

OFFICE FOR THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

ETHICS COMMITTEE

23 March 2015

Meeting commenced: 5:30p.m  
Meeting ended: 7:40p.m

Present: Bishop David Walker (in the Chair)  
David Arnold, Dr Ruth Bromley, Cym D'Souza, Nasir Hafezi, Paul Horrocks,  
Dr Peter Joyce, Sally Lester, Shaid Mushtaq, Ian Hopkins and Ruth Purdie

Officers in attendance:

Jim Battle, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Emma Stonier, Business Support Officer  
Supt Leor Giladi, Greater Manchester Police

1. Introduction and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Sean McHale, Catherine Boyd, Paul Rumney and Smyth Harper.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Chair updated the committee regarding a conversation which had taken place between himself and John Amaechi. John Amaechi has decided to resign from the Committee, but is interested in the small sub groups and could potentially contribute if these were related to his areas of interest.

3. Actions and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015, were approved as an accurate record.

Minute item 25: Use of Weapons: A member raised concern regarding the effect on officers carrying out their duty who are involved in a fatal shooting. The committee was informed that each incident is taken on a case by case basis; an officer will not be suspended unless there is obvious cause for concern and will remain in the force but under a non-operational role (restrict firearms duties). Officers cannot be operation again until an investigation has been completed by the IPCC, which is a lengthy process.

4. Items for consideration

- a) Police employment of people with criminal records: feedback from working group

Feedback was received from the small group set up to look at police employment of people with criminal records. This was to look further into the ethical issues of the vetting process for applicants with previous convictions and for applicants who failed vetting due to associations with people who may have previous convictions/criminal records.

The sub-group met with Bill Oxley at the Force Vetting Unit and raised the following questions and topics;

- Number of people who worked in Vetting Department
- People involved in vetting recruits, their qualifications and experience
- Roles and tasks of particular staff within the unit
- Training provided to staff
- Written policies the department uses
- Whether structure of personnel and their particular roles is clear
- How decisions are made, reviewed and considered
- Numbers of staff to carry out work
- What reasons, if any, are given to candidates who fail vetting
- Timing of when vetting takes place in the recruitment process
- Difficulties and concerns the Vetting Officer has
- Ethical challenges vetting officer may face in making their decision

The sub-group fed back that Bill Oxley had been friendly and open and was a very experienced officer. They were shown a document entitled '*Police Officer Recruitment: Eligibility criteria for the role of police constable*' which sets out the grounds and factors a Vetting Officer takes into account in considering whether candidate is eligible to be a police officer. Police officers are required to have 'proven integrity' and there are four categories which a person can be refused to be a police officer under.

The meeting raised the following;

- Consistency vetting decision making across England and Wales – could an applicant be rejected by one police force but accepted by another?
- EU nationals and access to systems for vetting purposes – difficulties carrying out eligibility checks due to this
- Recording of data on the PNC
- Reasons not disclosed to candidate why they fail vetting – Data Protection reasons

The committee were informed of the below following the feedback the sub-group gave;

- Policies for vetting were currently under review by the College of Policing, and that they were expected to be published in October this year.
- Vetting of the Chief Constable and the Deputy Chief Constable are done through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and not through GMP's Force Vetting Unit.
- Timing of vetting – individuals should not be vetted until they are employable, so have undergone part of the recruitment process. Individuals do have to

self-disclose and there is some element of self-selection in place and candidates are aware of the timings of vetting in the recruitment process. Committee felt it should be made clear to candidates that they may be rejected and not informed why due to Data Protection laws in order that the process is transparent.

- EU applicants – police have to rely on 3 years of data held within the UK. Data held elsewhere may be unreliable or inaccessible.
- Consistency across forces – College of Policing is there to set standards which should apply across the country. However there are always local circumstances that might throw up inconsistencies/differences.

The following areas were also discussed;

- A member enquired about the numbers of people rejected by known associates' policy. Could this be disproportionately affecting some communities more than others?
- What defines personal integrity? Taint issue, for example if an officer did x so many years ago, could this be later brought up in court and affect a case. Positive aspects of character are tested during the recruitment and selection process.
- A member with policing experience informed the committee that in her experience most vetting officers across the country follow the same process, and judgment calls are well documented, thorough and fair.

Following the above discussion the following was agreed;

- 1) Sub-committee to request to have sight of the draft college of policing vetting policy.
- 2) Sub-committee to have a point of contact with the college of policing over the topic of vetting policy.
- 3) Committee to look into possibility of meeting with the College of Policing to look at recommendations they are producing and potentially feed into the process.

#### b) Use of tasers

The paper presented about Use of Tasers had been circulated to the committee with the meeting papers. Superintendent Leor Giladi was in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions, and to provide a live demonstration to the committee of the use of a taser, showing how it worked in practice. Officers who carry tasers have been fully trained, and carry 3 cartridges. Cartridges are numbered and are assigned to a particular officer, so if/when fired can tell who has done so. There are 497 taser trained officers within GMP and 160 firearms officers. Taser trained officers are spread across the force.

After the demonstration the following discussion took place;

- What does training programme consist of? Committee were informed it is a 4 day training programme with a failure of 20%. Means Tasers would not be deployed to everybody as not all able complete the training.
- What is impact of using 'taser' on the public and Policing by Consent? Policing by consent and the concept of 'minimum force' – is taser minimum force? Possibility that the perception of police by the public could change.
- Usage numbers – some concerns raised that GMP figures are rising and other forces are dropping. There could be some differences in reporting methods which might explain this.
- Taser is a less damaging (compared to baton) and lethal use of force. There is also the safety of officers themselves to be considered when discussing their usage.
- What sorts of incidents are tasers used in? Are they incidents when someone is violent or officer is in danger? It would be useful to have this information to assess whether usage appropriate or not. Use of taser is recorded so it would be possible to look at how/when/why taser is used to help shape the committee's recommendations.
- Consider usage in context of what happens to public, what happens to officer, what happens to people it is used on – not just from the shots fired/lives saved perspective.
- Home Office did complete lot of research before agreeing to its usage. The European Convention on Human Rights considers it a less lethal force than taking life. Taser not given to everyone.
- GMP's position is that it considers people trained sufficient and not considering rolling out the usage to all officers on the force.
- Some of questions committee might want to look at – how can taser be deployed properly, recording and learning from incidents, how often is it used and why, when equipment deployed how satisfied are committee that it is appropriate, checks and balances in place for use of taser.
- Red dot incidences – where taser is pointed and not

The Chair summed up discussion;

- Committee wants to see some data from when reviews have been carried out and to find out how taser is being used and whether its use is ethical.
- GMP not pressing for taser to be part of standard officers' equipment. They are deployed in appropriate situations to deescalate situations.
- Public perception – way tasers perceived/treated by society raises concern that routine use may undermine notion policing by consent.
- Committee looking to be reassured that adequate processes in place for use of tasers.

The committee decided on the below following their discussions;

- 1) A small group to meet with GMP to dip sample the use of tasers. The results of this will be fed back to the committee at the next meeting.

## 5. Items for information

a) Police Culture: Fit for the Future

It was agreed that this would be added to the agenda for the away day. Emma Stonier to finalise date of the away day and to send round invite to the committee members following this meeting.

6. Future items and issues

a) Feedback from Ethics Committee offline discussion

The away day in June will have on the agenda the culture and method of the way the Ethics Committee will work. To prepare for this Emma Stonier will re-circulate the discussion sent round previously by the Bishop's PA to re-start the discussion prior to the away day itself.

The question was raised whether there was any evidence/research which suggested that the public were worried about ethical issues in policing. Jim Battle informed the committee that opinion poll research is being undertaken by the OPCC currently and the results from this will be fed back to the committee.

It was agreed that;

- 1) Emma Stonier to re-circulate the initial discussion email about way Ethics Committee works.
- 2) The results from the opinion poll research being undertaken to be fed back to the Ethics Committee once finalises.

b) Parklife

GMP asked for the Ethics Committee guidance regarding Parklife and a request they have received from The Loop (a charity GMP have previously worked with in testing drugs which are seized or found) about whether attendees at the festival could hand over any drugs they are carrying to be voluntarily tested without the risk of being arrested. This could prevent deaths from people taking tainted drugs, as messages could be sent out about drugs which may contain anything potentially lethal, via social media, to reach attendees at the event. GMP is asking for advice as this poses an ethical dilemma around people volunteering illegal substances to the police and not getting arrested. GMP needs advice urgently as a decision needs to be made within the next few weeks, as Parklife is taking place in June.

Following discussion it was decided that;

- 1) Two members volunteered to meet with Chief Superintendent John O'Hare to discuss this issue and help GMP to come to a decision. Emma Stonier will arrange this meeting.

7. Terms of reference

The committee agreed that the ToR would be re-circulated and that these would be discussed and signed off by the time of the next meeting. Emma Stonier will re-circulate these documents following the meeting.

#### 8. Any other business

A member asked whether data received by the Committee could be more robust, or the committee could be provided with more of a breakdown of the figures to better be able to assess an issue. Discussion took place around the following;

- If there are specific things the committee wants to see, then these need to be better defined (discuss further at away day).
- There are benefits of seeing data in person.
- Potential possibility of member/s of Committee meeting Ian Hopkins prior to meetings to discuss ethical issues relevant to specific agenda items.
- College of Policing - possibility of developing a closer relationship with them as they have a set of defined ethical principles/standards. Someone from the College of Policing could be invited to the away day to discuss this further.

It was agreed that;

- 1) To discuss the issues raised above at the Ethics Committee away day as part of the exploration into the way the Ethics Committee should work.