Solihull Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

Monday 14th September 2015 Meeting Record & Actions

Present: David Page, Eric Knibb, John Cogin, Thelma Borley, Alwyn Doyle, Marcus Brain and Ade Adeyemo.

WMP: Ch Supt Murray, Insp’s Bell, Green & Sarling

Minutes 13th July 2015 accepted with the following updates:

1. Re Stop & Search two IAG members had spent part of an evening with the CAPT, but no stops happened. More chances to observe to be arranged. On 25/9 a Sgts training session was planned, which would include IAG feedback.
2. At the next IAG meeting Insp Sarling would display S&S Forms.
3. The S&S IT glitch over times remained unresolved.
4. IAG wish to engage with those subject to S&S thwarted on legal advice over Data Protection issues.
5. John Cogin & Sarah Mushtaq had joined the YIAG tour of Solihull Police Station, which was very impressive and everyone answered their questions.
6. No update on the proposed Neighbourhood Watch conference in September. (**Action:** **Update req’d from PS Evans** **via Insp Sarling**).
7. There was still no access to the IAG Twitter account, Ken tan is still trying to gain access and then handover.
8. Eric Knibb was on the PCC’s citizen’s panel to interview the only candidate for Chief Constable and had seen the questions submitted by the public to the PCC. The Deputy CC was the PCC’s preferred candidate, now awaiting agreement from the Police & Crime Panel.
9. From David Page the proposed Stop & Search feedback letter had been rebuffed by WMP over Data Protection matters mainly (discussed later).
10. Two members (Ade & Tyrone) would be participating on police constable recruit interview panels later this month; with Eric and Marcus in reserve and for the next series of interviews.

The current ‘Community Policing Review’ by WMP was discussed and members were concerned that engagement work was already not being done.

Ch. Supt. Murray explained in brief that the review was looking at how Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Repeat Demand. Community policing would need to be measured, as resources were being cut. An essential part of Solihull Police’s response was to build relationships.

Members were concerned that ‘Trust & Confidence’ would decline. Other partners may not share the police’s priorities or have the capability to become involved. There was already a lack of volunteers across the borough and modern society, especially the young, engaged in different ways.

It was unclear if the review was engaging with the IAG’s. Ch Supt Murray’s recollection was that an early stage of the wider WMP2020 process IAG’s had been involved. (**Action: Insp Sarling to clarify if accurate**).

Ch Supt Murray referred to the possible involvement of the IAG in Solihull Council’s response to policing and public safety. Two IAG members were already on the Community Safety committee. A short discussion followed. (**Action: Ch Supt Murray to provide an explanation of what involvement meant**).

Question Time

1. Response times. Ch. Supt Murray mentioned at last meeting that statistics showed a decline in meeting targets. One Solihull venue manager has referred to a lengthy delay to a 999 call and Motorway attended. *Responded to later in wider consideration of the issues.*
2. *Speed Enforcement by police appears to not cover travel to and from school times when risk is highest. What are the criteria for volunteers doing Speed Watch?*

Answer: This led to a wide-ranging discussion over speed enforcement. There are ten Speed Watch groups locally, who have been trained to use the kit without any police presence; their information generates warning letters to the registered owner. Most of the groups are in the south of the borough. It was obvious that the groups chose their own time to be active and are not tasked by the police to high risk times. Police officers on response units are tasked to attend school locations. Then the vexed issue of JLR cars racing locally was discussed and the JLR Plant Manager was assisting with official warnings. A new site car park had 4k places. The police will now report back at our next meeting on Speed Watch. (**Action for Insp. Green**)

1. *When Solihull Town Centre bans open drinking of alcohol, why has a Spar off-licence opened in Poplar Road and drinking has increased without enforcement?*

Answer: The Solihull Town Centre ‘No Open Alcohol Drinking Zone’ remains in force, with PCSO’s responsible for enforcement and the Spar off-licence is not allowed to sell alcohol during the specified late hours. If any information indicated to the contrary that would be followed up. (**Chair to update questioner’s group**).

Sector Reports

Insp Bell: across Solihull Constituency crime was up by 3.1% and the focus remains Shirley, in particular @ the Parkgate Centre, where Asda’s policy on non-reporting crimes was a concern. A meeting is planned with a Regional Manager. The increase had led to three Solihull Town Centre police officers being transferred to Shirley; which had caused some upset locally.

Insp Green: Crime was up 1% across Meriden constituency; no change in the house burglary rate, although 1/4-1/9 there had been 174 burglaries. Following work with Asda @ Chelmsley Wood, two folders with those caught and not reported to the police were seen (handed over?). Asda had been reporting only 20% of thefts, below £50 were not reported. Now procedures had changed offenders were hitting other shops with poor security.

Robbery was up in the period 1/4-1/9 with 57 crimes, compared to 42 last year.

Off road motorcycle incidents were down. The video based on the story of a local youth who had crashed an off-road bike changing his life had been viewed 822 times since release.

After recent incidents of gypsy / traveller caravans parking illegally on council-owned land, reported in the media, Insp Green explained that there were considerable legal restrictions on either the police or council taking enforcement action. Ch Supt Murray requested IAG return to the issue at next meeting.

An update on the mass ‘boy racer’ meetings was given. Solihull Council unlike other local authorities did not have a civil injunction in place; those meeting knew this and exploited this. An injunction can cost £10-15k to obtain – *it was not clear if the council was considering this option*. (**Insp Green to clarify please**). The two officers working full-time on this were visiting the car owners, warning them about their activity which may have an effect.

Stop & Search Scrutiny

Insp Sarling presented the stats for August only; those for September were not yet available.

S&S used in August: 81; 60 persons, 19 person & vehicle and 2 vehicles. Drugs accounted for 49%, Weapons 11%, Articles for Crime & Stolen Property 41%.

No Further Action 74%, 15% of S&S led to an arrest (12 persons).

The ethnic breakdown did **not** cause the IAG concern.

Ch Supt Murray explained that the IAG’s wish to gain feedback direct from some of those subject to S&S had met a legal objection, so could not happen.

The Chair stressed the importance and value of IAG members observing S&S themselves, which gave an opportunity to ask people stopped. (**Action: Insp Green or CAPT Insp to arrange dates**).

Response Times

Insp Sarling gave a presentation in response to the question raised and after the recent press reporting on ‘999’ calls not being responded to properly, i.e. by non-emergency equipped and trained vehicles.

Calls for service were classified following national guidelines. Immediate incidents should be attended within 15 minutes; Early incidents within 60 minutes and Routine matters when possible. From 1/4-1/8 Solihull had 11,646 incidents of all grades to deal with. In July there were 2,457 incidents, with 562 Immediate and 1102 Early. Overall 6% of incidents were not responded too within the time limits. When each incident was examined a variety of issues were apparent, not the availability of resources – with a few exceptions – and the issue was regularly reviewed.

All the Solihull response vehicles were Vauxhall Insignia saloons, with the proper equipment and qualified drivers. Other vehicles, such as the Vauxhall Corsa and the “cub” vans did not have the right equipment, but sometimes due to demand were used for response work.

John Cogin explained that two local residents had had a bad experience when calling the ‘101’ centre; Sue Austin, 101 Supervisor, had extended an invitation for them, with John to visit and see what happened.

Any other issues

**The next meeting is on Monday 2nd November 2015, starting at 6 pm @ Homer Road.**

Grace Ononiwu, head of CPS West Midlands, would be attending and all IAG members are requested to attend.

The venue could seat thirty, five B’ham East IAG members were coming, a response with numbers was awaited from B’ham South IAG and the Chair had invited two east B’ham contacts (one an ex-Solihull IAG adviser).

Once numbers were known an invitation could be extended to other IAG and bodies. The Chair would ask the Solihull YIAG if they wished to attend.