Strategic Independent Advisory Group (SIAG) Meeting Minutes

8th September 2026

Attendees ***Names have been redacted to initials for confidentiality***

In Person

- SP (Co-Chair)
- DS (Chief Constable, Co-Chair)
- JA (Assistant Chief Constable)
- RGH (Chair, West Leicester LIAG)
- PS (Chair, South LIAG)
- JS (Chair, Leicester East LIAG)
- TP (Chair, North Leicester LIAG)
- LG (North West Leicestershire LIAG)
- M (Leicester South LIAG)
- VS (EDI Lead)
- RB (Strategic Representation)
- KM (Drone Project)
- LP (Witness Care)
- MC (Fairness in Policing)

Online

- RJ (Harborough & Wigston LIAG)

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1. Welcome and Introductions

SP welcomed attendees and invited introductions from those present and joining via Microsoft Teams.

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2. Review of Previous Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved by consensus.

Updates on Previous Actions

- A tracking log for LIAG Chair attendance has been developed to monitor representation across all LIAG areas and identify any gaps in attendance.
- An update was provided regarding previous discussions around private security provision in rural locations. Chief Constable DS provided further explanation and updates on the decision-making process.
- RJ raised questions regarding future PCSO staffing arrangements, which were addressed by Chief Constable DS.
- SP expressed support for the decision taken, recognising the importance of continuity for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), and congratulated Chief Constable DS on his appointment.

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3. Witness Care Presentation

Presentation by LP (Witness Care)

Chief Constable Sandell praised the Witness Care Team for their work supporting victims and witnesses, particularly in managing court backlogs following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion

Court Backlogs

- PS referenced HM Inspectorate findings concerning witness care and asked how Leicestershire compares nationally.
- Chief Constable DS explained that delays are largely driven by Crown Court backlogs and limited judicial capacity. Leicestershire remains broadly in line with national performance, although work continues to improve processes and increase court throughput.

Victim Satisfaction

- JS questioned whether victim satisfaction is measured alongside performance data.
- LP explained that surveys are conducted, but detailed analysis is currently limited and tends to focus on complaints. Work is underway to develop improved feedback mechanisms.
- JA provided additional information regarding victim and witness satisfaction measures.

- TP highlighted examples of poor communication leading to disengagement from the justice process and suggested a stronger focus on satisfaction measures and public understanding.

Diversity and Accessibility

- RGH queried whether statistical data is collected relating to witnesses from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- LP explained that such data is not held within Witness Care systems but may be available through wider police and criminal justice datasets.
- Chief Constable DS highlighted that Leicestershire Police utilises more interpreters than any other force nationally and ensures interpretation support is available when required.
- M asked whether interpreters are arranged for court appearances.
- LP confirmed that support is tailored to individual needs and can include interpreters, childcare, transport, and other practical assistance.

Identifying Additional Needs

- RGH asked how individual support requirements are identified.
- LP explained that initial needs are identified during police contact and statement taking, with Witness Care subsequently conducting further assessments and providing bespoke support.

Digital Access

- TP asked whether victims could access case information through a digital platform.
- LP advised that similar systems have been trialled elsewhere, but they do not replace the benefits of direct engagement with Witness Care staff.

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4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Update

Presentation by VS

JS welcomed VS to the organisation and reflected on Leicestershire's long-standing history of diversity and representation. He offered the support of all LIAGs in contributing to EDI work and community engagement.

Discussion

- M asked whether a future EDI meeting would be arranged, particularly in relation to previous Police Race Action Plan (PRAP) discussions.
- Chief Constable DS confirmed that work continues to ensure EDI initiatives represent all communities and acknowledged the challenges associated with balancing differing community perspectives.
- RGH commented that recruitment and progression should focus on capability and qualifications regardless of race or culture.
- VS explained how EDI principles are communicated both internally and externally and the importance of demonstrating fairness and inclusion.
- SP noted that SIAG provides a valuable environment in which ideas can be openly discussed and challenged before wider implementation.
- RJ asked whether there is evidence that supports the challenges highlighted in the presentation and whether communities share those perceptions.
- Chief Constable DS discussed ongoing work to proactively understand and address these issues.
- RGH highlighted the importance of partnership working and delivering consistent messages alongside other agencies and organisations.

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5. Break

A five-minute comfort break was taken.

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6. Drone Programme Update

Presentation by Superintendent BG

An update was provided on the development of the drone project.

Discussion

Facial Recognition and Surveillance

- TP asked whether the drones would utilise facial recognition technology and whether there were any concerns regarding RIPA compliance or aviation conflicts.
- BG confirmed:
    - Facial recognition technology will not be used.

- While the capability exists, it is not part of the project.
- The drones are intended for overt policing purposes and do not raise RIPA concerns in their planned use.

Visibility

- PS asked whether the drones could be made more identifiable to the public.
- BG advised that options, including fitting blue lights, are being considered.

Impact on Staff

- RGH asked whether drones would replace police officers.
- BG confirmed they would not replace officers but instead enhance operational effectiveness and situational awareness.

Data Storage

- LG asked where drone footage would be stored and for how long.
- BG advised that retention arrangements align with existing drone and body-worn video policies. Non-evidential material is deleted after 28 days.
- LG raised concerns about recording whilst travelling to incidents.
- KM explained that drone operators can remotely control recording and determine when footage is captured.

Public Confidence and Communications

- LG highlighted the need for a robust communications strategy to address public concerns.
- RGH supported this view and emphasised the importance of reassuring communities that the technology is not intended to create a "Big Brother" environment.
- BG confirmed that a communications plan would likely be developed and shared with SIAG members for feedback.

Operational Benefits

- JS asked about noise levels.
- BG explained that the drones are significantly quieter than police helicopters.
- RJ suggested demonstrating the technology at football matches or major events to highlight its effectiveness.
- SP requested future updates on project successes and deployment strategies.

- PS asked whether pre-recording functionality exists for incidents occurring en route to a deployment.
- BG confirmed that capability exists, with human oversight remaining central to operations.
- TP asked whether the capability would only be used for crime-related incidents.
- BG explained that drones may be used for a wide range of policing purposes, including both reactive and proactive policing operations.

SIAG Support

SP offered SIAG support in shaping the project through the creation of a small advisory group to provide community feedback.

Action*¿LIAGs to consider participation in a drone project advisory group*.

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7. LIAG Engagement Event and Sharing Good Practice

SP revisited previous discussions regarding a force-wide LIAG event.

Discussion

- TP reported positive discussions within his local group, suggesting that such an event would help celebrate achievements and increase awareness of LIAG contributions.
- SP explained that the intention is to improve sharing of best practice and learning between LIAGs.
- MG noted that not all LIAG minutes are currently being received and indicated that further work will be undertaken to collate information consistently across the force.
- SP asked whether each LIAG could present examples of best practice from their local area.
- JS stressed the importance of highlighting the positive impact of Leicestershire Police and demonstrating value for public money.
- Chief Constable DS provided broader context regarding budget pressures and financial considerations.
- TP suggested it would be useful to hear more about the benefits and outcomes the police service gains from SIAG and LIAG engagement.

- M reflected on previous discussions and suggested future events should include more informal networking opportunities.
- A discussion took place regarding SIAG Chair tenure, with a suggestion that Chair appointments remain in place for two-year terms.
- SP acknowledged that recruiting LIAG Chairs can sometimes be challenging and that continuity may therefore be beneficial.
- MC highlighted the value of consistency, noting that operational police leadership can change frequently whereas community representatives often provide longer-term continuity.
- LG noted this reflected her own experience, having continued in the role for three years.
- RGH suggested future events could include practical demonstrations such as Taser training and other operational activities to improve public understanding.

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8. Closing Remarks

SP thanked attendees for their participation and closed the meeting.

Action Log

Action	Owner	Status
Maintain and monitor LIAG Chair attendance tracking log.	SP	Ongoing
Consider establishing a SIAG advisory group to support development of the drone project.	SP / LIAG Chairs	Open
Develop and share a communications plan for the drone programme to support public understanding and confidence.	BG	Open
Improve collection and sharing of LIAG minutes across all groups.	CCT	Open
Circulate details of the Intercultural Event on 24 September to all LIAG members.	CCT	Open