

London Policing Ethics Panel Minutes of Meeting

Monday, 11 December 2017

Attendance

Dr Suzanne Shale (Chair)
Professor Deborah Bowman
Dr Priya Singh
Professor Leif Wenar

Also in attendance

Martin Tunstall, MOPAC
Sarah Egan, Secretariat

Minutes of Last Meeting

1. The minutes of the meeting on 13 November 2017 were agreed.

Chair's Update

2. The Chair gave a summary of her activities in the past month. The Panel's discussion included:
 - The work the Chair had done on finalising the Panel's work programme for the year, including discussing it with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. She had also shared the proposals with the Commissioner. It was agreed that, notwithstanding that the Chair was yet to receive the views of the Commissioner, the Chair would write to the Mayor seeking his views on the proposed work plan. [Secretary's update: the Commissioner's views have been received and she is content with the proposed work programme.]

Action: Secretariat to send to the Mayor the letter on the proposed work plan.
 - The timing of a report on digital policing. It was noted that it would be useful for the Panel to provide views on the ethical issues of the Met using automated facial recognition (AFR) technology reasonably soon, given that the Met was already using this technology on some occasions. It was agreed that the Panel should aim to issue an interim note on this topic in about four months' time, subject to them being able to gather the required background information in that timeframe.
 - The Chair's attendance at the Police Ethics Network quarterly meeting. The Chair advised that the meeting had been extremely informative and worthwhile. It had included updates in the morning on the activity of the various independent ethics committees that were present, and discussion of some interesting ethical issues in the afternoon session. South Wales Police had subsequently circulated a link to a BBC News article on their recent use of AFR <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-42239947>.

Reflections on the Panel's Induction

3. The Panel had a discussion of the learning they had gained from some of their induction activities, including the visit to the Lewisham borough station and observing the training on ethics given to new officers at Hendon.

Action: Chair to follow up on the invitation from the Lewisham visit to attend training on victims – Leif and Priya expressed an interest in attending.

Digital Policing

4. The Panel discussed and agreed how they would approach their consideration of the ethical issues arising from the development of digital policing.
5. As stated above, they would endeavour to produce an interim note on AFR within four months.
6. The first step would be to gather the background information required for the Panel to have a good understanding of the issues. The Panel agreed that the information fell into the following areas:
 - Understanding the technology (including plans the Home Office or others have regarding new policing technology of this nature) how it works, how well it works, and the operational needs MPS would wish to meet in using it;
 - Understanding the relevant legal framework on surveillance, surveillance technologies, biometrics and police data protection;
 - Understanding the regulatory framework relevant to these technologies;
 - Understanding the views of the public, what they currently know about police use of surveillance technologies, their experience of them, and their values in terms of balancing privacy with security;
 - Understanding the views of key civil organisations;
 - Finding out what academic research already exists on this topic.
7. The Panel agreed a work plan to begin to gather the required information.

The Panel's next meeting will be on 8 January 2018 at 14:00.