



Independent Advisory Group

Meeting Minutes

Berkshire East Local Command Unit

DATE 15th September 2026

TIME: 18:30

LOCATION: Observatory House, Slough

Attendees	Initials	Position and Area
	SB	LCU Commander
	SC	CI NH
	MB	NH INSP
	AJ	IAG Chair
	PD	IAG member
	RH	IAG member
	PD	IAG member
	LS	IAG member
	FM	IAG member
	AN	IAG member
	NMP	Cado TVP
	JH	IAG member
	RB	IAG member
	CF	IAG member
	MB	IAG member
	MS	IAG member
	SB	ASO TVP
	DB	BFC
	RH	TVP Communications
	LM	IAG Member
	LW	TVP Superintendent
	JS	IAG member
Apologies		
	DL	IAG Member

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	HH	IAG Member
	JJ	IAG Member
	SA	IAG Member
	SA	IAG member
	MK	IAG member

Agenda Item: Critical Updates – SB

- Demand levels across June and July were exceptionally high, driven by a combination of factors including the FIFA World Cup, annual leave commitments and periods of hot weather.
- Continued vigilance is being maintained in relation to MP safety. [Tan Dhesi MP](#) remains the highest assessed threat within the local area.
- On 15 July, a domestic homicide occurred in Bracknell. A suspect was arrested, charged and remanded into custody.
- On 10 August, an attempted murder took place in Windsor involving knife-related violence. The investigation remains ongoing.
- On 13 September, officers responded to an incident in Melrose, Bracknell, involving a female experiencing a mental health crisis who was armed with an axe and had reportedly thrown a hammer. Armed Response and Police Dog Units attended and successfully detained the individual. The matter attracted significant attention on social media.
- The Ofsted inspection report concerning children's social care services in Slough was published approximately three weeks ago and found the service to be inadequate. An improvement plan is now in place, led by [Debbie Jones](#), with partner agencies working collaboratively to address the findings.
- There has been considerable publicity regarding the Sentencing Act and the early release of certain prisoners. Particular media attention has focused on the case of [Andrew Harper](#), although those responsible for his murder are not eligible for release under these arrangements. Released offenders will continue to be managed through probation services. There are also increasing concerns around lower-level offending, with fewer custodial sentences being imposed for some offences. This is having a notable impact on areas such as shoplifting, where offenders can often reoffend shortly after being charged.
- In relation to group-based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), all public bodies that may hold relevant information have been requested to provide submissions to the national inquiry. The process is expected to be lengthy. It was noted that policing responses and safeguarding approaches have changed significantly over the last 10 to 15 years.
- Additional patrols have been implemented around Jewish holidays and places of worship to provide reassurance and increase community safety. Consideration is also being given to extending this approach to other communities where there may be identified risks or threats.

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- Recent protests in Dover involving masked individuals demonstrating in relation to immigration were highlighted. A local individual from the LCU attended and live-streamed the event. The situation is being monitored to identify any potential local impact or related community tensions.
- Reference was made to the recent Cleveland incident in which police officers and members of the public lost their lives following a vehicle travelling the wrong way along a road. Concerns were raised that such incidents appear to be becoming more frequent, potentially reflecting broader national trends.

Questions and Discussion

CF: Could more offences be dealt with by issuing on-the-spot fines rather than making arrests when offenders are unlikely to receive a custodial sentence?

SB: Out-of-court resolutions are available for certain lower-level offences, such as drunk and disorderly behaviour and some public order offences. However, their use is governed by legislation and national policy. While courts can impose financial penalties, this is not always within police powers.

RB: Are there any further developments regarding the murder investigation linked to the Grange Hotel?

SB: Suspects have been arrested and remain on bail. The investigation is being led by Major Crime and remains ongoing.

RB: Reform recently held its party conference, where a number of offence-related themes were discussed. A Bracknell Town Councillor is involved, and some members have expressed concerns.

SB: Happy to discuss the wider issues with RB outside of this meeting.

Agenda Item: IAG Member Matters

- **CE** reflected positively on her recent ride-along experience and suggested that school visits could provide an effective opportunity to engage with young people. She expressed a willingness to attend alongside PCSOs to share her experiences and perspectives. SB advised that Thames Valley Police already delivers a range of engagement initiatives within schools and continues to promote a policing-by-consent approach, with a focus on achieving the least intrusive and most appropriate outcomes, particularly for first-time offenders.
- **PD** raised concerns regarding community morale in Binfield, which he described as low due to ongoing issues, particularly involving nuisance motorbikes. He advised that approximately 20

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crime reports remain unresolved and expressed frustration regarding a recently cancelled meeting after the officer due to attend withdrew at short notice. SB agreed to facilitate contact between PD and the local Neighbourhood Policing Inspector.

- A representative from the Youth Parliament supported the value of police engagement with school-aged children and welcomed continued partnership working in this area.
- **CF** advised that efforts are ongoing to encourage representation from the Traveller community within the IAG to further strengthen community engagement and inclusivity.
- **RH** asked whether the FIFA World Cup had impacted policing resources. SB confirmed that it had placed significant demand on operational resources. Dedicated patrols were required, neighbourhood officers were abstracted to support operational policing, and match timings often resulted in extended periods of alcohol consumption before kick-off, increasing demand on services.

Neighbourhood Policing Presentation

MB delivered a presentation on neighbourhood policing activity in Slough.

Knife Crime

AJ: How are knife crime figures currently performing?

MB: The focus is on preventing the next generation of knife crime by identifying and targeting those most at risk of carrying knives. Alongside enforcement activity, there is a strong emphasis on education and prevention, with intervention considered more effective than relying solely on prosecution.

PD: Are figures available showing how many young people bring knives into schools?

MB: These figures can be provided. During periods of proactive operational activity, knife arches are deployed within schools to support intelligence gathering and identify potential concerns.

LB: Added that searches involving school-aged children are relatively rare.

Trust and Confidence

RB: Is there sufficient capacity to undertake community trust and confidence work?

MB: Building trust and confidence remains a priority; however, sustained demand in recent months has made this challenging. Emergency incidents and 999 calls frequently require officer redeployment. PCSOs continue to play a key role in developing relationships and maintaining a community presence.



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SB: Acknowledged the challenge of balancing neighbourhood policing commitments against operational demand. With finite resources available, abstractions from neighbourhood teams are carefully monitored and only undertaken when necessary. Efforts continue to maintain an appropriate balance between emergency response and local engagement.

Mental Health Training and Police Response

FM: Referred to an incident involving a young person experiencing mental health difficulties whose mother felt the arrest had been handled in a heavy-handed manner. Clarification was sought regarding officer training and arrest procedures involving young people.

MB: Confirmed that officers receive specific mental health training and are supported by specialist mental health teams who can attend incidents where appropriate. While it is not always possible to determine which officers will attend a particular incident, any use of force must remain lawful, necessary and proportionate. Body-worn video should be activated and can be reviewed to provide accountability and identify any learning opportunities for officers.

SB: Added that policing's approach to mental health has developed significantly over the last decade. There is a clear recognition that police custody is not an appropriate place for individuals experiencing mental health crises where no criminal offence has been committed. Significant effort is made to work with partner agencies to identify suitable support pathways.

Community Events and Positive Feedback

- SB advised that he would be attending the **Mothers Together Memorial Event** the following Friday, which focuses on raising awareness of knife crime and remembering victims.
 - **MBr** highlighted a recent incident at Tesco in Slough involving a person in mental distress. She commended the attending officers for handling the incident discreetly and professionally, noting the high level of skill demonstrated and the significant expectations often placed on police officers by the public.
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Social Media Challenges and Officer Welfare

DB: Asked about current officer training relating to TikTok and incidents involving individuals deliberately filming or provoking officers for social media content.

SB: Confirmed that this is an increasingly prevalent and relatively recent challenge for policing. In addition to operational considerations, there are officer welfare implications arising from online scrutiny and targeted content. Concerns were also raised regarding the growing circulation of AI-generated and



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manipulated images and videos involving police officers. Training and guidance are being developed to help officers respond appropriately to these issues. SB further noted the importance of supporting officer wellbeing, acknowledging that mental health concerns within policing remain a significant issue.

Agenda Item: Youth Parliament Council

NMP outlined plans to establish a Youth Independent Advisory Group (Youth IAG). The long-term ambition is to develop this across the Local Command Unit (LCU), with an initial pilot in Slough. **Council representation** and a **Youth Parliament member** attended the meeting and were invited to share their views on the key challenges facing policing and how relationships with young people could be improved.

The YP member highlighted that a significant issue among young people is a lack of trust and confidence in the police. She suggested that greater emphasis should be placed on preventative work rather than solely responding after incidents have occurred. The Youth Parliament acknowledged that knife crime is unlikely to be completely eradicated but felt that continued efforts should focus on reducing offending and harm. Virtual Reality (VR) initiatives were viewed positively, and support was expressed for investment in preventative programmes of this nature.

It was agreed that a further meeting would be arranged to discuss opportunities for engagement and development of the Youth IAG. Consideration will also be given to involving young people within scrutiny panels. Members were advised of an existing programme of **Young Inspectors**, who conduct independent reviews and assessments of local services.

Hate Crime Update

NMP provided an overview of current hate crime themes, including:

- The impact of recent protests in Dover.
- The murder of **Anne Widdecombe**.
- Activities linked to Black History Month.
- Awareness initiatives relating to Islamophobia Month.

LW advised that additional funding has been secured to support the policing of antisemitic crime. Training provided to officers through this programme will also enhance their ability to respond to and investigate other forms of hate crime. Trained officers may also act as tactical advisors where appropriate.

Work is underway to review local hate crime recording processes to ensure that incidents are being accurately identified and correctly recorded. This will help ensure that reported statistics provide a more accurate reflection of community experiences.



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AJ noted that some communities can appear reluctant or apathetic about reporting incidents. However, when a significant issue arises, large numbers of reports may be submitted within a short period, resulting in considerable fluctuations in recorded figures. The importance of encouraging victims and witnesses to report offences was emphasised.

RB commented that social media continues to contribute to community tensions through the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

Community Engagement and Public Scrutiny

Members were updated on the recent community scrutiny event held the previous month, during which attendees were provided with a demonstration of a spit hood.

The session helped address a number of misconceptions surrounding the use of spit hoods, with discussion focusing on balancing an individual's dignity with the need to protect police officers and members of the public. Feedback from attendees was reported to be positive.

The next community scrutiny event is scheduled for **21 October** and will focus on the use of Taser and police use of force.

Thames Valley Alerts Survey

Members were advised that a national trust and confidence survey will be distributed via **Thames Valley Alerts**.

The survey is being undertaken across approximately 30 police forces and will be sent to selected recipients. Results will be analysed by the **College of Policing**, with findings expected in December. Themes identified through the survey will inform both national and local responses. An update will be provided at a future meeting.

Community Events

DB advised that the **Stronger Together** event will take place in Bracknell on **26 September**.

The event will feature 34 stalls and representation from a wide range of community groups. Taking place in **Bond Square, Bracknell**, the event aims to celebrate the diversity and strengths of the local community.

Members were also informed of the **Thames Valley East Masaajid Council Football League**, which involved approximately 550 participants. The initiative was highlighted as a positive opportunity to engage young people in constructive activities and strengthen community relationships.



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Administrative Updates

- Members were reminded about the IAG WhatsApp group, and it was requested that **LS** be added.

Key Messages Agreed

1. Growing concerns remain regarding social media abuse and harmful TikTok trends that have the potential to place individuals at risk.
2. Continued efforts are required to improve trust and confidence in policing among young people.
3. Members welcomed the reduction in knife crime in Slough during the last quarter and supported the further proactive activity planned to sustain this improvement.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at Maidenhead Police Station 11th November 2026 at 18:30.