

West Berkshire LPA IAG (Independent Advisory Group) Meeting

DATE: 19th March TIME: 6pm

LOCATION: Hybrid

1. Welcome and Introductions: IAG Chair

AP, EE, AKC, LH, MM, JM, JG, BA, AM, KP, NH, MP, MG & CW.

Apologies – SG

2. Previous notes/actions: Nothing of note All

3. Members Feedback / Issues to raise: All

The Asian community felt reassured after recent burglaries when officers from the Priority Crime Team attended an ad hoc meeting to provide support. The meeting, organised swiftly by the IAG, drew 50 members of the public with a zoom link for those unable to attend in person. Media and local efforts have been focused on disseminating crime prevention advice. It is crucial to remind people to stay alert to trending crimes and remain vigilant. It was decided that another meeting is not necessary currently but will be reviewed if the issue resurfaces. MG will monitor the situation closely, ensuring crime prevention advice is widely disseminated. MG will also share 'Have Your Say' initiatives with the IAG. The Neighbourhood team will be going to the EID community event to give input and Q&A. MG will communicate with the clerk of parish councils to request 'Have Your Say' initiatives. While it is positive that they request these events, it is essential to hold them regardless of whether they are requested or not.

There is a lack of awareness regarding all conversations and events involving the community. The IAG was not informed about an event last week where the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was invited.

There have been Islamophobic comments on social media. The Prevent team is now leading the response. Concerns about Islamophobia are being raised.

There is a need to enhance awareness on how to report crimes for refugees and asylum seekers. West Berkshire Council is supposed to be conducting mapping work to facilitate contacting individuals. The Neighbourhood team attends Educafe meetings biweekly to engage with seldom heard communities. Efforts should cater to those who feel unsafe to go out and those who do not report crimes due to a perceived lack of action. There is a recognition of the necessity for a more extensive initiative in this regard.

Improving trust and confidence in the police is an ongoing effort that will not be resolved immediately. It requires consistent work and continuous improvement. Sharing examples of positive changes implemented by the police can help demonstrate their efforts to the community.

A forum has been proposed to provide a platform for those who feel unheard to share their stories with the police and others. While it may be a gradual process, the initiative needs to begin now. There is a recognition that reputation of the police has declined, and it is the responsibility of the IAG to contribute to rebuilding trust and confidence in law enforcement.

The possibility of establishing smaller sub-IAGs for more effective communication within specific groups was discussed and unanimously supported.

Youth IAG – We need to reinstate our efforts as the original students have moved on. Recent activities include youth engagement events at the Waterside Centre and regular attendance at Berkshire Youth gatherings. Plans are underway to establish a scrutiny panel involving children. We are also implementing hybrid 'Have Your Say' sessions to allow remote participation and interaction via chat. An officer regularly visits schools to provide guidance, and significant work has been done at the iCollege. It is essential to promote the positive initiatives we are undertaking, including publicising charges on social media.

4. Neighbourhood Policing Team Updates: MG

Despite no confirmed cases of drink spiking in West Berkshire, precautions are in place. Street pastors are offering support, and the "Ask Angela" initiative in pubs will alert bar staff to assist. Additionally, pubs have their own drink

spiking devices, and bystander training is being provided to bar and door staff to educate and empower them in safeguarding patrons.

Individuals identified for inappropriate behaviour will be placed on pub watch.

Efforts are made to prevent exploitation, including using cadets to attempt to buy drinks or order hotel rooms. Education packages will be conducted with venues that fail to comply, and there is a commitment to challenging individuals when necessary. Prevention, training, and vigilance are emphasised as key components of these efforts. Perpetrators lurk and observe, targeting young girls. To combat this, we will exchange insights from other regions on the tactics employed by these offenders.

Recognising a generation gap, there's concern about how parents can stay informed about incidents in pubs. Sharing relevant messages with parents and disseminating information to schools can help bridge this gap and raise awareness of potential risks.

5. LPA Commanders Update:

AP

AP introduced himself, sharing personal background and professional history. He emphasised a zero-tolerance policy toward poor conduct and expressed reliance on the IAG for guidance in local policing matters. Seeking advice on policy decisions, he encouraged engagement and welcomed feedback. AP expressed willingness to attend IAG events and stressed the importance of honesty and clear expectations from both sides. He assured that challenges would be addressed when necessary.

We need to map the community and ensure representation from all segments, particularly those that are currently underrepresented. As the group expands, effective management becomes challenging, underscoring the importance of adding value to its activities.

6. Policing legitimacy

Stop and Search – A message emphasising a drive for quality has been communicated to supervisors. While disproportionality in stop and search is better than other Local Policing Areas (LPAs), there's still room for improvement. It is essential for officers to be confident and prioritise quality in their actions.

Hate Crime – There's a consideration that the increase in incidents could be linked to media coverage. AP will investigate the spike in disablist incidents and explore the possibility of creating a separate category for refugee and asylum seeker crimes. In cases of hate crimes within schools, the preference is to handle them internally; involvement of the police occurs when incidents happen outside of school premises. Parents dissatisfied with school handling have the option to report to the police, with suspect children going through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) process. It is noted that many individuals stopped are not local, emphasising that stop and search operations are intelligence-driven and not targeted at the community.

7. Communications / social media IAG Chair

The communications team is willing to collaborate with the IAG to address their needs and help where possible. Impartiality is emphasised, highlighting the IAG's independence from Thames Valley Police. Exploring diverse communication channels to promote the message of the IAG is crucial. The focus is on clear and transparent communication, potentially utilising simple GIFs with concise messages. Expert advice is sought to ensure proper conduct and effectiveness in communication efforts.

8. AOB

Misconduct of Newbury officers - BBC article. The group were provided more information which can't be recorded for reasons of employment law but everyone was reassured at the approach taken.

Knife crime – Events in Bristol. Newbury is fortunate not to face certain issues currently, but it is recognised that vigilance is necessary to prevent them from arising. Discussion on these matters occurs regularly at both local and force levels, with scrutiny processes in place to address any emerging problems.

Dates for 2024: 18th June, 17th Sept & 17th December.