

**St Anne's Hall  
Vauxhall Grove  
SW8 1TB**

**RESENT:** CPCG BOAR Paul Andell (Ind. Memb.), Wesley tephenson (Your Story) Vi-Chairpersons, Shane Collins, Gill Kenealy Ind. Membs.), Paul Reynolds (Herne Hill Society), Jim Toohill (Victi support Lambeth), dul Sultan Virani (Lambeth Older Persons' Forum), **COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHI** Nick Abengowe (Herne ill Forum), Wally Channon, Peggy Tyler (Clapham Town N'hood Watch), eil Flanigan (West Indian -Servicemen/Ex-Service Women Assoc.), tuart Horwd (Brixton Market Traders Assoc.), Lloyd Leon (Brixton omino Club), David Prich-Jones (Lambeth Older Persons Forum), azel Saunders (Victim Support), David Tomlinson (Stockwell Pa esidents' Assoc.), John Wainwright (Clapham Sector Working Party) **DIVIDUAL MEMBERS:** Peter Harris, Lena James, Richard Moore, ernando Senior, Jane Warwic**STATUTORY MEMBERSHIP:** John oberts MPA LAMBETH COUNCIL: Cllr. Kingsley Abrams, Cllr. Ma ennett, Cllr. Darren Sanders, Cllr. Graham Pycock **METROPOLITA OLICE SERCE:** Supt. Stewart Low, Ch. Insp. Sean Wilson, Sgt. ichard Sparks (TOCU), Sgt. Ronnie Whelan **BRITISH TRANSPOR OLICE** Supt. Ellie Bird, Inps. Ian Mixt**SECRETARIAT:** Ben McKendrick **AFER NEIGHBOURHOOD** Veronica Barnard (Larkhall) **VISITORS IGNING :** Hope Barrett, Richard G. Dutton, John Howard

**POLOGIES** Doye Akinlade, Chris Adamson, Ivelaw Bowman, Rod rown, David Corderoy, Maud Estwick, Rowena Estwick, David Hart, Cil gel Haselden, Brian Mantell, Ros Mundy, Graham Nicholls, Yvonr kiyu, Anna Tsell, Hazel Watson

\* Minutes in ***bold italic*** indicate action points

**Information from Board/Group**

A CPCG briefing paper for June had been circulated.

**Minutes of the Meeting 1 May 2007**

The Minutes of the Meeting 1 May 2007 were accepted with the following amendment:

add Graham Nicholls to those present.

Para. 18. Add to last line. John Howard also congratulated Mr Bridger on the yearly crime statistics and said that Stuart Horwood had congratulated Ch. Supt. Low at the previous meeting for clearing up drug dealing in Brixton Market.

Para. 27. Add to last line. Stuart Horwood suggested to Mr Harding that Community Safety put a stall in Brixton Market to spread the news about their good works.

Para 34. Line 2. Change Ethiopian World Foundation to Ethiopian World Federation, Negusa Negast.

**atters Arising**

With regard to a question from Lloyd Leon about the frequency of the use of Section 60, Jim Toohill said that it had been answered in the Group's Briefing Paper for June. Mr Toohill

added that the use of S.60 in Lambeth was low in contrast to other boroughs.

- 8 Para 43. Mr Toohill explained that the specially convened meeting for Safer Neighbourhood Panels (SNP), which Anna Tapsell had referred to, would take place on 6 June with SNP chairs, the police and Lambeth councillors and officers invited.
- 9 In view of the concerns that many people had following the raid on the Rastafarian Temple on 13 April, David Prichard-Jones proposed that the Group set aside all other business and deal exclusively with that matter at the present meeting. Mr Toohill said that while that would not be possible, an EGM could be called if necessary.
- 10 Mr Leon agreed that the matter of the Rastafarian Temple needed to be discussed at some stage, saying that the destruction of the Temple following the raid was comparable to the way police conducted raids in the 1980s. Mr Leon said that the word on the street was that there had been collusion between the Council and police and that a Taser had been used. He added that the police had also been refused permission by Camberwell Magistrates' Court to close the building because no Class A drugs had been found.
- 11 Mr Toohill proposed that the Group look at a pragmatic, rather than formal, way of organising a meeting about the Temple if enough people were interested. If so, he said that the Group's Board would decide on a date.

**Virtual Courts**

- 12 Miles Dagnall, Project Director, and Ch. Insp. Sean Wilson, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Virtual Courts (VC) project (see attached), a means of using video conferencing technology and a shared, collaborative virtual space for documents in order that preliminary hearings could be conducted between police stations and the court.
- 13 Mr Dagnall said that the VC prototype was being run for twelve weeks from Brixton, Kennington, Peckham and Walworth police stations with cases heard at Camberwell Magistrates' Court. Once finished, an independent evaluation would be undertaken. Mr Dagnall explained that he had had a court service background and had been seconded to the London Criminal Justice Board (CJB), which essentially tried to coordinate the management of the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

Mr Dagnall said that, historically, many people would agree that the different agencies involved in the CJS in London did not always move in the same direction, at the same time, speed and place. Furthermore, he said research showed that people were concerned about the slowness of the CJS, and as such the VC project was attempting to test how cases could be concluded more quickly whilst retaining all the elements of fairness and balance currently enjoyed in the normal court process.

Mr Dagnall said that the VC project was not a pilot i.e. something that was conducted today to be rolled out the following day. Instead, he said that it was generally unknown what they would find until the project had been tested and evaluated

As well as the VC project, Mr Dagnall said that there were other projects ongoing that were also aimed at increasing the speed and accuracy of bringing cases before the courts and keeping bureaucracy to a minimum. Mr Dagnall stressed that the process depended on defendants maintaining their consent and, already, in some cases they had rescinded their cooperation.

Since the launch of the VC on 29 May, several cases had been heard using the system, which raised a number of questions: Was it worth it? Did it bring benefits to all the agencies involved? Did it speed up justice? What were the costs? Mr Dagnall said that such questions would form part of the evaluation which would take place after 24 August when the project ended. The results of the evaluation would determine any decision by the London CJB to go any further with VCs.

Mr Dagnall said that the VC process was developed by frontline workers i.e. custody sergeants, court clerks and administrators, and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and defence lawyers and thus far it had worked well. He added that another test for the VC was a four week trial of extending them into evening sessions.

Ch. Insp. Wilson went through the VC process (see attached) and emphasised that VCs did not constitute trials but were first case management hearings that allowed courts to filter out those who were going to plead guilty, who may otherwise clog up the system, and those going to plead not guilty, for whom certain directions could be taken i.e. determining what was needed for such cases to successfully go to trial.

- 20 Ch. Insp. Wilson said that he believed that VCs would give a much speedier delivery of criminal justice and would also add an element of proportionality to it. Many of the cases that went through the courts, he said, were those such as breach of bail, failure to attend court or wanted on warrant, and VCs would reduce the non-appearance of defendants and missing papers and personnel.
- 21 In response to Richard Moore's concern about justice being seen to be done, Mr Dagnall said that in terms of public visibility, the screens in the courts were open to viewing by the public in much the same way all court proceedings were open, and therefore there was no change to the public scrutiny element of the process. He added that VCs were a response to what Londoners wanted in terms of a prompt response to criminal justice situations.
- 22 In response to Neil Flanigan, Mr Dagnall said that in terms of a guilty plea being taken into consideration in a VC, normal court processes would be applied and there was keenness that the evaluation should show that there was no advantage or disadvantage to opting to go through the VC process, whether pleading guilty or not guilty.
- 23 In response to Lloyd Leon, Ch. Insp. Wilson said that while the CPS were responsible for bringing charges, the police did have the power to bring charges for certain minor offences which they did through the custody sergeant.
- 24 In response to Jane Warwick, Ch. Insp. Wilson said the option for going through the VC process depended on when a person was charged, not arrested. Therefore, persons charged between 9.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. would be offered the VC facility. With regard to going through the process, Ch. Insp. Wilson said that magistrates would satisfy themselves that defendants were happy to do so by questioning them, particularly those who were unrepresented.
- 25 In response to John Wainwright, Ch. Insp. Wilson said that in relation to pre-charging intelligence interviews, that once charged the matter was outside of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which did not cover the period from charge to the court process. The VC was about a first case management hearing, an administrative matter and not an intelligence interview.
- 26 In response to Richard Dutton, Ch. Insp. Wilson said that all four police stations being used for VC project had disabled access.

In response to Lloyd Leon, Ch. Insp. Wilson said that first case hearings lasted little more than five minutes and that he had not had any complaints about any Interview Room at Brixton police station being too hot, although he would keep an eye on the matter.

Arulini Velmurugu contested the accessibility of Kennington police station for disabled people in wheelchairs as the ramp was too steep. In response, Ch. Insp. Wilson said that the MPS Public Services Department had checked the ramp and, as he understood it, had deemed it acceptable for wheelchair users.

Ch. Insp. Wilson said that VC officers had received specific training in diversity and law but not in handling prisoners, who were escorted into interview rooms by designated detention officers.

In terms of benefits in relation to costs, speedier resolutions, justice for victims and savings, John Howard said it was cut price justice dispensed by a toy court. In response, Mr Dagnall said that in relation to costs the investment, not least in technology, was quite high and could not be considered cost-cutting justice. With regard to VCs being proper courts, Mr Dagnall said that he did not think they would be suitable for trial and were only being tested for first case management hearings. However, he added that they may be suitable for deciding whether a case should go to a crown quickly.

Mr Toohill said that while there were potential benefits in terms of speed in resolving cases there were concerns about accuracy and the non-neutrality of police stations as a place for delivering justice and hoped that views of defendants would form part of the evaluation.

Mr Dagnall said the evaluation would be carried out by Cap Gemini but subjective evaluation was also being conducted by which defendants' experiences were being captured through a questionnaire interview and some useful data had already been collated.

Bernard Horsford, London CJB, said that there was whole stream of evaluations looking at how the VC process impacted on people with disabilities, mental health issues and BME members of the community, not just by Cap Gemini but also people from within the community who could advise London CJB. In relation to accessibility, Mr Horsford said that it had been realised that some police stations didn't have the full range of accessibility, but they would be built into the requirements for the later stages if the process rolled out.

- 34 Stuart Horwood expressed his concerns that under the VC process that drug dealers arrested in Brixton Market could find themselves back on streets within an hour or two. In response, Ch. Supt. Wilson said the idea of the VC was not to set people free onto the streets any earlier than the investigating officer was able to conclude an initial investigation, and it was unlikely that drug dealers would be released within an hour or two.
- 35 A member of the Rastafarian Temple asked what impact assessment had been made in terms of training for officers in dealing with disabled people, since when the Temple was raided she alleged that a person who had identified himself as disabled was treated more harshly.
- 36 John Howard asked which people would be advising on the VC process and where the VC project fitted in with the Carter Report regarding legal aid. He added that he thought that annexation was occurring.
- 37 Mr Horsford said that the London CJB had an ongoing Independent Advisory Group, made up of well known experts in equality and diversity, who would advise on the impact assessment. A list of the IAG members could be found on the London CJB business plan. As far the Carter Report was concerned and the impact on legal aid, Bernard said it was something of which everyone was aware and part of the impact assessment would involve consultation with Black Lawyers Society, Association of Muslim Lawyers, Black Christian Network and other concerned, key bodies.
- 38 With regard to the Probation Service, which sat on the London CJB, Mr Horsford said that they had been involved in the design of VC project right from the start.
- 39 In relation to the Carter Report, Mr Dagnall said that the VC project couldn't have been launched at a worse time because of the difficulties between the defence community and the Legal Services Commission (LSC) over their new contracts issued the previous month. However, he said that VCs did offer the defence community an opportunity to earn money and quite a number of solicitors had taken part in VCs already. Furthermore, he said that if VCs were to go any further then perhaps the LSC should be asked to contract specifically for VCs and not regard it as something in terms of their general contract with defence solicitors.
- 40 With regard to accessibility to police stations, John Roberts said that the MPA had asked the MPS to undertake an equalities impact assessment of its Police Estate Strategy. At the

same time, the building of modern cluster custody centres in each borough, which would have up to 25 cells, was being looked into.

Ch. Insp. Wilson said that if wheel chair accessibility was problematic in terms of going before a VC then the case would be reverted to a normal court.

Paul Andell said the Group looked forward to seeing the evaluation of the VC project once it had been concluded.

## British Transport Police

Ch. Supt. Ellie Bird gave a presentation on the remit and work of BTP, a national police force, of which the main points were:

Ch. Supt. Bird had operational responsibility for all of London Underground (LU) area involving uniformed policing, CID, managing events and counter- terrorism.

BTP was not a Home Office police force and funded by 'user pays' i.e. it was primarily the train operating companies that paid for BTP with further funding from the Department of Transport. However, BTP learned lessons and good practice from the Home Office and often voluntarily implemented policies, procedures and ways of working.

Of BTP's policing priorities, the first was the prevention of terrorism and whenever any of BTP's 700 LU officers were on duty it was always in their minds, as it was with LU staff.

In terms of policing events, BTP worked with the MPS, and had, for example, moved 60,000 people in an hour and twenty minutes following a football match at Wembley Stadium

The LU was a dangerous environment with regards to safety; fatalities and serious injuries did occur and earlier in the year two persons had been killed while daubing trains with graffiti.

BTP dealt with and investigated a whole spectrum of crime similar to the MPS, including murder, robbery and sexual offences.

BTP considered the rail staff and the people who used the LU as the communities they served and concerns were expressed about the work of the Immigration Service on the LU, sometimes conducted without consideration of the impact of their operations could have on the community.

51 Insp. Ian Mixer informed the Group that within the Lambeth area policed by BTP there was one inspector, four sergeants and twenty constables.

52 At a local level, one of the main problems was ticket touts at Brixton underground station.

53 Over the past eight weeks there had been 80 crimes recorded in the Brixton, Stockwell, Vauxhall underground group which included forty-eight anti-social behaviour offences, three minor violent crimes, fifteen thefts and two hate crimes, which were cases of assault on LU staff. There had been no robberies recorded and the number of crimes committed meant that there was one offence per 82,000 passengers per day.

54 In response to John Wainwright, Sgt. Richard Sparks of the Transport Operation Command Unit (TOCU) said that the TOCU could respond to bus drivers experiencing problems, such as anti-social behaviour, through a system called Code Red, and pick up on patterns of behaviour in order to undertake proactive work.

55 In response to Cllr. Graham Pycock in relation to time spent on paperwork, Supt. Bird said that a lot of BTP work revolved around fixed penalty notices and BTP tried to minimise as much as possible the time officers were taken away from their deployments.

56 With regard to LU revenue and people avoiding payment on the underground, Supt. Bird said that it was not the BTP's role to collect debts, although they would support LU Revenue Protection Officers in the right manner. Furthermore, she said that LU could probably calculate the amount of revenue they were *not* losing due to the introduction of Oyster Cards. Insp. Mixer added that he could provide figures for the next meeting.

57 In response to Neil Flanigan, Supt. Bird said that no LU station could operate unless they could be safely evacuated, something that BTP had to think about particularly when policing events. She added that with every station being of a different design each had its own contingency plan.

58 In response to Shane Collins, Supt. Bird said that BTP had access to three different types of dogs; for drugs, explosives and general purpose. In respect of passive drug dogs, she said they would not be deployed unless there was intelligence to suggest that it was appropriate.

59 In response to Paul Reynolds, Supt. Bird said she was meeting with the Immigration Service in the

forthcoming week and she would ask to see if their intelligence showed that deployment was proportionate. She said that police were subject to great scrutiny in the way it used its powers and operated, and that she wished that the same level of scrutiny was applied further afield.

In terms of safety, Supt. Bird said that she did not want people to become frightened and caused to run back down escalators and around the underground when they could be dealt with on the streets. Furthermore, she said that she was concerned about the community impact on LU staff and travellers as a result of Immigration Service operations.

In response to Arulini Velmurugu, Supt. Bird that there were always LU staff available to assist persons with different forms of disability, particularly those with visual impairment. Such people, she said, would be escorted onto trains with staff awaiting them upon arrival at their destination.

In response to Jim Toohill, Supt. Bird said she would share statistical information with the Group.

## Lambeth Police Report

Ch. Supt. Low gave a PowerPoint presentation on Lambeth police performance for the previous month (see attached). The statistical police report was tabled

In response to Fernando Senior, Mr Low said there was a process in reporting back on murder investigations involving lay people being brought into the review of murder cases at different stages. Mr Low said he would undertake to talk to the senior officers investigating the James Smaart-Ford and Billy Cox murders and work out how best a feedback could be provided.

Gill Kenealy asked Mr Low if he could brief the incoming Borough Commander how the Group could advise on the way police officers responded to and treated young people on the streets, as the Group's concerns did not seem to filter down to officers on the streets.

Mr Low said the MPS could not tolerate police officers acting less than professional and that the new Borough Commander had to be accountable to the community. He said that he was sure that Ch. Supt. Sharon Rowe would have a view about the effectiveness of communication and networking links and if necessary make them stronger in order to pick up the concerning issues.

67 In response to Ms Velmurugu, Mr Low said that in relation to hate crimes against disabled people the police recognised that they needed. He added that a check would be made and some local figures provided.

68 With regard to there being a specific link officer for disabled persons, as with the LGBT community, there was not such a post at present

69 In response to Mr Horwood, Mr Low said there was nothing in the pipeline for extra officers for Brixton over and above what it already had. However, Lambeth was receiving an extra twenty-two Police Community Support Officers, eight of which would be based in Brixton. Currently, he said that the Brixton Town Centre team consisted of an inspector, two sergeants and sixteen constables.

70 In response to Mr Reynolds, Mr Low said that there were CID officers attached to the MPS Traffic Unit which investigated deaths following vehicle collision. He added that it was his understanding that just because the death by dangerous driving incident in Brixton involved a motorcycle it did not prohibit a charge of murder or manslaughter being brought.

71 Mr Low said that there had been another death by dangerous driving involving a female pedestrian hit by a car mounting a pavement in Kennington.

72 Mr Low said that the new Borough Commander for Lambeth would be Ch. Supt Sharon Rowe, currently serving at Enfield. Mr Low said that he himself had been appointed Borough Commander of Wandsworth. John Roberts said that the new Borough Commander's appointment had involved consultation with the Group and Safer Lambeth Partnership amongst others.

73 On behalf of the Group, Mr Andell congratulated Mr Low on his appointment and wished him all the best.

## Any Other Business

74 In response to a question from the floor, Mr Andell said that the Group would be inviting the Independent Police Complaints Commission back to a future Group meeting to give account of their recent actions regarding Jean Charles de Menezes.

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6. 00 p.m. TUESDAY, 3 July 2007