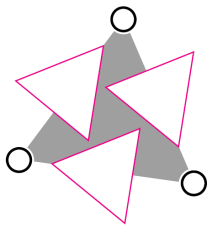


LEWISHAM COMMUNITY POLICE CONSULTATIVE GROUP

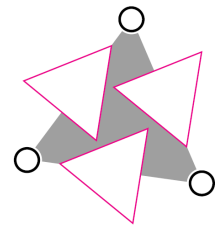
Working for a safer Lewisham for all

MINUTES

Tuesday 25 June 7.00 -9.45pm,
Civic Suite, Lewisham Town Hall, London SE6 4RU



L.C.P.C.G.



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PRESENT - Representatives of LCPCG Member organisations

Jackie Addison (Chair); Royston John (Vice Chair) ;Mickey Gallagher (Police) ; Graham Price (Police) ;Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Council); Anita Whitfield; Christine Kibblewhite; Cllr M Nisbett; Cllr S Jeffrey; Cllr J Daby; Cllr D Britton; David Michael; Denver Garrison; Dith Banbury; Emmanuel Imuere; Gilbert Osheivere; James Dobson; Joanna Bish; Joanne Hall; Joe Burchell; Laurel Saunders; Louise Hubbard; Mahad Abdulahi; Martyn Grover; Naomi Allen; Nico Springman; Olivia Sandy; Phil Turner; Richard Holland; Ruhamah Sonson; Tayo Disu; Timi Ogunbadewa;

PRESENT - Non Members

Sgt Ian McLone (speaker); Sgt Simon Parfitt (speaker); Daisy Cairns (minutes) Amanda Osei-Braimah; Bryan Pope; Simon Jones; Camilla Yahaya; Delores Williams; Sgt Ian McLone; Sgt Simon Parfitt; ; Phillipa Wall; Jennifer C Speid; Delroy Downer; Hazel Brown; Anthony Reid; Elaine Williams; James J Walsh

1. Poster for LCPCG's TASER meeting 25 June

Information item only

2. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, and for coming early to add handprints to the 10,000 banner, and support their campaign which is continuing with an event later this week, which includes a Speak Easy at Second Wave in Deptford. She thanked Tayo Disu and Simon Jones for their part in organising community/faith meetings to discuss the recently proposed BNP / EDL march, which was eventually banned based on intelligence received from the community about the potential affects.

She also noted that there has been some progress on the MOPAC plans to replace LCPCG with a Lewisham Safer Neighbourhood Board, and LCPCG and Council representatives have met MOPAC's new Advisor, who seems quite pleased with the proposals Lewisham have set out so far. There is a possibility that Lewisham will be able to bid for funds for engagement work.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the following LCPCG members:

Russell Nyman (Police Borough Commander), Florence Emakpose (LCPCG Strategy Group), Mahad Abdullahi (LCPCG Strategy Group – arrived late), Joan Ruddock MP, Heidi Alexander MP, Gurbaksh Garcha, Samantha Popely, Anthony Scully, Lucy Olofinjana, Sarah Denton, Cllr Britton (arrived late) Cllr Adefiranye, Cllr Onuegbu.

As well as from some non members:

Jenni Steele (LCPCG Strategy Group), Mervyn Kaye and Alvan Wright (LBL), Cllr Stella Jeffrey, Insp David Slade (TSG) and Susan Doran (MOPAC).

4. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes from the last ordinary meeting on 5th February 2013 were agreed by members. LCPCG Vice Chair, Royston John noted that there are still vacancies for Independent Custody Visitors in the borough and discussed the benefits that they bring.

5. Membership application - Walk In Space youth club

The application was approved by the members present.

6. TASERs - speaker from Met Police

Sergeants Simon Parfitt and Ian McLone, TASER instructors from the Metropolitan Police Service, addressed the meeting. They gave a presentation which included a powerpoint display, a short film and circulating some demonstration TASERs around the audience. Questions and discussions took place throughout the presentation and key points are noted below.

The rationale for the MPS using TASERs is that they have been used safely and effectively in the UK since 2003, and they will reduce the risk of injury to both violent offenders and police officers. They provide a differential use of force. Training is a very intensive 3 day course, and has a notably low pass level – if officers don't pass, they don't carry a TASER. MPS see TASERs as an additional tactical option alongside current Personal Protection Equipment (batons, vests, spray, etc).

Audience members were particularly concerned about the use of TASERs on vulnerable people, such as those with serious mental health conditions, and young people. They were informed that the training on these particular areas had been reviewed and improved within the last year. Training is quite wide ranging and includes fitness, eyesight, as well as aptitude and psychological tests which establish rationale for use or not in a set of situations. Officers can only apply if they are recommended by a senior officer.

A number of questions were asked about whether a TASER would be used in particular given circumstances. Officers explained outlined the broad principles when a TASER carrying officer could be sent to a incident, but stressed that it would be down to the individual officer to decide whether to fire, based on their judgement of the situation and the people involved. Senior officers do not order someone to be TASERed. Firearms officers will also carry TASERs, so this is a lower level alternative available to them.

While the demonstration models were circulating, the officers explained how the TASERs work, demonstrated the actions which an officer would use, first drawing the TASER, then aiming, then pointing the red dot, and finally discharge. The barbs were examined, and the officer explained that for the current to pass there had to be a minimum total width of clothing at each point where the barbs land. Police officers and NHS staff are trained

to remove the barbs, which just leave a red mark, but if any cause for concern i.e. if someone is hit in the face with a TASER they would be taken straight to hospital. Every time a TASER is used, information stored in the machine is then downloaded, including what stage was reached, timings, temperature and other conditions. There has been no evidence found of medical after effects caused by TASER. 9 out of 10 times a TASER is only drawn, and this will resolve a situation. Ch Insp Graham Price noted the usage figures for Lewisham, since March (the date of the roll-out of TASERs to a small group of local officers) when of 23 occasions, it had only been fired once. TASERs cost around £1000 plus cartridge refills every 30 firings.

Further questions were answered by the officers, and they asked for them to be recorded so they could use them to improve their national FAQ document:

Has anyone been TASERed who shouldn't have been, for example if someone panics when police arrive?

Is there a support network for officers who have used TASER if this causes them personal trauma?

Will TASERs become available on the streets (for members of the public to buy)?

Although the information is reassuring, we are still concerned about TASER usage, and how it will change the psychology of the officer carrying it?

We hear about other powers such as Stop and Search, and how these continue to cause concerns about the manner in which they are used. How will we ensure that the strict protocols currently in place do not change over time?

I work with Young People who carry knives and we get them to realise how it changes the way they approach violent situations, and it seems odd not to apply this to TASERs – what is the police response to this?

Is TASER a slippery slope to an armed police force, as they have in the United States?

Will TASER usage figures be made freely available, so that public are able to scrutinise whether use remains stable over time, or if it escalates?

Could carrying a TASER make officers less skilled at negotiation as they draw/aim/use it to reduce volatility of a situation, rather than other techniques such as verbal and physical communication skills?

Have any UK police been disciplined for inappropriate use of TASER?

Could TASER be used against someone carrying a firearm?

What other selection criteria are there for an officer to be chosen to undergo TASER training?

The Stop and Search Chair suggested that police use of TASER needs to be transparent and learn from mistakes made implementing other powers in the past.

The Treasurer asked Lewisham Police if they would publish their local TASER usage figures on a regular basis on their website, as well as to all future LCPCG meetings.

Sgts Parfitt and McLone also explained that some civilians have been observers on training days for TASER and there were over 10 hands raised. Sgt Parfitt agreed to look at arranging this for Lewisham CPCG members in the future. Locations will be either White City or Gravesend.

Sgt Parfitt also asked the audience to email any additional questions they would like to see included on the FAQ to the coordinator who could forward them on.

7. Lewisham Council - Update from Head of Community Safety Services

Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Head of Lewisham Council's Crime Reduction and Supporting People services, addressed the meeting. This item was taken after Item 8. Ms Mooney noted that in relation to the increase in Serious Violence there is long term work happening, with partners including Schools, Fire Service, Probation and others. She will cover the good work being done with offenders at a future meeting.

The Ministry of Justice is proposing a very swift change in how offenders are managed (aka rehabilitation of offenders) and they running a consultation on the legislation for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. Ms Mooney noted the significance this will have locally, and urged the audience to participate and help shape the new services.

8. Lewisham Police - Update from Acting Borough Commander

Superintendent Mickey Gallagher addressed the meeting on behalf of the Borough Commander for Lewisham Police. He spoke to the crime figures presentation which was included in the final version of the meeting papers. He acknowledged that the presentation did not include all the agreed categories and format. Such as: Serious Youth Violence -not included, Gun Crime - shown as percentage change rather than actual figures, Racist and Religious crime- not included, Motor Vehicle crime -displayed differently to previous versions, Non Residential Burglary - additional slide added by police, etc. In relation to Serious Youth Violence he noted this is increasing and is an issue of concern, although the figures have not been shown - he promised this would be covered in detail at the next meeting.

Other points Mr Gallagher raised in relation to the presentation included

- A significant increase in residential burglary and discussion about the wide range of techniques being used to tackle this.
- Police are now obliged to investigate non-residential burglary as seriously as residential burglary – this includes sheds and garages as well as shops and business premises.
- Licensees are encouraged to contact owners of lost mobile phones to deter these being reported as theft
- There will soon be a change to how Grievous Bodily Harm is recorded, expanding to cover incidents where the skin is broken, so he anticipates a rise in these figures at the next meeting.
- Knife Crime has risen since last year – the Gang Crime unit is very effective and police are targeting people known to carry knives.
- Although Mr Gallagher welcomes a sceptical approach to Stop and Search he believes that the high “positive outcome” figure in Lewisham means officers are targeting the right people.
- Reassuring victims is key in Domestic Violence cases. Body-worn cameras are on order and Domestic Violence cases will be priority for use, and this evidence will assist CPS in making prosecutions.

9. Question and Answer Session - Police and Crime Reduction Services

Audience members had questions about burglary hotspots cutting across ward boundaries, cuts to youth services and youth clubs, citizens contributing “intelligence” to police, making decrease in Gun Crime sustainable, negative experiences of Stop and Search by audience members, negative experience of Police Complaints system by audience members,

Mr Gallagher’s responses included:

- Some burglary hotspots have been hotspots for the last 19 years.
- People should give any information they think is helpful to police.
- Other officers do operate in the borough, so it may be possible it was not a local officer in the Stop and Search case described.
- Mr Gallagher is the lead on Professional Standards and asked to speak to the audience member about her negative experiences after the meeting.

Ms Subramaniam-Mooney responded on cuts to council services – the decrease in funding has been seen across all local authorities, and changes have been thought through very carefully in order to focus resources on the areas with the highest need and risk of harm. Also the council really does want to work with community groups more than they have previously on this agenda and there will be an event on 17th July.

10. Stop and Search scrutiny group - update from group's Chair

Emmanuel Imuere, Chair of Lewisham’s Stop & Search (S&S) Scrutiny group addressed the meeting. Key points covered include

- The new website www.lewishamstopandsearch.co.uk has received nearly 2.5 thousand visitors and they want to elaborate on the Know your Rights and Complaints sections.
- There has been a reduction in Section 60 Authorisations recently which is a significant improvement.
- He now wants the group to focus on the quality of the encounter, especially as S&S is often young people’s first significant contact with the police.
- As a group he said they are hearing mixed messages, as senior officers tell us about improvements that are taking place, but at engagements in the community we hear different stories of attitudes and cultures that still exist within police force.
- Emmanuel would like the group to understand the Roles and Responsibilities in terms of police complaints and would like clear and concise information to be available.
- The group is hoping to widen its membership, especially to include more Young People.

The LCPCG Chair explained that since the last LCPCG meeting Emmanuel and his Vice Chair have both been re-elected, and she noted that they have revitalised the group and done some interesting and exciting work in the past year. She explained that there are four meetings per year, and they are held in the late afternoon/early evening 4-6pm purposely so that young people can attend after school. If anyone is interested please contact Emmanuel or the LCPCG coordinator.

A member noted that in some ways it sounds as though there haven't been any changes in the way S&S is carried out. What have the police done to ensure that young people feel happier with how S&S search is carried out?

Chief Inspector Graham Price noted that S&S will always cause some difficulties, people will never actively welcome what is seen as an invasion of privacy, and indicates that the police are suspicious you have committed a crime. Police are doing training on S&S including with the young people at Second Wave in Deptford. Supervisors scrutinise the records and will pick up if there are particular patterns. Graham encourages people to make complaints or feedback, at a station, or via the web, by phone, or on Facebook - this is the best way to ensure that senior level officers are aware. He is also trying to set up an internal Stop and Search Scrutiny Group

11. Any Other Business

No other business was raised. The Chair thanked all the speakers and the meeting was closed at 9.44 pm.