

# SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT

<b>Safer Neighbourhood Panel</b>	<p><b>Tamworth Safer Neighbourhood Panel</b></p> <p><b>Scrutiny Panel: Sue Westwick, Paul Smith &amp; Peter Emery</b></p>
<b>Working Title:</b>	<p><b>Use of Force Core Scrutiny</b></p> <p><b>28<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b></p>
<b>Background:</b>	<p>This scrutiny has been carried out to fulfil the annual scrutiny requirement as laid down by the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office. Use of Force records were reviewed to make sure the powers are being used appropriately, the various risks have been assessed, that individuals who have force applied to them are dealt with reasonably and that the level of force is proportionate and necessary. Also, that the subject has been informed of their rights and that the reasons for using Use of Force are clearly recorded.</p> <p>The scrutiny team has undertaken Use of Force Training at Stafford Police HQ prior to the scrutiny.</p> <p>Inspector Gary Harborow, Tamworth NPT Commander provided details of the Use of Force incidents that had taken place in Tamworth between the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020 to the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, (99 incidents)</p> <p>From the list of incidents available and prior to the scrutiny the panel each chose three incidents, from these nine incidents 4 were chosen at random at the time of the scrutiny. A fifth incident was chosen but the footage from the Body Worn Video was found to be restricted and therefore not scrutinised.</p> <p>The STORM Logs and the Body Worn Videos were all available to view.</p> <p>The incidents scrutinised were:</p> <p><b>SP 20211703-0807</b>  <b>SP 20200510-0585</b>  <b>SP 20210116-0731</b>  <b>SP 20210225-0446</b></p>
<b>Conclusions:</b>	<p><b>SP20211703-0807</b></p> <p>Police attended a residential property following a 999 call from a female at the property, the female was known to the police. The female was seen at an upstairs window and was threatening to harm herself, the doors in the property were all locked and</p>



secured. An ambulance was called, and the female's mother also arrived at the scene. The police were given information that the suspect had taken "monkey dust" (Methylenedioxypyrovalerone) or MDPV earlier in the day. Armed Response Officers carrying an enforcer in their vehicle were in attendance and following an escalation of the threats from the female and the throwing of aerosol cans from a window authority was given from HQ for the officers to enter the property. Armed Response Officers entered through the rear door and arrested the female for affray. The officers restrained the suspect using verbal commands, handcuffs and leg restraints. She was taken to the ambulance to be examined by paramedics. To facilitate the examination and to make the suspect more comfortable the police officers attempted to move the handcuffs from her back to her front during which she broke free and attempted to remove a Taser from an officer's holster. The suspect was again restrained.

The suspect has a history of mental health issues and was referred to Social Services and for medical examination. She was later de-arrested for the offence of affray as it was not in the public interest to pursue.

The viewing of this scrutiny was difficult to watch as the female obviously had serious mental health issues that needed professional help. However, we believe that there were substantial risks to the individual, the police and the paramedics given that a Taser was grabbed at during the incident and the actions of the female were erratic and increasingly aggressive. Therefore, we concluded that the level of force applied by officers was proportionate, reasonable and appropriate.

#### **SP 20200510-0585**

This incident was a drug related situation where a group of between 5 and 10 males were involved in a street fight using weapons such as a spade, baseball bats a machete or sword and reports of an air rifle. Upon the arrival of the police including Armed Response Officers the males moved inside a residential property. The police surrounded the property and verbal commands were given for the suspects to come out. There was a considerable amount of Body Worn Video footage of officers containing the situation with the suspects inside the property.

From the STORM Log it was recorded that three males and one female were arrested but no Body Worn Video footage was seen to assess whether any Use of Force applied was lawful.

#### **SP 20210116-0731**

Following a report that a male had threatened staff at a pizza outlet with a handgun, an Armed Response Team was sent to the area. The suspect was reported to be a black male, wearing a black puffer jacket and a black baseball cap. The Armed Response Team encountered a male in the vicinity of the pizza outlet matching the description given and apprehended him. Use of Force tactics applied were verbal commands and handcuffs were fitted to the suspect while a Stop and Search was carried out, but no weapons were found. After questioning the suspect and



explaining the reasons for the stop, he was allowed to leave, and the search for the suspect continued.

As there were initial reports of a handgun, we concluded that the level of force applied by officers was proportionate, reasonable and appropriate.

**SP 20210225-0446**

Police were called to a residential property following a 999 call stating that a 14 year old boy had assaulted members of his family, the call being made by the boy's Stepdad. The boy was restrained by officers and handcuffs fitted. He remained seated on his bed but was extremely upset. He had serious issues with not being able to see his father and did not want to remain at his home. He told officers he wanted to leave the property and if that meant being arrested, so be it. The PCSO who attended along with another officer acted extremely professionally and calmed down the boy reasoning with him that he did not want to be arrested. It is believed the police removed the boy from the house for a short while so that he could fully calm down. The boy was then handed over to his Social Worker and referred to his GP. Follow up talks between the police and the Social Worker took place.

Given the delicate nature of this incident, the panel believe the officers acted in a manner that was professional, compassionate and yet maintained control of the situation and concluded that the level of force applied by officers was proportionate, reasonable and appropriate.

**Recommendations:**

**No recommendations raised.**

The panel would ask that the Officers who attended incident SP 20210225-0446 be praised for the way they handled the situation.

Thanks, are also extended to Inspector Gary Harborow who assisted the panel in the preparation for the scrutiny and during the scrutiny.

**NPT Commander  
Report Feedback:**

Thank you as ever to the panel for their thoughtful consideration of these incidents where officers are deploying their powers, specifically in the case in relation to uses of force, and for the feedback to the officers which I have passed on.

The scrutiny also rightly recognised the complex situations which we ask our officers to undertake and intervene, and noted that in each case, in the face of those situations, each use of force was deemed proportionate and necessary.

I am really heartened to see that the message to make the best use of BWV is landing and demonstrates that the use of force stands up to scrutiny.

**SCO Response:**

A well written and considered piece of scrutiny. The SCO wishes to further understand the rationale for the restricted BWV footage in this review piece and will pick this up with the Use of Force Lead for Staffordshire Police.