

INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

1. At the Consultation & Partnership Committee meeting on 7 June 2005, the Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) presented a report on Divisional Independent Advisory Groups. He indicated that it was also necessary to look at the Force Independent Advisory Group (FIAG) to ensure that the right people were involved and engaged. It was suggested that it may be appropriate for the Police Authority to manage the FIAG as it could be seen to be more independent.
2. Members resolved that a joint report be submitted to the Consultation & Partnership Committee in six months outlining the future of the Force Independent Advisory Group and the Divisional Independent Advisory Groups and this should indicate:
 - The advantages and disadvantages of who should chair the Groups
 - The best way to address any concerns and issues from a community perspective
 - The demographics in each Division
3. This report is intended to serve as an interim report and seeks to inform Members of some of the relevant issues prior to the submission of the final joint report.

BACKGROUND

4. The FIAG was established in 2000, in addition Divisional Independent Advisory Groups for each of the four Divisions have now been established. All the forums are currently administered by Humberstone Police with meetings of the FIAG held on the Police Authority premises.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

5. Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) have become generally accepted as a necessary conduit for accountability of the police on minority issues through transparency. The purpose of an IAG is for the Force to benefit from independent advice of members of the Group.
6. The Group membership is independent, providing advice from an external perspective, uninfluenced by police interests and attachment. Whilst Humberstone Police and the Police Authority should ideally have a dialogue and consultation with every interest group in every community, the FIAG is complementary to such consultation, not a replacement. Indeed an important role for the FIAG can be to advise on how to consult.

7. The appointment of a "representative body" is not the purpose of an IAG. Members must be reflective that is to say reflect their own views and opinions rather than represent anything more than their own beliefs and opinions. An IAG can be representative of a community in its broadest sense but attempts for it to be made comprehensively inclusive or representative will fail.

MEMBERSHIP

8. Different forces have adapted a range of different recruiting methods. Humberside Police FIAG has recruited and appointed members in two different ways. In the first instance members are recruited via a publicity campaign. The core membership then elects two members each from the Divisional Independent Advisory Groups. A Police Authority Member sits on the FIAG making a total of 25 members in all. There is a case for inviting known personalities from a variety of backgrounds to come and challenge the Force rather than relying on individuals taking the initiative by pursuing an application process. There is pragmatism in inviting known "challengers" to critically challenge Force activities. The keynote is that there must be transparency in the process of recruiting members.
9. IAGs are not meant to be comfortable. Members must be prepared to challenge and the recruitment process should seek rather than avoid those with a track record for giving the police a hard time. In addition, particularly in the case of the Force IAG, the participants should be equipped to think beyond the anecdotal. Concerns have been expressed, that currently the Force IAG is not strategically focused or proactive in its approach concentrating on the micro not the macro. It is difficult to see at this stage how a move to Police Authority administration would impact on this
10. Criminal convictions should not necessarily be a bar to joining an IAG. The perspective to challenge should be as broad as possible. It is recommended that whilst vetting should be conducted for those members who wish to be considered as Critical Incident Advisers who are called upon to advise during potentially sensitive policing operations, vetting should be around the appropriateness of sharing confidential information.

TERMS OF REFERENCE/CONSULTATION

11. Humberside Police recognised that an IAG was unlikely to spring up spontaneously there was the need for supporting structures as well as finance for IAGs. Also that there was a need to have a clear understanding of where the responsibility for funding and servicing was as well as where lines of accountability lay. There was a need for a constitution to establish such structures which must be signed up to by all concerned. Under the stewardship of Humberside Police the FIAG has such a constitution. This is attached at Appendix A.
12. A helpful guidance document written on behalf of the ACPO Race and Diversity Business Area has recently been published and an extract from it relating to suggested dos and don'ts for IAGs is at Appendix B.

ADMINISTRATION OF INDEPENDENT ADVISORY GROUPS FORCE OR AUTHORITY?

13. The ideal IAG would be independent of both the Force and the Police Authority however, as stated above, pragmatism dictates that there is a need for a support structure as well as finance.
14. Recent research concluded that of the 30 force areas nationally where IAGs exist, 22 are administered by the force.
15. Recently there has been a demand from the Force IAG for greater Police Authority involvement. (Appendix C)
16. The following are the identifiable advantages and disadvantages of the scheme as administered by each organisation:

POLICE AUTHORITY

- 1) WOULD INTRODUCE AN ELEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE BUT NOT TRULY INDEPENDENT
- 2) GOES SOME WAY TO ACHIEVING THE AIM OF HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY TO CONSULT WITH ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY ESPECIALLY MINORITY GROUPS
- 3) IS COMPATIBLE WITH SCRUTINY ROLE OF THE POLICE AUTHORITY
- 4) LOGISTICALLY THE ADMINISTRATION COULD BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE COMMITTEE SERVICES STRUCTURE OF THE AUTHORITY
- 5) ISSUES AROUND COMMITMENT OF HUMBERSIDE POLICE ONCE THE AUTHORITY TOOK OVER ITS ADMINISTRATION (IT WAS NOTED THAT AT THE EXTRAORDINARY IAG MEETING ON 27 JULY 2005 THERE WAS NO POLICE ATTENDANCE)

HUMBERSIDE POLICE

- 1) RECENT DEMAND FOR CHANGE FROM WITHIN THE GROUP TO MOVE AWAY FROM POLICE ADMINISTRATION. (APPENDIX C)
- 2) POLICE HAVE GREATER RESOURCES THAN THE POLICE AUTHORITY TO ADMINISTER AN IAG
- 3) BENEFITS FROM HIGH PROFILE JOINT CHAIRSHIP AT CHIEF OFFICER LEVEL (BUT SEE 5 OPPOSITE)
- 4) CLOSE LINKS WITH THE FORCE COMMUNITY RACE RELATIONS OFFICER
- 5) POLICING ISSUES RAISED CAN BE ACTIONED DIRECTLY BY THE POLICE WITHOUT ROUTING THROUGH A THIRD PARTY (THE POLICE AUTHORITY)
- 6) HUMBERSIDE POLICE HOLD THE FUNDING FOR FIAG ADMINISTRATION
- 7) THE POLICE ARE BETTER EQUIPPED THAN THE POLICE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE THE AGENDA AS THEY ARE "IN THE KNOW" IN RESPECT OF WHAT IS

FURTHER VIEWS

17. Members may also wish to consider such future issues as:
- What is the FIAG asking in terms of challenging the Force on its policies and providing a voice for the opinion of minorities on policing?
 - What benefit does the Force gain from the Group having regard to the objective of the Group to advise the Force on minority issues?
 - What overall benefit would there be for the Police Authority in taking on the function?
 - With the establishment of Divisional IAGs, is there a need for an FIAG?

RECOMMENDATIONS

18. It is recommended that Members:
- i) Discuss the contents this report; and
 - ii) Receive a final report in December 2005.

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Background Documents: None