

Committee(s): Police Authority Board- For information	Date(s): 3 rd September 2020
Subject: Update on the Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group	Public
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 60-20	For Information
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Summary

An Independent Advisory Group (IAG) is a strategic group that seeks to improve two-way communications between the police service and the diverse communities it serves. Closely linked to the IAG and often a sub-group in many forces is the Community Scrutiny Group (CSG) whose core responsibility is to monitor the legitimacy of a force's stop and search activities and use of force.

Following the effectiveness of the IAG and CSG being called into question by HMICFRS during the 2018 PEEL Integrated inspection of the Force, the CoLP Chief Officer Team gave direction that the functioning and activities of the IAG and CSG be reviewed in consultation with the members. This resulted in a decision that the IAG and CSG be merged into a single Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group (IASG).

At the time of this merger in 2019, Members of the Police Authority had some concerns and requested an update on this new arrangement after 6 months (OR 34/2019/P refers). This was due to report to the May Police Authority Board, but owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was deferred to the September Board.

The IASG has a new Chair and Vice-Chair and has met quarterly since December 2019 and by video conference in recent months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Force is pleased to report that membership is healthy and attendance at meetings consistently high, with members receiving and discussing presentations on a range of relevant topics. They have also been provided with the Force's latest stop and search and use of force data for scrutiny, resulting in discussion and requests for additional information at future meetings. This is proving useful to the Force in terms of challenge and advice.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the beginning of 2018, the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner commissioned a review of Force community engagement to ensure it was capturing the views of the community and people they serve. This review gained momentum after the findings of HMICFRS in their Integrated PEEL inspection which was published in April 2018.
2. Findings from the review were reported to this Board in July 2019 and were summarised as:
3. **Independent Advisory Group (IAG)**
 - Insufficient number of members regularly attending to fulfil its minimum requirement to operate legitimately
 - A lack of adherence to its constitution in terms of time of office for the Chair and other office holders
 - An absence of police liaison and attendance at a senior level in more recent times (superintendent or above)
 - A lack of inclusion or updates from the Force to the IAG in relation to key policing decisions and activities
 - A potential for duplication of activities given the similarity of aims and objectives to those of the CSG
4. **Community Scrutiny Group (CSG)**
 - A virtual absence of membership attendance during 2017 and 2018.
 - Both the chair and deputy of the group were also police officers, thereby affecting its ability to operate independently.
5. As a result of the outcome of the community engagement review and the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection findings, a number of recommendations were agreed by the CoLP Chief Officer Team:
 - To increase and maintain the number and diversity of membership of the IAG through active and ongoing recruitment
 - To ensure a minimum attendance and maximum time in office of IAG members to enable it to fulfil its requirements and maintain its legitimacy
 - To ensure police attendance at IAG meetings at a senior level (superintendent above)
 - To ensure the IAG is regularly updated of Force performance and key strategic changes
 - To merge the functions of the IAG and CSG to create an Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group (IASG) to improve representation and resilience

6. With a decision to amalgamate the two groups, efforts were concentrated on recruiting new members to form the IASG. A number of new members came forward as a result of a recruitment campaign and a new terms of reference was drafted, along with information sent out to prospective members about their role and expectations should they decide to become members. An induction took place in June 2019 to which all members were invited and a new Chair and Vice-Chair were duly elected at the first IASG meeting in December 2019.
7. Following the update on the review recommendations to this Board, Members requested that a report on the effectiveness of the new arrangements be brought back for information once the new IASG meetings had time to embed (OR 34/2019/P refers). This was due to report to the May Police Authority Board, but owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was deferred to the September Board.

Current Position

8. The Force is pleased to report that membership is healthy and attendance at meetings consistently high, with members receiving and discussing presentations on a range of relevant topics. Meetings have taken place quarterly and have been well attended, with 10 members at the initial meeting on 11th December 2019, 12 on 11th March 2020 and 9 on 10th June 2020, despite this being during the period of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the enthusiastic discussions taking place following presentations and scrutiny of the Force's stop and search and use of force data, meetings have extended to 2 hours and on occasion longer.
9. Members embraced meeting virtually via video conference in June and also for an extraordinary meeting convened on 30th May 2020 to receive a briefing on the Force's response to the pandemic from T/Commander Evans and Supt Isaac. T/DCI Felton from the Economic Crime Directorate also attended to provide members with information on COVID-19 related fraud and work undertaken to address this.
10. The Chair of the IASG was invited to sit on the Force's COVID-19 Gold Group at the start of the pandemic and attended all weekly meetings. The Chair is also a member of the Force Equality and Inclusion Gold Group and attends the Tactical Tasking and Coordination Group and Safer City Partnership meetings.
11. All IASG meetings have been attended by the Force Equality & Inclusion Manager, and the Police Inspector who leads on presentation of stop and search and use of force data and by an officer of at least superintending rank. The Lead member for the E&I (and previously Community Engagement) SIA has also been in attendance. A summary of the discussion points and presentations given to members is as below:

11th December 2019

- Chair and Vice Chair elected.

- Presentation on the current issues surrounding stop and search in the context of Force performance, followed by questions and answers from the officers present.

11th March 2020

- Presentation and discussion on mental health and the Force's use of mental health street triage and Trauma Risk Management (TRiM).
- Presentation and scrutiny of CoLP's quarterly stop and search and use of force data, with questioning on the information from members.

10th June 2020

- Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC) presentation by Uzma Babb (Senior Stakeholder Engagement Officer for London) and Salman Naseem (Regional Director for London) on the role of the IOPC in investigating complaints against police. This was followed by considerable questions and discussion on the points raised.
- Presentation and scrutiny of CoLP's quarterly stop and search and use of force data, with questioning on the information from members. A number of requests for follow up information were made and additional data subsequently sent by the Equality and Inclusion Manager. Requests were also made for additional data in future use of force reporting to the group.
- Discussion on the recent Black Lives Matter protests and the policing of these.

Next Steps

12. There will be a members-only meeting on 2nd September to review the terms of reference and allocate individual areas of interest to members. The next full IASG meeting will be held via video conference on 16th September and includes input on equality and inclusion initiatives, the Force's Transform change programme, out of court disposals and the new stop and search Authorised Professional Practise (APP).
13. Presentation and scrutiny of the latest stop and search and use of force data will also continue to take place. Following a request from the group for dip sampling of anonymised records and Body Worn Video (BWV), the Force's Stop and Search lead, Superintendent Uniform Policing, is considering IT solutions to enable this.
14. Training for the IASG has been slightly delayed by the pandemic, however there are plans to facilitate this as soon as possible via the Equality and Inclusion Manager.

Conclusion

15. The new IASG group has significantly improved the mechanism for effective scrutiny and challenge of the Force's activities. There is increased membership, consistent attendance and an obvious enthusiasm from members of the group to carry out this crucial role in a constructive way, which will assist the Force in improving its legitimacy and transparency.

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