafted. Two public surveys (for residents and businesses), providing opportunities to influence the plan, will be circulated to the panel. <i>Post-meeting note: email including links to both surveys sent to all panel members on 30th September 2024.</i> - Chief Constable Charlie Hall will be retiring at the end of 2024. The PCC is responsible for recruitment and that process is underway.
4	Complaint Resolution Team (CRT) Update
4.1	<p>KS shared a presentation (item 3) and reminded that the role of the team was to attempt service recovery of low-level complaints. Where the team is unable to make a judgement (i.e., no evidence either way), the complaint is logged to identify patterns of behaviour from the data. The team does not deal with complaints relating to PAVA and Taser, or any serious injury (more than reddening.)</p>

4.2	<p>The data revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63% of cases were forwarded onto Professional Standards (PSD) • Three fewer allegations were made, compared to the same period last year. • No trends identified (officers or type of allegations.) • Use of Force allegations made up 4% of all complaints. • 77% of the complaints were made by women.
4.3	<p>One upheld allegation was made direct to the Constabulary and reviewed by a sergeant. CRT also review all complaints made to the Constabulary to ensure the matter is logged and forms part of the full picture of behaviour patterns.</p>
4.4	<p>CC asked how complaints are handled that go straight to PSD. KS advised that CRT create the pack (locate BWV, log IOPC criteria, etc.) and return to PSD to investigate. AT asked if the type of allegations passed onto PSD could be shared with the panel. KS agreed to provide this information at the next complaints update.</p>
5	Use of Force Dip Sampling Feedback – all uses, countywide
5.1	<p>CC reminded that officers were present for operational guidance only. The panel decision should be made prior to asking for advice. The scrutiny took place between 11.00am-12.45pm.</p>
5.2	Group A
5.2.1	<p>Item 1: Spit Guard</p> <p>Officer's efforts trying to calm down the detainee were good. The panel was not sure whether the male officer was in control of the situation. Officer kept threatening PAVA even though the detainee was already in handcuffs. Some panel members thought the PAVA threat was appropriate. Male officer seemed very agitated and it appeared the threat of PAVA was a punishment, although not all panel members agreed. The panel felt that the officer swearing was unnecessary. The grading decision was split ranging from Green 2 through to Amber 4. Graded Amber 3 by majority.</p>
5.2.2	<p>Item 2: PAVA</p> <p>The officer was heard to say 'fantastic' when the detainee said that he wanted to kill himself; this was not appropriate. Detainee clearly violent/agitated but the officer did not calm him nor investigate the problem. Panel members questioned whether the use of PAVA was necessary, although aware there may have been additional intelligence unheard on the</p>

	<p>footage. Once the PAVA was deployed, there could have been more aftercare, before other officers arrived (20 mins later). The grading decision was split between Green 2 to Amber 3.</p> <p>Graded Amber 3 by majority.</p>
5.2.3	<p>Item 3: Baton</p> <p>The statement was good and provided context. Officer mentioned PAVA. The report reflected the footage, although it was difficult to see the whole engagement as the BWV was not clear. Baton used effectively. The Panel questioned whether someone known to be violent should be put into a cell first but the officer advising during the meeting explained that this was not protocol. Graded Green 1</p>
5.2.4	<p>Item 4: Limb & Ground Restraint</p> <p>The panel felt that the narrative did not match the footage and would have preferred access to footage leading up to the clip shown, to assess whether officers had tried to deescalate. The force used appeared reasonable, but the BWV camera was not turned on until far into the process. The panel felt that from what was reviewed, the engagement appeared reasonable but since no justification recorded, there was Insufficient information to grade the incident. OST to review</p>
5.2.5	<p>Item 5: Taser</p> <p>A very thorough and clear report was provided, although possibly a little out of sequence. The panel recognised the good strategy in terms of officer positioning. Good use of the threat to deploy taser. Suspect complied immediately. Graded Green 1</p>
5.3	Group B
5.3.1	<p>Item 6: Taser</p> <p>Excellent use of taser. Clear commands were given by officers. The suspect was apprehended quickly, caution exercised as members of the public were close by. The officer expressed concern that a knife may be used to harm others (including children) inside the shop.</p> <p>Graded Green 1</p>
5.3.2	<p>Item 6: Ground Restraint</p> <p>A good use of force. Well demonstrated use of deployment in a calm manner. Good example of teamwork. Clear communications. Graded Green 1</p>

5.3.3	<p>Item 8: PAVA</p> <p>The written narrative matched footage and was well-written. Positive support from a member of the public. PAVA correctly used. Reassuring aftercare. Graded Green 1</p>
5.3.4	<p>Item 9: Baton</p> <p>The Panel felt that control was not established until taser was deployed. PAVA deployed twice with no impact. Baton used appropriately. A good example of mixed uses of force. Graded Green 1</p>
5.3.5	<p>Item 10: Baton</p> <p>The suspect was known to certain officers and greeted one officer by name. Baton drawn but not used. Good use of force. The suspect was smiling throughout the encounter and accepted the reason for the stop. a good-humoured stop and subsequent arrest. Graded Green 1</p>
5.3.6	<p>Item 11: Taser</p> <p>The panel felt that the officers should be commended for their actions in this case. The narrative recognised the dangers. Excellent teamwork was apparent, looking out for each other and for the welfare of the suspect. A highly dangerous situation which was well-handled. Graded Green 1</p>
5.3.7	<p>Item 12: PAVA</p> <p>The Panel questioned whether the stop/search power was used appropriately and requested a referral to Stop & Search Scrutiny Panel. In terms of the force used, the panel felt this was appropriate. The situation escalated once the detainee was in handcuffs and PAVA subsequently deployed correctly. Graded Green 2</p>
5.4	<p>General comments:</p> <p>Several of the above concerns were mentioned and OST will further review these incidents. The panel felt that the officers involved in the incident recorded at item 11 should be commended for the way the matter was professionally handled.</p> <p><i>Post-meeting note: item 12 has been referred to the Stop & Search Panel and will be reviewed at the October meeting.</i></p>
6	Any Other Business
6.1	<p>CC advised the panel that, at the last meeting, a particularly well-handled incident was reviewed and a 'well done' letter on behalf of the panel was sent to the officer. (item 4)</p>

6.2	Officers observing found the meeting helpful, particularly as supervisors, to help and develop officers. To also understand the need for better recording, particularly reflecting the decision-making in the statements.
6.3	No other items raised. CC closed the meeting.
7	Date of next meeting: Thursday 28th November 2024, 10.00-13.00, East Herts Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8EQ <i>Please note: this is NOT the County Hall building.</i>