



Joint Independent Ethics Committee Meeting

Monday, 9th December, 2024, 9.30am

Ainsworth's Suite, Cotton Court Business Centre

PRESENT

Dr Gill Strachan (GS) (Chair)
Victoria Blakeman (VB)
Khalid Ibrahim (KI)
Dr Julie Cook (JC)
Dr Ade Oladapo (AO)
Mark Hindle (MH)
Dr Camilla De Camargo (CC)
Dr Janet Howe (JH)
Debbie Storr (DS)
Tricia Whiteside (TW)

IN ATTENDANCE

Gillian Routledge (GR)	Lancashire Constabulary
James Black (JB)	Lancashire Constabulary
Joanne Kane (JK)	Lancashire Constabulary
Chloe Halliwell (CH)	Lancashire Constabulary
Pamela Hudson (PH)	Lancashire Constabulary
Weronika Wallis (WW)	Lancashire Constabulary
Steve Freeman (SF)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Richard Harrison (RH)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Amy Robertson (ALR)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Rachel Whittle (RW)	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

1. Welcome and Introduction from the Chair

The Chair welcomed all in attendance.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies received.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 30th September 2024

The minutes were agreed to be true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising noted.

5. Ethical Dilemmas

The Committee was asked to consider two ethical dilemmas and provide feedback: Policing of Parades and Community Engagement, and Flu Jabs.

Policing of Parades and Community Engagement

Members were asked to consider the level of community engagement they deemed appropriate during the policing of parades and community events. In this respect, JB provided a verbal presentation to members outlining the Constabulary's operational processes and considerations.

JB informed members that whilst there was College of Policing (CoP) (Authorised Professional Practice (APP)) guidance available to forces relating to the policing of protests, there was limited guidance relating to the policing of parades.

It was noted that ordinarily, a request to hold a parade was submitted by event organisers to the relevant policing team, either directly or via their local authority, for consideration. The Constabulary then conducted a risk assessment to determine the necessity of a police presence. Upon considering the level of risk associated with an event, determining factors were the level of expected attendance, demographics, location, potential intoxication of attendees, and the regional and national context. The level of risk determined whether a bronze, silver or gold command was required, with the decision made by the Planning Superintendent.

It was explained that the role of officers policing parades was to ensure public safety and risk mitigation. Examples of police assistance included police marshalling and road closures. It was stressed that whilst it may be decided that further policing resource was not required, this did not impact routine neighbourhood policing i.e., PCSO patrols of the area.

JB noted that allocating policing resource to a parade not only provided reassurance around public safety and promoted public trust and confidence but presented an opportunity for officers to engage with the community. In addition, it was noted that police officer/staff attendance at parades whilst off-duty was supported, providing the event avoided conflict with the Constabulary's values and Code of Ethics.

It was noted that the force had a responsibility to ensure there was a balance between maintaining impartiality whilst also engaging effectively with the community.

It was noted that the former Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, had shared her views publicly regarding the policing of parades. This was highlighted to the Committee as an example of how a national narrative can impact policing.

GR noted that forces were advised to be mindful of engagement with parades to maintain impartiality; the police had to ensure that engagement was proportionate and fair.

AO noted that Lancashire Police had recently advised organisers of a music event to cancel, due to concerns around public safety and the risks associated with the event. AO commended the police for the assistance and guidance provided.

Moreover, the topic of police engagement during the policing of protests was discussed. SF noted that engagement with anti-fracking protesters had gained consensus as proportionate. This was noted to be an example of proactive policing and meritorious community engagement.

It was noted that in response to the widescale protests catalysed by the Southport attack in the summer of 2024 (Operation Eskin), Lancashire police took the decision that officers would not wear full protective clothing, due to concerns around public perception and community expectations. The force was supported by communities for this decision as the feeling was it prevented escalation of tensions. This highlighted the importance of ensuring the force was knowledgeable about the communities they served and engaging in the most effective ways.

JB noted that the force had received positive feedback from event organisers and was confident that the Constabulary had good engagement levels with the community whilst policing parades, however welcomed the committee's feedback.

KI commended the force for their approach to the policing of Gaza protests.

TW queried whether there was any data to demonstrate a correlation between the implementation of preventative measures (i.e. additional policing resource allocated to parades) and a reduction in crime. It was noted that whilst it was difficult to measure the impact of prevention, there was evidence to suggest that officers understanding the communities they served aided the prevention of crime.

It was highlighted that police forces nationally had received intense media attention over the summer months as there had been a number of disturbances that required a proportionate police response. JH noted that whilst a number of forces had received negative press, there had been no issues raised about Lancashire Constabulary.

In addition, GR noted that the Constabulary had been graded outstanding by HMICFRS for preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability.

For members' benefit, it was suggested that the HMICFRS PEEL Assessment be circulated to the Committee.

ACTION 26: ALR to circulate the Lancashire PEEL Assessment 2023–2025

Flu jabs

The second dilemma asked to be considered by members was whether the Constabulary should publicise that employees were able to claim back the cost of their flu jab.

JK provided a verbal presentation to the Committee. It was noted that since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the Constabulary had allowed employees to claim back the cost of flu jabs. Whilst the employee uptake had been low (63 last year), there was a concern that should all employees (currently 6135) claim back the cost of their flu jabs, this would present a significant cost to the Constabulary and as such, its budget.

It was explained that, ordinarily, the Constabulary would circulate an article to staff outlining the ability to claim back the cost of their flu jab. However, due to concerns around the potential costs that could potentially be incurred should all staff submit a claim, the Committee were asked to consider whether the Constabulary should advertise this scheme to employees.

It was also noted that there had been no evidence to suggest that the uptake of flu jabs decreased staff sickness. It was noted that the Constabulary received advice from the Force Medical Advisor regarding the vaccination of staff members.

MH expressed that he felt the scheme should be advertised to prevent staff illness.

In response, an alternative view was put forward by the committee suggesting that if the vaccination was not mandatory for employees and there had been no issues presented regarding staff sickness, it may not require publicising.

TW noted that from a health viewpoint, the Constabulary should publicise the scheme. She noted that Preston Hospital advertised the scheme and had an uptake of 20% out of 9,000 staff members.

JH noted that rather than publishing the scheme, the Constabulary could encourage staff generally to get their flu jab.

CC felt that there was benefit in publicising the scheme as it demonstrated employer welfare considerations and could contribute to staff morale and wellbeing. She noted that staff may feel disappointed to learn that the scheme was available but had not been informed.

Moreover, another member noted that hospital admissions for Covid-19 and Flu had increased recently, which should be acknowledged as part of considerations as whether to promote the flu jab scheme.

Overall, the committee felt that the scheme should be publicised to promote staff wellbeing and, whilst they acknowledged the costs concerns faced, it was felt that publicising the scheme was unlikely lead to significant increase in uptake and as such, costs to the Constabulary. However, it was acknowledged that uptake could vary i.e. during an epidemic.

6. Code of Ethics Implementation Update

It was noted that the Constabulary had continued to review all policies and processes with the intention of embedding the Code of Ethics within them.

In addition, members were informed that the Constabulary would be launching the new intranet page early in the New Year, which would include a specific tab dedicated to embedding the Code of Ethics, under the heading of Vision, Values and Ethics.

PH outlined she had recently met with TW and JC to discuss the Leading The Way training that had been delivered to some Constabulary staff members. It was noted that members had made a number of suggestions regarding the training, however the overall feedback received had been positive. Members had recommended that the training videos also include subtle inappropriate behaviours which may be more difficult to identify. It was noted that further discussions regarding suggestions made were ongoing.

In respect of training material, it was noted that the College of Policing (COP) had developed a quiz regarding the implementation of the Code of Ethics named 'know your code'. The Organisational Development Team (ODT) was looking to develop a similar quiz in Lancashire Police. In addition, the CoP were due to release training videos specifically around menopause and neurodiversity in the context of ethical conduct.

It was noted that the ODT were introducing student officer focus groups. The aim of the focus groups was to broaden understanding of student officer culture to assist in the development of support mechanisms. It was highlighted that views around ethical conduct often differed

between different age demographics, for instance there was notable differences regarding the usage of social media and technology across different age groups.

GS outlined she had recently attended a professional standards conference and noted that one of the police forces in attendance had developed cards that contained ethical dilemmas for officers and staff to consider, as a means of embedding the Code of Ethics. The force had received an input from the Armed Forces and other organisations to develop the cards. GS commended this approach.

The Committee asked whether the Constabulary had reviewed the progress of the initiatives they had developed/that were in development. GR noted that behaviours were tracked through the engagement board, cultural audits, People's Voice and by using specific indicators for instance, reduction in incivility. It was noted that a detailed cultural audit was set to be circulated on 2nd April 2025 following the work the Constabulary had undertaken with the University of Durham.

TW acknowledged that whilst the Constabulary had undertaken a significant amount of work with leaders, work with staff outside of leadership roles seemed to be limited. GR noted that the Constabulary were in the process of designing a one day intervention course whereby leaders would deliver a presentation to front line teams. In regard to embedding the Code of Ethics throughout the force, the Constabulary felt it had been important to begin with leaders so that they could set an example to their teams, which meant the Code of Ethics would filter through to staff members from those in leadership positions. In addition, the ODT had been reviewing the staff Personal Development Review (PDR) process to ensure the Code of Ethics was being embedded through this process; this provided an opportunity for managers to identify inappropriate behaviour through staff PDRs.

ACTION 27: GR to circulate summary of cultural audit once completed.

7. Update from Tactical Ethics Committee (TEC)

The last meeting of the Tactical Ethics Committee was held on the 5th December 2024.

The first dilemma the Committee was asked to consider was as follows:

“Should organisational knowledge of misconduct or performance issues relating to an individual be carried over and taken into account following a move from police staff to police officer posts?”

It was noted that police staff and police officers were technically employed by different employers; staff members were employed by the Chief Constable whereas police officers were employed by the Crown. Therefore, any previous misconduct or performance issues of police staff members who had moved into a police officer role were not shared with the new employer.

It was noted that the sharing of previous performance and misconduct issues across employers could negatively impact public trust and confidence. For instance, the public may lose trust in the police knowing that officers may have previous misconduct and performance issues. In addition, concerns were raised in respect of the fairness of retaining information about staff in previous roles and whether it was fair to use this information to determine an individual's eligibility to become a police officer.

Moreover, it was noted the police would not necessarily hold any information about previous performance and misconduct issues of external candidates. This therefore raised further questions around the fairness of sharing internal candidate information across employers.

However, it was noted that should this information be shared across employers, support could be given to individuals to facilitate development.

It was noted that the Head of the Professional Standards Department was reviewing the Constabulary's Eligibility Policy, which detailed the eligibility criteria for officers seeking promotion.

The TEC had agreed that staff information regarding performance and misconduct issues of police staff be collected and retained throughout their career.

MH supported the suggestion that some information should be shared across employment. However, he felt that should information be shared, there should be a standardised process and information shared should be objective, for instance sickness records.

Moreover, the TEC were also asked to consider a dilemma relating to the publicising of pension forfeitures; this had also been considered by the Joint Independent Ethics Committee at its previous meeting.

Members felt that the forfeiture of an officer's pension should be publicised both internally and externally. It was noted that publicising internally would raise awareness and also act as a reminder to officers of the repercussions of misconduct.

In addition, members raised no concerns around the forfeiture of pensions of officers who had committed serious offences. However, members noted that consideration should be given to the marital status of an officer when determining the level of forfeiture. For instance, members raised concern that a pension forfeiture may be more punitive to officers who were divorced as they may be splitting their pension with their ex-spouse. The Panel noted that a pension to a divorced spouse be protected should they have a Pension Sharing Agreement in place, and not lost as a result of the Pension Forfeiture process.

The members noted that pension to a divorced spouse would be protected, and not lost if an officer forfeited their pension.

Members had noted that pension forfeiture currently only applied to police officers and felt that police staff should also be subjected to pension forfeiture if they met the criteria.

CC had attended that last TEC and noted that there had been uncertainties in relation to which department was responsible for undertaking reference checks for new applicants.

ACTION 28: GR to ascertain which department was responsible for undertaking reference checks for new applicants and feedback to members.

In relation to character reference requests, it was confirmed that the Constabulary had a standardised reference template which they asked new applicants to complete. However, it was noted previous employers often only provided basic information to avoid any legal/liability issues.

8. Members Updates from Thematic Areas

Stop & Search, Use of Force and Continuous Improvement Panel

Members felt the meeting had been extremely useful, and highlighted the value the meeting had in terms of contributing to public trust and confidence.

MH asked whether any Joint Independent Ethics Committee members would be interested in attending. TW indicated that she wished for it to be explored whether she could join the Panel's membership.

In regard to the ride-along-scheme, members had discussed the pros and cons of member attendance at the meeting. It was agreed that it may be more beneficial for members to attend police operations specifically dedicated to stop and search in a targeted approach with the best chance to be productive.

Moreover, members at the meeting had recognised that in a number of the cases presented, officers could have used more appropriate powers to detain those experiencing mental health crisis. It was noted that in a significant number of stop and search and use of force cases, the offender had been experiencing a mental health crisis.

MH informed the Committee that four officers from Lancashire would soon undertake a visit to Ashworth High Secure Hospital to observe how force is used in a clinical setting. MH indicated that he would provide feedback from the visit at the next JIEC.

Action 29: MH to report back to the Committee findings from the visit to Ashworth High Secure Hospital in terms of learning in respect of use of force.

Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel

The Committee felt the meeting had been extremely useful and had received good feedback.

It was noted that an inspection of Custody had been conducted earlier in the year by HMICFRS and that a further inspection was due to take place in the near the future.

The main concerns discussed at the meeting related to staffing issues in Custody and the difficulties experienced in relation to the detention of children. It had been recognised that children released from custody prior to attending court often re-offend which was of concern to members.

Professional Standards Sub-Committee

RH informed the committee that following the establishment of the meeting, it had been decided to take a short pause in activity towards enhancements going forward. Towards this, RH asked members for feedback regarding how they wished to conduct scrutiny of professional standards, with a hybrid approach suggested for consideration enabling formal meetings and dip-sampling arrangements in line with the Dip-Sampling Protocol.

RH explained that any significant changes to the meeting necessitated a change to the Terms of Reference, and therefore they could not be fully implemented until this process had concluded. However, it was stressed that identifying and implementing the changes was a priority going forward.

Members agreed that a combination of meetings and dip sampling would be most effective, and requested that a meeting be organised to discuss future developments for the meeting.

ACTION 30: AR to circulate the Professional Standards Sub-Committee Terms of Reference for comment and arrange a meeting with members to discuss.

Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

AO was due to meet with the Chief Constable prior to attending the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Board on behalf of the Joint Independent Ethics Committee. The introductory meeting had been arranged for the 21st February.

Code of Ethics Implementation Update

TW and JC had attended a meeting with PH and CH from Lancashire Constabulary's Organisational Development Team (ODT) to review the Leading The Way training that had been delivered to police officers and staff. Overall, the feedback from members had been positive with only a small number of suggestions having been made. It was recommended that the Constabulary continue to liaise with members outside of the formal JIEC meeting to ensure their input in relation to the implementation of the Code of Ethics was captured.

Whilst members noted that the meeting with the ODT was useful, they felt it would be more beneficial to have formalised update/input meetings arranged with the team.

ACTION 31: AR to arrange meeting with OD, TW and JC to establish a formalised meeting plan to ensure input from members is captured at key points in the implementation of the Code of Ethics.

Vetting Appeals Panel

It was noted that CC was due to attend a training session with the Vetting Department on the 16th December prior to attending the next vetting appeals panel.

9. Action Log

ACTION 14: Members expressed an interest to attend Constabulary focus groups and AR was actioned to facilitate attendance.

ACTION 17: It was noted that the slides shared covered the research so far and had been presented at the National Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity Conference. This work was continuing in Lancashire and other forces with the roll out of the leadership training.

ACTION 18: Feedback had been provided regarding the delivery of the procedural justice training and reassurance sought to prevent this in the future.

ACTION 19: It was noted that a list of policies would be sent to members to allow them to request which ones they would wish to see. Gifts and Gratuities had been requested to be sent.

ACTION 21: It was noted that approval would need to be sought from University of Durham to share the questions from the Cultural Audit with members. However, the potential to share the methodology behind their derivation could be explored in the meantime.

ACTION 22: Chief Superintendent Chris Hardy had advised that any approach to HMICFRS would need to go via the Constabulary's Force Liaison Officer. He had advised that members may wish to await the HMICFRS PEEL report, which was due to be issued soon, although he acknowledged that the report may feature very little in respect of the external Stop and Search, Use of Force and Continuous Improvement Panel. However, from the feedback received, he noted that the HMICFRS Inspector was happy with the meeting and had described it as 'effective'. AR was actioned to contact Supt Hardy for a further update.

10. Any Other Business

MH raised concerns regarding the feedback he had received from officers regarding the relaunching of the Code of Ethics; when asking officers about the new ethics agenda he felt in some instances there was a lack of engagement. GR assured the Panel that whilst the new Code of Ethics was similar to the previous, work was ongoing in relation to embedding them in force to increase engagement.

It was recommended that the Committee familiarise themselves with the JIEC Terms of Reference in preparation for a review in the new financial year. It was explained that there was the intention to disseminate a survey to members to ascertain their views towards future enhancements.

ACTION 31: AR to add 'Annual Review' to the meeting agenda in March.

ACTION 32: AR to circulate a survey in the New Year requesting member feedback and comments regarding the 2024/25 Joint Independent Ethics Committee.

11. Date of next meeting

3rd March 2025