



# Kent Police and Kent Police Authority

Strategic Independent Advisory Group

## Minutes

**MEETING HELD MONDAY 24 January, 2011, Kent Police College,  
19.00 hrs.**

### **Welcome and Introductions**

1. The Chair welcomed the Chief Constable, IAG members and police officers and staff.

### **Minutes of last meeting (25.10.10) and matters arising**

2. The meeting agreed that the minutes were an accurate record. All actions had been completed.

#### **Matters arising**

3. **Para 18, Stop and Search:** Issue of incident involving a group from the Gypsy/Irish Travellers community and the practice of 'dipping' for 'red diesel'. Should this occur again the member concerned should make direct contact with the Diversity Support Team to report the incident.
4. **Para 19, Stop and Search:** Query involving the ethnicity of people from the Gypsy/Irish Travellers community and the individuals' claims that they did not fit any of the categories of 'ethnicity'. There was confusion between the recording of 'ethnicity' and not the other 'social strands' e.g. transgender. It was made clear that it was only 'ethnicity' which was required to be recorded and not any of the other protected characteristics.
5. **Para 41, Stonewall:** The Chief Constable congratulated the Diversity Support Team on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index result for Kent Police. It was briefly reported that Kent Police had been ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in the Top 100 Employers and that as well as being recognised as one of the top 100 employers, this year Kent Police had also been recognised as a 'Star Performer Network Group' – a recognition scheme introduced to showcase excellence in employee networks.

## **Address by the Chief Constable re Restructuring**

6. The Chief Constable explained that Kent Police had to make a budget reduction of £50M in the next four years, three quarters of which was to be accomplished in the first two years. 80-84% of the budget was spent on people, therefore there was a need to reduce the number of police officers (front end staff) by 500 and the number of police employees (backroom staff) by 1000. The reductions would be made, as far as possible, by 'natural wastage' i.e. retirement or people moving out of the county.

7. In order to continue to deliver a quality policing service and to protect the people of Kent and their belongings whilst still making the required reductions in officers and staff over the four years, it was necessary to carry out a major force restructuring. Several different plans had been considered, however, it was felt that the most effective plan was close to being finalised and this would be presented to the Kent Police Authority (KPA) on 9 February. Once the plan had been ratified it would be shared with the Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG).

8. Speaking of the diversity of the force, the Chief Constable explained that equality impact assessments would be conducted in relation to the impact on service delivery and employment as a result of the financial decisions that will have to be made. By way of example, police staff were predominantly female whereas police officers tended to be male. Therefore a reduction of 1000 police staff (mainly women) would give an imbalance of the men to women ratio and this would have an impact on the diverse nature of the workforce. He added that the restructuring team would appreciate hearing the thoughts of the SIAG and the BCU IAG members with regard to such issues. The views of the Force's staff support groups will also be canvassed.

9. Turning to the new structure, the Chief Constable briefly explained that it was being recommended that the six current BCUs would become three Divisions each of which would have its separate districts. Each district would be headed by a Chief Inspector with the exception of Medway which, because it was a unitary authority would be headed by a Superintendent. The Chief Inspectors and the Superintendent would have two specific objectives to focus on in each of their districts:

- (1) service delivery
- (2) performance

They would not have to deal with HR, budgets, resource allocation or any ancillary concerns.

10. With regard to the present BCU IAG structure, it was suggested that they would re-form similar to that of the police districts and form 'clusters' in each of the three divisions. A final decision had not been made and SIAG members and others, would be consulted.

11. The following is a summary of the questions and answers.

- In view of the cuts, how will anti social behaviour issues be dealt with? The importance of reducing crime was recognised, however there were some 32 definitions covered by anti social behaviour and these would be reduced to a more manageable 14 and would be addressed by police working more closely and in more appropriate ways with their partners in the community. Kent Police had a memorandum of understanding and agreement with other public sector authorities and once an officer had attended the scene and taken the details of the incident, then the Force Contact and Control Centre (FCCC) would assess the incident and then pass it to the most appropriate person or organisation to deal with, not necessarily a police officer.

- Will the procedure be equality impact assessed in conjunction with local councils?

The police element will be equality impact assessed and it was expected that most/all other partners would also be equality impact assessed.

- Will Special Constables be involved in dealing with issues of anti social behaviour?

All available officers will be deployed as and when necessary.

- Local councils are also having to downsize and the cuts are hitting them heavily so they will sometimes have difficulty in finding the manpower to meet police requests to go to incidents.

It was recognised just how important other partners were to the police, e.g. the CCTV is operated by local authorities and police would not want to lose the partnerships that currently exist and will work hard to ensure strong partnership working continues.

- Will Kent Police collate all details of incidents, the responses and the results and give feedback to the victim(s)?

Feedback is always given to everyone who contacts the FCCC and Kent Police. Local police monitor what is happening in their ward area and a complete overview of information could be given by police although not necessarily immediately following the incident.

- What happened with the incidents where there was no impact and no damage caused?

Every incident was tracked and recorded and a harm test would be done either by police or by another organisation.

The KPA was following up with Professional Standards the procedure for tracking and recording all calls. A report was due middle of March and the KPA would also visit the FCCC. The KPA Authority representative confirmed that Kent Police carefully tracked all information that went to third party agencies.

- What consultation had been undertaken or was planned?

Consultation with local authorities had been taking place for some time. Anti social behaviour issues were not a 'one size fits all' operation, it covered such issues as: inconsiderate parking, less harmful attacks etc. but there was a need

for police to fully understand the potential difficulty and make sure they got the approach right.

12. The SIAG offered their help and advice should it be needed. The Chief Constable replied by saying that when the restructuring was publicly announced, he would welcome help from the SIAG.

### **Update from Force Restructuring Team**

13. A Focus programme to re-design Kent Police had been worked on for about eight months and there had been a lot of consultation on it with KPA and other stakeholders.

14. The scale of the financial challenge - £50M of savings over four years was demonstrated. It was emphasised that the Force would still have approximately £1¼M so policing would still happen but it would be done differently. The required saving would come from two sources: (1) no further recruitment and (2) a reduction in police staff and officers.

15. The preferred option for the changed look of the Force was fast approaching completion. It would be made up of three Divisions which had largely been determined by existing conditions such as the road network, existing police stations and other resources. The Divisions would be sub divided into districts and Neighbourhood teams, larger than they are at present.

16. Response to calls was not as good or efficient as it could be. The suggested solution consisted of a four point plan:

- Dedicated team, deployed locally, managed centrally;
- Respond to all immediate and high calls across the county;
- Flexible deployment based upon demand;
- Carry out intelligence-led directed patrol.

17. Neighbourhood Policing was a big element of the new structure. It was proposed that there will be bigger teams with broader roles. When a call is received from a member of public then initially, if it is not an urgent call, response officers will go to the scene to assess the incident and then call in the appropriate support to deal with the detail of the incident while the response team is free to respond to the next call. The Neighbourhood team will then take ownership of the incident and the problem solving process.

18. Some of the plan will be released to the public on 28 February by which time all local authority Chief Executives throughout Kent will have been briefed. In summing up the presentation, it was explained that central to the restructuring plan was to prioritise existing resources to front line policing thereby minimising the impact of the cutbacks. This would be achieved by making the largest savings (about 36%) from 'back office' functions.

19. A representative for the KPA added that the KPA had agreed a roll forward of £4k from the previous financial year for the SIAG budget. However the same reductions in budget would apply to the SIAG as to the Force and Authority. In reference to the re-structuring, it was mentioned that a review of the BCU IAGs had taken place without KPA involvement and this issue was to be discussed between the KPA and Kent Police. It was commented that the KPA felt the review presented a good opportunity to consider the BCU IAGs structure in light of the proposed police changes from six BCUs to three divisions.

20. The following is a summary of the questions and answers on the subject at the conclusion of the presentation.

- Was this information confidential?

Some discretion would be appreciated.

- Would the Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) be part of the new model? The paper which had been presented to the meeting detailing the work of the CLO was cited as an excellent recommendation for the CLO role to continue.

- Will PCSOs be involved in the new structure?

PCSOs were valued by Kent Police, however as they were largely supported by Government money with some conditions as to their roles etc. care needed to be taken as to how they were deployed.

- The change in demographics had been taken into consideration during the planning of the restructuring.

- What was being done to enhance preventative activities?

A lot of preventative work was incorporated in the Neighbourhood officers' roles which was similar to the roles of the CLOs.

### **Neighbourhood Policing / PACT**

21. This item was opened by the passing on of a Chief Officer's thanks to SIAG members for their participation in the 'Mystery Customer' project. Those taking part chose the Neighbourhood meetings they wished to attend from a police web site and attended them as an ordinary member of the community. They then completed a simple feedback form of 20 questions and submitted it to Neighbourhood Policing. A total of 18 formal feedback forms were completed. Regular themes about the neighbourhood meetings to come from the feedback forms included:

- Publicity – the need for the meetings to be more widely publicised in local areas
- Location – meetings should be held where they were accessible to a large cross section of the community.

- Structure and content – meetings need to be well structured with a chair who keeps the meeting to time and the attendees in order. The content should include local crime figures and new priorities with an opportunity for the attendees to challenge any part of the content if they do not agree with it.

22. There were two proposals for consideration.

- (1) Should the exercise be repeated around autumn 2011?
- (2) Should a different form of engagement be trialled? This would involve engaging on line with local communities.

The Chair of the SIAG felt a follow up exercise would be useful and would have lessons which would benefit every organisation. He also felt that the on-line consultation was an exciting development for the future.

23. One member felt that there was a notable lack of local authority members at the meetings. It was pointed out that many local councillors did attend the meetings and took away issues to work on.

24. Members were thanked for their work. It had been helpful and had identified areas for improvement, which was the original purpose of the exercise.

### **Brief Updates on Priority Issues**

25. **Anti Social Behaviour:** A draft revised Strategy is being prepared for consultation and will be circulated to the SIAG once completed.

26. **Recruitment / Retention / Progression:** The HR Team were working on recruiting officers to the Special Constabulary. SIAG was providing support.

27. **Vulnerable Groups – Age:** There had been nothing to report on this subject.

28. **Vulnerable Groups – PPU (Public Protection Unit):** After a meeting with the Force SPOC, the SIAG Leads felt they had a greater understanding of what was involved although they did not feel qualified to give any useful advice or assistance. However, they wished to hold a 'watching brief' along with the BCU IAGs, and report back to the full meeting as and when required.

29. **Vulnerable Groups – Disability:** A member reported on personal experience of some police buildings as being 'unfriendly' to wheelchair users. However, it was noted that recent new builds were fully accessible.

30. **Prevent:** There was an on-going Government review on the subject, with the results expected in February/March this year. The strategy was being revised to be 'fit for purpose'. More information should be available after April.

31. **Hate Crime:** The SIAG Lead for this subject felt that the relationship with the Police SPOC was less than adequate. The T/DCC said that the SPOC should be reminded of what he should be doing.

**Action: The person concerned to be contacted and get them to 're-engage- with the SIAG Leads. Done**

32. In the spring the Equality and Human rights Commission was expected to publish it's report following the recent public inquiry it had conducted into disability related harassment. Amongst other matters, the inquiry was looking at ways public authorities work together to combat harassment directed towards disabled people. The Force had made a very detailed voluntary submission to the inquiry. The Commission's recommendations would be shared with members once the inquiry report was published and an update would be provided as to how the Force will progress relevant recommendations.

33. **Stop and Search:** The pilot scheme on the use of Blackberries for recording and submitting stop and search procedures had finished and it was found to be very useful. The next two areas to receive the blackberry application will be South Kent and East Kent. A draft Stop and Serve strategy had been produced which gave evidenced, appropriate and justified use of stop and search with the support of local communities. The Stop and Search oversight board had highlighted disproportionality in it's report on the subject.

### **ESPS**

34. Two meetings to consider objectives had already been held. There were several questions raised and requests for further information from members which would be responded to. More meetings were being planned to consider the remaining objectives. The members were thanked for their help in this matter.

### **Annual Forum – 23 March 2011**

35. The aim was to get as many community groups/organisations as possible to attend the Forum and the Chair asked all members to encourage anyone they knew from their local community organisations to attend. The invitations had so far gone out to all BCU IAGs and CLOs.

Next Executive Meeting: **Monday 28 March, 2011, Classroom 14, Kent Police College, Maidstone, 19.00 hrs.**

Chairs (or their deputies) from the following BCU IAGs would be invited:  
**Mid Kent / South Kent / East Kent**

Next Full Meeting: Tuesday 26 April, 2011, Classroom 14, Kent Police College, 19.00 hrs