Independent Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes

Oxfordshire Local Command Unit

DATE **Monday 2nd June 2025**
TIME: **1600 hours**
LOCATION: **MS Teams**

Attendees	**Initials**	**Position and Area**
Ben Clark	BC	Chief Superintendent - LCU Commander
Wendy Percival	WP	Neighbourhood Chief Inspector
Roni Koshi	NT	Oxfordshire Support Inspector
Dave Hession	DH	Community and Diversity Officer - Oxfordshire
Lisa Honess	LH	OPCC – Trust and Confidence support
	DO	IAG Chair
	DC	IAG member
	RA	IAG member
	MT	IAG member
	MT	IAG member
	PC	IAG member
	SK	IAG member
	EG	IAG member
	MG	IAG member
	MI	IAG member
Apologies		
	SM	IAG member
	LHS	IAG member

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were made. DO discussed a few points:

1) Shoplifting at Bicester village – DO asked security if shoplifting is an issue and if they feel supported by TVP. They assured DO shoplifting wasn't a great problem and TVP are there whenever they need them.

2) Traffic issues in local town – 7.5 tonne weight limit that has been abused. Added to agenda.
3) Rural Crime Taskforce stop vehicles and check everything is in order. People are grateful they are stopped by police as they know they are keeping an eye on things. DO asked could a similar approach be replicated in stop and search, especially with knifes.

From LPA to LCU – how policing has changed within Oxfordshire

Wendy Percival explained that prior to November Oxfordshire consisted of three local policing areas: South Oxfordshire and White Vale, Oxford City and Cherwell and West Oxfordshire. These were governed by three local superintendents.

With some budget cuts and more flexibility required, a change team came in and looked where the drive and demand needed to be. Instead of having three individual areas, Oxfordshire became one local command unit.

Supt Jen Hogben looks after all of the frontline policing across the whole of Oxfordshire. D/Supt Lewis Prescott-Mayling looks after all of the CID teams.

The front line will flex according to demand. Now any officer in Oxfordshire will respond to where the demand is.

Oxfordshire LCU implementation was gradual so it wasn't unsettling for officers to be hit with so many significant changes in one go.

Prior to November, Oxfordshire's performance was brilliant but there is always room for improvement.

Expected to see some dip in performance after transition to LCU however so far, there has been no significant drops. Charges have remained strong. Still a huge drive as it needs to improve. Response times are improving with 90% of grade 1 calls being reached within the timeframe of 20 minutes. Victim satisfaction appears to be really good from point of call to first attendance. Seems to drop off throughout the investigation.

Oxfordshire is a very popular area for officers to work in.

Buckinghamshire are struggling to retain and recruit officers. We are giving Buckinghamshire 30 officers.

Community and Diversity Officer

Dave Hession explained the purpose of the role of Community and Diversity Officer (CADO) for Oxfordshire, which is to build trust and confidence with communities and oversee hate crime.

DH has recently done a talk regarding Project Pathfinder - how police are linking in with the different asylum seekers and migrants living in Oxfordshire. MG explained that this presentation was very well received and the attendees thought that the Q&A session following was the best part of the event.

DH passes on information to NH teams regarding community events to get as many people to come and see TVP at different locations, to help build trust and confidence. DH goes to many different meetings including the Scrutiny Panel where BWV is reviewed. This again builds confidence, as BWV is showing what officers are doing on a daily basis.

The feedback is very positive from each meeting.

DO asked whether there was a way that TVP can bring some of the minority groups together to meet officers, as some communities don't feel policing is a career of choice. An IAG member explained that trust and confidence is very key within the BME community but this has remained low. The community need engagement opportunities without police present so they can express how they feel openly, as the general mindset is you do not talk to police.

LH explained that the Police Race Action plan was looked at in the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight board meeting and there was a suggestion that one of the ways to increase communication within the community would be if each group had a synchronised message to go out after each meeting.

SK explained that there are people in the community that have been here for quite a while who have a more positive view of the police. However there are newer people who don't have a positive view due to bad experiences not in this country. Part of the work is talking to people who have come to this country very recently and raising their awareness of what the police do.

PC discussed feedback from NH watch systems and members that there is a growing concern that people are being led by hate campaigns via social media.

It was raised that LGBTQ community don't trust the police. An example was given where a trans feminine officer was sent to a travellers site with no back up on her first shift back as a female.

Thames Valley Police Trust & Confidence Strategy

TVP leading the way together with the OPCC in looking at how to map out how communities trust the police, what the levels of confidence communities have in policing, and taking the 'so, what?' that comes out of that and putting it into a plan of action.

A Forcewide annual survey will be shared across a number of areas, to look at what communities think of policing in TVP.

This has allowed the drivers of the survey to form a trust and confidence strategy which was launched fairly recently. This will be circulated to IAG members.
BC asked IAG members to continue to support TVP by giving feedback on how policing is doing and getting involved.

On an annual basis, things such as the work of the stop and search scrutiny panel will be reviewed as an IAG.

Oxfordshire LCU Updates

Serious incidents were discussed which included a murder in Abingdon, a fire in Bicester and violence in Blackbird Leys.

Murder in Abingdon

The murder was found to be domestic related. LH asked whether the amount of domestic related offences have grown or if it has always been this way. BC confirmed that it has been going on for as long as people have been engaging in relationships. The volumes of reported offences are rising due to increased awareness.

LH shared how victimless cases like this one are known for being difficult to prosecute

successfully, and asked whether this is improving or if anything can be done around confidence in police.

BC explained that a few years ago legislation was changed to allow police to take cases to court, for whatever reason the victim has declined to support a prosecution. This was attempted at least once in this particular case.

Domestic violence protection orders, independent domestic abuse advisors and third sector and voluntary organisations are available to support victims.

A target has been set for Oxfordshire LCU to improve charge rates, particularly in respect to domestic abuse cases.

Domestic Abuse Investigation unit used to sit separately from local policing, however they are now part of it since changing to an LCU.

Clare's Law – where people can apply to the police to find out any domestic offending history about their new partner, and police are able to disclose this to safeguard them. MI shared that there was a woman who had a domestic abuse stall at Witney Pride, who has offered to do some free training for volunteers. If moving forward with the training, Clare's Law will be included as this isn't common knowledge.

MT spoke about cases where the victim does not want to support the case, however police have seen clear evidence that domestic abuse is present but nothing is done. There is a process in Oxfordshire that any considerations for where police are looking to take no further action in a domestic case will get reviewed for consideration of a domestic violence protection notice by a senior officer, to see whether there are other opportunities there.

Fire in Bicester

Sadly three people died at the incident, including two firefighters from Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service.

A number of memorial events took place afterwards.

Now moved into the recovery phase and investigation phase where the fire service have handed over ownership of the incident to police.

Ongoing investigation for the coroner to feed into the coronial process. This will be a long process.

Major Crime team are leading the investigation and will leave no stone unturned in terms of analysing what took place.

Periodic updates are being released on the TVP website in line with the families' wishes. Police are engaging with the families through liaison officers.

At this stage the investigation is not a criminal investigation.
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service have passed thanks to TVP.

Blackbird Leys

A couple of months ago police had a number of incidents of violence around Blackbird Leys, including two stabbings.

There has been a number of arrests, charges and remands.

Section 60 power was authorised which allows officers to stop and search people in the area if they anticipate serious violence.

Extra officers were put in the area for a period of time to provide reassurance.
The people who police believe committed the offences have been charged and are remanded in custody, awaiting trial.

Not indicative of wider community tensions or issues.

Oxford City council and police are looking at initiatives to look at Blackbird Leys policing in the longer term.

An IAG member lives in Blackbird Leys and said that parents are terrified about the events that have taken place. They asked about the process of the section 60.
The section 60 was reviewed and stopped within 24 hours as it was simply to address that particular issue.

Although it gives officers the grounds to stop and search, there still needs to be rationale and officers are required to act professionally.

There were only about three searches that took place over the 24 hour period.

Abuse of search powers was discussed.

Statistics were shared that a black male is two and a half times more likely to be stopped and searched for weapons than a white male. The outcome rate is higher for those black males who are stopped and searched for weapons, which suggests that when police are using that power for weapons, they are stopping and searching broadly speaking, those who are carrying something that they shouldn't be.

A black male is three and a half times more likely to be stopped and searched for drugs than a white male. However, the outcome rate is significantly lower, which implies that police are not using that power in the right way and need to understand why they're not using that power in the right way and how it can be improved.

EG asked whether there are any plans for more CCTV in Blackbird Leys.
This is being looked into as part of the long term plan to reduce crime reduction. Looking into using funding for mobile cameras.

Lots of work being done with schools and partners.

Member engagement & Q&A

MT discussed the lack of education within the police regarding autism. If someone is fidgeting and shuffling at the scene, are police taught to interpret this as they could be hiding something, when in fact they could be autistic. This needs addressing.

The transgender community has distrust in the police. They have tried to cooperate with the police but there has been a lot of distrust. These issues will be looked at in the next meeting to understand what has happened and how they can be solved.

A lot of work has been done in the rural community around building relations with TVP and the farmers, land owners and gamekeepers that have over the years experienced incursions from travelling communities, poaching, hare coursing, and threats of violence.

Engagement evenings have taken place where TVP have spoken to young farmers from 14-28 years old, to give them an understanding of what the police are now doing to help them with.

Community WhatsApp groups have been set up which has given a level of comfort and confidence to people who live in very remote areas and can feel detached from the wider rural community.

Issues raised around lack of funding for communities. Will be discussed at the next meeting.

An IAG member felt that as all different police forces have different computer systems, there is a lack of join up and communication.

Some people in the Polish community find it difficult to trust the police, whilst others are happy with their experience with the police.

Domestic abuse and drink driving were raised as issues within communities.

MG shared that they police have been very helpful and attended all incidents within the last few years, engaging with the Polish communities and other communities.

The Indian and Hindu community have had some very good interactions with police recently at an event held in March, to raise funds for a new community centre.

There were concerns about the possibility of any conflict or violence in South Asia spilling over into the streets here.

The effects of politics on the LGBTQ community at the moment is difficult, but most of the interaction with police has been positive and supportive.

LH highlighted three key messages at the end of the meeting for people to take away:

1) For people to talk about Clare's Law at any opportunity – lots of interventions and different possibilities available for the police and that people will be supported.
2) Section 60 stop and search – only in place for 24 hours and only three searches took place.
3) Perpetrators involved in the stabbings in Blackbird Leys were from out of the area.

Date of next meeting – September 2025.