



Title: Minutes of Strategic Independent Advisory Group
Date & time: Tuesday 26 April, 19.00 hrs
Venue: Force Control Room, Kent Police

Welcome and Introductions

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself and the Executive members and everyone around the table then introduced themselves. Thanks were given to all those who had volunteered to be members of the Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG).
2. The Chair read out a list of training sessions, organised by North Kent, which involved understanding aspects of the 9 protected characteristics and ethnic minority groups. He urged as many members as possible to attend these training days.

Minutes of last meeting (24.1.11) and matters arising

3. The meeting agreed that the minutes were an accurate record.

Matters arising

4. ***Para 8, Address by the Chief Constable re Restructuring:*** The Chair highlighted the last three lines:

"He added that the restructuring team would appreciate hearing the thoughts of the SIAG and the BCU IAG members with regard to such issues."

And urged members to pass any thoughts they, or their BCU IAG colleagues, might have on the restructuring proposals to the Chief Constable via the Chair or the Community Engagement Officer in the Diversity Support Team.

5. ***Para 19, Review of the BCU IAGs structure in light of proposed police changes:*** The KPA Member explained that the KPA would be meeting with the DCC (Deputy Chief Constable) when the issues of the structure of the BCU IAGs would be discussed.

Update from Force Restructuring Team

6. The Force Change Manager gave a comprehensive update on the plans for force restructuring.

7. Kent Police were on target to save £50m over the course of four years. In addition to the savings already made, further planned savings included:

- Operational areas £25m savings
- Crime Directorate £1m savings
- Support Services £13.1m savings
- IT – joint with Essex £9,000 savings
- Non-pay budget savings (including IT, Stationery/Printing, Estates and Overtime) £10m savings

8. An extensive in-force consultation was ongoing. It included a Focus forum for the use of officers and staff, meetings and briefings with Police Federation, Unison, Staff Associations and Diversity Support groups. In addition impact assessment meetings with representatives of Operational Departments and BCU Senior Management Teams had taken place, as well as various visits with forces in the South East of England and around the country.

9. Additionally, a series of meetings had been held in different parts of Kent to consult with Kent's communities. The main points to come out of the consultations had been an emphasis on local policing and concerns about the effects of police changes on anti-social behaviour issues and response policing.

10. It was proposed to reduce the current six BCUs (Basic Command Units) to three, which would be re-named Divisions, i.e. North Kent & Medway, West Kent and East Kent. Throughout these three Divisions there would be nine main response bases, i.e. Gravesend, Medway and Sittingbourne police stations in North Kent & Medway, Ashford, Canterbury, Folkestone and Margate police stations in East Kent and Tonbridge and Maidstone police stations in West Kent.

11. The current nine custody suites will be reduced to seven across the county.

Q: If the reduction of custody cells leads to an increase in size of custody facilities in the seven areas, will this lead to an increase in revenue outgoings?

A: The numbers using the additional two custody suites (Sittingbourne and Dover) had been taken into consideration and it had been decided that nearby custody suites, i.e. Medway and Folkestone would have sufficient capacity to deal with the situation.

12. With respect to the Neighbourhood policing bases, no firm decisions had yet been made. There were currently 31 neighbourhood sites and 31 front counters available to the community and although this situation was not to change immediately, it was being given consideration to see if savings could be made without affecting the service offered to Kent's communities.

13. There followed several slides which outlined Operational Command Structure, Local Policing & Partnerships Command and the command structure for each of the three Divisions. All the Neighbourhood Policing Teams in the geographic areas of each of the Divisions will be headed by a Chief Inspector with the exception of Medway and Thanet which, because of their size and some unique characteristics will be lead by Superintendents.

14. Following slides outlined the roles and responsibilities for the new Divisional Commanders, their Deputies and District Commanders.

15. Throughout the whole of the planning and restructuring process equality impact assessments had been embedded and details had been examined. For example under service delivery and employment it was found that 62% of the staff were female.

16. The following is a summary of the questions and answers after the presentation.

Q: When these changes are complete and ready to be made clear to the public, what reassurances will be given that, for example, the rate of Anti Social Behaviour incidents will not get out of control?

A: "A series of key messages will be issued, both internally and externally, via the media through Corporate Communications. The gist of these messages will be to explain the reasons for the changes i.e. to save money, to reassure people that the standard of policing will be upheld, that police will continue to engage with the public about what is important to them and that there will be an emphasis on the importance of neighbourhood policing and partnerships."

Q: How will the success of the re-structuring be measured other than in terms of money saved and how much flexibility is there in the scheme if it does not achieve it's targets?

A: "The whole process has to be flexible. However there are a series of measurements by which the benefits of the changes will be judged. A slide giving the relevant information and headed 'How we will measure success' will be included at the end of the Focus Programme presentation."

Q: The opportunity to earn overtime payments will be reduced as part of the savings operation so how will police ensure that they have sufficient man- power to cover those difficult times of the week, i.e. Friday/Saturday evenings?

A: "Each of the Divisional Commanders will know their areas best and will plan the deployment of their officers accordingly in order to ensure that the most demanding times of the week are sufficiently covered. They will be able to use local discretion and flexibility and to share personnel and other resources across the divisional areas."

Q: Will there be a greater use of technology for communications, e.g. video conferencing and e-mail communication?

A: “This will happen more often although the South Kent BCU is already very good at using video conferencing facilities which has enabled them to make savings.”

Q: What will happen to the existing Chief Superintendents and Superintendents who will find themselves jobless?

A: “The selection exercises have taken place and those roles needing Chief Superintendents and Superintendents have already been filled. These individuals will not be demoted and it is anticipated that the numbers will be adjusted through natural wastage such as naturally as retirement or people moving out of the area.”

Q: Has the impact of the cost of the 2012 Olympics been considered with all the policing duties that will be involved?

A: “An Olympics Planning Team has been set up to consider issues of police response and delivery. There is also a separate pot of money specifically for use on the Olympics.”

The Chair brought the item to a conclusion by thanking the presenter for the very informative presentation. He added that the Restructuring item would be placed on the agenda for the remaining SIAG meetings this year.

Allocation of SIAG Priorities for 2011/2012

17. Seven priorities had been determined and these would be allocated to SIAG members who would be known as the SIAG Leads. The Chair highlighted that the priority entitled “Harm to Vulnerable People” should be changed to “Protecting Vulnerable People from Harm”. This was agreed by all present. Each priority would be covered by a Kent Police (KP) SPOC (Single Point of Contact), though in one or two cases there could be two SPOCs. The SIAG Leads and the KP SPOCs will be given each others’ contact details. They will then meet together to discuss the progress and what is happening with regard to their particular priority. It will be the SIAG Lead(s) responsibility to raise any issues or questions that have been picked up generally or from the BCU IAGs concerning the specific priority under discussion.

18. The KP SPOCs then draft a report of the meeting (using a specific template – attached for your information) which is shared with the SIAG Lead(s). Once the report has been agreed by both Lead(s) and SPOC(s) the SPOC will send it to this office for inclusion on the next SIAG agenda.

19. In addition to the process outlined above, there will be occasions when SPOCs will wish to get in touch with SIAG Leads to ask their advice on specific incidents or occurrences or to seek community advice.

20. The Chair urged members to communicate with each other as much as possible. Mr Bird made a welcome suggestion that the ‘previous year’s SIAG Leads’ should give a handover of the most recent discussions to the new Priority Leads. This idea was very much welcomed by all members.

21. Members stated their preferences for working with the seven priorities and once all the Kent Police SPOCs have been confirmed, a definitive list will be distributed to all members.

SIAG Recommendation on number of IAGs within new three Divisional Kent Police Structure

22. After discussion, it was generally agreed that the three Divisional areas were too large for one BCU IAG per Division. It would be difficult for many BCU IAG members to travel from their homes to the meeting place. Additionally, the needs and issues of one Division would be so diverse and widespread that members could lose interest in attending meetings and participating.

23. The KPA Member suggested that a way to overcome the distance issue would be to employ more technology and to hold more video conferencing meetings and for members to communicate more amongst themselves and with their BCU IAG SPOCs via e-mail. It was stressed that representation must be representative of the communities and meetings were not always the best way of achieving that. It was pointed out that there was concern that Muslim women were not represented on the SIAG.

24. Members agreed unanimously that a recommendation should be made to Kent Police that they keep the six BCU IAGs as they are at present for at least this year and give the three divisions time to 'bed in' before any changes were made.

Feedback from BCU IAG Chairs on recent meetings

25. It was explained that it was hoped BCU IAG Chairs and Members of BCU IAGs who sat on the SIAG should undertake a two-way reporting of significant items discussed at BCU IAG meetings to SIAG and from the SIAG to the BCU IAG. The Chair proposed that there should be a standing agenda item "SIAG Report" on both the BCU IAGs and SIAG agendas and each of the three SIAG representatives should take it in turn to report to meetings. The following is a brief summary of prevalent issues raised at the April BCU IAG meetings.

26. East Kent had discussed the issue of containment or 'kettling' and how police dealt with demonstrations.

27. North Kent had had a successful meeting at which they had discussed four local priorities and feedback to SIAG/BCU IAG. The meeting had recognised the importance that the BCU IAG should not work in isolation but in close contact with other local organisations, other BCU IAGs and the SIAG.

28. Mid Kent had spent the majority of their meeting considering hate crime analysis and statistics.

29. Medway had also discussed 'kettling' and had taken part in a desk top exercise on the subject.

Treasurer Items

30. The Treasurer reported that there had been an underspend from the 2009/2010 financial year of £4,000 which, it had been intended, should be used to subsidise the BCU IAGs. It had been agreed that this should be used as part of the current cost reductions for Kent Police Authority (KPA).

31. There was an underspend for the SIAG for the financial year 2010/2011 of £5,000 and it was proposed by the Executive Committee that this should be used to promote community cohesion. The ex Chief Executive of the KPA had agreed in principle pending a paper giving a summary of what the money should be spent on, how it would be allocated and showing any surplus money.

32. Suggestions as to how this money could be used included:

- Towards the hiring of a 'people carrier' to bring BCU IAG members to the 2012 Annual Forum next March;
- Towards the 'Disability' week in June;
- Delegate some money to each BCU for their independent use whilst the SIAG maintains overall control;
- Towards the 'Transgender Hate Crime' day.

Update on overall progress made on the Equality Standard for the Police Service 2010/11 and confirmation for 2011/12

33. An Inspector gave a brief background to the meetings held with representative members of the SIAG including the six Chairs of BCU IAGs (or their Deputies) the Chair of the SIAG and the disability representative of the SIAG. The baseline and integrated levels set by the previous Deputy Chief Constable had largely been met, i.e. 99% baseline and 77% integrating. The main aspects were:

- Operational Delivery (public facing duties);
- People and Culture (support structures);
- Organisational Processes (processes).

34. The Inspector thanked the SIAG for their valued feedback. He said Kent Police appreciated that SIAG members had given quite a lot of their own time to the consultation involved with the Equality Standard for the Police Service.

35. The next 12 months would be a period of consolidation and building.

36. The Chair commended Kent Police Force on the Standard, saying that it was pleasing to hear that Kent Police had reached the second stage.

Any Other Business

37. The KPA Member, had a few items to raise.

38. *Restructuring:* The KPA took a large part of the governance in this matter and SIAG Members should be reassured that the questions they were asking were the same ones as those raised by the KPA with particular relevance to the public money involved.

39. *Special Constables:* The KPA had worked with the unions and had picked up on the concern that Specials had been approached to do administrative rather than police work.

40. *H15 Custody Visitor Policy:* The KPA wished to make it quite clear that the Custody Visitors Scheme was in the remit of the KPA – not Kent Police – and was therefore, not for consideration by the SIAG.

41. *Muslim women:* Should any member of the SIAG have concerns about the community of Muslim women or what is happening with them, then they should take those issues directly to the KPA.

42. *New KPA Chief Executive:* The previous Chief Executive had left Kent Police Authority to go to a job with the MET. There would be a 'stand in' KPA Chief Executive until a permanent replacement was appointed to take up the post on 1 July 2011.

43. *BCU IAGs:* The issue of how the BCU IAGs were formed and operated was discussed briefly. The Inspector explained how the Kent Police SPOCs (Single Point of Contact) – who had responsibility for the BCU IAGs – had close links and communicated regularly with the Diversity Support Team at Police HQ.

44. *BCU IAG Improvement Plan:* Members were asked to feedback any comments on the BCU IAG Improvement Plan to the Diversity Team at Kent Police HQ.

45. *Mileage claims:* The Treasurer reminded Members to complete and submit their mileage claims on a monthly basis in order that the outgoings could be closely monitored and money saved wherever possible.

Next Meetings:

1. Executive Committee Meeting – Monday 27 June, Classroom 14, Kent Police College at **18.00** hrs.
2. Strategic Full Meeting - This will take place on Tuesday 9 August in Classroom 14, Kent Training School at **19.00** hrs.