

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

3 December 2024

In attendance

Alice Bird ('AB') – Programme Manager, Community Engagement, MOPAC

Mirren Gidda ('MG') - Tower Hamlets CMG Chair

Chervonne N'Defo ('CN') - Programme Officer, Community Engagement MOPAC

Paul Oladimeji ('PO') - Inspector, Metropolitan Police ('MPS')

Vicky Tunstall ('VT') - Detective Superintendent, Metropolitan Police ('MPS')

1. Welcome/introductions

Apologies from Tristan Manetta noted.

2. Minutes from last meeting

Those present agreed the minutes from the previous meeting, MG confirmed that she would upload the minutes to the website and noted that she had uploaded a redacted version of the form the CMG completed at the last Body-Worn Video viewing session. VT queried whether the data protection agreement relating to the CMG covers the redacted form being published. AB confirmed that she saw no issue as long as personal details are redacted but was happy to get a second opinion from MOPAC's data team.

ACTION: AB to speak to MOPAC's data team regarding publishing redacted spreadsheet on the website

3. Chair to update on action plan completed items and outstanding items

MG went through the action plan, she noted the completed actions, which included updating the website so it now has a "know your rights" section but noted that in future it would be good to have the resource to commission additional information.

MG asked PO about the outstanding action related to passing on the CMG's feedback for the July BWV viewings. These actions had been allocated to Insp Thomas Vie [note for readers: previous inspector engaging with the CMG], and MG just wanted to ensure they were carried over and actioned. PO provided MG with feedback.

MG also raised another action which had been assigned to Insp Vie, which related to getting the CMG's written feedback for the BWV viewing which had happened in April, so she could publish it on the CMG's website. PO noted he had got these notes and was happy to give them to MG, but requested that she return them to the police station, to ensure that they were properly destroyed afterwards.

ACTION: MG to return April BWV notes to PO/Bethnal Green police station

The group then discussed the actions relating to other stop and search initiatives being done in the borough. PO mentioned that the MPS were looking into the young people who are frequently searched in the borough and working with other statutory agencies to identify support for those children to address any underlying safeguarding issues. MG asked if this is linked to previous initiatives the MPS ran where the top 10 most stopped individuals were identified in each borough. MG noted that it was important to consider the outcome of the stops, not just that the stop occurred. MG asked if the most stopped young people are also on managed cohorts (e.g. the former Gang's Matrix), the MPS said they were not sure.

ACTION: MG to seek an update on this

MG also noted the actions around wider work on improving stop and search. MG asked about the Op Coniston results [note to reader: an initiative by Tower Hamlets police for sergeants to review individual stop and searches and provide feedback on them]. PO noted he did not have the results and was unsure if this project would be repeated. It was also noted that there was an action on MG attending stop and search training of officers that was still open. PO noted that he would have a look at this.

VT noted that there was also going to be a lot of work going on internally in the borough to update officers on the expectations around stop and search, this will be done through materials added to SharePoint pages. VT flagged that the MPS were working on a doctrine of expectations, which would set out how stop and search should be used. MG asked if it was possible for the CMG to be able to be involved in the development of these materials. VT confirmed that there should be some scope for this.

ACTION: MPS to brief the CMG on stop and search doctrine of expectations and how CMG can help shape this

AB noted she had spoken to the MPS' central stop and search team and that they had paused sending out the letters to people whose stop and searches the CMG has watched due to the conversation held at the CMN [note to reader: please see previous minutes for more on this]. The central stop and search team recognised both the interest and expertise in the TH CMG and noted that if the borough wants to take its own approach in sending out these letters then they were happy for them to do so. VT noted that she would need to check about GDPR concerns and resourcing before committing to this fully.

ACTION: VT to get sign off on running the follow up letter process internally

AB confirmed she was due to meet with the QR lead for the borough shortly and would ask about the scope for the CMG to be able to shape the content that the QR code links to [note for readers: the QR code is offered by officers following a stop and search. It provides information for people who have been subjected to a stop and search].

ACTION: AB to update on this

In the action plan was an action to agree a process for the police to respond to the CMG's feedback following BWV viewings. At this meeting, the below process was agreed. BWV viewings will take place monthly with times agreed at the CMG bi-monthly meetings.

- BWV viewing session takes place and CMG members fill out Microsoft feedback form
- MOPAC receives a spreadsheet that is automatically generated from the Microsoft form
- MOPAC will forward this spreadsheet back to CMG Chair and MPS for action the next working day
- MPS will take pre-agreed actions based on the CMG's assessment of and feedback on the BWV over the next four weeks and will send an email update to the Chair confirming actions taken
- Further information following the actions taken will then be collated and emailed back to the CMG and MOPAC
- It will then be reviewed and discussed with the whole CMG at the bi-monthly CMG meeting

There were further comments on the BWV feedback form, including what actions can be taken if the CMG rates a BWV viewing as "Red".

ACTION: Paul to provide a list of outcomes that can result when a member of the public makes a serious complaint or the Met flags a serious complaint so that the CMG can consider what can be added to red

MG requested that there be an addition to the current traffic light system, saying that the current "Red" was not wide enough to cover extremely concerning behavior. AB noted that other groups have agreed that if they see a severe "Red", this can trigger a referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct ('IOPC'). AB then suggested that the process if the CMG identifies a "Severe Red" should be that the Met refers itself to the IOPC or provides a written response to the CMG noting why the MPS will not pursue that route and what they are doing instead. VT said she would ask for sign off on this issue.

ACTION: VT to gain sign off on process around "Severe Red"

Another action related to the agreement of a memorandum of understanding ('MOU') between the CMG and MPS. A draft version of the MOU was discussed. Agreement was reached on almost all points requested by the CMG in the previous meeting, with the caveat that both parties would need to see exact wording used before fully committing.

Issues which are currently outstanding and cannot be accommodated in the current MOU relate to the process around contacting those who have been stopped and searched after the fact by letter (see above for more). There is also an outstanding matter regarding the CMG's ability to be interested parties in the complaints process; currently this cannot be part of the MOU for the CMGs but all parties want to keep this under review, ensuring that this issue is revisited and considered as part of the wider work looking at scrutiny transformation.

ACTION: AB to circulate MOU to MPS and CMG for final sign off

Another action related to a FOI MG had submitted on handcuffing in stop and search, which had been refused on cost grounds. MG asked if VT would be able to provide the data which had been requested. AB noted the specific ask may be difficult as the MPS often struggles to pair use of force, stop and search and handcuffing consistently. VT noted that she couldn't generate this data and noted that MG should refine and resubmit the FOI.

Lastly, MG noted an issue has arisen as Tower Hamlets Council has refused to pay the money the CMG had been granted through the SNB fund. CN confirmed that a way around that had been identified, and she would be in contact to support MG with getting payment.

4. Paul to update on BWV feedback

As the current feedback process had not been agreed, PO did not have an update against actions for the November and October viewings. PO agreed to obtain the updates and bring these to the CMG by Jan 2025.

5. Discussion on community outreach, including making edits to QR code

Covered under Item 3.

6. Update on plans for future of group

Covered under Item 3.

7. AOB

N/A.