

## Minutes of Meeting 33

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007

Plymouth Pavilions

### ATTENDANCE

Andy: Intercom Trust  
Kay: Gender Trust  
Michael: Intercom (Chair)  
Nic: Western Boys  
Paul: Eddystone Trust  
Rhea: Independent Member  
Tess: Intercom Trust  
Tony: Deputy Chief Constable  
**Visitor:**  
Superintendent Chris Singer, Plymouth BCU

### APOLOGIES

Carl: Police Authority  
Danny: Eddystone Trust  
John: Force Diversity Inspector  
Juliet: Force Diversity Manager  
Keith: Independent member  
Mark 1: RESPECT Youth Group  
Mark 2: Plymouth Pride Forum  
Sorrel: FFLAG  
Teresa: Force Diversity Officer

The meeting opened at 10:15am.

### *Welcome and introductions*

Michael welcomed DCC Tony Melville and Supt Chris Singer to the Group.

### *Minutes and matters arising*

Nic said that page two, paragraph one of the last minutes should read that it was he who “raised concerns that there was not a separate category for transphobic crime”. Tony questioned the statement on page two, paragraph five—“performance management will now be undertaken by the Police Authority to hold BCU commanders to account”—as his understanding was that the Police Authority held the Chief Constable to account, who in turn held the Police Service to account—including the BCU Commanders.

Chris said, with regard to the Arthur Eathorne case discussed at the last meeting, that there was potential for Robert Kennedy to be released and Middlemoor’s media strategy team were working on ways of tackling issues arising from this possible outcome. Michael re-iterated the Group’s concern that they had not been forewarned about the evidence that proved crucial to the Review board. The Group felt it was important that they should in due course work with Middlemoor’s media strategy team as soon as the final decision on the appeal is known. John had been asked to make enquiries about this case and Michael said that he will chase this up.

**Action: Michael to contact John re: Eathorne case**

Also, to be carried forward:

**Action: John to locate street-preaching guidelines**

**1. Welcome to the Deputy Chief Constable. Discussion of Police representation and Group membership. Future activities.**

Tony clarified his role which includes performance improvement, assets and resources, corporate planning, budget overview, professional standards, code of conduct, legal issues, disciplinary cases, anti-corruption, cold case review and diversity. Tony also clarified the current staffing within the Chief Officer group. Bob Spencer will be Acting Chief Constable for one year, responsible for territorial policing and criminal justice. Michael noted that territorial policing is particularly important for the Group as there is significant inconsistency across the four BCUs. Tony went on to say that Nigel Holt is the Director of Human Resources and Colin Papworth is acting as Director of Finance and Resources. All three Assistant Chief Constable posts are currently vacant. There is a national shortage of officers who have completed the Strategic Command course—the barrel is dry in terms of qualified candidates. However, on 4 May, officers will be selected to ‘act up’ in those roles for one year. Tony acknowledged that an interim Chief Officer Group would bring a range of challenges.

Tony assured the Group that he has a strong commitment to the PLG but that he must ensure balance across his portfolio, which includes ensuring a similar commitment to the Race and Disability IAGs. Hence he will be unable to attend every meeting. In order to ensure strong Police presence on the Group, Tony proposed that work be done to organise attendance of a senior officer at every meeting. The police would need a clear idea of which areas will be scrutinised in advance, so that the most appropriate senior officer holding this policy area can be selected to attend. Tony felt that this approach would also strengthen the PLG’s influence within the wider Chief Officer group.

Michael noted the importance of having the Deputy Chief Constable attend the Group and the possibility for positive change this brought with it—Nigel’s enthusiasm had been vital for the Group in the past. However, the Group felt that the Group has massive potential and could be much more effective than before under the arrangements proposed by Tony. The Chief Superintendent attending has to be the right person to take back the Group’s concerns and ensure they are heard and addressed at a higher level. Tony suggested that the Group’s administrators should liaise with Juliet to decide the most appropriate officer to attend each meeting. It was decided that ACC Bob Spencer should be invited to attend at his first convenience to discuss territorial policing and the Group’s anxieties over consistent corporate standards. Tony felt that better liaison between the Group and the Police was needed and pointed out that Juliet’s Performance and Development Review included better dialogue. Tony said that for those interested in more information the PDRs are posted on the internet.

Nic said that he welcomed better communication but was keen to see information filter down through the ranks more efficiently than in the past. Tony said that senior officers were currently going and personally checking that things are being followed up. Tess said that while it would be very positive for the Group to work with the wider circle of Chief Officers, and so have a range of experience to draw on, the concern is that it might be difficult to move things forward with no consistency in attendance. Any points for action identified with a particular officer would be likely to lose momentum if that officer could not attend the following meeting.

It was agreed that senior officers attending would brief the Diversity Unit about developments after the meeting, and that the Diversity Unit will ensure that each meeting is attended by someone who will liaise with the member of the Unit who is scheduled to attend the next meeting, and make sure they are equipped to respond about actions.

**Action: Force Diversity Unit**

Andy said that he welcomed what Tony had said and looked forward to seeing changes at the top filter down through the BCUs.

The Group also spoke about the importance of senior officers discussing proposals with the Group before decisions are made so that consultation can be included in the final draft of documents. Tony said this made sense but that final decisions would have to rest with the Police. Michael encouraged members to read documentation thoroughly and bring feedback. Michael also suggested that he work with Juliet to triage documents so as to try make the most efficient use of the Group members' valuable time. Andy made the point that it is so important for the Group to receive feedback on the hard work they put in or at least receive an explanation as to why a proposal wouldn't work.

The Group went on to discuss membership levels and the effort that should be made to encourage new members to the PLG. It was noted that potential new members were welcome to have spectator status before making a formal application to join the Group. Rhea suggested that interested parties who were unable to attend the Group could act as advisors by reading policies/documents and sending in feedback. This would bring additional resources, skills and support from those prevented from attending by other commitments. The importance of having the Group featured on the Police website was raised and Tony said he would chase this up.

**Action: Tony to ensure D&CC website features the IAGs**

Rhea asked that a document, by way of introduction to the Group, could be written for interested parties to explain the role of the IAG. Michael noted that as Intercom is currently working on their new website it was a good time to be raising this issue and producing this introductory document.

**Action: Michael to work on PLG part of website/introductory document**

## **2. Superintendent Chris Singer: Plymouth policing**

Chris firstly outlined the main responsibilities of his role: performance and partnerships, diversity, and business standards. He went on to say that he was aware that Plymouth was not one of the best performing BCUs for reporting. Michael pointed out that rather than comparing the levels of reporting between different types of phobic crime, that the real discrepancy actually lies between the level of reporting and the number of incidents – all reporting levels are alarmingly low.

Chris went on to talk about neighbourhood priorities, which for Plymouth include anti-social behaviour and youth offending. There is a community justice scheme being developed which is aiming to make justice relevant to the communities affected by it. It will be piloted in eleven areas across the country and centres around the need for magistrates to have a good understanding of community issues and to sentence accordingly. This scheme would also include working with groups on any particular issues that arose out of the process. Rhea had concerns over who would be consulted and that diversity issues might not be taken into account. Michael noted that

neighbourhood priorities are geographic priorities and that geographically-based consultation will in effect exclude (say) LGBT young people in Plymouth. Michael felt that LGBT people need to be viewed as an extended neighbourhood across Devon and Cornwall.

Chris said that 16 May is the start-up date for the community justice scheme and clarified that it would only cover those crimes that would have usually gone to first hearing (shop-lifting, harassment, etc.)—serious crimes beyond the remit of magistrates would be heard in Crown Court as usual. The process would also involve community impact statements – the Group had huge concerns over who would prepare these statements and about the fact that nobody on the Group had been informed about this scheme. Michael queried why it hadn't appeared at any of the LCJB sub-group meetings. Given the importance of the issue Michael suggested that a separate sub-meeting be organised with Chris, the Race IAG, the CPS and those members of the PLG who would like to continue the discussion. Paul asked that everyone be briefed before the meeting.

**Action: Michael to organise meeting for interested parties**

The lack of better performance indicators was raised as it was felt that there currently is currently no good method of evaluating satisfaction with the police service. It was felt this should be given its own agenda item at a later date.

**Action: Evaluation of performance indicators to be put on subsequent agenda**

Rhea enquired about the Plymouth Policing Board which Chris informed the Group was being put together to assist in delivery and was being led by the Police Authority. The Group felt they would like more information on this.

**Action: Michael to approach Acting Chief Supt Elaine Marshall for information**

### **3. *Improving reporting of phobic crime: discussion and action points.***

Michael re-iterated that Intercom's Firmer Foundation report indicated a high level of phobic crime against LGBT people. Nic said that in his area there was lots of persistent low-level crime. He felt that while there were some exceptional officers there was a feeling of apathy and many believe that the Police will not do anything about low-level crime and so wouldn't report it whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity. It was felt that if the public could see low-level crime being tackled that that would increase confidence in reporting.

Andy said that he had been working with Teresa, Juliet, Paul, Daniel, Police Officers and The Laurels on a Safer Cruising project. This project is working to inform people of precautions to take when cruising, and to increase trust and confidence in reporting. The project will include piloting reporting centres in Devon. This would involve providing training for people to third party report and also providing training for Police call-handlers. The idea of calls being put straight through to Diversity Units was raised but it was felt that everyone taking the calls should be equipped to respond appropriately. However, Andy explained that the training for call-handlers is holding the project up and without the skills in place to deal with demand effectively they can't promote the project. They had hoped to have it all set up by the summer as the demand for the service will be greater with the influx of tourists.

The Group was informed that there were continuing concerns about the quality of response received by people calling the Police call-centres. Tony said that he had been calling a number of

victims every month and listening to pulled tapes of their calls to the Police. He was not surprised to hear that there was dissatisfaction and felt that the training would be invaluable. He also highlighted that one problem is the high turnover rate of call-handlers and the Police needed to work on retaining them in order to deliver better consistency of service. Tony also felt that there can sometimes be a reluctance to re-train. The PLG unanimously expressed their concern over the delay in the training of call-handlers and asked that the service remove any barriers as soon as possible.

**Action: Michael to write formally over Group's concerns**

Michael, Tess and Andy had to leave at 12:00am and the meeting continued with Nic as Chair.