

Independent Advisory and Scrutiny Group (IASG or the Group)

City of London Police (CoLP)

Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2020

Approved at the IASG meeting on 17 February 2021

1. Introduction and Membership

This is the first annual report of the re-constituted IASG, formed as a combination of the previously separated advisory and scrutiny groups. Membership of the IASG, which includes some members of the former groups, was finalised in the early part of 2020. Renu Gupta was elected Chair, Godfrey Baillon-Bending was elected vice chair, and Heather Thomas was appointed secretary unopposed. These three members form the Executive Committee. There are currently 9 other members i.e. a total of 12, two members having withdrawn in the course of the year. The roles are unpaid, save for reasonable expenses incurred. The Group is diverse by reference to gender, ethnicity and religion. Membership will be reviewed annually, with the first review having taken place at the meeting on 17 February 2021. Continuing membership depends upon participation in IASG business and in the training arranged for the Group by CoLP (see paragraph 6 below).

2. Terms of Reference and Operating Protocol

As a new group, the IASG had to design its own terms of reference and operating protocol. The CoLP had the opportunity to comment, but the lead was taken by the Group. Both documents will be reviewed annually in July to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

3. Independence

The IASG is independent of the CoLP, the Group's role being to review, support and challenge the policing undertaken by the CoLP, the CoLP being subject to direction from the Police Authority Board of the Corporation of London (PAB). There are three CoLP officers who regularly attend the meetings and provide management information, but they are not members of the IASG. Other officers or civilian staff (civilians are Corporation of London not CoLP employees) may attend to present specific topics, as may members of the PAB. The IASG is not answerable either to the CoLP or to the PAB. The Group will from time to time make written or oral representations to the CoLP and/or the PAB with respect to aspects of policing. Neither is obliged to act on the basis of the representations, but it is expected that they will take them into account. The relationship with both the CoLP and the PAB is still developing.

4. Meetings

The IASG met five times during 2020, once without the CoLP representatives present to discuss the terms of reference and operating protocol. The agendas routinely include a review of the Stop and Search and Use of Force statistics with other topics added on an ad hoc basis (see paragraph 5 below). The Group has determined that from 2021 they will

meet every other month rather than every quarter in order to manage the size of the agenda. After the March 2020 meeting, all meetings have been held virtually.

5. Business Undertaken During 2020

- a. During the first lockdown from March to [June], the Chair attended the Gold Group meetings convened by the CoLP in order to comment on priorities and issues arising. Several members attended a dedicated meeting on the topic of Covid -19 led by Commander Dai Evans in order to review the impact of the epidemic and CoLP's response.
- b. As well as the specific training referred to at paragraph 6, the Group heard from the Independent Office of Police Conduct at the June meeting.
- c. The Group has sub-divided itself into smaller teams dedicated to special areas of interest, namely: anti-social behaviour, counter-terrorism, cyber crime, diversity and inclusion, fraud/financial crime, public order, roads policing, serious and organised crime, stop and search and vulnerable people. The diversity and inclusion sub-group has met the Assistant Commissioner (AC Sutherland) to discuss diversity within CoLP in the context of the CoLP's proposed new Equality & Inclusion strategy. The Chair also attended the CoLP E&I Gold Group (set up in response to the George Floyd death and BLM protests, and now disbanded), and the E&I Operational Delivery Board.
- d. Several members attended the sergeants' promotion board in November/December (one attendee at each session) and a separate report setting out the members' reflections on the process was presented to the CoLP as part of the IASG meeting papers on 17 February 2021.
- e. A number of comments have been made on the Stop and Search and Use of Force dashboards with a view to improving the information available.
- f. The Group heard in December about the CoLP's plans to relocate to newly built premises off Fleet Street, probably in 2025. At the same meeting, the plan to police the City over the Christmas/New Year period was also discussed, although the impact of the virus was to make the plan rather less critical than usual.
- g. The Chair has also regularly attended the CoL's quarterly Safer City Partnership Meetings, and the CoLP's monthly Tactical Tasking & Co-ordination Group.

6. Training

Following a slow start as training had to be adapted to online delivery, three training sessions were held in the last quarter of the year. Two provided a general introduction to policing and the third addressed the Use of Force. Training will continue on a regular basis either during the periodic meetings or at separately arranged sessions. Records of attendance at training are kept by the Secretary. Members who do not participate in the training, either when held or by way of review of the recorded session, will have their

membership of the Group reviewed.

7. The 2021 Plan

As well as continuing the training programme, the IASG has agreed to monitor the CoLP's use of the Out of Court Disposals option. Management information will be developed accordingly. The Group also plans to develop the relationship with the PAB, in order to understand better their priorities and to tailor scrutiny and advice accordingly. The enormous reduction in footfall and the closure of the hospitality and entertainment sectors have radically altered the nature and scale of crime within the City. This will be kept under review, with a likely shift of focus to fraud and other online crime. We are also developing a feedback loop to monitor which IASG recommendations are adopted.

8. Conclusion

This report will be presented to the CoLP and to the PAB for information. It will be available to the public on the CoLP's website.