Independent Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes

Berkshire East Local Command Unit

DATE **14th January 2026**

TIME: **18:00 – 20:15**

Attendees	**Initials**	**Position and Area**
Chief Superintendent Steve Raffield	SR	LCU Commander
Neil Misselbrook	NM	NH Inspector
	GS	JOU Inspector
Christian Parker	CP	Sgt/Staff Officer to C/Supt Raffield
Stewart Codling	SC	NH Chief Inspector
AJ	AJ	IAG Chair
CF	CF	IAG member
MS	MS	IAG member
PD	PD	IAG member
SA	SA	IAG member
MB	MB	IAG member
AA	AA	IAG member
HH	HH	IAG member
DL	DL	IAG member
JJ	JJ	IAG member
JH	JH	IAG member
Neeta Mistry-Patel	NMP	TVP CADO
Apologies		
	FM	IAG member
	LS	IAG member
	AN	IAG member
	RB	IAG member

Updates from the LCU - Chief Superintendent Steve Raffield

- Welcome to our new representatives

Local Context and Emerging Tensions

- The area has remained relatively quiet; however, international tensions including conflicts in the Middle East, Russia, and the United States may have local implications.
- In response to a query from DL about what this might look like locally, it was noted that if global events affect a particular community represented within the LCU, this can lead to localised tensions. Previous examples include displays of flags.
- Oxfordshire has experienced growing concerns, and RBWM has also had challenges regarding flag displays and differing approaches by local authorities.
- The IAG was reminded of its role as "eyes and ears" within the community and encouraged to raise any emerging concerns.
- A recent incident involving the Jewish community has had a noticeable impact on local sentiment.

Section 60 (S60) Powers

- No S60 authorisations have been issued recently.
- When S60 powers are deployed, it is useful for the group to review the rationale behind the decision.

Neighbourhood Policing Update - Stewart Codling & Neil Misselbrook

Key Points

- Neighbourhood policing plays a vital role in building community trust, ensuring that if proactive measures such as S60 are required, relationships are already strong.
- Structure consists of three geographical teams:
    - **Bracknell**
    - **Slough**
    - **RBWM**
- A meeting is scheduled for Friday to discuss future structural arrangements.
- Core priorities include:
    - Community engagement
    - Problem-solving
    - Building strong working relationships with local communities
- The LCU structure enhances responsiveness due to officers' local knowledge.

- Areas of focus:
  - **Anti-social behaviour (ASB)**—a key driver of wider criminality
  - **Retail crime and retail community engagement**
- The Force has reaffirmed a strong commitment to Neighbourhood Policing. All but one PC role is filled, and a new recruitment round for PCSOs is pending.

Safer Streets Initiative

- National government initiative focusing on:
  - Visible policing presence
  - Community-led policing
  - Tackling ASB
  - Improving town centre safety

Local Activity

- Establishing dedicated **Safer Town Teams** to address town-centre issues.
- Recent thematic "months of action" have covered:
  - Retail crime
  - ASB
  - Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
  - Licensing enforcement
  - Test purchases
  - Engagement operations
  - E-scooter and e-bike enforcement
- Some town centres had experienced a loss of control by police and local authorities, but early outcomes from Safer Streets work are showing positive change. Retail partners are giving favourable feedback.
- It was agreed that this initiative should be publicised more widely.
- The **"Your Area"** platform provides meeting information, NH team details, and a 72-hour response guarantee for community enquiries - www.thamesvalley.police.uk/your-area
- Officers are encouraged to make informal visits to community venues such as synagogues, gurdwaras, churches, and mosques to strengthen trust.

General Reflections

- AA noted that although the creation of the LCU initially raised concerns, it has proven positive. Communication has improved, and the structure supports cross-area networking while maintaining local focus.
- Increased partnership working with local authorities is evident and welcomed.

- While future government changes may influence policing, SR noted there is strong confidence that current NH policing enhancements will continue given their clear benefits.
- There are five Neighbourhood Chief Inspectors across the Force, ensuring dedicated strategic leadership. While some forces have scaled back NH policing, TVP has maintained its model.

Action - SC to speak with NMP regarding Community Cohesion (Hate Crime performance and community tensions data/overview in Berkshire East).

Community Scrutiny Panel (CSP) - Neil Misselbrook
Key Functions

- Independently scrutinises police powers, particularly **stop and search**.
- Panel consists of volunteers from the public and is chaired independently (currently around 10 members).
- Meetings are held in person due to the need to redact BWV footage.
- Reviews take place every **4–6 weeks**.
- Focus includes scrutiny where **disproportionality** is identified to support organisational learning.
- Feedback, positive and constructive, is provided directly to officers.
- Learnings are integrated into police team discussions to support best practice.
- Purpose is to strengthen transparency, legitimacy, and trust—especially in communities with limited confidence in policing.
- Scrutiny Panel- IAG members wanted to attend as observers - NM agreed to share the dates with AJ which he will share via WhatsApp Group

Discussion

- JH highlighted that information is not always shared consistently across all areas. Windsor West is unaware of some NH priorities. NM will pass officer information to NG to explore replicating this approach in Windsor.

Facial Recognition Update - Insp Guy Summers (JOU HIO/TVP)
Key Considerations

- Public concerns include:
  - Potential bias toward certain groups
  - Accuracy issues, especially for minority groups
  - Being monitored without consent
  - Media portrayals, including critical documentaries on the MET

- Live Facial Recognition (LFR) differs from retrospective systems. Science-based testing has shown **no bias in live systems**.
- Only a small number of highly vetted officers operate LFR.
- Accuracy:
  - **0.0003% false alert rate**
  - **78,000 images** processed by TVP with **no mismatches**
- While there is currently no specific legislation covering LFR, it operates under common law, and formal legislation is in development.

Deployment

- LFR can operate day or night (with additional lighting if required). Andy Aldridge offered support with adjusting town-centre lighting during night-time deployments.
- Public receives **seven days' notice** before deployment via the Force website.
- Deployment requires:
  - A policing need
  - Clear justification
  - Proportionality
  - Supporting crime data
- Officers, not computers, make the final decision when a match is indicated.
- Watch lists are updated daily to ensure relevance.
- LFR supports, not replaces, officer expertise and often increases public engagement.
- It is an overt tactic, not covert.
- Regarding immigration enforcement: There is currently **no plan** to use LFR for this purpose. TVP support the Home Office only for criminal matters, not immigration issues such as overstaying.

IAG Matters

PCC Role Changes

- Anticipated changes scheduled for **2028**.
- Primary impact expected at **OPCC staffing level** or in **financial commitments** made by the PCC on behalf of the Force.
- Information has been shared with the **ISOB** and the **Chairpersons' Forum**.
- Public-facing impact is expected to be **minimal**.
- Continued commitment to the **Trust and Confidence Strategy**.

Trust and Confidence Strategy – Update from Louise Warbrick

- Strategic Focus Areas

- Initial activity split across four core themes:
  - **Use of Police Powers**
  - **Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee**
  - **Community Cohesion**
  - **Proportionality**

Performance and Inspection

- TVP is within the **top five forces** nationally for stop and search usage.
- Approximately **35,000 Use of Force forms** are submitted annually. Inspections indicate a need for **increased completion** (e.g., each of three officers attending an incident should complete a form).

Public Engagement & Process Improvements

- A new communication approach will increase transparency by sharing this information publicly.
- Ongoing refinement of internal processes to improve accuracy and consistency.

Ethical Recording & External Audits

- A College of Policing audit on non-crime hate incidents has been completed with very positive findings regarding ethical recording. A formal report is pending publication.

Upcoming Events & Operational Considerations

- Planning underway for Holocaust Memorial Day, including discussions around visible reassurance policing in the current political context and the potential for linked protests.
- In line with government direction, police will begin recording nationality as part of efforts to improve data quality and cultural understanding.

Management of Sensitive Incident Information

- Where an incident involves identifying an individual's ethnicity and there is potential for community tension, details are escalated to Chief Superintendent Steve Raffield and Communications department. Decisions on disclosure are made **case by case**, with safeguarding considerations prioritised.

Representation and Training

- **Vice Chair representation**: *MS has agreed to take on this role*.
- **Member training**: College of Policing training packages identified; Louise to explore scheduling and distribution.

National IAG Engagement

- TVP has a representative from Buckinghamshire serving on the **National IAG Executive**.
- Louise attended a national event and is awaiting follow-up on:
  - Opportunities for wider involvement
  - Access to national materials and learning
- An improved mechanism is needed to ensure national IAG content is shared locally**.**

IAG Public Event

- SR and AJ have discussed the development of a Community Leaders Event aimed at seldom-heard communities.
- The event will cover topics such as:
  - Use of force
  - Scrutiny processes
  - Community perspectives and lived experience
- Objective: Build understanding of how policing interacts with different communities.
- First meeting to be police-led.

Meeting Frequency

- Proposal agreed: IAG to meet **every two months** rather than quarterly.
- Target meeting duration: **90 minutes**.

Messages to Share with the Community

- Communities currently calm, and the group welcomes the new investment in Neighbourhood Policing**.**
- Warm welcome extended to Neeta, the new CADO.
- General support expressed for Live Facial Recognition with a clear understanding of how it is used.
- Members are keen to attend community events wherever possible.

Next Meeting - Date: 25 March 2026

Meeting concluded at: 20:21