

ADVICE RELATING TO ETHICS COMMITTEE BRIEFING NOTES – IMPACT AREAS

Issue

1. I have been asked to provide legal advice regarding a proposed project regarding impact areas and associated activities, the purpose of which is to assess the effect of police presence and movements on criminal activity within Impact Areas (IA) and how this compares to similar areas which have not been designated as Impact Areas (non-IA).
2. This will identify the effectiveness of deploying police resources in an Impact Area compared to police resources active in a similar area which is not so designated.
3. Of particular note and with regard to delivering a direct impact on law enforcement delivery the intent of the project is to support policing in making Impact Areas better and safer by reducing crime, demand and harm, improving the quality of life for those local communities and protecting the most vulnerable.

Background

4. This proposed project is intended to both directly support operational policing, but also the Force's Precision Policing Doctrine, which will enable key decision makers access to the necessary information and expertise to develop a learning culture.
5. Aside from identifying the effectiveness and utility of increased resources in Impact Areas the project will generate a dashboard for WMP to assess the movements of officers from any department or Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) within a chosen Impact Area and to assess these movements alongside data relating to crime, incidents and stop and search.
6. This will permit decision makers to assess how long officers are or should spend in Impact Areas, including the identifying the most appropriate times and resources for current crime and demand issues. The stop and search data and crime data will be provided in concert to ensure that the use of this tactic is focused on the right areas at the right times.
7. This project and activities will directly support policing by enabling decision makers to assess the effectiveness of operational activity. It will also will inform the Force Tasking and Delivery Board, the Strategic Tasking and Coordination Group and other decision making forums.
8. Further, the analysis will provide a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of activities within the Impact Areas at a strategic level. It will therefore inform decisions about the resourcing of these areas in the future.

Analysis

9. The data that will be used will be recovered from WMP systems and hence is already held in the course of routine law enforcement business.
10. In addition when considering this project in the context of human rights and data protection legislation, it will be noted that WMP processes information in accordance with the Law Enforcement Directive for law enforcement purposes. These purposes include preventing, investigating, detecting or prosecuting criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, including the safeguarding against and the prevention of threats to public security.
11. When considering the issue of intrusion into an individual's private life the briefing note has confirmed that whilst data will be recovered from WMP systems relating to crimes, incidents and

stop and search, personal information relating to members of the public who featured in those events will not be used or relied upon in the analysis.

12. However, the position of WMP officers and staff needs to be considered separately, as their collar numbers will be required as unique reference numbers to understand which officers, from which departments were in any chosen area and at what time. I understand that no further data relating to officers or staff will be used in the analysis.

13. When considering whether or not this information falls within the category of private information it is my assessment that it does not. Information regarding collar numbers relates directly to their roles and is used routinely when discharging their duties in support of law enforcement. In addition an officer's identity will not be linked to a particular collar number, merely the fact that a member of WMP deployed to a location.

Conclusion

14. The purpose of this project is to make use of lawfully retained material in order to support law enforcement operations. When considering the issue of the project impacting on an individual's right to a private life the briefing paper has confirmed that no private information will be used in any analysis. As such there would be no intrusion into an individual's privacy.

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