



THE MPS AND THE SELF EVIDENT APP

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November 2018

Cressida Dick CBE QPM
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
London SW1A 2JL

25th May 2018

Withdrawal of Self Evident Crime Reporting App and Service

It is with sadness that I have to advise you that - despite the positive feedback it has received from Pat Gallan, Neil Jerome and officers across the MPS - we will be withdrawing the Self Evident App from London this summer. I am sorry to say that Witness Confident, our sister charity which has promoted public engagement against violent crime, will also be closing.

The decision of your Public Access Transformation Board that the MPS has no use for a smartphone app to enable Londoners to report crime and send it evidence has left us no other option. In the face of such indifference, we are unable to continue to raise the funds to provide this service or run the charity.

The damage this will do is clear from the report of the MPS's Continuous Policing Improvement Command which evaluated the App in December 2017. Its Executive Summary states:

Self Evident is an App available on smart devices, created for use by the general public as an alternative method to reporting criminal activity or other relevant incidents to the Police with the ability to upload verified, CPS approved evidence & provide first accounts in a structured Police style report.

Since launch Self Evident has succeeded in:

- Becoming the leading, most practical crime reporting app on Android & Apple
- Crucially assisting the public & Police to capture & exhibit evidence with ease
- Saving Police time & reducing the barrier to reporting by creating a solution to the digital incapability of Police services
- Allowing for better triaging of reports entering Police systems
- Being recognised by the CPS as a secure & legitimate evidence provider
- Providing Police officers evidence required to arrest & charge suspects
- Securing convictions at court, based on evidence gathered on Self Evident

Self Evident has not received any public or internal promotion by the MPS, thus it has remained overlooked & underutilised. Funding is due to be cut in April 2018 which may lead to its termination.

For the above and the following reasons, the position of the Board is incomprehensible to us. When Self Evident is withdrawn it will mean Londoners can no longer send the MPS timely photo and video evidence – a facility that Theresa May called on the police to enable back in

January 2016. As you will recognise, the withdrawal of this facility means that even where a victim has the crucial evidence, the crime may not be investigated under the new Crime Assessment Policy if that evidence can no longer be readily available to your officers.

As to propriety, we cannot see how the Board had due regard to the value for money duties imposed on you by section 35 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. We say this as we have shown that if the Self Evident App were harnessed by the MPS:

1. it could save you over £4m a year since the cost of receiving reports via the App is one third that of calls to 101;
2. the provision of evidence direct from the public to the MPS could release the equivalent of 137 front line officers each year; and
3. by offering a distribution licence, the App would not only save you money but could bring the MPS revenue.

Value for money aside, the App has received unsolicited praise from frontline and senior officers across the MPS, including from those responsible for the investigation of knife crime, hate crime, gangs, child exploitation, missing children and domestic abuse. It secures recommendation rates of over 90% from victims and witnesses who use it. It offers the MPS unique advantages in its support of vulnerable victims, engaging the young, securing the co-operation of witnesses and in the provision of evidence for court. Happily, if rarely in the field of digital policing, the Self Evident App has already been proven to work and so it is ideally placed to complement and enhance the digital platform the MPS is now developing. As to helping deter and detect serious and violent crime, the App has been used successfully to report and send the MPS evidence on child abuse, domestic violence, gun crime, knife crime, stalking, street violence and terrorism.

For the MPS to turn its back on the App at a time of rising violent crime and wide concern about public engagement will seem inexplicable to many. It is additionally disappointing when the App's Peelian approach means it is so well placed to help the MPS realise your ambition that it "makes the most of digital but not at the expense of traditional values in policing."

Unless you find reason to reverse this decision, we will soon need to give the 26,000 registered users notice of its withdrawal and we will be referring to this letter to enable them and the wider public to understand the reasons we have been obliged to take this retrograde step. Out of consideration to you and the many officers and Londoners whom we have had the satisfaction to assist, please know that we are ready to meet with you or colleagues to address any issue in this letter that your office raises with us by 21st June.

Yours sincerely,

Guy Dehn
Director

guy.dehn@justevidence.org

From: xxx@met.police.uk>
Subject: Just Evidence
Date: 21 June 2018 at 13:35:29 BST
To: <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>
Cc: <xxx@met.police.uk>

Dear Mr Dehn,

I have been asked by the Commissioner to contact you regarding your letter dated the 25th May which she has read. Having explored the matter with her senior colleagues, the Commissioner does not feel it appropriate at this stage to personally intervene in this decision but has asked that we offer a face-to-face meeting as requested.

She has suggested that if you wanted to take up this offer it would be most appropriate if you met with Deputy Assistant Commissioner Mark Simmons.

I have copied in Mr Simmons' staff officer John and should you wish to arrange a meeting please feel free to contact him directly.

Kind regards

Stuart

Stuart Bell

Commissioner's private office

3 Briefing for meeting with DAC Mark Simmons 05.07.18

3.1 We have not been told whether the MPS's very positive Report of 18 Dec on the App and our briefing of 30 Jan on the savings it can unlock were in their papers for the Public Access Board. All we now know of their decision is from Commander Neil Jerome's email that

"(The board) has corporate governance for how the public contact the MPS and specifically reporting of crime.

The board expressed the view that the MPS will continue to work with other forces to develop the national strategy for the Single Online Home for Policing. The national strategy is being developed by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the MPS is part of a proof of concept with other forces. The use of Self Evident app, or other third party apps to receive reports or evidence, does not fit within this strategy, or the MPS Digital Policing Strategy.

The MPS will continue to develop its own solutions for online crime reporting within the national context and within its own digital policing developments. This includes investment in its own website and digital services for crime reporting. Whilst the MPS cannot accept digital evidence through its existing online crime reports, developments are ongoing on a proof of concept to receive digital evidence for online reporting. Other developments include the automation of the workflow and risk assessment for online crime reports, together with the automation of the transfer of data from online crime reports to the call handling systems (CHS) and crime report information system (CRIS).

I am grateful to you and your colleagues for presenting the Self Evident app to the MPS as an alternative solution to on line reporting and I appreciate this was not the news you were expecting."

3.1.1 On this basis, salient points that DAC Simmons may now want to consider are:

- Our proposal was that the MPS (i) take Self Evident over and not that it be a third party app; and (ii) as our paper on Savings made clear, it was to complement and enhance their online form and not be an alternative to it. This meant it could only save the MPS costs of developing and providing equivalent functionality via app or in its online service.
- The MPS Digital Policing Strategy expressly states *"Where possible we will use standardised, off the shelf applications, which will reduce development cost and risk, and speed up delivery"*
- In Jan 2016 Theresa May told the chiefs to enable citizens to send in digital evidence.
- The NPCC leads on the Single Online Home for Policing publicly state that it is *"more than just a website" and "the public will have the choice and confidence to engage, report and interact with their local police using the digital channels that most suit their needs"*
- The BTP 2016 survey shows that for reporting non-emergency crime the public's preference was 41% by app, 18% by phone, 18% by text, 7% by online form and 6% by email
- OFCOM data shows the online form favoured by the MPS – which takes over 20 mins to complete – will disadvantage 1 in 3 young Londoners and 1 in 3 poor (D/E) Londoners who only access the internet on a smartphone
- The Police & Crime Plan, endorsed by the Commissioner and Mayor, states *"In the age of the smartphone, we are missing opportunities to be available in ways that Londoners now expect and are more convenient"*
- As well as improving public access, the greater benefits of the App are
 - (i) the fact it can free up equivalent of 137 officers a year,
 - (ii) the proven benefits for the MPS, CJS, victims and witnesses in public confidence, finances and bringing people to justice, or
 - (iii) the RSA/MPS report's description of it as *"capturing witness material that could have very high utility for police investigations and risk analysis"*.
- Angus McCallum MPS CIO has said what will now drive the MPS digital programme is what officers want. Many officers want the App, because it helps them do their job and it works.

3.2 Some of the reasons why the MPS should now harness the App

3.2.1 Unsolicited comments from MPS officers on the App

- *"It's good isn't it! Sadly as much as we push it the Met simply forgets."* - DI Crime Policy Lead
- *"What's not to like about the App?"* - Asst Commissioner Gallan
- *"Having worked as a police officer for 8 years I never heard of it until a few months ago and am astounded at how this could change policing. Worryingly, the knowledge amongst police officers is almost zero. Today, I shared my limited knowledge of your app with colleagues Met-wide including those in specialised unit. I have never been so popular as seemingly they had no idea about this either!"* - Borough Detective
- *"We currently have great difficulty getting video clips sent to us that are usually from the mobile phones of witnesses and other community minded folk. Can we use the app?"* - Digital Forensics
- *"Really helpful"* - Child abuse (CESO)
- *"Fantastic"* - Trident (guns/ gangs)

3.2.2 Key benefits for the MPS and Londoners

- 1) Improved support for vulnerable victims – (i) they self-identify so before their report is accessed, MPS know their status and can prioritise them; (ii) the app can give them confidence, and (iii) App-validated evidence and statements help the MPS to deliver justice.
- 2) Digital evidence
 - a) only expedient way public can send evidence from a smartphone or CCTV to officers;
 - b) if not readily available under Crime Assessment Plan, investigation stopped;
 - c) the CPS describes App-validated evidence as "good to go".
- 3) The MPS's online form is not designed for witnesses – be it gangs, knives, terrorism, motoring – while ringing 101 can be an uphill task. Nor is it geared to vulnerable victims as 89% of online reports are recorded without needing to talk to the user.
- 4) App reduces hoax and abandoned calls as the user's ID is verified.
- 5) Our feedback of app users shows it significantly boosts their satisfaction rating of the MPS, including among those who are dissatisfied with the response to their particular report.
- 6) The App will unlock substantial efficiency and cash savings.

3.2.3 The financial proposal we put to the MPS on 23 March 2018

Our projected costs of maintaining the Self Evident App and Service in London for the six months from April 6th are £275,520 assuming current levels of demand. If during this period you want us to work with you on MPS branded versions of the Apps, transferring the Service in-house or back-end integration, we would look to you to meet any additional costs that arise.

The charging model that has been used to date for us to deliver the App and Service is £9 a report and £9 for the evidence attached. Exact usage will depend on how the MPS promotes the App and Service and suggestions are outlined in the briefing on the potential Savings. There we show that if the MPS promotes the App to complement and enhance its existing phone and online public access and it generates 150,000 reports a year all with evidence, the annual cost will be £2.7m. As the briefing shows, we estimate this should unlock efficiency and other savings in excess of £10m a year – by freeing up 137 officers a year and bringing net cash savings of £4.1m.

For the App and Service to work to its potential we think there will best be some sense of ownership of it within the MPS. If this is your view and that of the Management Board, one option will be for the Service to move in-house. If this is an attractive option and something we work together to put in place over the next six months, we would then be looking at a five year uncapped licence at a fee of £1.14m pa. Depending on how we think usage of the App and Service will grow over the five years, we are ready to consider back loading the fee.

Finally, we do not know whether a distribution agreement for other forces is something the MPS is able to consider but if it is, we are ready to discuss how this can mean the MPS will effectively get the App and Service cost free and can generate some income for you.

3.3 Relevant background on this issue

3.3.1 The MPS, the charity and the App

1. The MPS wrote to stop Witness Confidential's charitable funding in 2012, responding to a reference to renew a £200k grant, in which we had first set out what the App would do.
2. The then Commissioner was taken aback to learn the MPS had blocked the charity's funding and sent the then Commander for Criminal Justice and a crack team to work out a way forward, initially to focus on how the MPS could use our interactive street violence map.
3. When we then showed the Commander and colleagues the App, they said it touched on all the MPS knew they needed to improve and that it was then 5 years ahead of its time.
4. They proposed to provide £500k for an 8 month pilot. In July 2012 the then Commissioner agreed with senior managers to back this.
5. But in August 2012 the then Asst Comm Simon Byrne wrote that due to austerity, this was too much for the MPS to prove the concept and wished us luck.
6. As no charitable funds were available, we had to set up the social enterprise so we could prove the concept. We also reminded the MPS not to infringe our IP.
7. In late 2012 through to summer 2013 the MPS asked us to delay the launch of our app for undisclosed legal and technical reasons.
8. We discovered at end of 2012 that the MPS and MOPAC had started work on their own app that autumn. This work continued for over a year with launch scheduled for late 2013.
9. We launched Self Evident in London in June and nationally in September 2013. The MPS / MOPAC app never launched.
10. Despite the support of their officers, the MPS never officially promoted the App. It has not given feedback on how it could work better for them; nor – as it and MOPAC had promised – has it arranged for back-end integration of the app. Nobody from the Public Access Board MPS contacted us about the App prior to its decision in April.
11. As the Report from the MPS's Continuing Policing Improvement Command shows the App is a real success and provides a service Londoners want and officers value.

3.3.2 The MPS's track record on IT

Given the MPS's record on IT, the App represents a compelling opportunity to harness a tool that works, delivers something officers and Londoners want and provides excellent value for money.

London Assembly's Budget Committee in Dec 2017 reported

"For the 2017-18 budget, the MPS originally tabled £38 million of cumulative digital savings to 2020-21. The MPS later removed all of these digital savings, saying that the previous plans 'did not stack up financially'. Now MOPAC has budgeted for just £13.1 million of digital savings in 2018-19. Digital Policing is a vital part of the MPS's efforts to transform itself, improve outcomes and save money. The delays to projects are therefore extremely concerning".

Evening Standard May 2017: "The MPS revealed it was to start issuing tablets and laptops to officers after shelving a £6 million trial to equip police with iPads. About 1,700 laptops and tablets are being given out from August this year. The budget overspend comes after new MPS chief Cressida Dick pledged to expand digital policing to improve the MPS's efficiency. The force has launched a massive overhaul of its IT systems at a cost of up to £350 million".

This £6m includes £4.1 million the MPS spent on bespoke software for an iPad app for officers that it then scrapped. We understand the last Commissioner had hoped the Self Evident App software would be used as the working template for that.

3.3.3 MOPAC's interests

The withdrawal of the App will lead to a reduction in the service available to Londoners as they will no longer be able to send the MPS evidence. The loss of the functions to verify users, record early accounts and validate evidence will also reduce the current offering. The App's withdrawal will also mean that the MPS's digital offering will disadvantage 1 in 3 of London's young and poor who are victims of crime and all witnesses. Significant savings that can readily be delivered will be lost and – IP issues aside - additional costs will be incurred in developing these same functions.

3.4 Five Examples of the App in Use – (compiled from app data and user surveys)

Domestic Violence

Emma managed to escape an abusive relationship several years ago, and her ex-husband was excluded by an occupation order. In spite of this, he continued to follow and intimidate her.

Using the app's evidence validation function, Emma was able to show he had breached the order. She sent time-stamped photo evidence to the MPS, along with a validated statement describing what had happened.

She said she wouldn't have reported so promptly without the app. She had spent ages waiting on 101 before, and her local police station was closing down and the next nearest was miles away, without any parking.

With the app, she could record and send her account straight away. She found this helpful, as it was a long time before she was asked to make a formal statement, and by then some of the details were hazy. She said she found it easier to describe a difficult emotional situation using the app, rather than face to face or on the phone. Emma was very pleased with the way the MPS handled the case.

Gun Crime

Joy is a single mum who lives on an estate in south London. While there's a happy mix of people, there are a few characters who can act like they own the place – and if they're wound up or out of their head when they see you, you're in the wrong place at the wrong time.

When that happened to Joy late one evening, it all got well out of hand. She ended up being threatened with a gun – and right in front of Chantelle, her five year old. Joy knew if she didn't do something, she and Chantelle would end up sitting in the flat afraid to go out. Later when she didn't want to phone the police because Chantelle was asleep, she looked on the internet to see if she could report it online. The MPS police site wouldn't let her report the incident online and as Crimestoppers was anonymous that couldn't help.

Seeing an ad for the Self Evident app, she decided to give it a go. While she liked the idea that it let her send photos to the police, what really attracted her was that the police would have her details and be able to get back to her. In fact just having the app on her phone started to give Joy back a sense of confidence that she could do something and she could get something done.

The MPS got back to Joy quickly and said they'd do what they could to help. They put the man under observation and had grounds to arrest him a couple of days later. He got put inside for a few days and when he was back out, he seemed to have calmed down a bit. Joy thinks a lot of young people would feel safer if they had this app so someone should tell them about it.

Sexual Harassment

Sophia was on the bus one afternoon in Harringay, when a man standing nearby began to lean on her. Unsure what to do at first, Sophia tried to ignore him but it went on for some time. Eventually the man was pressing his backside against her.

This wasn't the first time she had suffered sexual harassment. Even so she was worried about reporting it to the police, as in the past this had left her feeling vulnerable and anxious. But a friend recommended Self Evident. She felt an app would be easier, and particularly liked the option of sending video.

Sophia reported the incident with the app, pinpointing where it happened on a map. She added a time-stamped video statement explaining what happened, as well as photo evidence. The MPS Police accessed her report within a couple of hours, and she was very grateful for their quick email response sending someone to see her.

Stalking / Child Abuse

“There is an elderly gentleman with a dark coat who comes into ABC cafe during the mornings and films small children, girls and boys. I have witnessed this a number of times. Yesterday morning he took photos of my daughter who was visibly shaken by the incidents. He refused to delete it as he said it's his phone. He tries to strike up conversations directly with the children despite us parents telling him not to. He showed up again this morning. We left immediately and walked a different route as we were scared he was going to follow us. I'm not sure if there is anything you can do. He is scaring children and putting parents on edge as a lot of children have breakfast there as it's near two schools.”

It was when Nicky left the café that she downloaded the app, which she'd heard a friend mention. Nicky says it was really easy to use – she just typed in this brief summary of what happened, flagged the location on the map and sent it to the police. Soon after she got to work in the West End, the police rang. They were brilliant and later came to see her at home. As it turned out they knew about this man, the Met put plain clothes officers into the café who arrested him when he started filming young girls.

Nicky is sure she wouldn't have reported it if she hadn't had the app. She'd have got to work, gone straight into a meeting and put it out of her mind. She says she wouldn't have wanted to ring the police from work as other people would've heard all about it and her bosses mightn't have liked it. Nicky comments, *“It's brilliant that you can report crime by smartphone, as it lets you log what happened really quickly and without anyone noticing - for all they know, you could be playing a game on your phone”*.

Terrorism

“I saw two Asian men in a smart new car parked off the road near a private farm. They had a large box near what looks like a large pile of fertiliser. No one else was around. The road there in the morning is a little busy so others would have seen them clearly. No major viewing obstructions. They were just sat talking, but what makes me wonder is the box and what a smart car is doing in the middle of nowhere. My worry isn't of someone taking this stuff for simply gardening, more so the thought of it being used as something more, like ingredients for violence if this is something they use?! The photo I took with the app has more details.” In the survey, Dave said he doubts he would have reported this if he had not had the app.

From: Guy Dehn <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>
Subject: Re: DAC Mark Simmons and Guy Dehn to discuss Just Evidence App
Date: 6 July 2018 at 10:32:08 BST
To: xxx@met.police.uk

Dear Mark

Thank you for meeting us yesterday. Notwithstanding your candid opening remarks, it was a pleasure to resume engagement with NSY five years on albeit now that the concept behind the App is proven.

Alex and I found it helpful to hear the thinking behind the Public Access Board's decision as it enabled us to point out that it was a mistake to see the App as an alternative to the Met's online offer when it complements and enhances it in so many important ways. While the App's unique ability to send digital evidence to the Met may be the most obvious advantage at this moment, it is clear when you explained why any digital initiatives must fit within the MPS' end-to-end process of crime reporting, that the App offers the Commissioner other important advantages.

These include the facts that (a) App users' ID is verified and this reduces the real risks of abandoned and hoax reports and doctored digital evidence that arise with the online offer; (b) the App's unique validation feature means the CPS sees its evidence as 'good to go' and so it eases the demands on your officers in a way that the online system cannot if it were to be the only way Londoners are to be allowed to send the Met digital evidence; and (c) the App's witness statement function more than delivers the as yet unfulfilled commitment in the Digital Policing Strategy for such a feature.

Functionality aside, we hope we made it clear that the MPS' online offer is an excellent way to report crime wherever the victim wants a CRN or has no need to talk to the police. As we hope we made equally clear, the App addresses a different and no less important constituency. It was designed to be and is proven to work as a digital offer that enables the MPS (a) to improve its support for repeat and vulnerable victims, (b) to facilitate its engagement with London's young, its poor and those for whom English is not a language of choice, (c) to enable and encourage witnesses to help the Met in a way that actually helps the Met, and (d) to relieve your officers of the burden of some unnecessary and tiresome tasks. As I said, we will be happy to join with you and put the App and the Met's online offer to a panel of victims and witnesses to give feedback on what they see as their relative merits.

As Alex said on section 35 and quite aside from any IP issue, we genuinely doubt that the Met can develop, build, pilot and run comparable functions and safeguards to those the App now offers in a way that will deliver for the Commissioner and MOPAC better value for money than the offer we have put to you. Be that as it may, if it helps you, we are also willing to discuss a payment by results approach based on the savings that the App brings going forward.

While I hope you will get to test the App yourself now you have downloaded it, we are confident that you will find the Savings Briefing helpful though do please come back to me if any of it is unclear. As the Briefing explains the substantial savings the App can unlock for the Met are in Optimising Response and Smarter Working rather than Improving First Contact and this - and the fact the briefing was not before them - may explain the decision the Public Access Board initially took.

If on further consideration, whether or not for this reason, you share the discomfort of the Commissioner and the Deputy Mayor about the initial decision of the Public Access Board, please know we are happy to work with you and colleagues on how the Met might best use and make the App its own.

Kind regards, Guy

From: Guy Dehn <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>
Subject: Re: DAC Mark Simmons and Guy Dehn to discuss Just Evidence App
Date: 26 July 2018 at 15:02:43 BST
To: xxx@met.police.uk
Cc: Alex Graham Anthony Heaton-Armstrong

Dear Mark

I gather the review of the App has taken rather longer than you had initially anticipated. In the hope that this means you are giving serious consideration to the ways it will complement and enhance the new technology offer the MPS is making on how the public can access your services, I wanted to re-iterate that we remain willing to work with you and colleagues to address any remaining concern you may have.

However if you and the Commissioner do not consider there are sound enough reasons for the MPS to make use of the App going forward, please be aware that in mid September we will need to give registered users four weeks' notice that the App and Service will be withdrawn.

Obviously we remain hopeful it will not come to this but if that is the Commissioner's decision, please know we will be ready to work with the MPS to address any concern it may have about any accessing reports and evidence post withdrawal.

I hope this is helpful both as to content and timing.

Kind regards
Guy

From: xxx@met.police.uk
Subject: RE: DAC Mark Simmons and Guy Dehn to discuss Just Evidence App
Date: 27 July 2018 at 09:10:13 BST
To: <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>
Cc: < Alex Graham Anthony Heaton-Armstrong

Dear Guy

Apologies for the delay, and I note your comments on the timings. I commissioned a review of the paper you provided me with and am awaiting the results of that this week. I will get back to you next week.

Kind regards
Mark
Mark Simmons QPM
Deputy Assistant Commissioner | Local Policing

From: Guy Dehn <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>
Subject: Met
Date: 7 September 2018 at 17:39:15 BST
To: Alex Graham, Anthony Heaton-Armstrong

Mark Simmons (the DAC who leads on this) just rang me for 15 minutes and apologised for delay. He / the Met are changing their view on the value of an app, in large part following the discussion Alex and I

had with him and the savings paper (adding some of our £ estimates were too low and some too high). He thinks there is real potential value in apps supporting repeat and vulnerable victims. He understands our time and financial pressures but says he doubts they can do much in money or human capacity in the very near future. He is writing a note for us on what they may be able to do and when and will get this to me early next week and will be happy to talk or meet. I said once we have the note we will see whether there is anything that is doable at our end.

Could be worse.

Happy weekend

Guy x

Guy Dehn

Just Evidence

[Welcome to the Future. It's Self Evident](#)

From: xxx@met.police.uk

Subject: Self Evident App

Date: 14 September 2018 at 14:41:19 BST

To: <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>

Good afternoon Guy - apologies for not getting back to you sooner.

We are in the middle of our Capital Budget Planning and Prioritisation Process and are still to get a clearer picture around when we may be able to commence work on an App.

Having reviewed the work plan for the Public Access Programme Board it is certainly unlikely that we will have either the capacity or the funding within the next 12 months and I can't be sure beyond that time period either – I'm sorry I can't be more specific.

I appreciate that this makes decision making difficult for you, but as we discussed we have a pretty full programme at the moment that involves the development of our on-line offer and a contact resolution service for the Met is amongst those things.

Happy to discuss further if that would help

Sorry again for the delay in responding to you

Kind Regards

Mark

From: Guy Dehn <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>

Subject: Met

Date: 20 September 2018 at 08:55:52 BST

To: Alex Graham Anthony Heaton-Armstrong

Morning Alex and Anthony

I had a half hour call with Mark Simmons yesterday evening. No shift from his email - they're overstretched and can't consider anything outside their work plans and don't want to look beyond their

online offer for a year or two. He was apologetic and will send us their review of our savings paper tomorrow. Us aside, it doesn't bode well for witnesses or for repeat & vulnerable victims.

I'll draft something to go to the commissioner and we'll suspend the app and service from end October.

Sorry I've no better news to start the day.

Guy Dehn

From: xxx@met.police.uk

Subject: RE: Self Evident App

Date: 21 September 2018 at 19:12:33 BST

To: <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>

Guy

Apologies for the delay. The report I referred to is marked 'commercial in confidence' so I cannot send it to you as it is. However I have copied some of the key points in relation to the costs/savings below:

1 Reporting Crime

1.1 Cost of 101 System

1.1.2 The cost per call for crimes is quoted as £41.41 (2015/16). Historically, we have used a standard figure of £8.04 per call, based on a target average call time of 371 seconds, which includes staffing, supervision, technology and estate costs. Recent work undertaken by EY for the Contact & Resolution Service high level design suggests the actual average length of a call is 434 seconds, which is equivalent to £9.41 (extrapolated from the £8.04 figure). The over-estimation of call costs means that the predicted level of savings will be overestimated.

1.2 £4.86m savings from the Self Evident App in Improving First Contact

1.2.2 The process for the receipt of Self Evident reports is broadly the same as our online forms, save that Self Evident claim they have verified the informant's email address (and telephone number). This is something that our online form cannot do. The verification is presumably undertaken when a user signs up for the Self Evident app they have to provide an email address and then receive an email to that address to verify it is correct, and a code sent via text message to the telephone to verify their number. We are unaware of significant issues with incorrect or invalid email addresses being provided via our online reports. Whilst our own online forms currently require the user to enter data in the name, address, email address and telephone number fields (they could put "prefer not to say" in any of those boxes and we would still accept the report), Self Evident's sign up and validation process may deter some users from reporting. The longer term vision through SOH and the Contact & Resolution Solution project is to offer customer accounts ("MyMet") which, as well as case tracking, would retain users' personal details. Users would still have the option of not signing up.

The claim is made that Self Evident reports can be handled by MetCC three times faster than on the telephone. Anecdotal evidence from MetCC suggests that the handling time for SE reports is similar to that of our existing online crime report forms (an average of 277 seconds, which is one third faster than telephony) but more likely slightly longer. It takes a short while for the MetCC operator to request a PIN and log into the system to access the Self Evident report. The

data contained in the Self Evident report often requires follow up with the informant via a telephone call. In particular, a precise location is not given on the report. Instead, a map is presented showing the rough location of the incident and not a specific address.

On a related note, TDIU report that in general terms, the process of accessing the Self Evident reports with an email verification is slow and takes considerably longer to process than a report submitted through our online reporting system. The Self Evident reports tend to lack information compared with our online reports. Although I have not seen the customer front end, I assume this is because the Self Evident offers no structured questions for gathering information from the user (unlike our online forms which take the user through a set of questions designed to identify their need and gather the information we require to service their request or signpost them to the right service or other place if it is not a police matter).

1.2.3 Using the revised MPS figures at 1.1.2 and 1.2.2, and the cost of £9 per report (without evidence attached) gives an annual cost to the MPS of £838,500, compared with the claimed potential *saving* of £4.86m.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Simmons QPM

Deputy Assistant Commissioner | Local Policing

From: Guy Dehn <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>

Subject: Re: Self Evident App

Date: 25 September 2018 at 13:13:32 BST

To: xxx@met.police.uk >

Dear Mark.

Thank you for this. While it is helpful to have a summary of the Review's key points on the costs/savings of the App as against 101 as estimated in section 1 of our Briefing, please will you supply us the Review itself as you repeatedly said you would.

In so far as the 'commercial in confidence' marking may still be a concern, we don't see how it can apply to the Review's findings on the estimated savings in sections 2, 3 and 4 of our Briefing when it does not apply to those in section 1.

There are two pressing reasons why we ask you to send us the Review now:

1) On 7 September you said that we had understated some savings in our Briefing and overstated others. Having promised to send us the whole Review, it is not right that we have only seen those savings that it considers were overstated when those that were understated or reliable are clearly relevant to any representation we now make to the Commissioner on this matter.

2) You said that, as a result of the Review, the MPS now recognises that the real benefits of an App are in the supply of evidence and the support for repeat and vulnerable victims. Therefore the Review's findings on these issues are directly relevant to the approach we will now make to the Commissioner (and are clearly more important than those on 101 where you say the MPS feels the benefits of such an app are not at this time so clear).

For these reasons, please can you now supply us the Review as we wish to write to the Commissioner this week.

Best wishes

Guy

From: <xxx@met.police.uk>
Subject: RE: Self Evident App
Date: 27 September 2018 at 16:08:37 BST
To: <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>

Mr Dehn

Thank you for your email. DAC Simmons is currently on annual leave and will respond to you on his return towards the end of next week.

Best wishes

Eileen
Personal Assistant to Deputy Assistant Commissioner

From: Guy Dehn <guy.dehn@justevidence.org>
Subject: Re: Self Evident App / Battersea Murder
Date: 19 October 2018 at 13:08:20 BST
To: xxxs@met.police.uk

Dear Mark

We've just seen that an app user sent a report with evidence a couple of months back that will be of interest following Wednesday's tragic murder of Ian Tomlin who confronted drug dealers smoking weed outside his home in Battersea.

The user located the incident a couple of hundred yards from the murder scene and timed it at 14.38hrs on 31 July. His summary states "They are drug dealing, there is a strong smell of marijuana and because of their constant presence being very close to the playground, no parents are taken their kids there, it's no longer safe" and attaches a 104 second video.

The report was sent to Victim Support which accessed it (but not the video) on 1 August. Our understanding is that Victim Support will have liaised with the MPS or reassured the user to do so himself and so your colleagues may already be aware of the report and video. But if they are not, please let them know if they get back to us and we will do what we can to help. If they would prefer to liaise with Victim Support the relevant officer there is xxxl@victimsupport.org.uk.

Since - as I think you may be aware - we cannot access the video ourselves (as requested by ACPO and Home Office), we cannot indicate whether or how far this video may contain telling evidence. But even if this video proves to be of no direct assistance to this murder investigation, it does indicate the value the App could play if the MPS saw fit to encourage and enable Londoners to use it to share such evidence they have on their phones with the police. As such, I am also copying this to Stuart Bell in the Commissioner's Office as I imagine she may be considering how far the App could assist the MPS and its officers in such cases.

Kind regards

Guy
Guy Dehn
Just Evidence
[Welcome to the Future. It's Self Evident](#)

Cressida Dick CBE QPM
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
London SW1A 2JL

2nd October 2018

Withdrawal of the Self Evident Crime Reporting App and Service

Thank you for initiating the review of the Public Access Board's decision that the MPS has no use for a smartphone app to enable Londoners to report crime and send evidence.

DAC Mark Simmons will be able to confirm that the review has been worthwhile as he and colleagues now accept the benefits an app like Self Evident will bring the MPS and Londoners in (i) enhancing support for repeat and vulnerable victims, (ii) obtaining evidence, and (iii) freeing up officers' time. As to public access, however, we are disappointed that Mr Simmons did not seem to appreciate the significance of OFCOM data showing that if young and poor Londoners are to engage as the MPS takes its services online, smartphone apps will need to play a strategic role.

However, despite the welcome shift in its approach to apps and assurances that it wanted to utilise our five years' experience with Self Evident, Mr Simmons now says that the MPS is proposing to develop its own app but that no work on this can start before 2020. As outlined in my letter to you of 25th May, we are left in a position where it is impossible for us to raise the funds necessary to continue to run the App. As such, we regret that on 1st November we will need to give notice to our 27,000 users that the App and Service will be suspended on 21st November.

As this will mean that Londoners can no longer report crime or engage with the MPS by smartphone or send it photo or video evidence, the situation will be incomprehensible to most people. In attempting to explain the reasons, we will be making available this letter and the attached Briefings. While Mr Simmons is yet to supply us the MPS' review of the savings that Self Evident will unlock, from what he has told us there is no dispute that it would – in addition to net cash savings – free up the equivalent of over 100 officers a year. For this reason, we cannot see how it can be good value for money for the MPS to forsake such a benefit for the substantial risks, delays and costs until its own app is available. As Self Evident is proven to work in and out of court, is rated highly by victims and witnesses, and as frontline officers across the MPS value and want to make use of the App, we believe you may want to intervene personally at this stage.

Yours sincerely

Guy Dehn
Director
guy.dehn@justevidence.org

Mr Guy Dehn
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Cressida Dick CBE QPM
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Tel: 020 7230 2346

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www.met.police.uk

31 October 2018

Dear Mr Dehn,

Thank you for your letter dated the 2nd October where you ask me to review the decision to discontinue the use of the smartphone App provided by Just Evidence.

I have reviewed the matter fully with DAC Mark Simmons and other colleagues including the head of digital policing and our department of legal services. Having considered all the material I am not inclined to reverse this decision and feel that the rationale of the public access board is sound.

When we look at the data and the metrics involved in the App we have a very different view on the potential cost savings and feel that the use of this App and submission charges, if expanded, would actually lead to a cost to the MPS rather than a saving. We fully accept that the App has been of some use for those signed up to it but it has not harvested enough benefit to justify a potential cost.

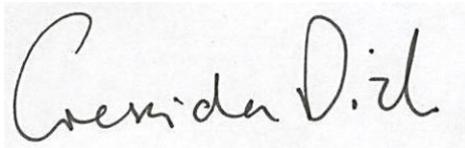
The MPS is not preparing its own App but is developing solutions to the issue of public submission of digital data. These are being developed in the light of national and technological developments in this area to ensure the best possible sustainable solution in the long-term.

Self-evident has been a useful pilot but we entered this under those terms - as a pilot. If we were minded to award a contract we would be obliged to comply with procurement regulations to allow open and fair competition before doing so. We could not just offer this contract directly to you. However, it is just not something that fits with our digital plans at this time hence we are not taking that step

I note your comments about poorer Londoners using Apps but there is a capacity to contact the MPS and report crime online via any mobile device and we are working hard to promote our online reporting functions. The App is quicker to complete but requires additional follow up questions from police officers to capture relevant information. The time saving at the front end is counterbalanced by this. Our online reporting takes longer because it captures vital information and covers some critical questions.

We are very grateful for the time effort and energy you have put into this and I am sorry that this is not the decision you were hoping to get. I note in your proposed press release that you claim we are “indifferent”. I can assure you an awful lot of time, effort and energy has gone into evaluating this before we have made our decision. We care deeply about how our services can be accessed. I am clear this App cannot be justified for us because of the overall costs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cressida Dick". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular background.

Cressida Dick
Commissioner

Cressida Dick CBE QPM
Commissioner
Metropolitan Police Service
New Scotland Yard
London SW1A 2JL

2 November 2018

Dear Commissioner,

Thank you for your letter of 31st October and for letting us know that you are not going to intervene in the Public Access Board's decision that the MPS has no further need for a smartphone app to enable Londoners to report crimes and send it evidence.

As there are a number of points in your letter that need to be corrected or qualified and as we will be publishing this correspondence so our 27,000 users and the public can understand why the App is being suspended, we take this opportunity to set them out below. While we do not expect you to respond to them individually, we do ask that you bear these points in mind as you and colleagues address the important issue of how the MPS can best engage Londoners in your vital work reducing violent and serious crime.

While senior and frontline officers have emphasised the real benefits that the Self Evident App offers the MPS in the support it provides to repeat and vulnerable victims, your letter makes no mention of this. Instead, it considers the App solely as an alternative to 101 and the MPS' online reporting form.

This mistake has also meant that your consideration has focused on the economics of the initial recording of incidents and not on the advantages and improved efficiencies of officers having ready access to relevant photo and video evidence from the outset, of having early validated witness evidence, and of the tamper-proof quality of evidence captured on the Self Evident App which makes it 'good to go' in the words of the CPS.

As to the MPS' online reporting system, as you recognise, this takes over twenty minutes to complete and does not enable users to attach evidence. As importantly, it measures its success by the fact that in 89% of recorded reports there is no need for officers to talk to victims. By contrast Self Evident serves a different need and was specifically developed to secure the necessary engagement of vulnerable victims and witnesses with your officers, not to replace it. The loss of such a facility will prove increasingly important as (a) many of London's young and the poor – approaching half of whom only go online on their smartphones – will be deterred from reporting crime or engaging with the MPS, when faced with completing such a lengthy form on their phones; and (b) the online process is clearly unsuitable for witnesses who may wish to supply you telling evidence of street violence or other crimes on their phones.

In your letter you say that the MPS entered into a pilot of the Self Evident App. This is not correct as we have never discussed or agreed to such a pilot with the MPS in the five years the App has

been in use. Had there been such a pilot, the MPS would inevitably have promoted the App on its website, on 101 and in press releases so the public and your officers would have been aware of its existence and you could have tested its utility. The fact that the Report of the MPS's Continuous Policing Improvement Command found the App has been used as frequently and effectively as it has is without any internal or external promotion is testament to its real potential. Yet somehow this is used as a reason that the App should be discontinued because it has not harnessed sufficient benefits.

As to the savings the App can unlock, the only costings that your letter and previous correspondence mention concern the immediate recording of a crime report. No mention, however, is made of the major savings the App offers, namely in gathering validated and other evidence, having verified users or in deterring crime and bringing offenders to justice. It is not right that the MPS refuses to share its cost-benefit analysis of the key features of our App with us, particularly when it is not clear that the actual costs and the benefits have been properly assessed. With so many businesses now using apps to improve efficiency and customer engagement, people will find it astonishing that the MPS sees no benefit in such a move. True there are modest costs involved in the App but these should be weighed against the savings it will bring, just as the costs of body worn videos are justified by the major savings it is expected to bring.

For all the above reasons, we feel sure that before long the MPS will wake up to the real advantages that an app like Self Evident can bring its work keeping London and Londoners safe. When it does you may then want to consider whether public procurement require a tender in the light of the App's unique functions and proven track record and in the light of the advice the MPS has on intellectual property rights in this matter. However should you then decide to tender, we will welcome any competition as we are confident that Self Evident will offer unrivalled value for money.

Finally, thank you again for considering this matter. We wish you and your officers well in your work keeping London safe and we apologise to them that we have been unable to persuade you that the MPS should promote and adopt this practical tool that helps them do their job. My own regret is that after the MPS blocked the pilot of our witness appeal map to highlight and reduce street violence in London and then sought to close down our sister charity Witness Confident, I did not succeed in getting anyone senior at the MPS to welcome – let alone pilot or embrace - the Self Evident App. I hope it is not too long before you and colleagues recognise that in this fast changing world tools like the Self Evident App and StreetViolence.org will be not just helpful but necessary if the MPS is to enable and encourage Londoners to engage with it and help turn the tables on crime.

Yours sincerely

Guy Dehn

Guy Dehn
Director