

BN Stop & Search Scrutiny

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th September 2014

Those in attendance:

Linda HINES (LH) – Chair
Trudy Yates (TY)
Muhammed Sultan (MS)
Steve Whitehorn (SW)
Andy Jackson (AJ)
Steve Clayton (SC)
Sam Miller (SM)
Inspector Andy Russell (AR)
PC Adam Charlesworth (AC)
Superintendent Ron Winch (RW)
Vicki Smith (VS)

1) Welcome, Introduction & Apologies

Meeting open at 18:00 hrs by Chair and introductions completed.

Apologies received:

Tod Hale
Sgt Nicky Keen
Henry Wattis
Sue Bailey
Inspector Jason Bonser

Linda Hines wishes to welcome both Sam Miller from Urban Devotion and Andy Jackson from the Gracechurch Shopping Centre to the group.

2) Conflicts of interest

LH asked group to confirm if there was any conflict of interest – no conflict identified.

3) Matters arising from previous meeting

Action: Inspector Russell/Sixsmith to breakdown population into wards: due to the recent change in how we record the stop & searches, AR is currently unable to provide data for the last three months, **so this action is carried forward.**

Action: Inspector Russell/Sixsmith to look at questions:

- *NFA/other = why? What does this mean?*
- *Arrested = was this due to the reason they were stopped?*

In relation to NFA it means that no further action has been taken after the stop and search has been conducted. The “other” option has now been removed from the system.

In relation to “Arrested”, when an officer brings their prisoner into custody, they need to tell the custody sergeant that the person was arrested following a stop & search and this is recorded on the custody record. The officer will also record this on the stop & search form.

Action: Inspector Russell to look into those arrested and see if they are convicted: AR informed the group this is labour intensive so currently unable to provide this information. AR will revisit this in the future to see whether a restricted officer could look at a sample of stop & search forms.

Action: Inspector Russell to feedback to officers the panel's views: AR has informed officers that the panel are looking at their stop & search forms and asked for their views on this. No one has yet provided feedback to AR.

Members: ensure Terms of Reference is signed and brought to the next meeting: Outstanding forms are Muhammed and Sue. Sam Miller who is a new member provided with Terms of Reference in the meeting.

4) Provision of data & discussion to include arrest rates, type of searches conducted & race proportionality

AR explained to the group that at the end of August, Birmingham North adopted a new system to record stop & searches. Due to this, there is no data to share at the meeting, AR and the officers from our Organisational Service Development (OSD) department will be going on a training input to learn what this new system offers and how data can be extracted for the Scrutiny Panel presentation.

AR showed the group a video about the new stop & search system. The key elements are:

- No more paper – done completely over the radio
- The process of conducting stop & search has not changed, just the recording
- Each stop & search encounter will be allocated its own unique reference number
- The person stopped will be given a receipt with the reference number listed
- The new pad has a guide for officers to remind them of all the powers and a link to a feedback page on the PCC website for the person stopped to do if they wish – since May, there has been no feedback given
- The new electronic forms will ensure all boxes are completed, as the RAD cannot move onto the next question if the box has not been completed or selected wrong
- The new form also only provides limited options so there is no mismatch.
- There is a free text box so officers can explain in more depth their grounds for the stop – the RAD will type exactly what the officer says
- Supervisors will need to check the form and sign it off stating it makes the standards. If it does not meet the standards, then the sergeant needs to explain why and say what steps they are taking to tackle it, i.e. speak to officers
- If the officer disagrees with what is written in the free text box, the inspector can request to hear the tape and then comment
- Officers will be unable to remove / change the form once it has been submitted, so the inspector can only add comments

AR also informed the group that the new system will allow for better mapping of the stop & searches and so will give a clearer picture of where people are being stopped. There should also be a 0% rejection rate.

The group are impressed with the new system and can see it will be easier and quicker for officers. It will also limit human errors such as leaving boxes blank and poor hand writing.

RW confirmed that continuous training is provided to officers around stop and search to ensure they are following the correct procedures and using their powers appropriately. The number of stop and searches has decreased but this is down to the training and making officers more effective. The new system also provides a better audit trail and more transparency for the public.

5) Review of a selection of actual stop & search forms

The group reviewed three random forms on the new system:

Form one: three males were stopped due to being in a high burglary area at 0430am and had no connections to the local area.

SW commented he would like to see the reason why the officer thought the three males were acting suspiciously – for example were they drunk, did they try to hide something etc.

AR agreed and will feed this back to the officers so there is more explanation over “acting suspiciously”. Officers would do an assessment every time they approach people to see if a stop & search is needed.

AC confirmed “current intelligence” is anything within the last 10 days so it is up to date intelligence. The reason “high burglary area / part of patrol plan” is intelligence that is discussed at daily management meetings, which assists officers in targeting key areas at key times/days to assist in building intelligence.

Form two: males decamped from a vehicle after it made off from police. Outcome was NFA.

The group commented there is not a lot of free text in box so it is unclear as to why the police attended to stop vehicle and what the suspicion was. Also, why was the person NFA? AR agreed with the group but stated the officers would have completed the stop & search because no “reasonable person” would make off from the police.

Form three: males decamped from a vehicle after it made off from police. Outcome was arrested.

In the free text there is no mention as to why the person was arrested. This would have been useful as the other person was released.

6) Force and national developments in stop & search

Only force update is around the new system which has been discussed in the meeting. AR and other officers are having training on how to extract data from this system, so for the next meeting we should be in a better position to show the group some data.

7) Forthcoming tactical use of stop & search powers

The only forthcoming tactical use will be Bonfire Night at Pype Hayes Park. Officers will be working with security to ensure people are not carrying fireworks.

8) Community impact through the local use of stop & search

AR not aware of anything and neither was the group.

9) Issues to be brought back to Gold Group

LH asked if there will be only press release around West Midlands Police using this new system. AR stated that BN LPU is the last LPU to adapt to using this system, so once everyone has settled in with the new system, he is sure something will be released.

Action: AR to feedback to Gold Group about publication about the new system

10) AOB

AR reminded the group the PCC has set up a website for each police area to promote their stop & search scrutiny panel. The minutes and agenda for the meeting will be publicised on the website.

AR requested the group view the website and see what other items they wish to add to the Birmingham North page, for example some scrutiny panels have produced videos.

Link to the website is:

<http://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/key-issues/stop-search/stop-and-search-scrutiny-panels/birmingham-north-stop-and-search-scrutiny-panel>

Next meeting is 16th October at 6pm, Sutton Coldfield police station

Future meetings:

18th December

All at 6pm at Sutton Coldfield Police Station