SUFFOLK POLICE POWERS PUBLIC SCRUTINY (SPPPS) MINUTES

Date: November 30th 2026

Location:
XR Lab at University Studies and Professional Development Centre.

Number in attendance:
70+

Chair - Sharon Lee

Note Taker - Travis Dickerson

Attended:

Travis Dickerson (TD)
Sharon Lee (SL)
Phanuel Mutumburi (PM)
Elizabeth Casey (EC)
Tim Passmore (TP)
Nicola Gully (NG)
Kate Fitzsimons (KF)
Chris Shields (CS)
Amy Yeldham (AY)
Lucy Hammond (LH)
Chris Hinnit (CH)

60 WSC Students

Welcome – All Welcomed by the Chair

Notes from previous meeting – Notes from previous meeting signed off.

SPPPS - Stop and Search/ Know your rights scenario with WSC students

Review of Forms

Students scrutinised case withing their group with a facilitator, feedback was given to the wider group for discussions.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 1: Stop and Search - 370613/280726/123745

Grounds for stop/search:

Seen a male I suspected to be involved in drug supply in the Ipswich area. He had a small man bag on which is what people involved in drug supply often wear. He had dumped his bike in the door way of a shop so I stood it up and waited for him to come out. I did not know it was his bike until he presented himself at the front of store and confirmed it was his bike.

I knew the male by sight as he is a regular person on briefing slides for his drug supply intel and investigations. I have checked police systems and there was multiple recentreports linking him to drug supply.

I suspected based on the intelligence that the male may be in possession of drugs or drug supply paraphernalia.

ISCRE Comments:

- What specific behaviour indicated drug possession or supply at that moment?
- Why was carrying a small man bag considered suspicious?
- What weight was given to current observations versus historic intelligence?
- How recent and reliable was the intelligence relied upon?
- Did the intelligence specifically suggest the individual was carrying drugs on this occasion?
- If the officer had not recognised the individual, would the observed behaviour alone justify the search?
- How did the officer distinguish reasonable suspicion from the individual's reputation?
- What objective evidence linked the individual to drugs at the time of the stop?
- How do supervisors assess whether intelligence-led grounds are sufficiently specific and current?

Discussion:

CH: This was based on very recent (within the week) intelligence to suggest the male was involved in drug and gang activity, alongside a recent arrest in the same circumstances. The officers initially engaged in the belief there were enforceable bail conditions which prevented the individual being in the town centre and were provided the intelligence and detained the male for a search.

The overall view from viewing the BWV was that this met the legal standards, was respectful and professional and the action was justified, necessary and proportionate.

The feedback was that there could have been a clearer rationale on the form and the use of the 'manbag' as grounds could cause concern of profiling based on an item of regularly worn clothing across the community. Once the whole situation was explained there were no issues on undertaking a search.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 2: Stop and Search - 370573/040626/204308

Grounds for stop/search:

Police were called to reports of three males trying to gain entry to an address. MOP have reported seeing one of the males looking through the letter box, and one of the males had what looked like a screwdriver and were trying to force a window open. MOP have also reported that the males were trying to open the front and back door.

MOP have stated that the males had been at the address for some time and have been trying to gain access to the property by trying the front and back door as well as the windows. MOP had taken photos of the three males outside the front of the property.

MOP had taken photos of the three males and had given officers a description of the males. MOP have also stated that the three males had walked off to the fleece public house and had gone inside.

ISCRE Comments:

- ·At the point of the search, what were the specific objective facts that gave the officer reasonable grounds to suspect this individual?
- What information linked this individual to the reported attempted burglary, beyond matching a description or being with others?
- Can the officer clearly distinguish the information provided by the witness from the suspicion they personally formed?
- How did the officer ensure their suspicion was based on this individual's actions and not simply their association with the other males?
- What role did the photographs play in forming your reasonable grounds?
- The supervisor identified that the object of the search was not communicated. Why was this omitted?
- How would the subject have understood what they were being searched for if the object was not explained?
- If the subject was not told what they were being searched for, how could they understand or challenge the justification for the search?
- Do you believe the subject was given enough information to understand the purpose and scope of the search?
- Which elements of GOWISELY were provided, and which were missed?
- How might the missing GOWISELY elements affect the legality, transparency, and public perception of the encounter?

Discussion:

CH: BWV identified that officers communication to each other may have mitigated the need to search and could have been improved. One officer identified that, while the subject agreed to the search, they should have delivered GOWISELY and failed to do so citing the noise and dynamic nature of the location (in a public house).

The view from viewing BWV is that this was an appropriate search but didn't not adhere to the standards (GOWISELY) and communication could have mitigated a need to search.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 3: Stop and Search - 370098/050726/012135

Grounds for stop/search:

Male was with another male who was described as having a knife down his trousers. Informant that called incident into Police stated that it was originally the black male that had the knife first and handed this to the other male. IC3 male was spoken to, refused all details and started to walk off from Police.

Male was seen by a MOP to have a knife and pass this to another male he was with.

I suspected the males may have passed the knife between each other as MOP sighted them both having possession of it at one point. The males then went out of view from the MOP and a walk through of possible locations they were did not locate a knife so suspected they were still holding it.

ISCRE Comments:

- ·The witness reported that the knife had been passed to another male. What made the officer suspect this male still had possession of it?
- The grounds state the officer suspected the males were "still holding it". What evidence supported that suspicion, rather than it being an assumption?
- The males went out of sight of the witness. Why did the officer conclude the knife was still on one of them rather than having been discarded during that period?
- What was the ethnicity of the other male?
- Were both males searched?
- What moved your suspicion beyond a possibility and into reasonable grounds to search?
- The record states the male refused details and walked away. Can you confirm your grounds for search were complete before that occurred?
- ·What role, if any, did the male's refusal to engage play in your decision-making?

Discussion:

CH: In this situation there were reports of two males, one with a knife. The subjects were located on a nearby street and identified by a member of the public as those involved. The first male was searched with no result and the second was subsequently searched by another officer.

Viewing the BWV there were clear grounds to detain and search from the outset, the officer engaged with the subject and only detained them when they said they were going to leave. This is used as part of the grounds which would have given an impression to the public that the detention was based on this fact and not the wider circumstances where the grounds clearly existed.

This search was reasonable but broke best practice which is to engage to mitigate grounds and not engage to improve or gain grounds. The grounds were present and the office should have been confident to detain from the outset.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 4: Taser - SC-24062026-382

Reason for UOF:

Police received a report of a male matching Logans description, WHITE MALE, TOPLESS, WEARING DARK BOTTOMS, had threated someone with a knife.As I have driven around the corner I have noticed subject matching the description given, I also observed the subject paining attention to my police vehicle. As I have turned the car around it appeared the attempted to hide himself behind the hedge. I have exited my vehicle, identified myself as a taser officer. I have unholstered my taser and kept it at a discreet carry position. I have commanded to the subject to show me his hands and keep them up. As I have approached the subject who was compliant I have been informed by other officers that this was not the subject. I have reholstered my taser and then explained the reason for the taser draw.

ISCRE Comments:

·Did the subject's behaviour contribute to the officer's threat assessment?
·Was the Taser draw necessary to manage the perceived risk?
·Was the level of force proportionate to the suspected offence and threat?
·Were there any viable alternatives to drawing the Taser?
·Did the officer clearly identify themselves and give effective commands?
·Did the officer appropriately reassess the situation when new information emerged?
·Was the explanation given to the member of the public adequate and professional?
·What lessons, if any, can be learned regarding suspect identification and decision-making?

Discussion:

CH: In this situation there were reports of a male with a knife, an officer was immediately in the area and saw a male matching the description, he exited his vehicle with his taser drawn and while moving towards and engaging with the subject was informed the offender was located and that the male he was dealing with was not involved.

The students raised concerns about the taser use and that the person involved was innocent, Pc Fall demonstrated the different 'carry' methods and deployment of taser and demonstrated the discreet mode used in this incident. This helped the understanding of the levels and escalation of use of force.

The BWV showed the officer using a proportionate use of force with the taser drawn but not used or pointed towards the subject, he then showed a trauma informed approach in explaining why he stopped the subject and also explained to the subjects father who arrived moments later. This was commented on as a excellent example of using the minimum force required and reassessing appropriately.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 5: Use of Force - 37MA/2738/26

Reason for UOF:

Male was arrested for Robbery. As I have gone to arrest the male he has pulled his arm and made a step back and then tensed his arms, making it hard for me to fully secure the male. He is a 15 year old male who had impact factor of height over myself.

ISCRE Comments:

·How would the officer categorise the male's behaviour; non-compliant, resistant, or aggressive?
·Did the male attempt to assault anyone or make threats?
·What verbal instructions did the officer give before applying handcuffs?
·How did the male's age (15) influence your decision-making?
·The officer mention he stepped back and tensed his arms. Why did this create a need for handcuffing?
·What did the officer mean by "impact factor of height over myself"?
·Was the force used limited to handcuffing and guiding the male, or were other tactics required?
·Having reviewed the incident, do you still consider the force used to be necessary, proportionate and reasonable? Why?
·Was authorisation required for a minor, if so, was It sought?

Discussion:

CH: This was an arrest and a common place use of force for police officers. The officer account was provided with more details and this included the assessment of threat and risk. The subject had been named in a robbery and it was justifiable to place them into handcuffs to detain them safely. The policy was clarified that there is no requirement to seek supervisory authority to use force on someone under 18 years old, as these are dynamic situations. This is unlike stop search where there is generally an opportunity to seek authority.

A discussion took place on how different size and builds might impact officer decisions, this include the size and build of the officer and that this makes assessing use of force quite tricky for the panel as its entirely dependent on the officers honest held belief and if it is understandable. This was accepted as a challenge and the reason scrutiny is important.

The panel stated this was an understandable, safe and legal use of force but some better articulation on the form would help with the panel understand the situation better.

CASES FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY

Case 6: Use of Force -375014/300626/162605

Reason for UOF:

Stopped male suspected drug dealer. Force was to effect stop search and prevent escape or loss of evidence.

ISCRE Comments:

·What would have happened if you had not used force at that moment?"
·What specific actions by the male indicated an immediate risk of escape?
·How did you assess that force was necessary rather than precautionary?
·Can you explain why the level of force used was proportionate to the behaviour you were presented with?
·What evidence did you believe was at risk, and what made that risk immediate?
·Was the decision to use force based on the male's behaviour, or on the nature of the suspected offence?
·What opportunity, if any, was given for the male to comply before force was used?

Discussion:

CH: This was a search of a male believed to have met some drug users. He was sat by his ebike and was engaging with officers when they approached him. The area is one with very clear and recent community intelligence as crime and drug supply offences taking place and the officers were on a directed patrol (sent to patrol the area for community reassurance and disruption).

The male volunteers that he had some cannabis and the officers handcuffed and searched him, the interaction from BWV was polite and professional and the handcuffs were removed as soon as they were no longer required. This was noted as good practice and evidence of reassessment.

AOB:

No any other bussiness

Next Meeting:

November Wednesday 25th - Online