

### **Summary of additional evidence:**

#### **1. Safer Neighbourhood Board - stop and search scrutiny sub-committee – 10 October 2018**

Members of the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee were invited to attend the Lewisham Safer Neighbourhood Board Stop and Search Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018 to gather evidence for their review. The following notes were taken from attending this meeting:

- The following was noted regarding information on the Met Police stop and search dashboard <https://www.met.police.uk/sd/stats-and-data/met/stop-and-search-dashboard/>
- Ethnic appearance is defined by the arresting officer
- The age is listed where given
- Stop and search age profile by ethnicity with Lewisham age profile by ethnicity overlaid would be useful.
- Challenges included the age profile information by ethnicity data being largely based on the 2011 census and therefore not necessarily accurate for current figures. In addition to this the rate per 1000 of population didn't take into account age profile. I.e. it considers the borough as a whole rather than the ethnicity of a particular age group making the accurate statistics on proportionality difficult to extrapolate.
- The Forum were keen to get more information such as:
- Stop and search data overlaid with monthly crime stats
- Statistics on age profile broken down by race
- Outcomes data broken down by age and race.
- It would be useful to view stop and search slips to look for patterns – the group had the right to do this and members were invited to should they wish.
- Peak activity around particular dates such as Halloween was raised.
- The Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth review was shared with members of the group and the date of the next meeting shared.
- Members of the group felt that more data broken down more simply was key for them to affectively look at the issues.
- It would be useful to look in more detail at stop and search complaints statistics.

Please note this is not minutes of the meeting but notes of some of the issues raised that may be of relevance to the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth review.

#### **2. A Community Forum event organised by Second Wave as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week 2018. Notes by Cllr Rathbone**

The main themes for the evening's discussion were 'Trust, Leadership and Resilience.

Police-Community relations were mentioned on several occasions, in regards to reporting and the need for improvement. The event itself was a positive example of Police-Community relations.

Although very interesting the majority of the event was not directly relevant to the review by Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee, however, the closing discussion was incredibly relevant.

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Some comments were raised that community engagement was not part of current police training, and could be challenging for new officers. The corporate nature of policing was emphasised and the fact that training is done on a national basis making it challenging to take into account the particular differences of communities across different forces. Comments were made that practical training and good community engagement was something that was learnt on the street, informally. The importance of having a representative force that people could relate to was raised, as was problems relating to political correctness; that some officers may feel unable to ask awkward questions, and thus acted on incomplete knowledge and in ignorance.

There was some discussion on how there used to be more emphasis on community engagement as part of training, with new/probationary officers expected to embed themselves in the community and engage with groups.

The Police and Community working together to engage with each other was key to developing positive relationships that enable the Police to do their job in the borough. Comments raised included that attitudes of young people could change from defensive/confrontational to open/cooperative when they deal with them in a policing capacity, once they recognise the officer in question as someone they have dealt with before in a non-policing situation and had positive engagement with.

A key takeaway for me from this part of the discussions was that prior engagement with the BAME community and Police on an equal basis, was vital.

*Please note this is not minutes of the meeting but notes of some of the issues raised that may be of relevance to the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's in-depth review.*

### **3. Stop and search discussions and workshops on the Pepys Estate in Evelyn Ward – notes by Cllr Alex Feis-Bryce**

Some local community leaders and volunteers in my ward, who run the 2000 Community Actions Centre, drew my attention to the fact that there had been a number incidents where members of the local community, particularly young black men, had been inappropriately treated and targeted by the police. I was shown videos, taken by independent observers, of incidents where men had been assaulted. There was also a high profile incident on Deptford High Street involving a local man who is active in the community and something of a role model to many <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2018/apr/25/the-brothers-who-were-searched-by-the-police-for-a-fist-bump>.

As someone with a background in criminology, who has worked with the police and advised them at a senior level in previous professional roles, I wanted to arrange a 'safe space' discussion with the men who had been targeted to give them an opportunity to talk about their experiences. The local Safer Neighborhoods Team did request to be involved in the meeting indicating a willingness to engage with the young men but after consulting the participants it was clear that many of them wouldn't have attended if police were invited, which only served to illustrate the level of distrust.

The meeting was arranged with the support of 2000 Community Action Centre and myself and my ward colleague Cllr Caroline Kalu met a group of around ten young men and listened to their stories. Each one of the men had been questioned by the police or had experienced what they described as 'stop and search' (though it could

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have been 'stop and account' or something else resembling 'stop and search' which may not have followed the formal process) at least once and most said it was a regular occurrence. It was also pointed out that many of the interactions hadn't been official or formal and to their knowledge the police hadn't made records. Consequently, it was felt that 'stop and search' was being used as a means to target and harass them and take advantage of the general lack of understanding of the limits of police power. It is important to note that the general consensus was that most of the incidents involved police officer from outside the borough without local knowledge. I was also informed that very few, if any, of the incidents resulted in any kind of arrest and none of the men had been charged for anything related to the incidents.

One of the men I spoke to had been chased by two plain clothed police officers who caught him and grabbed him and then asked why he ran from them to which he responded, fairly I feel, that most people would run from two plain clothed men who spontaneously decided to chase them. There was another incident where a man had incurred facial injuries due to being assaulted by police. It is clear that, in these cases and the majority of the cases I was told about, there were no reasonable grounds to believe that the individuals in question had been involved in a crime or were in possession of a weapon or prohibited item. It was also clear that the actions were not led by intelligence and if they were targeted it was driven by racial profiling rather than any justifiable, ethical or evidence-based factor.

Most alarming to me was that each one of the, without exception, indicated that formally complaining about police misconduct wouldn't even occur to them and, even more concerning, the majority couldn't imagine any circumstances in which they'd call the police if they were the victim of a crime.

Following this, I arranged a workshop led by Y-Stop, a stop and search project run by young people for young people, with the aim to inform the attendees of their rights and support them in diffusing situations and resolving conflict if targeted by police officers. The workshop was productive and was attended by about 15 young men from the community who developed a deeper understanding of their rights, the extent of police powers around stop and search and felt that were better equipped to deal with any future situations.

The community leaders who first highlighted the issues with me, and who are often the people who these issues are disclosed to by the men targeted, have expressed their willingness to seek solutions to the issue locally. In light of the regular 'stop and search' and related incidents, the community is communicating problems through Evelyn Safer Neighborhood panel. However, concerns have been raised that due to the Violent Task Force not including local officers on the panel or any direct liaison with the community the situation has gotten steadily worse, primarily due to the fact that these incidents are usually led by undercover police officers targeting and, in a number of occasions, chasing young people to check if they're carrying knives.

In conclusion, I submit to the Committee that police 'stop and search' powers, the lack of accountability for them and the misuse of these powers has led to a fundamental breakdown in trust resulting in a whole generation of BAME young men on the Pepys Estate feeling that they wouldn't voluntarily report to or engage with the police in any circumstances. As well as demonizing and, to a certain extent, isolating these young men from the authorities, this will inevitably lead to the police being unable to communicate with and work alongside sections of the community on the

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Pepys Estate when it comes to gathering intelligence or evidence relating to future crimes in the area. This, I believe, will have a broader detrimental impact on the safety of the wider community.

### 5. **Lewisham Youth Independent Advisory Group at Lewisham Police Station - Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019.**

- The group started a year ago and was designed to be a safe space for young people and a chance to chat to local Police and share concerns and ideas.
- The Police were working with schools. This was happening more now compared to the past but there was always room for improvement.
- There were 11 young women at the meeting and all felt that they didn't mind the idea of stop and search and it could make people feel safer but it was important it was done "fairly and politely".
- The young people reported that it could be a humiliating interaction and there should be more emphasis on respect and politeness.
- All the young people present felt it needed to be a clearer and regular and fairer process and there should be more understanding of your rights as a member of the public if you are stopped.
- Some concerns were raised that increasing searches may mean people stash knives therefore stop and search would be pointless and individuals involved in stashing would be missed and this would not actually help make communities safer. Weapons sweeps would therefore need to be more frequent too.
- Police and young people had worked together in schools to do workshops and role plays. This had been useful for Police and young people. Phil Turner from Second Wave was present at the meeting and commented that they did lots of work with Police and young people.
- A member of the Police present at the meeting felt looking at conversion rates did not show the full picture of how effective stop and search was. Often other issues were discovered through stop and search and could help with intelligence and wider issues.
- Often stop and search was around reports and complaints of ASB. Although offences around street drinking or drug use could be minor they could be having significantly negative effects on the local communities and this needed to be addressed.
- Sometime a Police presence could de-escalate a problem.
- Communication skills by the Police were important – Second Wave stated they were targeting probation officers who tended to be younger with their training and maybe they should be more focussed on older officers too.
- Those present felt communication with the public and communities should be a mandatory part of Police training.
- Police officers were encouraged to be polite – "thank you for time". Many of the young people present felt this did not always happen.
- The young people felt positive seeing Police from the BAME community. One reported how positive she felt when she saw a Black female officer and that the numbers should better reflect the community they serve.
- BAME representation was important as was having positive role models from different communities.
- Regarding body worn cameras, some young people present felt people were confused why they were being filmed. They would have liked to have understood this better before being confronted.
- The Police at the meeting felt positive about body worn cameras. They were often filmed by the public and it was important that they had their own records.

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- Some young people felt it would be good to have a rule about how many Police officers could carry out a stop and search on one individual as it could feel intimidating.
- One young person reported that they had experienced unkind remarks from the Police "young people like you like to stab people like me."
- Some young people felt there should be rules in place regarding the number of inexperienced officers working together and that there should always be more experienced officers present too.
- Communication beforehand was felt to be very important. Communities and the Police should work together.
- One young person suggested reminding police officers to put themselves in shoes of the person being searched.
- One commented on how female Police Officers may be better at deescalating situations.
- One person commented that Police should have the skill set to work with public because each interaction can shape opinion of the Police and the Policing system.
- The Police sometimes experience abuse such as being spat at and sworn at and sometimes assault. It was a challenging role. Police are human and could make mistakes and sometimes maybe people forget the challenges. Many do not enjoy carrying out stop and searches.
- The young people present all felt working in schools would be positive and Year 4 and 5 would be a good place to start.
- One officer commented that Stop and Search was highly politicised and sometimes seemed to be arbitrarily imposed or restricted from central government which was not necessarily helpful for community policing.

### **6. Somerville Adventure Playground Consultation – Thurs 31st Jan 2019**

As part of Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's review, the Council's Young Mayor's Team met Jacob Sakil, Senior Youth Supervisor at Somerville and approximately ten young people aged 10 -17 years to discuss the young people's views on the local community and relations with the Police.

The summary below lists the comments of the young people present:

#### **Things you like about the area?**

The variation of activities and ways to stay active; Safe youth clubs; Chicken shops; The role models we have already because it is a close community – Somerville Adventure Playground; Support for vulnerable young people; Adequate football/sports grounds in the area; Soutwark free swim and gym; Adventure is my favourite part about the area.

#### **Things you don't like?**

The violent acts/ groups; Stop and search; Late response/ignoring youth which increases the crime rate; Inadequate jobs in the area which increases the crime rate; Stereotypes about young people; Kids walking about when school is open; limited opportunities; The way the youth are portrayed; Older children bullying younger children; No support for care in the community/ isolated individuals

#### **How can you change this?**

More workshops around the area; Have more peer role models /inspiration; Creating more job opportunities for the youth; Teaching the authorities how to handle the youth

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and communicate/cooperate with them especially the police; Creating/planning for the youth by job opportunities/free gym and swim like in other areas

### **In what situations do you come across the police?**

Stop and search; knife crime; drug dealing; fights; Community police officers; Undercover police following me on the way home; When undercover cars slow down when they pass you; During primary school when you go into an altercation in school

### **What works?**

Undercover police; Body cameras (sometimes they turn them off); School officers – they know how to relate to YP better

### **What doesn't?**

Restraint; police being sarcastic; Saw first-hand officers attacking a girl in the van trying to restrain her; They don't listen to both sides of a story; Don't see police visible in Lewisham (new cross); Don't have accurate intelligence at times; They assume things that happen; They don't solve all cases; They think everyone is the same

### **What could be better between police and young people?**

Not being blamed for things that happen; Have a more positive attitude when engaging young people; Young People and police not jumping to conclusions; They should have better training when becoming PCs; They should deal with problems faster and let people know; When girls are stopped ask for a female officer; In youth clubs there should be a way to report incidents to the police; PCs information to be updated as people do change their lives around; Not to touch people without a reason; The narrative/story the police live in or believe

## **7. Interfaith Forum – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Councillor Morrison and Councillor Rathbone attended the Interfaith Forum at Lewisham Council on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February along with the Scrutiny Manager. Councillor Rathbone introduced Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's review into "stop and search, Prevent Policy and community relations" and invited members of the forum to share experiences and comments from their observations and from their communities and congregations.

During the discussion the following was highlighted by members of the forum:

- A member of the forum commented that the black community could feel particularly targeted by stop and search. If particularly communities were being disproportionately stopped those same communities would also be disproportionately criminalised.
- Other comments included that some of the community seemed to be concerned when you said "Police" and that the Muslim community sometimes felt particularly stigmatised and targeted by the Prevent policy. It could feel like communities were being spied upon. Those with the wrong concepts of Islam were likely to be reluctant to engage therefore there was a question as to whether it was effective. There was a feeling within the Muslim community that Prevent only targeted Muslims.
- A concern was raised about the purpose of the Safer Stronger Communities Committee's review and how it could make any difference. A member of the forum

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felt that Lewisham was nowhere near having good relations between the Police and Black youngsters and this had been raised in the past and nothing ever changed.

- A comment was made regarding the Prevent strategy in terms of the duty on schools and colleges. A member of the forum felt that the duty on educational institutions could make people feel more nervous around faith generally and suspicious of people with any faith. It was therefore felt that it could be counterproductive. It should be implemented differently to ensure it is not making people nervous about faith and damaging positive relations.
- Goldsmiths University was working on more multi-faith support for all. It was felt that it was positive for everyone to see different faiths and those of no faith working together.
- A comment was made that in the past, Prevent had made people feel very nervous. Some people would not engage with particular charities because they were working with Prevent and felt the organisations were taking money to “spy” on people. It appeared to be more open now. There was an event at Mitcham Mosque on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019 on a question time on the subject of Prevent.
- A member of the Forum commented that many teachers and lecturers felt like the Prevent duty felt like they were being asked to spy.
- All those present were invited to submit any further comments they wished to be considered to the Scrutiny Manager by Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

### 8. Young Advisors Meeting - 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Councillor Sophie Davis attended the Young Advisors meeting along with the Scrutiny Manager on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 to discuss the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee’s review and hear the opinions of the young people present. There were 22 young people present aged 11-20, all of whom live or go to school in Lewisham. The young people worked in groups to think about their experiences both positive and negative and what they felt helped positive relations and what hindered them. The young people listed the following key points:

#### **Positive experiences/things that had worked well:**

- A group of young people present at the meeting commented that they had been assaulted by a woman and the Police came and helped them and arrested the women.
- The Police working with young people in schools, through youth groups/young advisors.
- Y Stop – S.E.A.R.C.H cards and the Millennium Youth Media videos were really helpful in terms of young people understanding their rights.  
<https://www.release.org.uk/y-stop-project>
- One group of young people commented that stop and search meant people were less likely to carry knives because they were scared of being stopped and that would reduce knife crime.
- The Police bring safety to where we live.
- The Police are efficient.
- There can be positive effects on ex-convicts which can change their lives for the better.
- Ex-convicts/gang members giving assemblies/talks instead of the Police.

#### **Negative experiences/what doesn’t work:**

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- Disproportional use of force/restraint or power: A young person in the group stated that he had been called out of a lesson by Police Officers who had come to his school, he was hand-cuffed, searched and questioned all at school without his parents or any other supportive adults present. He was not charged with anything and the experience had had a negative effect on his trust in the Police.
- The Police not listening or understanding your point of view. They should not make assumptions but listen to both/all sides of the story.
- Being stopped repeatedly: A young person commented that he was stopped three times on the same road.
- Lack of understanding between Police and young people: A group of young people commented that if people spoke in particularly ways or used slang etc. the Police may not fully understand them and be quick to jump to conclusions. Also if the Police used terms that were not clear to young people this could be intimidating and not help a positive interaction.
- Underage children being stopped and searched with no adults present.
- When help/advice was sought of the Police and they did not respond.
- Sometimes people were stereotyped by the Police based on how they looked/dresses/where they lived.
- Interactions could be intimidating for example when the Police pull up in vans and 6 Police officers for one suspect.
- Stop and search not actually seeming necessary.
- Interactions should be more polite.
- School officers are not useful they are just “standbys”