

BAME Engagement and Scrutiny

Introduction

Policing in the UK is based on consent. Without the support of the public the police would not be effective. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) believes policing will only improve legitimacy through greater transparency in decision making and through positive proactive engagement with BAME communities.

The Independent Office for Police Complaints (IOPC) and the Home Office have also made recommendations and encouraged policing to establish scrutiny panels in order to receive and respond to community feedback in relation to stop and search, use of force and discrimination complaints.

Over the last few years the PCC's BME Steering group has made huge progress in building a positive relationship with policing and championing the recruitment and retention of BAME police officers alongside improvements in stop and search practice.

It is now felt that the PCC's structures for engaging with the BAME community need to be refreshed. This report sets out in brief the PCC's proposals to establish a new framework for engaging with BAME communities and scrutinising all aspects of policing activity, including the quality of the police's interaction with BAME public, particularly victims of crime.

Proposals

The Commissioner intends to establish:

- a 'Community Listening Group' (CLG)
- an 'Independent Community Scrutiny Panel' (ICSP)
- an 'Commissioner's Equality Group' (CEG)

Each group will have agreed terms of reference.

This report provides brief detail on how each group interfaces with each other and illustrates how issues of concern can be escalated and routed for consideration of further scrutiny and possible inclusion as a priority in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. The proposals can be summarised as follows:

- The Community Listening Group (CLG) replaces the BME Steering Group
- The Commissioner's Equality Group (CEG) replaces the BME Working Group
- Independent Community Scrutiny Panel (ICSP) replaces the Stop & Search Scrutiny Board

The Commissioner's Equality and Diversity Project Support Officer (EDPSO) has prepared a more detailed report which provides the full rationale for the proposed changes and details of consultation.

These proposals take account of the consultation feedback with numerous stakeholders that have taken place over the last twelve months. Nottinghamshire Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) arrangements will remain unchanged by these proposals.

Community Listening Group (CLG)

A new Community Listening Group (CLG) will be established. It will provide a mechanism for any stakeholder to discuss concerns and issues relating to crime, victimisation, offending and policing affecting the BAME community. The CLG will involve individuals, organisation or groups that have a remit of providing services to the BAME. Public sector equality leads will also be invited to be part of the CLG. The CLG will also include organisations that work with BAME young people.

The CLG will meet twice per year to review progress and consider areas of common concerns. One of the meetings will be an annual conference to take place in the autumn to coincide with the annual refresh of the PCC's police and crime plan.

The CLG at its annual conference will nominate a Chair who will form a steering group that meets on a more frequent basis to develop a work plan based on the concerns and issues raised by the wider membership of the CLG. The Chair, in consultation with other members of the steering group, will determine which concerns need to be escalated to the PCC's CEG.

The steering group will:

- act as a mechanism for the BAME community to raise grievances and concerns
- maintain a stakeholder database and organise an annual conference
- develop a system of regular feedback on progress against the work plan and other relevant activities
- act as advisors and a critical friend to the PCC
- enable a two-way dialogue between the BAME community and PCC
- Publish agendas, reports and minutes to support improvements in transparency and openness

The Chair of the CLG and steering group will act as a representative on other partnerships and boards, such as the Violence Reduction Board. They also attend the Commissioner's Equality Group (CEG) to raise the key issues and concerns put forward by CLG members. The Chair of the CLG and steering group will receive a financial remuneration to cover their expenses. The PCC will award a grant to a third sector organisation to ensure the smooth running of the steering group and to cover the cost of the annual conference. Awarding a grant will enable the steering group to act and meet independently of the PCC.

Commissioner's Equality Group (CEG)

The proposal is that a new 'Commissioner's Equality Group' (CEG) be established, chaired by the PCC. The PCC will decide on the membership but it will include:

- Deputy Chief Constable.
- Chairs of the Community Listening Group (CLG) and steering group and the Independent Community Scrutiny Panel
- Representatives from faith organisations

The CEG will meet quarterly to discuss and monitor the progress made against the BAME issues raised by the CLG relating to crime, victimisation, offending, policing and any other matters of concern identified by the PCC and or by Nottinghamshire Police.

The CEG will:

- Develop an equalities plan, including priorities and actions based on advice from CLG and ICSP
- Maintain oversight of how the force is effectively responding to issues and concerns raised by the BAME community
- Set the work programme and priorities for areas of scrutiny for the Independent Community Scrutiny Panel (ICSP)
- Publish agendas, reports and minutes to support improvements in transparency
- Support the establishment of an inter faith forum/group

The PCC will also consider at his CEG meetings any reports and recommendations from the work of the Independent Community Scrutiny Panel (ICSP). Any agreed actions will then be included in the annual refresh of the Police and Crime Delivery Plan, which is subject to consultation and endorsement from the Chief Constable.

Independent Community Scrutiny Panel (ICSP)

The proposal is that a new Independent Community Scrutiny Panel (ICSP) be established to introduce BAME independent professional experienced scrutineers to the PCC's governance and assurance structures. The scrutineers and chair will be recruited bring their knowledge, perspectives, insights and understanding gathered through both their lived experience and professional training and academic study.

The ICSP will:

- Enable effective community oversight and transparency
- Allow a two-way dialogue
- Make recommendations for improvement in practice, policy and procedures
- Produce an annual report on its findings and recommendations
- Determine the methodology and approach to scrutiny
- Consult and feedback to the BAME community on the scope and findings of their scrutiny reviews

- Publish agendas, reports and minutes to support improvements in transparency

The chair and other members of the panel will be remunerated to cover their expenses.

The ICSP will meet quarterly to scrutinise all aspects of policing activity, including the quality of their interaction with the BAME community and victims and compliance with statutory guidance. An annual work plan will be prepared based on escalated concerns raised by the CLG and agreed by the PCC's Equality Group (CEG). Amongst other things this independent group will examine and review stop and search, use of force, and discrimination complaints.

Members of the panel will be appointed or nominated according to legal requirements and the principles of public life. Job descriptions will be created and members of the panel will need to be vetted in order to ensure open and transparent sharing of information between the panel and the police.

Appendix A contains the PCC's BAME Engagement and Scrutiny Cycle which illustrates how these three groups interface with each other i.e. the route by which issues are raised and progressed and responded to effectively. The PCC's office will be represented at all of these meetings. It is believed that this proposed cycle of engagement and scrutiny should help to enhance legitimacy and continue to build the trust and confidence of all communities served by the police.

Appendix A – PCC’s BAME Engagement and Scrutiny Cycle

