

Stop and Search Scrutiny 2021

Safer Neighbourhood Panel

Cannock Chase Safer Neighbourhood Panel

The Scrutiny team members were Brian Murphy, John Bernard, and Paula Stanton

Working Title:

Stop and Search Scrutiny

Reason for enquiry:

Cannock Chase Safer Neighbourhood Panel has a mandated duty to carry out a regular scrutiny covering Stop and Search. During the Corona Virus pandemic this has not been possible and the panel recognizes the problems this has presented to both the NPT and the panel.

Background:

The Scrutiny Panel were supplied via the NICHE database, a list of some seventy-six incidents from which five were selected to be reviewed. Only four incidents were presented at the scrutiny. This was because one of the incidents had no BWV. An explanation was given prior to the scrutiny but as this doesn't fall under the remit of the scrutiny and it will not be presented in the scrutiny report.

The scrutiny was carried out at Cannock Police Station on the 2nd September 2021. The BWV was presented by Sgt Mark Burslem, Deputy Commander.

The BWVs were presented on a lap top, which did not present any viewing problems for the Scrutiny Panel, apart from the occasional buffering of the BWV. It should be noted that there are still problems with the IT connections at Cannock Police Station but these were not an impediment to the Scrutiny Panel.

The Scrutiny Panel wish to make a clarification that on two of the BWVs, observations are made. We wish to point out that these observations are not criticisms but are noted to show that the Scrutiny Panel closely reviewed the BWVs and offered what we believe to be the same level of professionalism that is shown by the NPT.

The Scrutiny Panel consisted of three members, who have all carried out full Scrutiny Training. All three members made separate notes, enabling a broad and unbiased approach to the review.

Review of Findings:

Incident One - Occurrence Number 21210056659

The suspect was stopped at Rugeley Railway Station on suspicion of theft. The officer appeared to be aware of the identity of the suspect in question prior to attending Rugeley Railway Station. A search was carried out and property was found and according to the NICHE data a summons issued. We would wish to note that the Police officer that carried out the Stop and Search appeared to fail to formally identify himself and also appeared to not supply the legal justification for the search. However the Scrutiny Panel also noted that the suspect and officer were well



acquainted and so no criticism is offered for this apparent lack of procedure. In every other respect the officer carried his duties.

Incident Two - Occurrence Number 21210057854

The Stop and Search was an intelligence stop according to the NICHE data. The officer carried out a full and correct formal identification of himself, gave a full justification for the search and also offered a copy of the search to the suspect. The BWV showed a thorough but polite search of the vehicle. In keeping with the Scrutiny Panel promise of observing the BWV with due diligence, the Scrutiny Panel noted that the male passenger appeared to be ignored by the two officers present. The reason for this comment was purely that if the justification for the search was intelligence led, we thought that the passenger would be of interest too. Again, we wish to point out the comment is not offered as a criticism, merely showing the Panel observed the BWVs with due diligence.

Incident Three - Occurrence Number 21210077366

The search was carried out due to intelligence given by Cannock Council CCTV. The officer supplied a full formal identification and justification for the search and due to the search, property found and an arrest carried out. It was also noted that handcuffs were used in the Stop and Search. The panel accepts that the officer had full justification for his actions.

Incident Four - Occurrence Number 21210084541

Several youths were reported as being seen carrying knives. The suspect was stopped at the Railway Station at Rugeley. The Officer carried out all the correct procedures and the panel noted his patience whilst carrying out the search. Whilst the suspect was very young, approx. twelve years old, no further action resulted from the search. The panel recognise the police still have to carry out these duties even though they may appear onerous to the suspects.

Conclusions:

The Panel was impressed with the professionalism and courtesy shown by all the officers. We would also like to note the patience shown by the officers whilst carrying out the searches and again we wish to point out that the observations the panel noted are not offered as any criticism of the officers or the NPT.

Recommendations:

The panel has no recommendations to offer.

NPT Commander Report Feedback:

I have noted the comments made by the scrutiny panel and would wish to thank them for their time and considered approach to the exercise. Whilst there are no identified points of learning, from an internal perspective, the over-familiarisation of an officer and a suspect is not sufficient grounds to not formally identify themselves at the start of the search. This will be addressed.
CI Victoria Downing

SCO Response:

A thorough scrutiny by Cannock SNP with good observations.