

Stockwell Community Resource Centre SW4

PRESENT: CPCG BOARD: Anna Tapsell (Chairperson), Paul Andell, Gill Kenealy, Shane Collins, Jim Toohill (Ind. Membs), Doye Akinlade (Brixton Society), Ros Munday (Clapham Community Partnership), Wesley Stephenson (Your Story), Jane Warwick

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP: Jean Carpenter (Flipside), Jim Fairweather, Keith Shaw (WIESA), David Hart (Clapham Community Partnership), Stuart Horwood (Brixton Traders Assoc.), Lloyd Leon (Lambeth ICVs), Anna Long Churches Together in Clapham), Brian Mantell (South London Synagogue), Sharon Moodie (Cressingham Gardens TRA), David Tomlinson (Stockwell Park Residents Assoc.), George Tuson (Streatham Southside Neighbourhood Watch), Arulini Velmurugu (Lambeth Towers TRA), Hazel Watson (Milkwood Road Residents Assoc.)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS: Hope Barrett, Richard Dutton, Rosemarie Falaiye, Gloria Gomez, Peter Harris, John Howard, Lena James, David Prichard-Jones, Clare Moore, Richard Moore, Cheryl Sealey.

STATUTORY MEMBERSHIP: *MPA* Maurice Blades *LAMBETH COUNCIL* Cllr. Donatus Anyanwu, Cllr Kingsley Abrams, George Marshman (LBL Adult and Community Services), Ann Corbett (Community Safety) *METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE*, Supt. Alistair Sutherland, Supt. Paul Wilson, Sgt. Ronnie Whelan, Insp. Derek Penton (TSG), Sgt. David Healy (TSG) *BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE* Sgt. Ricky Lucas

GUESTS: Fiona Cooper, UK Border and Immigration Agency

VISITORS: G. Abraha, Tesfai Berhane, F. Gebregiorgiu, Ukent Milwood, Amanda Pauling, Gemma Rocyn Jones, Leon Watson

APOLOGIES: Mariam Bangura, Ivelaw Bowman, Cllr. Diana Braithwaite, Rod Brown, Wally Channon, John Cheetham, Maude Estwick, Rowena Estwick, Neil Flanagan, Nick Mason, Ch. Supt. Sharon Rowe, Fernando Senior, Peggy Tyler, Hazel Watson.

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

Introduction

1 Anna Tapsell welcomed Fiona Cooper (Inspector, DEPMU, UK Border and Immigration Agency) and George Marshman (Divisional Director, LBL Adult and Community Services) to the meeting.

Minutes of the Meeting 7 October 2008

2 Minutes of the Meeting 7 October 2008 were accepted without amendment.

Matters Arising

3 There were no matters arising.

CPCG Information Briefing

4 Jim Toohill drew the meeting's attention to the key points in the monthly information briefing, which was tabled. He invited members who had information that they wished to share with the Group, via future Briefings to contact the Group office.

5 In response to David Prichard-Jones, Ann Corbett said that she had met with Ms Tapsell and Mr Toohill to discuss a Safer Lambeth Partnership (SLP) constitution. As part of this she said that the SLP was looking into issues of accountability, engagement and transparency. In this respect, she said that she could see no reason why SLP agendas and minutes could not be published on Lambeth Council's website and in future they would be.

6 In response to Lloyd Leon, Ms Tapsell said that IAGs were Independent Advisory Groups which advised the police on a number of issues as diverse as gun crime and policing people with disabilities. Ms Tapsell said that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) had reviewed its IAG policy a year ago and as a result some IAGs were disbanded. Since Lambeth had a strong consultative group, Ms Tapsell said that the Group was very insistent that any IAG it would support would have to be independent and accountable to the community for what it did.

7 Richard Moore questioned the reason for the confidential nature of SLP meetings in the past, which was unusual and unlike the practice of other boroughs. In response, Ms Tapsell said that there was nothing discussed at the SLP Board that needed to be confidential.

8 With regard to IAGs, Mr Moore said that the National Policing Improvement Agency recommended them as being very useful in terms of giving help and advice, as well as for holding the MPS to account.

Lambeth Police Update

- 9 Supt. Alistair Sutherland gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Lambeth police performance comparing the current financial year to date with the same period in the previous year (see attached).
- 10 In response to David Tomlinson, Supt. Sutherland said that there was a briefing concerning the Community Safe public information system which he would circulate via the Group.
- 11 In respect of the new non-emergency police number, **0300 123 1212**, Supt. Sutherland said that the new system was manned 24/7 throughout the year by CC operators and, depending on the type of call, may be given a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) number or be reclassified as an emergency.
- 12 Supt. Sutherland said that if a CAD was created in relation to a crime, a report would be generated which Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers could view. Furthermore, SNT officers could look at the CAD entries for their ward thereby offering an opportunity to discover what had been reported in the previous 24 hours. Therefore, he said his expectation was that SNT sergeants would have access to local intelligence.
- 13 Ros Munday said that the reason that the local community had pushed for a dispersal zone in Clapham was because of youths congregating at a 24 hour off-licence. Ms Munday praised the dedication and the respectful manner in which the police had conducted themselves while operating in the dispersal zone. However, Ms Munday said that Youth Services had badly let the community down by little or no outreach work that was supposed to be present on her estate
- 14 Tesfai Berhane, a Youth Worker, said that the Youth Service worked in partnership with the police and other service providers on any issues affecting young people. With regard to the dispersal zone order, Mr Berhane said that he thought it had been set up by the police and managed by them, although if the police needed support they would work closely with them.
- 15 ***Mr Toohill said that a dispersal zone order in Brixton, which had started of very well, took a dent to its reputation after the arrests of two people perceived have been in possession of some illicit substance. However, it seemed that their from the Town Centre for political stance. Mr Toohill asked for an update on what happened to them, e.g. were they charged and convicted.***
- 16 In response to Richard Dutton, Supt. Sutherland explained that an Acceptable Behaviour Order (ABC) was an informal contract drawn up with parents and children regarding their behaviour and was part of a staged approach to more formal proceedings such as an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) or criminal prosecution.
- 17 With regard to Section 30 dispersal orders [Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003], Supt. Sutherland said that they had to be authorised and signed by both local authorities and the police. Supt. Sutherland said that the package for the dispersal zone, which had been put together by a SNT sergeant, Nicola Duffy, would be a good practice model.
- 18 Mr Moore commented on the commitment and good work carried out by the TSG working with local youths a West Norwood youth club. On the other hand, Ukent Milwood said that issues concerning the TSG's disproportionate amount of arrests of young people and aggressive behaviour of officers needed to be addressed.
- 19 Lloyd Leon said that from his recent observations of Stop and Searches by local police officers in Brixton, he hoped that Lambeth police continued to practice in the respectful manner he had witnessed.
- 20 With regard to SNTs, Mr Moore said that there was a need to move towards a single command structure in Lambeth for SN policing and he proposed an open and wide debate on the matter.
- 21 In response to Mr Moore, Supt. Paul Wilson said that the police were always looking to improve SNT management and had recently introduced a new performance management regime with Chief Inspectors for the north and south of the borough undertaking line management responsibilities.

- 22 Supt. Wilson said that the first performance management meeting would aim to take a lead from Wandsworth, which was regarded as a beacon of good practice in terms of SNT management, and that he would report back to the Group with the hope that it would lead to a constructive debate.**
- 23 Wesley Stephenson said that while ABCs were a good idea there was an issue about them in terms of them showing up on Criminal Record Bureau checks, which could affect a young person's job prospects. In response, Supt. Sutherland said that as far as he was aware ABCs did not count as a conviction, although post conviction ASBOs were subject to declaration.
- 24 In response to Mr Stephenson, Supt. Sutherland said he could assure him that all 999 calls were recorded. However, while calls received in former CAD rooms [since replaced by Insulated Borough Operations (IBO) offices] were not recorded, he said that they were re-routed through MetCall to either a local switchboard or 999 where a recording would be made.
- 25 With regard to police response time for a call concerning an individual with mental health problems, Supt Sutherland said in the case of attending a violent person, police should arrive within twelve minutes. In relation to a longer term problem of a tenant, for example, with mental health issues, Supt. Sutherland said calls could be referred to SNTs or IBO for dispatch, which should lead to enquiries made alongside partnership agencies to assess the response required.
- 26 Ms Tapsell said that the protocols between the mental health services in the community and the police was a matter which the Group's Mental Health sub-Group (MHG) needed to examine, particularly as the new Mental Act provisions in relation to mental disorder would require new responsibilities and a greater call on police time.
- 27 George Marshman said that a new national report concerning the assessment of people with mental health problems found in public places and involving the police had been published. He said that there was increasing concern about people being assessed in police cells, which was an inappropriate place for those with mental illness. Having recently met with the Head of Mental Health Services (MHS), Mr Marshman said that it was reassuring to know that there was a hospital custody suite which could be used for assessment in conjunction with MHS and the police.
- 28 **Mr Marshman said that he intended to go through the [Mental Health] report with the police to look at the issues pertaining to mental health in the near future while also listening to any issues raised by the Group's MHG.**
- 29 John Howard said that in terms of the impact on women's lives, families and mental health, Home Office research showed that 80% of women in Holloway Prison were suffering from forms of mental illness. Mr Howard said that at a previous meeting the Group had been led to understand that no one with mental health problems could end up in prison due to safety nets and checks. Mr Howard added that 74% of the women in Holloway Prison were there for their first offence.
- 30 In response to Shane Collins, Cllr. Donatus Anyanwu said that no decision had been made about Lambeth Housing's employment of concierges while S.17 of the Crime & Disorder Act required the Council to consider the impact on community safety.
- 31 Mr Marshman said that notwithstanding the public perception that concierges were extremely useful in terms of reducing crime, and the fear of crime, there was a financial problem to be addressed. As such, he said that there was no guarantee that there would be no changes, although decisions in relation to the Lambeth Housing Revenue Account would seek to minimise any impact changes may have regarding community safety.
- 32 Ms Munday said that the Council had already cut the number of concierges by half and the only reason that the Council was talking to the Group about it was because she had raised the issue about Community Safety not being involved from the very beginning.
- 33 Arulini Velmurugu said that due to crime and the fear of crime, and a lack of faith in protection from the police, some disabled people felt compelled to carry something with which to be able to defend themselves. Supt. Sutherland offered to hold a crime prevention

and awareness day for the disabled community in Lambeth.

had been submitted to the Metropolitan Police Authority.

34 In response to John Howard, who questioned whether crime figures could be trusted following revelations that the Government had claimed a 20% reduction in crime when in fact it had risen, Supt. Sutherland said that the Lambeth crime figures were those recorded on the crime reporting system as they were reported by the public and independently monitored. Supt. Sutherland added that police had to comply with a strict National Crime Reporting Standards policy, which had led to many crimes being recorded that would not have been some years ago.

35 Mr Toohill said that next month the Group should once again start to receive its monthly statistical report on a regular basis.

36 In response to Gill Kenealy, Supt. Sutherland said that the Group could be provided with further information of those stopped at the Oval on August Bank Holiday incident. In terms of providing evidence of gang membership, he said that the reason for stopping the youths was the fact that they constituted an identifiable group, moving as one, from south London on their way to the Notting Hill Carnival.

37 A member of the public, Celwyn, said that the family and friends of the man who recently died in Brixton police station deserved to know who was present at the time, the training they had received and many other answers by way of a full report. He said that the death had caused a great deal of distress for many and for someone who had exhibited health issues to die in a police station in 2008 could not continue to happen.

38 ***Ms Tapsell said that there had been no discussion about the death to date because the Group had not been given the family's permission, while there was also an Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) investigation ongoing. She said that the Group would check with the IPCC for an update.***

39 In response to Celwyn concerns about health issues and policing, and the need for transparency in discussions about deaths in custody, Ms Tapsell said that the Group had written a report two years ago about the use of police stations and mental health, which

Immigration Issues

40 Ms Tapsell said that the immigration status of some members of the community, and the treatment of them, were of concern to the community, particularly as their information and intelligence could be useful in terms of crime prevention, reduction and the safety of the whole community, but which may not be forthcoming due to their relationship with authorities.

41 Fiona Cooper, responsible for managing a detention estate for immigration detainees, gave a PowerPoint presentation which included an Overview of Border & Immigration Agency activity, Immigration Legislation and Powers of Immigration Officers, Immigration Control, Detention Estate and Use of Police cells (see attached).

42 The Group learned that there were around 2,500 detention spaces in the UK, mainly occupied by men, that 86% of removals were made from Heathrow and that immigration detainees could be legally held in a police station for five nights, or seven nights if removal directions had been set.

43 Ms Cooper informed the Group that all the Detention Centres around the UK had independent monitoring boards to ensure that removals were carried out safely and with humanity, while all holding rooms and escort vehicles were fitted with CCTV with sound recording being introduced.

44 Doye Akinlade, who had recently stood down as the Chair of Lambeth Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs), said that ICVs visited Lambeth police stations unannounced to check up on the welfare of people detained in police cells. One of the ICVs' concerns was that people detained under the Immigration Act were technically not in police detention. This, he said, placed a burden on the police in terms of work as they waited for the Immigration Service to collect them.

45 Mr Akinlade said that the removal of detainees from a cell had an impact on their welfare due to the anxiety and stress caused by waiting in the knowledge that they would

- be deported. He said that some, if not all, of the immigration detainees were not allowed to take with them all of their possessions, such as clothes and money, which would be useful to them in the country to which they were being deported.
- 46 Mr Akinlade asked if it was possible for an Immigration Officer to be available, either borough or police station based, to answer to questions concerning immigration detainees.
- 47 Mr Akinlade said that he wished to thank Supt. Sutherland for his cooperation in helping Lambeth ICVs to fulfill their role.
- 48 Jane Warwick, Mr Akinlade's successor as Chair of the ICVs, said that immigration detainees picked up in the streets were not taken back to their place of residence before being deported and that ICVs had come across people who would be losing everything they have possessed while being resident in the country, sometimes for many years.
- 49 ***Ms Warwick also said that the cells in police stations were not suitable for holding a person for several hours, let alone up to seven days, and invited Ms Cooper to visit the inhumane condition of the cells at Streatham police station, which she highlighted was not the fault of the police.***
- 50 Mr Marshman said that the local authority dealt with people whose immigration status meant that they may not receive housing and other benefits while Home Office decisions sometimes meant that they could not remain in the country, although no action was taken to remove them.
- 51 Mr Marshman said that the Council, through Social Services, sometimes had a legal duty to support them until their status was determined or they were deported. He said that this was a particular issue in Lambeth due to the fact that the National HQ of the Refugee Council and Terence Higgins Trust were based in the borough.
- 52 In response to Cheryl Sealey, Ms Cooper said that anyone who had applied to be removed voluntarily but had been refused needed to go through their case owner. She added that while voluntary removals were encouraged where possible, certain criteria was applicable since tax payers' money was being used.
- 53 Lambeth Women's Aid (LWA) staff said that Lambeth Social Services had been of no use to a mother, in distress as a result of domestic violence, who had been referred to them only to be told that the Council's duty was towards her child only, who they offered to put in respite foster care while telling her to sort out her own issues or go back to her own country. At the same time, she said that many women were scared of reporting domestic violence to police for fear of being deported.
- 54 Mr Marshman said it was his understanding that the Government had issued guidance which sounded similar to the response that LWA had described, which could have explained how the response from Social Services Team did not sound just or reasonable.
- 55 Mr Marshman said that the Team worked within a legal framework and had a duty to ensure that it was legally entitled to support the people it did while bearing in mind that Lambeth Council did not receive any money from central government to fund the service. Mr Marshman said that he was not able to answer questions about individual cases but would discuss particular problems outside of the meeting.
- 56 With regard to anyone having difficulties in relation to domestic violence, whose immigration status was either uncertain or it was clear that they would not be able to remain, Mr Marshman offered to arrange a meeting between LWA and the Team for a constructive discussion about legal constraints and clearer communication. Although he was against domestic violence, Mr Marshman said that being a victim did not entitle a person with no legal status to a service from the Team.
- 57 Sgt. Ricky Lucas said that British Transport Police (BTP) no longer worked with Immigration Service Arrest Teams on the London Underground although Immigration Service officers did attend BTP's central London police station where immigration detainees were taken.
- 58 David Prichard-Jones said that while much had been said about in respect of the detection of illegal immigrants, individual cases he had heard of from reliable sources about the treatment of people being deported were horrifying. Mr Prichard-Jones said that if

- the public at large knew what was happening there would be a public outcry. He added people needed to pay more attention and interest in the issue of detention and deportation, although it did not seem to be very high on the Government's list of priorities.
- 59 Gloria Gomez said that Ms Cooper presentation was, on paper, very good but the reality was very different; a situation that was in a terrible mess and a violation of human rights. Ms Gomez said that there were three million people in the UK deemed as illegal immigrants, many as a result of corrupt solicitors and papers being lost or delayed by the Home Office. Such people, she said, suffered shame and humiliation while not being allowed to retain their dignity by the treatment they received.
- 60 Paul Andell said the immigration issues were the Group's business inasmuch as they impinged on confidence in policing, as in the case of Joseph Crentsil, in 2001, who fell to his death after climbing out of a window of a third floor flat. Mr Andell said that incident severely dented confidence in the local police.
- 61 ***Mr Andell asked if any new targets had been set for removals and if the MPA had been consulted. Maurice Blades, MPA, said that he would look into the matter and report back.***
- 62 Ms Cooper said that that the highest priority removal target was that of 5,000 ex-foreign national prisoners per year, half of male detentions, who had served a sentence and had the biggest impact, adversely, on the UK economy. However, Ms Cooper said that were issues regarding documentation, passport and travel papers which could delay the process while negotiations went on concerning some nationals of particularly difficult countries.
- 63 Ms Cooper said that she did not have the removal target for the Government's second priority, failed asylum seekers, but could obtain it. She said that the lowest removal target concerned illegal workers and refusals of entry, and that individuals held at police stations under the Immigration Act and released on bail were those who did not meet the priority criteria for detention and removal.
- 64 In response to Mr Akinlade, Ms Cooper said that the police would refer cases of immigration detainees held in police cells to local enforcement teams, which would undertake thorough research and checks to justify a decision on whether a person should be sent to a detention centre or not.
- 65 Ms Tapsell said that the Children's Commissioner had expressed his views about the appalling conditions of Yarl's Wood Detention Centre and how ashamed he was about the standard of welfare for the children held there.
- 66 In response, Ms Cooper said that a Prison Service report had supported a lot of the work going on at Yarl's Wood. Furthermore, she said that the number of detainees was much lower following incidents at Yarl's Wood and Harmsworth where bed spaces had been reduced from 1450 to 259 plus those for females and families. With regard to the length of detention at removal centres, Ms Cooper said that as long as the process of removal was seen to be progressing no time limit was set.
- 67 Earlier in the year, Mr Toohill said that a report by the Inspector of Prisons and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary about Southwark MPS Custody Suite [which was used specifically for immigration detainees], recommended that it should be closed immediately. Mr Toohill said that people had to wonder what it was about the system which allowed the Custody Suite reach a state which took two Inspectors to write a report before it was dealt with.
- 68 Stuart Horwood said that his experience of working in Electric Avenue, Brixton, was that whenever an Immigration Team arrived quite a few shops emptied of their employees, which gave him cause to believe that there were people working there who shouldn't be. Mr Horwood asked if there were any educational programmes and people working with vulnerable persons who could explain the benefits of not using cheap labour.
- 69 Ms Warwick said that at a meeting at the MPA the previous week she had learned that Southwark Detention Centre had been closed. Ms Warwick said that she was concerned about an overspill of immigration detainees into Lambeth and wanted to know if there were plans to support the borough's police.

- 70 In response, Ms Cooper said that she had attended a meeting at the Home Office where, with the Prison Service and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), discussion had taken place about hubs of police holding centres, which were much suitable for detaining immigration offenders in terms of facilities, such as showers and exercise yard
- 71 With regard to overflow, Ms Cooper said that when prisons were full, inmates were kept in Operation Safeguard cells. She said that the current plan was to keep the cells empty for immigration detainees. However, she said that immigration detainees will always be found in police stations as they would often be there before being referred to Immigration Service.
- 72 Mr Howard said that he could not see how the UK Border Agency fitted with its Mission Statement about holding detainees securely and safely and cared for with humanity, having considered all the stories he'd heard.
- 73 In response, Ms Cooper said that the Mission Statement only applied to Immigration Removal Centres and not police stations.
- 74 Mr Howard said that the changes to legal aid had led to practitioners giving up immigration work and that it was difficult in the extreme to find specialists to take on cases, only to be charged £1000 or more for advice received. Mr Howard said that with the advent of the unified contract and the Carter Reforms it was virtually impossible for non-profitable organisations such as Lambeth Law Centre to take on immigration work.
- 75 Jim Fairweather said that immigration was an important subject affecting the whole of Europe, which had always been known by non-white people as Fortress Europe. Mr Fairweather thanked the Group for discussing the issue as it showed that it was abreast of events in the world today.
- 76 Cllr. Anyanwu said that in relation to the women about whom decisions and judgements had been made [in respect of their legal status], and had yet still to be removed, there remained the matter of domestic violence and the risk to the life of the individuals concerned, which needed to be examined with a message sent to the Government.
- 77 Mr Marshman said that while he could not say that he or his staff always made the right decisions, he thought that very few people undertook to become social workers in order to say no to people, although sometimes, sadly, it was unavoidable due to restrictions on money available, which nobody happy.
- 78 For example, Mr Marshman said that there was nothing humane about a pregnant woman with two children on the streets but it wasn't always easy to resolve. Mr Marshman said that the cost of support was not insignificant when taking into consideration housing and benefit costs and possible specialist care support, which was a dilemma for the community.
- 79 Mr Toohill asked Supt. Sutherland whether he thought there had been any improvement in regarding certain communities engaging and communicating with the police in respect of reporting crime such as domestic violence.
- 80 In response, Supt. Sutherland said that he did not perceive the problem of policing unseen communities to have improved nor solutions proposed. However, while the police were accountable, Supt. Sutherland said that did not mean it would necessarily arrest every vulnerable person who reported a crime.
- 81 Supt. Sutherland said that it was the police's job to serve the whole community, not just certain parts of it, and suggested that another meeting should take place involving all the relevant agencies and organisations to discuss further what could be done to improve the situation, which was not peculiar to Lambeth but which did have a large illegal population.

Next Meeting

6.45 p.m. Tuesday, 2 December 2008

(please note late start due to parking restrictions)

West Indian ExServicemen/Servicewomen Association

161-167 Clapham Manor Street SW4

(off Clapham High Street)