Seventh meeting of the Tower Hamlets Community Monitoring Group ('CMG')

12 March 2025

In attendance

Mirren Gidda ('MG') - Tower Hamlets CMG Chair
Tristan Manetta ('TM') - Tower Hamlets CMG volunteer
Chervonne N'Defo ('CN') - Programme Officer, Community Engagement MOPAC
Paul Oladimeji ('PO') - Inspector, Metropolitan Police ('MPS')
Vicky Tunstall ('VT') - Detective Superintendent, Metropolitan Police ('MPS')
Dionne Wilson-Brown ('DWB') - Community Engagement Officer MOPAC

1. Welcome and introductions

MG welcomed attendees and opened the meeting.

2. Action Plan and Recruitment

MG provided an update on recruitment - MOPAC has arranged for Tower Hamlets Council and Tower Hamlets CVS to publicise the CMG's recruitment drive. MG had written a job advert for both. CN confirmed that the advert, to be published by Tower Hamlets Council, will go live in the coming week once the imagery is finalised. CN is chasing Tower Hamlets CVS.

3. Chair's update on action plan

MG noted that there is an action for her to attend Community Safety Partnership meetings and connect with other groups doing police scrutiny or advisory work, some of which do not share the same views as the CMG. She has not been able to do this due to capacity but it remains an ongoing action item.

MG discussed how the group could reach more volunteers and publicise its work. MG and TM have discussed doing some flyering around this. MOPAC agreed to find out whether the CMG can make edits to the content of a police QR code, which is given to people following a stop and search.

4. Memorandum of Understanding ('MOU') and feedback document

[Note for readers: The Tower Hamlets CMG, in discussion with the Met and MOPAC, is adopting a new scrutiny model that gives it broader powers. It is very much hoped that this will allow it to better hold the police to account. As part of adopting this new model, MOPAC has drawn up a MOU that sets out the CMG's role and function. The CMG has also adopted a feedback document used by a group in Hackney (more below) that allows it to rate stop and search Body Worn Video clips it views. Depending on the rating, the document sets out certain further actions that the Met must take. MG had made amendments to this document that were discussed at the CMG meeting.]

VT shared that the MOU has not yet been signed off and she would like it to align more closely with the Hackney pilot [note to readers: a Local Police Scrutiny Panel is being trialled in Hackney. Hackney and the Tower Hamlets CMG have different areas of focus in terms of scrutiny] and pan-London transformation work.

MG expressed frustration, noting that the CMG and MOPAC had reviewed the document and understood that it was ready to proceed, with MG having made changes following the last CMG meeting at the Met's request. VT clarified the MOU is not on hold but needs further alignment work.

Concerns raised by VT included:

- **Section 60:** VT noted potential conflicts of interest where individuals both advise and scrutinise police. MG explained she is contacted by the Met when it is considering putting a s60 in place. This has happened twice and both times MG has been critical of the decision and urged a different approach. MG sees this as falling within her scrutiny role and does not consider it to be advising the police. The CMG does not ever advise the police.

- **RAG Rating System:** [Note to readers: when the CMG watches Body Worn Video clips of stop and searches, it rates them "Red", "Amber" or "Green", in line with what Hackney does. MG added "Neutral" for when stop and searches are compliant but there is nothing positive to say about them. She also wanted to add a "Severe Red" for stop and searches that might, at their highest, necessitate officer expulsion/Met self-referral to the IOPC]. VT queried whether "Neutral" is necessary. Agreed to keep it as an option but remove the need for feedback to be provided. VT said "Severe Red" could not be accepted but will be discussed as part of the broader pan-London work on reforming police scrutiny processes. [Note to readers: the CMG has removed "Severe Red" but considers that where it sees clips of that type, it will still push for the strongest possible response, including IOPC self-referral]. MG asked if additional actions could be listed under the "Red" category; i.e., where the CMG rates a Body Worn Video clip as "Red" what is the full list of possible outcomes for the officer involved? VT explained the feedback document reflects all the outcomes but she will clarify this in the document as various acronyms were used.

==ACTION: VT to make amendments to MOU and feedback document==

5. Feedback Process

MG raised concerns that the CMG has been using the new "Red, Amber, Green" feedback system but its feedback has not been passed on to officers. Instead, staff at the Met have replied and said they did not consider the feedback needed to be passed on. VT clarified all feedback, positive or negative, should be passed on, save in exceptional circumstances. It was agreed the MOU would be amended to reflect this. It was also agreed that the form the CMG uses to record feedback is quite long and a simplified version will be extracted and shared with the Met so feedback can be more clearly seen and actioned.

==ACTIONS: MOPAC and CMG to update the MOU to reflect feedback processes. MG to provide suggested wording. PO to pass all of the CMG's previous feedback to officers==

6. Most Stopped Young Persons pilot project

[Note to readers: The CMG was told that the Met has been collecting data on the most stopped young people in London. The CMG obviously wants to know if this impacts young people in Tower Hamlets and the extent to which they are being stopped and who is being stopped demographically]. PO shared that the list of most stopped young people did include young people from Tower Hamlets but did not have further specifics.

ACTION: MG to email Met central stop and search team and get further data

7. Swallowing of Drugs Policy

[Note to readers: The CMG watched a Body Worn Video clip where someone was believed to be holding drugs in their mouth. The CMG had concerns that force was used to get the drugs and an ambulance not immediately called. MG had asked PO to find out what Met best practice is where someone is holding drugs in their mouth/has swallowed drugs.]

PO advised it is to:

1. Prioritise person's safety
2. Immediately call an ambulance
3. Ensure if any force is used, their head is down and they are tilted forwards

MG highlighted that recent BWV footage did not appear to reflect this guidance.

ACTION: PO to email Tower Hamlets and Hackney officers reminding them of the correct policy and to ensure their training is up to date

8. Stop and Search Training

MG updated she is due to watch a police stop and search training to see what officers are taught. Awaiting times from organiser.

9. Serious concerns about police officer

[Note to readers: The CMG raised serious concerns about a Bethnal Green police officer following a stop and search clip it viewed last year. The CMG has been chasing to find out the outcome of this.]

VT confirmed there were some minor points of learning relating to PC ED but not in relation to use of force. Due to data protection, specifics cannot be shared. MG asked if there was anything further that could be shared and if she could know why no concerns about use of force were raised.

ACTION: VT to follow up with Professional Standards regarding the rationale behind the use-of-force decision

10. BWV Letter

[Note to readers: The CMG learned that where someone has been subject to a stop and search and the associated Body Worn Video clip has been viewed by the CMG, the Met would write to them and notify them that the clip had been seen. MG had edited that letter to provide the CMG's contact details and state that the CMG could assist with making a complaint. The Met then took legal advice and considered it might not be able to share the letter at all for data protection reasons.]

VT updated that the letter remains on hold, with no current update.

11. Community Feedback

MG shared that the community had raised concerns about officers asking individuals for immigration status during stops. MG mentioned it had specifically been raised around food delivery drivers being stopped and asked for their immigration status. PO said immigration status will be asked where there is "reasonable suspicion" someone might be in the UK unlawfully. MG asked if officers are told to look out for this or if they have any training. The answer seemed to be "no". Paul suggested officers would ask for immigration status based on intelligence.

MG shared the community also had concerns around use of facial recognition. VT said there is a facial recognition van for the whole of London and Tower Hamlets has to "bid" for it. It will be positioned in areas with high footfall but also where there is space for the van to be parked. VT said it has been used twice in the last 18 months in Tower Hamlets with a high success rate.

ACTION: MG said she would send written follow-up questions to the police as concerns remained around both issues

12. AOB

None.