



Independent Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

Oxfordshire Local Command Unit

DATE 10 September 2025

Attendees	Initials	Position and Area
Ben Clark	BC	Chief Superintendent - LCU Commander
Wendy Percival	WP	Neighbourhood Chief Inspector
Sam Booth	SB	LCU Staff Officer
Dave Hession	DH	Community and Diversity Officer - Oxfordshire
Matthew Barber	MB	TVP Police and Crime Commissioner
	DO	IAG Chair
	PC	IAG member
	RA	IAG member
	MTa	IAG member
	MTh	IAG member
	MG	IAG member
	DC	IAG member
	EG	IAG member
	AB	IAG member

Purpose and Opening Remarks

The chair opened the meeting explaining that the aim of the IAG meeting was to focus on community engagement, policing priorities, and updates from Thames Valley Police (TVP). The Chair emphasized that the meeting was about what attendees bring to the table for their communities, not individual roles.

Key Topics Discussed

Recruitment and Officer Allocation

- BC explained the staffing position on the LCU. There was an imbalance across the force where whilst Oxfordshire was 86 officers over establishment;

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Buckinghamshire was 32 under. As such an exercise had to take place to rebalance officers from Oxfordshire to Buckinghamshire – with some compulsory transfers. BC stated that was unpopular but handled as sensitively as it could be done. BC also stated that even after the transfers Oxfordshire was still over establishment.

- BC and MB gave an update around force-wide recruitment and retention issues. Retention has improved, especially after the 3-year mark. Recruitment is now more selective, reducing early resignations.

Housing Allowance Proposal

- DO reported to members that he had highlighted pay and financial reward as an issue to TVP, the PCC and was proposing to raise this at the forthcoming IAG chairs meeting. MB stated that a proposal to increase SE allowance from £3,000 to £5,000 was rejected by Government. DO highlighted disparities between Met Police and TVP funding.

Stop and Search Scrutiny

- BC gave an update around stop and search within Oxfordshire. MTa raised concerns about racial disproportionality in drug searches. BC advised that as the force lead for stop and search he was looking at a number of measures to explain or improve the position – this included TVP revising data recording to include context and plans to improve independent scrutiny and quarterly narrative reports.
- MTh asked about disproportionality around those with neuro-diverse needs. She highlighted positive recent training and video resources shared for autism awareness.

Community Engagement and Visibility

- BC outlined that Oxfordshire would soon be conducting a trial on how the LCU officers can use social media more effectively, with an emphasis on online engagement to counter misinformation and incorrect narratives around police activity.

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- DO raised a proposal for bite-sized community meetings with police officers, particularly aligned to Parish Council Meetings.
- BC asked for recognition of the Oxfordshire paradox, where the County had the lowest crime rates in the force but paradoxically the highest levels of fear of crime and lack of confidence in police. He explained the work of the Neighbourhood teams around this and asked members to consider helping to work to provide the correct narrative and context about crime in Oxfordshire.

PCC Updates

- MB provided a force level update on a number of issues:

1. Neighbourhood Policing

- MB explained Neighbourhood policing has more than doubled since 2022 and TVP was being innovative around using patrol data - Patrol data is now tracked (e.g., 231 hours of foot patrols in August) and this generated a discussion around smart policing using patrol data. PCSO recruitment remains challenging due to low pay and limited career progression.

2. Crime Trends and Priorities

- MB noted the following: Shoplifting charges increased by 74%; Knife crime decreased by 5% across Thames Valley; Rural crime down by 17%, with increased reporting; Stalking and harassment reports have risen due to better reporting.

3. Data and Analysis

- The updates above prompted a discussion from members about how better data analytics could be better used to support local policing. MB explained TVP has a strategic analysis team, but resources are limited.
- Discussion on balancing data collection with operational efficiency.

Demographics and Representation

- DO and other members raised concerns about lack of young people and diversity in the independent advisory group.
- Members agreed to explore targeted recruitment within communities.



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Migrant Hotels and Public Perception

- BC gave an update on tensions around migrant hotels. He explained that protests at migrant hotels in Oxfordshire are low scale with no offences reported to date and no arrests or other interventions being required. He explained that police are not being complacent and have plans around policing protest if required. He also went on to outline the disproportionate fear of protesters and hate crime that is being generated but the reality on the ground in Oxfordshire does not bear this out.
- A discussion took place around the issue and members agreed that there must be a focus on countering misinformation in media and social platforms.

Actions and Decisions

Immediate Actions

- DO asked members to identify three key takeaways from the meeting.
- WP to follow up on a question around PCSO visibility in Headington and whether this had reduced as a result of the LCU merger.
- Community engagement sessions to be organized with BC and MB.

Future Agenda Items suggested by members

- Stop and Search governance and training.
- Demographic analysis of patrol and engagement data.
- Youth representation in the advisory group.
- Gender and ethnicity balance in recruitment.

Closing Remarks

DO and members commended the police for their dedication and transparency. Emphasis was placed on amplifying positive police work to balance public narratives. The meeting ended with thanks and a reminder to report even minor incidents to build accurate crime data.

Date and time of next meetings

TBC