LPA IAG Meeting

Minutes

DATE: Wednesday 11th September 2024

TIME: 6pm-7.30pm

LOCATION: Kiln Farm Gurdwara, Two Mile Ash, Milton Keynes

Initials	**Position**
AK	IAG Chair
EB	LCU Commander, TVP
GB	Staff Officer, TVP
NS	CADO, TVP
LB	Insp, TVP
JH	IAG Member
TR	IAG Member
NR	IAG Member
TJ	IAG Member
DH	IAG Member
KM	IAG Member
HS	IAG Member
JW	IAG Member
JS	IAG Member
PS	IAG Member
AKh	IAG Member
TG	IAG Member
IM	Guest
AKe	Admin Support, TVP (Minutes)
Apologies	
SS	IAG Member
SB	IAG Member
RRK	IAG Member
LP	IAG Member
AA	IAG Member
ZM	IAG Member
SBe	IAG Member

1. **Welcome & Introductions:** **IAG Chair**
   AK thanked everyone for attending and to JS for hosting at the Gurdwara.

2. **Previous minutes were ratified** **TG & NR**
   The IAG Minutes are published on the TVP Website and can be viewed here: Milton Keynes Independent Advisory Group | Thames Valley Police

3. **IAG Chairs Report** **AK**
   This is the first meeting since the riots occurred. There was much discussion around the prevalence of misinformation on social media and how this contributed to the spread of fear amongst communities**.** Milton Keynes was touched directly and indirectly. All Mosques were in communication with each other and with their communities, keeping in touch to see how things were developing. AK thanked EB for playing down the false information that was circulating and providing timely reassurance to keep MK safe.

Many police were also injured in the riots but why was only one faith community targeted, the Muslim Community, with Mosques being damaged? The days of David Cameron/Theresa May and the loss of Police officers was a major contributory factor in the reduction in experienced officers. Austerity is felt not only in policing but in the NHS and Schools too. Scrutiny panels may highlight weaknesses but everyday Police face the unknown. When things go awry, please reassure your communities that Police are doing their best.
EB: In MK - are there any reports of misinformation where Police haven't done what they should have? Please ask your communities and feed back to us.
AKh: A reputable professional body were going to circulate information regarding possible riots. A call to the CADO was made who, despite being on leave responded promptly, dispelled the false information and averted panic.
EB concerned that the level of local detail given in the large scale misinformation meant that possibly someone local was contributing, or something more sinister such as AI may have been involved. AKh believes some young people like to whip up a drama and that is part of the reason.
EB: It takes time to dispel misinformation and in the meantime, more crops up. It is hard to keep up. Problem with protests in London where footage gets taken out of context. People saying the Police aren't doing anything and not taking into account it might not be safe to 'break the line' for example. Police prefer to deal with rioters early the next morning but for some members of the public – that's not good enough. Police have to be right before sharing information and that takes time to check systems etc. or we create a bigger problem.
TLJ: Moral panic on social media was crazy and TLJ was fielding many messages from parents and children. Physical checks to see if there were actual riots happening (there were not) allowed people to then go about their business. Some people wanted to travel to big cities to join the action.
EB: Online it was a storm but outside in MK, it was fine.
JS: Are Police powers restricted when dealing with riots? On TV we see rioters throwing missiles at Police who appear to be doing nothing. It makes people think they can carry-on doing it without repercussions.
EB: HRA article 2, the right to life and safety – always comes first. Protecting the asylum hotel was to protect the life of those inside. When people throw things, we have powers of arrest but in order to do that we have to 'break the line' protecting the building. Sometimes we can charge at them or send horses in – sometimes we have arrest teams can come past the line and deal but they are not always present. We take footage, identify the offenders then attend their homes early the next day to take them in.
LB: At the hotel you saw a strong held line. Hopefully the Officers wouldn't get injured. To have dealt with rioters immediately would have been resource intensive and with a Public Order trained Officer shortage, due to the national scope of the riots, you had to be smart about where you directed resources. It looks like we are just taking the flak, but that is why we have shields, pads etc. Would you break the line and put yourself in the midst of rioters to deal with one person – or hold the line and maintain your primary objective to protect the building? Building intelligence and targeting rioters at a later date is part of the longer game. We have to also keep ourselves safe whilst protecting the public and recognising crimes are being committed.
JS: Youths are influenced by this and take part. Can you deal with U18s?
LB: Absolutely, they will be taken into Custody.
TG: Having seen Public Order training, the perceived inactivity of the Police versus the post incident arrests show the tactics work.
JS: But by then the damage has been done to public property.
EB: You cannot avoid everything but have to minimise risk, maximise safety and secure evidence.

4. LCU Commander's Update: Guest Speaker – Insp LB – Child and Young Persons Exploitation

LB is the Missing Tactical Lead for TVP. One of the barriers around investigating exploitation is that young people don't always know they are being exploited. In the past, Police have not got it right or seen the signs e.g. Rochdale, but are learning lessons from that. Social media means youths have the whole world at their fingertips but it also means the whole world has access to them.

What can exploitation look like? How can you recognise the signs in your communities? Regarding CDLs (county drug lines) and sexual exploitation (SE), we are not far from London and have specific drug lines

between there and here. Adult drug dealers are using children, buying them items and getting them involved in moving drugs up and down the lines. How do you talk to a 13 yr old who believes they are having a brilliant time with so-called 'friends'? How do you get them to realise they are a victim of crime?
As parents/carers/a community – how do you recognise the signs for yourself?
The incidents years ago looked like men speaking to teenage girls in the street, making friends, buying gifts. These days – it's online. You can keep a man out of your home and keep track of where your child goes but how do you keep track of their social media? These behaviours are often seen in 'looked after children' in the care system but also in traditional and broken families too - it is widespread.
TVP sees the criminal aspect of the drugs side, but at the heart is a child victim of 'modern day slavery'. We apply a multi-layered approach, arresting the children, then safeguarding them to an extent. When we remove the drugs, it's a key moment to engage with them and get them away from those exploiting them. Our HRU (Harm Reduction Unit) at MK spend a lot of time engaging with young people who we have identified as being exploited either through CDL or SE, needing them to understand they are the victims. Many parents may know their children are being exploited but children often don't listen to parents so community leaders have a part to play as that independent voice. To tackle this has to be a multi-agency approach. It will be essential if we are to fight this exploitation pandemic.
AKh: When local youths are spoken to, they often get into it due to poverty and absent parenting. Once involved they are scared to try and get out. Violence and fear of violence makes it hard to get out. Youths are being openly groomed into this. They endanger their family and community by being involved.
LB: Once arrested, TVP make 'modern day slavery' referrals and HRU try and engage. If we confiscate large amounts of drugs we employ a safeguarding package. Prevention is key which is where communities come in.
TG: There are so many vulnerable families who are easy targets. In a Church setting, a wayward youth may not approach a Church member as we know their parents.
LB: The Police actively avoid using the same Officers who arrest these youths to also be the ones who try to engage and build trust. When the realisation of what they have got into dawns, we need to work out a way to get them out. It's not as easy as just stopping, due to factors like external influences and drug debts. This is called contextual safeguarding.
HS: How active are TVP on social media? Appear to be behind and need to catch up. Sharing the horror of local cases may deter others.
EB: In order to get ahead, we can't share our tactics publicly, what we know, what we are doing. Neighbourhood Watch are always frustrated when drug dealing is reported and we appear to do nothing. We must be smarter. If we take out a big CDL, it will be re-filled in three days using violence. We must target resources at those who are the biggest violence/exploitation risk. Intelligence gathering is not a fast process. 80% of what we do we can't share.
NR: How do you intend spreading information about recognising the signs of exploitation?
LB: Education, for children themselves to see what they are walking into which is a lot to ask. Also- parents, if your child gets trainers you haven't bought – encourage them to speak about where they got them from? As a parent, talking and sharing about your child pulling away from you is hard. We need to have open conversations about this and encourage families to raise early concerns.
EB: Happy to trial community messaging via Social media in MK.
AK: Are forced marriages seen as exploitation?
EB: Forced marriage has a law of its own and is just as serious but dealt with differently.

5. AOB **All**

***Armed Response Vehicle arriving at 1930hrs** for a show and tell
PS: Riots started because a boy of African descent harmed young people. How did this move over to attacking Mosques/Islam?
NS: Misinformation on Social Media.
A discussion was had around the origin of the fake news.
EB: If TVP in MK identify anyone deliberately posting misinformation on social media to incite a riot, they will be prosecuted. Sharing posts with information that you don't know is true, even in an effort to warn others, is not helpful as it provokes fear.

Policing may come away from 'X' (Twitter). Local officers have been asked not to use it. Morally, knowing it worked so hard against us – how can we use it. However, there is nothing to replace it yet so our Comms dept, who need it to warn and protect the public, will carry on for now.

TR: Targeting the Muslim community made life challenging for us here in MK even if there were no riots here.
NS: Reassurance patrols were around all mosques. Applications for Home Office funding for Security usually took 6-8 months to process, but after riots they said they would get into places within 48 hours.
There was a discussion around how targeting the Muslim Community made people feel vulnerable and insecure.

NR: NHS England is looking at launching a new text service to support mental health crisis 24/7 365 days a year. A QR code will put the person through to a trained practitioner. NR to supply information and AKe to distribute.

6. **Next Meeting at 6pm on Wednesday 16th October 2024** **All**
   Location: Kiln Farm Gurdwara