

OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER  
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

ETHICS COMMITTEE

8 September 2014

Meeting commenced: 5.30 pm

Meeting ended: 7.38 pm

PRESENT: Bishop David Walker – in the Chair  
David Arnold, Catherine Boyd, Ruth Bromley, Cym Dsouza, Nasir Hafezi,  
Paul Horrocks, Peter Joyce, Sally Lester, Sean McHale, and Shaid Mushtaq

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jim Battle, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Smyth Harper, Head of Communications and Advocacy  
Nikki Park, Head of Executive Services

Ian Hopkins, Deputy Chief Constable  
Paul Rumney, Chief Superintendent, Professional Standards Branch

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of John Amaechi and Ruth Purdie.

9. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 31ST JULY, 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2014, were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the attendance list to include Jim Battle in the list of officers in attendance.

10. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members discussed the draft terms of reference for the committee and the documents that had been circulated by a member to assist with (a) the production of information to be published on the website and/or displayed at police stations, and (b) the work of the committee.

It was agreed that:

1. the draft terms of reference be amended to clarify that (i) it will be themes which will drive the agenda for the committee and not individual complaints, (ii) a work programme had been established for the next 12 months which would be progressed as scheduled, subject to anything urgent being submitted, and (iii) after seven/eight months the public would be consulted on the production of the committee's workplan for the following year.

2. any further comments on the draft terms of reference and the supporting documents to be forwarded to the Smyth Harper.
3. Members would liaise with the Smyth Harper with regards to publicising the documents.
4. Paul Rumney would provide information to members on the methods by which employees and the public can raise concerns, enabling them to advise anyone who may approach them.
5. minutes of the meetings would be published on the website, once they have been approved.
6. a triage system be established comprising of Bishop David Walker, Jim Battle and Ian Hopkins to consider any complaints which may be submitted directly to the committee.

Members thanked Nasir Hafezi for producing the documents circulated.

#### 11. TOPIC FOR CONSIDERATION: BODY CAMERAS

Ian Hopkins provided members with (a) examples of the type of body cameras worn by officers, describing how they worked, (b) a video presentation detailing a number of incidents involving officers using the body worn cameras, and (c) a report detailing the background on the use of the cameras across the UK and GMP to date, seeking their views regarding their future use.

Members considered the video footage and the questions detailed in the report and it was agreed that:

1. a small group be established to consider the questions contained within the report and issues such as:

#### **The recording process – use of discretion**

The decision to record or not record rests with the user – although the guidance states that incidents should be recorded whenever a police power is invoked. Does this degree of discretion raise concerns? For example:

- Could the discretion be abused by police officers selectively recording incidents involving certain subjects or certain groups of subjects?
- Is there the potential that it could be perceived as being misused against certain subjects or groups – whether or not that is the reality?
- Likewise, could the option not to record a situation be misused and/or seen to be misused?
- Does partial recording run the risk of presenting a biased view of an incident?
- If police officers have the discretion to turn off the video at the request of a subject, is there potential for intimidation or manipulation?

### **The recording process – what issues would be raised by continuous use?**

- Would the above concerns be lessened if recording was continuous?
- What impact would continuous use have on police officers? Would they feel that this was an intrusion and an additional pressure? Or would they feel that it would support them against unfounded allegations – and potentially reduce the likelihood of such allegations?

### **Impact on police-public relationships?**

- What impact would the recording of interactions have with the public? Could it create a barrier – akin to taking officers off the streets and into cars?
- What impact would it have on anti-social behaviour? Are people more or less likely to behave badly in front of the camera?

### **Impact on prosecution/ court hearing?**

Video recording has the potential to provide powerful evidence to support prosecution, support victims, speed up justice and reduce the cost of unnecessary and cracked trials.

- Does seeing an incident from the perspective of the body worn video user create an inbuilt bias?
- What about the impact on juries/ those in court?
- Others captured on the video have the right to privacy. Is this sufficiently protected by the ability to pixilate the images? Do victims have the right to request pixilation?

### **Impact on victims?**

- Victims may be recorded at a vulnerable moment. Does this increase their vulnerability? Is it an invasion of their privacy?
- Or does it support them in deciding that they will be believed if they pursue prosecution?
- Does it increase the risk – e.g. in situations of domestic abuse?
- Could they be intimidated into requesting that the recording is turned off?

### **Storage and deletion of recordings**

Guidance advises that material should be destroyed after a maximum of 31 days, except in certain circumstances.

- Does this present an appropriate balance between the retention of material that may assist a later investigation versus the rights of those captured on the recording?
- Is there a practical consideration about storing large quantities of recordings? How much more of a problem would that be if recording was continuous?

**Possible questions for focus groups (to be tailored to the different groups)**

- Any experience of being recorded? (Being questioned or arrested/ victim/ general chat with police?)
- Were you told that you were being recorded?
- Were you conscious of the video?
- Did it affect your behaviour?
- How did it make you feel?
- Did it affect the behaviour of anyone you were with?
- Do you think the police behaved differently because of the video?
- How do you think the video will be used? Who should be allowed to see it?
- How long do you think it should be kept?
- What are the pros and cons of body worn video cameras?

2. That the group aims to produce a report to be considered at the next meeting of the committee.

12. FORWARD PLANNING AND FUTURE TOPICS

Smyth Harper submitted a briefing note which detailed a suggested framework for the committee and a forward plan of topics to be considered over the next 12 months.

It was agreed that:

1. Smyth Harper be requested to revise the forward plan as follows:

- November:
  - Unarmed police
  - Members' report on body worn video cameras
- January:
  - Stop and search
  - Ethics on the frontline
  - Confidence to challenge

2. the revised forward plan be circulated for comments, and then submitted to the next meeting for approval.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, commencing at 5.30pm.