

Karibu Education Centre, Brixton SW9

PRESENT: CPCG BOARD: Anna Tapsell (Chair of Meeting), Paul Andell, Doye Akinlade (Brixton Society), Ivelaw Bowman, Shane Collins, Gill Kenealy, Ros Munday (Clapham Community Partnership), Jane Warwick (Lambeth Women's Aid)

COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP: Neil Flanigan (WIESA), John Frankland (Herne Hill Forum); Stuart Horwood (Brixton Market Traders Assoc.); Lloyd Leon (Brixton Domino Club); Anna Long (Churches Together in Clapham); Nick Mason (Lambeth Summer Projects); Catriona Robertson (Clapham and Stockwell Faith Forum), Hazel Saunders (Victim Support Lambeth), David Tomlinson (Stockwell Park Residents Assoc.); Peggy Tyler (Clapham Town N'hood Watch); Arulini Velmurugu Lambeth Road/Towers TRA), David Warner (Brixton Society), Kathy White

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS: Hope Barrett, Tia Henry-Lindo, John Howard, David Prichard-Jones, Richard Moore, Cheryl Sealey **STATUTORY MEMBERSHIP: MPA** Jude Sequeira **CPS** Claire Holder **LAMBETH COUNCIL** Cllr. Mark Bennett, Cllr. Marcia Cameron, Ann Corbett (Community Safety), Megan Jones (Drug & Alcohol Team), Jade Holvey (Domestic violence Coordinator), Shaila Mahomed, Stella Clarke (CYPS) **METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE** Ch. Supt. Nick Ephgrave, Det. Supt. John Corrigan, Det. Insp. Tracy Sherman, Insp. Neil Paton, Insp. Adrian Elgstrand (TSG), PC Errol Patterson, Jezreal Edwards **BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE** Sgt. Ricky Lucas **CPS** Claire Holder

VISITORS: Rev. Mimi Asher, Tim Boxall, Edward Brydson, Ros Griffiths, Commander Andy Tarrant (CO19), Ch. Supt Alistair Sutherland (CO5), Insp. Ronnie Whelan (CO5), Valerie Dinsmore (LBL), Christine Frank, Rikki-Leigh Hudson, E. Culeiora (GAIA), Abigail Jones (LWA), Diane Martin (NHS Trust), Sundari Anitha (ASHA), Tracey Ford, Niki Kalisperas (Trust), Det. Sgt. Roddy Llewelyn (MPS Human Traffic Team), V. McBean, E. Minnow, W. Mohammed, Emmanuel Muhammad, I. Muhammad, J. Muhammad, Kaddy Muhammad, Maxine Muhammad, Carole Macauley (MOZAIC), Jermaine Prempeh, Penny Prempeh (MOZAIC), Asha Senater, Laura Stretch (REACH), Ellen Tabback (GAIA), David Tapsell, Chuka Umunna, Hilary Wears, Becky, Cassandra, Danielle, Georgina, Gideon, Kara, Saffy, Tennika, Derya Yildirim (St Michael's Fellowship)

APOLOGIES: Wally Channon, Susan Doran, Richard Dutton, Maude Estwick, Rowena Estwick, Cllr. Betty Evans-Jacas, Rosemarie Falaiye, Cllr. Rachel Heywood, Brian Mantell, George Marshman, Patricia Moberly, Clare Moore, Graham Nicholls, Martin Ryan, Beryl Saunders, Fernando Senior, Jim Toohill, John Wainwright

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

Introduction

1 Anna Tapsell (Chair of the meeting) welcomed Ch. Supt. Andy Tarrant (CO19) and Ch. Supt. Alistair Sutherland (CO5) to the meeting

2 The Chair referred those present to the Briefing Paper for November, which contained a chronology of letters, statements and quotes in relation to the announcement that police were conducting routine armed firearms patrols in Brixton, which was to be discussed later in the meeting.

Minutes of the Meeting 6 October 2009

3 Minutes of the Meeting 6 October 2009 were accepted without amendment.

Matters Arising

4 Ann Corbett said that since the last meeting the Council people had recruited people to fill the vacant posts for Community Safety Coordinators [Minute 15. 06/10/09].

5 Ros Munday thanked Ch. Supt. Nick Ephgrave for acting on concerns about the tenure of Safer Neighbourhood (SN) police officers by giving assurances that officers would serve a two year period with SN Teams [Minute 32, 06/10/09].

6 David Tomlinson said that at the meeting of the Vassal Ward SN Panel the previous week there had been a lengthy discussion with Rev. Mimi Asher with regard to finding larger premises for her congregation in the Myatts Field area.

7 Ann Corbett said that she had been looking into the availability of Council property and that Rev. Asher had been referred to the Young and Safe small grants programme. Furthermore, she said that the Council remained committed to assisting Rev. Asher and that John Readman had offered to help her church achieve charitable status and to undertake capacity building.

8 Carl from Word of Grace Ministries reminded the Group that his church of over 80 members was operating in a small, overcrowded community centre which would soon become a safety hazard while people who could potentially fall prey to gangs were having to be turned away. He therefore asked the Council to exercise its power as promised and find them new premises. He added that he had found an

empty building in Myatts Field which would serve the church's purpose.

9 Rev. Mimi Asher thanked Mr Ephgrave for taking the time to visit the church and engage with the young people there, which had been much appreciated. She added that it was very important that everyone worked together to deal with the issues the community faced and to take an interest in the lives young people.

Sexual Violence to Women

10 The Chair welcomed the panel assembled to lead the discussion on Sexual Violence on Women who in turned introduced themselves.

11 Det. Sgt. Roddy Llewelyn, Human Trafficking Team, New Scotland Yard, investigated the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, organ harvesting and forced labour.

12 Jade Holvey, Domestic Violence Coordinator for Lambeth, would soon be leading a project on Domestic Violence Against Women.

13 Ellen Tabback, Coordinator, and Erica Culeiora, Caseworker, represented Gaia, a multi-agency partnership centre staffed by Victim Support, Lambeth Women's Aid, solicitors and others to offer Domestic Violence services such as advice, support and counselling.

14 Laura Stretch, Project Manager for REACH, a Domestic Violence project from Guys and St Thomas' NHS Trust.

15 Det. Insp. Tracy Sherman, MPS, in charge of the Sapphire Unit in Lambeth which covered investigations of Rape and serious Sexual Violence.

16 Hazel Saunders, Manager, Victim Support, worked with victims of crime including Rape and serious Sexual Violence.

17 Gill Kenealy, Board Member, CPCG, worked with young women some of whom had experienced Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence.

18 Derya Yildirim, represented St Michael's Fellowship, a charity supporting young parents

up to 24 years-old and also ran a Domestic Violence workshop for young mothers.

19 Diane Martin, Project Manager, TRUST worked with women involved in Street Prostitution in Lambeth.

20 Sundari Anitha worked for ASHA, a refuge providing a specialist service for South Asian women who were victims of Domestic Violence.

21 David Tapsell, Family Therapist - Child Mental Health, was concerned with the links between Sexual Violence and children's mental health.

22 Megan Jones, Manager, Drug and Alcohol Team, commissioned treatment services for drug and alcohol abuse to which there was a connection to Domestic Violence in relation to both victims and perpetrators.

23 Ann Corbett, Asst. Director, Lambeth Community Safety, said that the number one priority for the Safer Lambeth Partnership (SLP) was Serious Violent Crime of which violence against women was one of the key commitments for action. The priority was owned and overseen by the Violent Crime Partnership Action Group chaired by Det. Supt. John Corrigan.

24 Ms Corbett said that there was still much more to know and understand about Sexual Violence, which had seen a rise in terms of Rape and Sexual Assault in Lambeth, with a 41.6% increase, or 42 more offences, over the past financial year, which was considered high compared to peer boroughs.

25 Ms Corbett said that due to under-reporting it was difficult to gauge the extent of the problem, although it was believed that alcohol was a factor in about 39% of incidents alongside mental health and substance misuse. In view of the lack knowledge about the situation, she said that the SLP was committed to understanding it more fully.

26 Ms Corbett said that the SLP was committed to responding effectively to victims of Rape and serious Sexual Assault and supporting them. The SLP was also committed to improving detection of violent sexual crime and had set itself targets and measures to increase the number of sanctioned detections.

27 In relation to Domestic Violence, Ms Corbett that three out of four of SLP's targets were on course and that money associated with them would be reinvested in Domestic Violence services.

28 Det. Insp. Sherman explained that Rape was sex without consent, whether or not it occurred within a relationship such as marriage, and that while a high number of attacks were carried out by persons unknown to the victim, i.e. 'Stranger Rape', many were committed by a person known to the victim as a friend or acquaintance. She said that Rape was the second most serious crime after murder and was always thoroughly investigated with all avenues of enquiry pursued.

29 D.I. Sherman said that the MPS had reorganised the way it dealt with Rape and Sexual Violence and currently there was a dedicated unit, SV2, in every London borough. Furthermore, she said there was a Chief Superintendent to lead on issues and raise concerns of victims and the police with the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Home Office.

30 D.I. Sherman said that there were a larger number of Sexual Assaults committed across London's diverse communities than were reported to the police, and that they crossed all cultural backgrounds and age groups. In respect of reporting incidents, she said that the police's stance was to believe and support the victim with a primary aim to investigate and prosecute offenders. The police also aimed to support victims, whether or not a case went to court, by dealing with the risk to her and enabling her to receive the right support in order that she could better handle her experience and move forward.

31 D. I. Sherman said that many people who reported Rape found the experience of the Criminal Justice System a difficult one. Therefore, those who reported an incident were given a chaperon, i.e. a Sexual Offence Investigation Techniques (SOIT) officer, with whom they could spend some time to be helped through the system.

32 D. I. Sherman said that victims of serious Sexual Assault could attend The Haven, based at Kings College Hospital and supported by NHS staff who worked closely with the police. At The Haven, she said that victims could report assaults anonymously and receive counselling.

Furthermore, if they wished to be examined and allowed for DNA to be gathered for submission to tests, their anonymity would still be respected.

33 D. I. Sherman urged anyone who had information about a Rape to report the matter, otherwise perpetrators would be free to commit other offences without hindrance. She said that the more information the police received the more could be done to assist the SLP, such as improving street lighting or enhanced patrol, as well as help police to build up cases.

34 More information about The Haven can be found at <http://bit.ly/eia1F> or Camberwell Haven, King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS. Tel 020 3299 1599

35 Laura Stretch gave a PowerPoint presentation on a Domestic Violence project carried by Stretch at Gus and St Thomas' Hospital.

36 Ellen Tabback said that Gaia, like other agencies, heard stories from women about the Domestic Violence they suffered and recognised the difficulty women had in disclosing information to a stranger who was necessarily asking personal questions about the physical violence and abuse they endured in the home. However, she said that victims were less inclined to divulge incidents of Sexual Violence through fear, shame and lack of trust or other factors. She added that even when some women did eventually open up they did not realise that what they had experienced was Rape or Sexual Violence.

37 Erica Culeiora, a Caseworker, said that Gaia being a multi-agency partnership meant that private, statutory and voluntary organisations such as solicitors, the police and Victim Support worked together daily to offer advice, support and counselling. However, in terms of casework involving Sexual Assault, she said that in her experience many women who had disclosed information were not willing to take the matter any further, as they did not have the confidence. This, she said, clearly showed that there was a need for greater support.

38 Det. Sgt. Roddy Llewelyn, Human Trafficking Team (HTT), said that he predominately dealt with cases of sexual exploitation, mostly young women from Eastern Europe who had been duped into coming to the UK with promises of work in the legitimate

services industry which failed to materialise. Chosen by traffickers for their vulnerability, DS Llewelyn said that the young women invariably had poor English and had been groomed by the men who had brought them over and who controlled them by forcing them into large, inflated financial debts. Furthermore, he said that the women were often the victims of Rape by the same men and forced to take jobs as prostitutes or sex workers to pay for their debts. He added that the women were further controlled by systematic abuse and threats against them and their families back home.

39 When a woman was brought to the attention of the police, DS Llewelyn said that a priority was to reassure her that there was a safe place for her to stay, and in this respect the police worked with Eaves Housing's Poppy Project. HHT also worked with the Sapphire Unit in order to interview women and acquire the best evidence. If a woman wanted to return home she would be told that it could be arranged and that any immigration issues could be dealt with in the short term. If the woman was able and willing to assist the authorities with a prosecution she would be encouraged to stay if she wanted to.

40 DS Llewelyn added that police also extended their protection to victims in their own countries through partnerships with the Witness Protection Services of other national police authorities with which they worked, such as in Hungary and Romania.

41 DS Llewelyn said that there was every likelihood of brothels operating in Lambeth and that Community Action Teams, made up of members of the public working with the Stop The Traffic Trust and police, could make a difference. He said that one good example was Croydon, which targetted brothels and local newspapers advertising them. He said that Croydon had actually rescued some women and presented them to the police.

42 DS Llewelyn said that over the past two years HHT had prosecuted seventeen cases and currently had another eighteen cases pending. He said that the average custodial sentence was six years, with fourteen years the highest so far for Human Trafficking related offences.

43 Diane Martin, Project Manager of Trust, said that she worked with 250 women, the majority of who were involved in street

prostitution and drug use, and provided street outreach and a drop-in centre.

44 Ms Martin said she sympathised with residents who had to live with the paraphernalia that surrounded prostitution in their streets, and that she welcomed the return of a Vice Squad operating in Lambeth. However, she said that women with whom Trust worked faced Rape on a regular basis. Stigmatised for their drug and alcohol abuse, Ms Martin said that a large number of the women had disclosed that they had been abused sexually as children and sexually exploited prior to turning to prostitution.

45 Ms Martin agreed that women who had been trafficked into London were systematically abused and psychologically controlled and would be in need of counselling. In this respect, she that Lambeth was very committed to a holistic approach for its prostitution strategy, particularly in view of the Sexual Violence that women encountered. She added that it was good to see how those who had managed to exit prostitution were more empowered and being a positive part of the community.

46 Sundari Anitha, ASHA, said that a recent NSPCC report looking at teenage relationships found an alarmingly high rate of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault involved, and that there seemed to be a pattern of behaviour of young girls being controlled by their boyfriends, pressurised to have sex and sexually abused. She said that there was a need to talk about this issue with young people in schools where there was much sexual bullying with young women growing up accepting it as the norm.

47 With regard to Rape going unreported, Ms Anitha said that a main reason was due to a sense of shame, which was more of a gender issue than one of culture. While for the majority of the community a victim of Rape could feel a personal sense of shame, in some minority communities a feeling of shame was also brought upon a family. Ms Anitha said that people with extra vulnerability needed trust and confidence in reporting Rape.

48 David Tapsell said that it was not a coincidence that nearly all the women with whom he worked who had children with mental health issues, had themselves experienced Domestic Violence or Sexual Violence in their relationships, which had a significant impact on child's ability to relate to the world they were in.

He said that Sexual Violence against women, therefore, extended beyond the victim to the children they were trying parent, as well as the wider community.

49 Mr Tapsell said that Sexual Violence destroyed the hope that parents had in bringing up children and trying to rebuild that hope was extremely difficult work. He said that there was no quick fix for systematic violence embedded in family life, although dealing with perpetrators would be a start.

50 Mr Tapsell said Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence were contributive factors to a woman's mental health as shown by a disproportionate number of women suffering illnesses such as anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders post-traumatic stress and psychotic episodes. This, he said, made parenting even more difficult and became an additional problem for mothers having to deal with the threat of having their children taken away from them.

51 Mr Tapsell said that more and more young women were suffering from Sexual Violence in schools and sexual bullying seemed to be endemic. He said that there was a need to talk to young people about what was acceptable in terms of them relating to each other.

52 Gill Kenealy agreed that there was a great deal of pressure on young women to have sex through the sexual bullying by young men who coerced them into undertaking certain sexual practices. She said that the manner in which young men talked about women and sex was startling, and that she had even witnessed two young men arguing over how much it was worth to have a young woman's mobile phone number.

53 Ms Kenealy said that parents, workers and members of the community needed to work with young men concerning their attitude to young women, some of who's self-esteem was very low, and look into the gender issues, especially as it seemed that there was a connection between violent crime committed by young men and the prevalence of Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence in the home.

54 Derya Yildirim said that teenage pregnancy was a big issue in Lambeth and that by working with young mothers in Domestic Violence workshops she had found that giving

into demands for sex was considered part and parcel of daily life in a relationship and that such beliefs needed to be challenged. She said that one of the things she and colleagues undertook was to address the role of the media and the messages that it sent out to young people about women's status in the eyes of men, i.e. as sex objects and male possessions. She said that working towards changing that view was a gradual process.

55 Ms Yildirim said that she also worked with young fathers, some of whom had produced a film about Domestic Violence and organised events around Domestic Violence, which she said was gender violence and a matter of Human Rights and Child Protection since they both needed to be automatically reported to social services.

56 Det. Supt. John Corrigan commended the speakers for their roles in addressing Rape, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. However, he said that people who were aware of such incidents but reluctant to report them could do so by anonymously contacting Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**. In terms of bringing Domestic Violence to an end, Mr Corrigan said that there was only one gender that could make it happen. Men. He said that men had to challenge violent behaviour against women and could show their support by recognising White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), an international movement for the elimination of violence against women, by wearing a WRC white ribbon on 25 November.

57 Canon Ivelaw Bowman thanked the panel for leading the discussion on Sexual Violence against women. However, he questioned why there were no Black African and African Caribbean members on the panel, as he was aware of black organisations in the borough which worked on such issues.

58 Canon Bowman said that the daily debasement, degradation and disrespect of women in the media were contributive factors towards the problem of Sexual Violence and each one of the panel needed to do something about that.

59 A member of the public said that the easiest way to traffic women into the UK was through marriage and that she knew of three foreign women who had married British men with drug and alcohol issues who were violent and abusive towards them. She said that the women

sometimes worked in brothels and she spoken with them about going to the police but they were too scared.

60 DS Llewelyn said that the police often came across young women who were being controlled by men as part of the grooming process, and that marriage had been recognised as a means by which men reinforced their control over women.

61 Ms Anitha said that it seemed as if women with insecure immigration status were more at risk of Sexual Violence and enforced labour, not just by their partners but others connected to them. She said that although a victim of Domestic Violence could be given indefinite leave to remain in the UK, the levels of proof were so high that many women were unable to meet them and that their word was not enough to substantiate their claims.

62 Stuart Horwood said that he was humbled upon hearing about the work done and asked why there wasn't a feature about it in the local press or Lambeth Life, since there was a great deal of information which needed to be put out in the public domain.

63 Ms Martin said that Trust had had placed articles in the South London Press to challenge the myths concerning prostitution although, ironically, the paper wanted to do quite salacious articles on the front page while at the same time paid advertisements for brothels were placed in the back pages, about which there was an ongoing campaign.

64 Megan Jones said that the Council were going to focus on women's personal safety messages to be put out over the Christmas period to help prevent sexual offences and inform people where they could go to get help.

65 In relation to the high incidence of Stranger Rape in Lambeth, Ms Corbett said that while much more needed to be understood about it there had been links made to the borough's night economy and therefore a seasonal campaign targeting women to stay safe and travel safe would be launched.

66 In response to Arulini Velmurugu, D. I. Sherman said that there were some male victims of Sexual Violence and that there were places available to men depending on their particular needs.

67 With regard to people with physical and mental disabilities, D. I. Sherman said that it was a cause for great concern, as it could possibly be more difficult for them to reach out beyond their carers to someone who would believe them. At the same time, she said that victims may not feel confident about being believed because of their particular issues. However, she gave reassurance that nobody on the panel would be dismissive of anyone's allegations and the whole community needed to know that victims would be listened to.

68 Ms Holvey said that the Council had recently received money from the Home Office to undertake a mapping exercise into the prevalence of violence against women in Lambeth, including all the points raised so far. She said that part of the exercise would look at services available in the borough and access to them. She added that if services were not accessible to everyone it would be an unacceptable situation.

69 Neil Flanigan, said that the panel had addressed the wrong people and should be talking to young people instead of the Group. He said that what he had heard showed that there was no structure or plan to spend public money to resolve the crimes that were taking place.

70 Cel Wright said that the discussion could have shown more equilibrium as it was not only men who committed sexual offences against women. He said that he had been shocked by the number of women involved in committing sexual offences, as had been shown in recent news coverage, and it was not just men that needed to stop.

71 David Tomlinson said that the Group did not do enough to draw in secondary schools. From a SNP perspective of seeing the outcome of police results in dealing with gangs, he said there appeared to be a normalisation of boys' misbehaviour which needed to be viewed with a higher level of concern. He said that we were in a worse situation than ten years ago when there was a personal sexual health curriculum in schools. Mr Tomlinson suggested that a corporate plan needed to involve engaging with schools, some of which were in denial about what was going on.

72 In response, D. I. Sherman said that The Haven employed a youth worker to engage with

schools and who over the past few weeks had put together a timetable for a joint presentation with the police to address the issues and real problems in schools.

73 Mr Tapsell said that targetting the young was a valid point but from his experience of working with families in which there was significant violence, the profile of the men committing violence was not seventeen year-olds but largely men in their twenties and older. With regard to male victims of Sexual Violence, Mr Tapsell said that while it wasn't less of an issue, statistically the problem was very small compared to women, and the discussion was about an issue which encompassed the whole room and not just a small minority.

74 Ros Griffiths said that there was clearly an issue regarding schools, parents, SLP and the rest of the establishment in relation to the community being very fragmented and not working together. She said that the issue was everybody's responsibility and, as a parent, it was worrying to hear that even children in primary schools were not safe. Meanwhile, she said parents were shut out and made to feel powerless by those who were supposed to be taking care of the community's children.

75 Mr Leon said that he was concerned that he had not heard any emphasis on education and he had been worried for a long time that families and parents had not been brought into the equation in terms of the education of children. Speaking of his experience as an Independent Custody Visitor to Lambeth police stations, he said that he asked himself how it could be possible that a fourteen year-old boy in police custody could have fourteen convictions, and why he had ended up in so much trouble and had been left to be dealt with by the police. Mr Leon said that to some extent the Government had been responsible for not allowing parents to discipline their children and to show them right from wrong.

76 Mr Leon said that he believed there were not enough black people going into schools in Lambeth to teach and act as role models. In response, the Chair said that if anyone knew of instances of schools not being welcoming of parents to let Ann Corbett know so that she could look into it.

77 In closing the discussion, the Chair reminded the meeting that two women died

every week in the UK as a result of domestic violence while countless children's lives were forever blighted. She added that the Group would return to the subject of Sexual Violence to Women at another time.

Lambeth Police Update

78 Ch. Supt. Nick Ephgrave 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).

79 Paul Andell said that the burglary figures looked scarily high and appeared to bear out the view that acquisitive crime would increase as a result of the country's current financial circumstances. Mr Andell asked if the SLP had an action plan to address acquisitive crime.

80 In response, Mr Ephgrave said that the SLP had a significant and well developed burglary action plan. However, he said that the high figure for burglary was due in large part to private properties which had been divided into a number of flats that shared a communal entry, which in turn led to multiple break-ins within a single building. Mr Ephgrave said that £100K of funding had been secured from the Home Office to strengthen the entries of multi-occupancy buildings, although the police would continue to try to bring about a reduction by good policing.

81 In response to Rod Brown, Mr Ephgrave said that the majority of London boroughs had been affected by an increase in burglary and Lambeth was by no means the highest. In respect of reported 'cash in transit' robberies, Mr Ephgrave said that these kind of robberies were investigated by the Flying Squad, which had a 40% detection rate for such crimes.

82 In response to Stuart Horwood's concern about burglaries against businesses and the effect it had upon them and potential new businesses coming into the area, Mr Ephgrave said that the matter had been raised by Richard Moore at the last meeting, since which time a Business Crime Review had been commissioned and should soon be published.

83 In terms of burglaries against businesses appearing to be less of a concern than residential burglaries, Mr Ephgrave said that

traditionally the Home Office had placed more emphasis on the latter due to the impact it had on victims having their homes violated. However, **he said that once he knew what the crimes against businesses picture looked like he could start to address the issues that were of concern to the business community.**

84 Mr Horwood said that burglaries against business was more than about theft of property and damage to premises but could also lead to business going bust and people losing their livelihoods. He said that he would like the matter to remain a priority.

CO19 Armed Patrols

85 The Chair said that the community was angry about police units from the centre coming into the borough, as was explained at the last Group meeting, and it was clear that the local police did not always know what operations were occurring locally. Yet again, she said, the Group had only learned about police operations through another medium, i.e. an announcement on a BBC News programme that CO19 firearms officers were patrolling estates in Brixton.

86 The Chair said that if it was the case that the borough's estates were so bad, tenants would be within their rights to ask the Council to move them. However, she said that the community did not believe, nor wanted to feel, that its children were so dangerous that it needed to be protected by armed patrols.

87 Ch. Supt. Andy Tarrant (CO19) said that CO19 provided a service to all boroughs, which included the use of an Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) carrying three armed officers to respond immediately to 999 calls concerning firearms. When not responding to emergency calls, Mr Tarrant said that ARVs provided high visibility patrols of boroughs, carrying with them a range of less lethal options than firearms such as a Taser.

88 Mr Tarrant said that CO19 had reviewed its tactics due to the demands of the MPS and borough commanders to deal with the 13.9% increase in gun crime in 2009 compared to the previous year. Therefore, he said that CO19 had looked at how it could work differently to provide more support to borough based colleagues.

89 Since ARVs were required by different boroughs throughout London, Mr Tarrant said that when an ARV was called to another borough it could consequently be to the detriment of the borough it was already patrolling. Therefore, he said that CO19 had formed the Trojan Proactive Unit (TPU), a team of ten officers which could be committed solely to operating in one borough at a time. The TPU was subject to bids from borough commands through the MPS tasking process; a meeting chaired by a high ranking officer who would allocate corporate resources such as CO19, TSG and Air Support Unit to boroughs.

90 Mr Tarrant said that the tactics used by TPU were no different from those used by any ARV in providing a mobile patrol and high visibility presence in support of unarmed officers, as they did with Operation Neon which targeted gun crime in Lambeth. He said that TPU also provided a deterrent at high profile events, particularly as certain criminal elements recognised ARVs and their role, whilst also giving armed support to plain-clothes officers.

91 Furthermore, Mr Tarrant said that TPU could make sweeps of areas where there was intelligence that weapons were being stored or hidden and make searches with local SNT officers, just as Operation Blunt did following intelligence about knives. This, he said, was what the media had referred to as foot patrols.

92 Mr Tarrant said that the reason TPU had been sent to Lambeth was due to a 20% increase in 999 calls coming from the borough concerning firearms. Once they were told of their deployment, Mr Tarrant said TPU met with Lambeth police's Senior Management Team (SMT) to ask which tactics they wanted them to use. As a result of the two weapons sweeps carried out, which the media had referred to as foot patrols, two rifles were recovered in operations that had lasted for less than an hour..

93 Mr Tarrant said that each of the weapons sweeps, which had been approved by a local superintendent, were conducted as a result of intelligence and commanded by a local SMT officer in conjunction with SNT officers. Mr Tarrant said that the weapons sweeps had since been suspended but it did not mean that ARVs would not be seen on estates if they were called to respond to an incident or information.

94 Ch. Supt. Alistair Sutherland, Central Operations (CO5) gave a PowerPoint presentation (see attached) of the role of CO5, of which he was the new head. Mr Sutherland said that the presentation was the first to be given outside of the MPS concerning the changes to the command of firearms operations, how it would look like in practice, the people in charge of operations and how CO5 officers would link up with local officers.

95 Cheryl Sealey said that Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson's statement had in one breath said that no armed patrols had, nor would, take place, yet later stated that they had occurred and had been stopped. She said that the Group needed to know which was correct.

96 With regard to the weapons sweeps, Ms Sealey said that a friend had called her from Angell Town to tell her that there were fifteen police officers armed with machine guns on the estate and that nobody knew what was going on. Ms Sealey said that this was outrageous, especially as a police officer had said on the news that armed patrols were being used to show people who was in control.

97 In response to Ms Sealey, Mr Tarrant said that the two rifles were found in an underground car park on Stockwell Park Estate. He added that the operation would have taken less time than it did but time was taken to forensically package and photograph the finds.

98 With regard to the weapons sweep on Angell Town Estate, Mr Tarrant said that not all of the officers involved were from TPU but also included SNT officers who were not armed, and for whom TPU were present to protect.

99 Mr Ephgrave said that there was large difference between routine patrols by armed officers on Lambeth estates and town centres, which nobody wanted to see, and an armed response to intelligence. Mr Ephgrave said that armed officers in support of local officers had always been the case across London at times when unarmed officers needed support and protection. He said that the media had done everyone a disservice by suggesting that there would be routine armed patrols in Lambeth.

100 The Chair, however, reiterated the point that it was actually CO19 themselves who had said on BBC News that armed officers were

present in Lambeth because of the gangs and would patrol estates.

101 Ros Griffiths said that it was not fair to blame media reports although they appeared to have compounded a problem which already existed, i.e. a breakdown in communication between the black communities and police as a result in changes in police personnel. Ms Griffiths said that she had been concerned for some time about reaching the point where it felt like things were going backwards. For this reason, she said that a number of people were deliberately not present at the meeting because they felt that they had no voice and that the Group did not represent the community, only its members.

102 Ms Griffiths said that what had happened in the media had presented an opportunity to have proper engagement and move forward. She said that people did not just want to see what the police had done but wanted to be involved in what the police were planning, and that an invitation should be extended to the community to sit at the table in order that once operations had been carried out the community could speak with one voice instead of individuals having to pick up the pieces and explain to the community what had gone wrong.

103 Ms Griffiths said that the black community did not want to walk away from engagement because it felt a responsibility. In order to improve communications with the black community, she said that there needed to be forums where issues that specifically affected that community could be discussed, for example Myatts Field, Angell Town and police operations.

104 Mr Leon said that with the MPS Commissioner on holiday and the Deputy Commissioner unaware, it was his view, not least as demonstrated by the death of John Charles de Menezes, that CO19 had again taken it upon themselves to announce that they would operating in estates. While acknowledging that there would be times when armed police were needed in Lambeth, he said that it should always be with the knowledge of Lambeth's SMT, in order that the community could learn what happening was and to avoid cover ups.

105 Mr Sutherland said that his new department was a safeguard to ensure that the Borough Commander and the community would be fully aware of operations in place in Lambeth,

since they would have to go through his office and be commanded by his team.

106 Mr Tarrant said that while Mr Sutherland's office was a result of recommendations following the death of Jean Charles de Menezes, he was keen to make CO19 work more with the community. For example, he said that a CO19 Sergeant and PC were delivering presentations to young people and using a case study of a young man who had been shot dead to divert them away from becoming involved with guns.

107 With regard to officers carrying firearms, Mr Tarrant said that none of his officers came to work wanting to shoot someone but would rather try to resolve situations in the most peaceful way possible and negotiate a successful outcome in the way in which they were trained to do. In response to Mr Moore, Mr Tarrant said that the youngest person that CO19 had had to take a gun from was aged eleven years.

108 With regard to the news that CO19 were to be deployed in Lambeth, Kelly ben Maimon said that knee-jerk reactions were totally inappropriate and that there should have been clarity about information before responses were sent out.

109 Mr Tomlinson said that, as far as he was aware, at the time he had received the Chair's press release regarding CO19, she had not spoken with the Borough Commander nor the Group's Board before reacting to a story on television. In response, the Chair said that she had sought the Board's authority about the press statement with whose agreement it was sent out.

110 Asher Senater said that he was scared not only for the young people but also for himself, and that less and less people attended Group meeting because the same issues kept reoccurring while the police had become stronger and brought more guns into the community. Although there were issues which needed to be addressed, he said that everyone needed to work together. For example, he said that while 14,000 people had passed through his organisation since March, for which praise had been received from the police, there had been no tangible support. Mr Senater said that he was holding a seminar on 18 November to which CO19 and TSG officers would be attending.

111 Richard Moore said that it was clear that a large number of people lived in fear of becoming a victim of gun crime while at the same time there were different points of view about how to deal with the problem. Having read the South London Press, he said that it was apparent that more people felt safer with an armed police presence than without one.

112 In terms of policing priorities around resolving gun crime, Tracy Ford, the mother of a young murder victim shot at Streatham Ice Rink, said that Operation Trident was under-resourced. She said that her son's murder had still not been resolved despite there being 250 people at the venue when he was killed. She said that she had also spoken to other mothers whose son's murders had not been solved. Ms Ford added that when called to a domestic situation at her home recently forty police officers attended, but when she had gone to the Ice Rink after her son's murder she saw only one police car.

113 Mr Ephgrave said that it was not easy for him to respond to Ms Ford's concerns in a public arena as there were many complicated issues surrounding the incident of which she spoke.

114 Mr Sutherland said that as the new commander of a new firearm command unit he was absolutely confident that it would go a long way to addressing some of the concerns held about community engagement and consultation and making sure that it was effective. Mr Sutherland also reminded the Group that they would be welcome to visit CO5, which was based in Lambeth, to see how it operated and assessed the need for firearms operations in Lambeth.

115 With the meeting drawing to a close, Mr Ephgrave said that the issues regarding CO19 had not perhaps been as fully discussed as everyone would have liked, but that any further concerns could be raised at another time.

116 Mr Tarrant thanked the Group for inviting him and Ch. Supt. Sutherland to the meeting.

Next Meeting

6.00 p.m. Tuesday, 1 December 2009

Stockwell Community Resource Centre SW4