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**Discussion at:** Joint Independent Ethics Committee (JIEC)

**JIEC Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025

**Subject/ Dilemma:** **Life Facial Recognition Engagement**

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**Report of:** *Mayor for West Yorkshire/ West Yorkshire Police*

**Presenter:** CI Dan Tillett / Insp Paul Cumming

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## **1. PURPOSE**

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- 1.1 To get independent advice and opinion from the Joint Independent Ethics Committee Members to inform and influence decision making.
- 1.2 For JIEC Members to highlight areas of focus for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Constable to consider.

## **2. SUMMARY**

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- 2.1 West Yorkshire Police have been successful in securing 2 Live Facial Recognition vans equipped with the appropriate technology from the National Biometric Function, funded by the Home Office.
- 2.2 The introduction of LFR is part of a broader strategy by the police to enhance public safety, support investigations, and protect vulnerable individuals. It is used in targeted deployments to identify individuals on watchlists, such as those wanted for serious crimes or missing persons
- 2.3 The use of such technology raises important ethical, social, and cultural questions. In order to keep public trust in policing, this technology needs to be introduced in a way that is fair, transparent, and inclusive

## **3. KEY QUESTIONS/ SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE COMMITTEE**

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- 3.1
  - **Advising on community engagement:** How can we best reach and involve underrepresented or historically marginalised groups?
  - **Guiding inclusive dialogue:** What forums, languages, or formats are most effective for open, respectful conversations?

- **Building trust:** How can we demonstrate that LFR is being used responsibly and with community interests at heart?
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Are there specific cultural or religious considerations we should be aware of when deploying LFR in public spaces?
- **Visible support:** Would you be prepared to accompany us when conducting engagement activity in public spaces?

3.2 Members discussed the topic at length. Discussion summary:

- i. Need key messages on the headlines to inform the public about Live Facial Recognition (LFR) but this needs to have detail underneath. Things to be explained such as the community impact assessment and intelligence case to give trust in process and combat the misinformation in the media.
- ii. Need to say what will happen if concerns are given – i.e. will inform future facts sheets?
- iii. Need to signal that it is about everyone and not a certain community.
- iv. Use of infographics is a good way to show how effective the LFR is and this will bring accessibility and accountability.
- v. This is a generation that do not read large amount of texts so listen to views and be prepared to give answers to issues raised including:
  - a. Lawyers who are hesitant due to human rights perspective and that there are no national guidelines or legal framework.
  - b. The public are sceptical due to rights of privacy
- vi. Need to be clear – to give understanding of the way data is retained and about the compilation of bespoke watchlists.
- vii. Vulnerable people will worry about the use of historical data – also previous media reports about misidentification – current technology is improving on a regular basis and this needs to be communicated.
- viii. Needs to give an understanding of the technology and the way it will be used including
  - a. Blurring of faces not picked out by facial recognition
  - b. Bespoke lists for just the offenders linked to the reasoning for the deployment
  - c. Only keep for 24hrs and the data kept is just numbers – no pictures stored.
- ix. There is a suspicion of AI in policing with questions about context of the data – i.e. how would the police deal with any errors re: misidentification

- x. Need to involve young people in any deployments – go to local schools and impart understanding so they can be part of the conversation
- xi. Need to link to the Race Action Plan and show how it is reducing the ‘over policing’ recommendation in the local plan.
- xii. Balance with current context is key – i.e. when deployed in an area look at the disproportionality in the population about to be surveyed and ensure that bias is not at work.
- xiii. Overall it is clear that this type of technology is becoming more commonplace – and we need to drive the regulations forward. Trust in communities will come when people understand the use and any errors are communicated and learnt from.

### **3.3** Members also gave some practical suggestions:

- Staged engagement – look where it is to be deployed then engage first
- Take the van to schools – giving understanding to young people will help with confidence in the community
- Need to go to the community and not expect them to come to you.

## **4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

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4.1 Please click on links for more information

[Facial Recognition - Liberty](#)

[Live facial recognition cameras may become ‘commonplace’ as police use soars | Facial recognition | The Guardian](#)

[Live facial recognition – five things you need to know | College of Policing](#)