

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Community Engagement Committee** was held on 2 April 2008 in the Conference Room, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter starting at 10.00am.

Present:

Chairman B Preston
Members: M Bull, L Dunn, M Hicks, A Malcolm and J Owen

Officers in Attendance: -

Police Authority A Buisman (Policy Officer) and R Martin (Policy Officer)
Constabulary G Sims (Force Consultation Officer)

PC/258 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Hicks and Mr C Wallin.

PC/259 Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda.

PC/260 Chairman's Announcement

There were no Chairman's announcements.

PC/261 Minutes

PC/253 – Members stated they were still not being informed of PACT meetings scheduled for their local areas. It was thought this was a basic communication issue that could be remedied easily. The Chairman indicated that he would discuss this with the chief inspector with responsibility for the neighbourhood policing project.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2008 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PC/262 Police Authority Panels

The Policy Officer (Community Engagement) presented a report on the pilot Panel held in Launceston in January 2008 and proposing the future approach. Issues discussed during the consideration of this item included:

- The need to ensure people from all areas of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly were invited to attend Panels.
- Membership of the Panels will rotate to ensure a throughput of views and opinions.
- Residents from Plymouth and Exeter can provide a city-view of issues to balance the rural perspectives.
- There was an approximate 50/50 split in males and females attending the pilot Panel. The range of ages was narrower; the majority of attendees being aged 40+.
- The next Panels are scheduled to be held in June and October 2008 at locations yet to be determined.
- Those people expressing an interest in attending Panels will be canvassed as to their preference of venue.
- Comments made by the Panels, in the case of the Local Policing Summaries, are provided to the Planning Working Group for consideration and action.

The Chairman thanked the Policy Officer for her work in taking this initiative forward.

RESOLVED: That two Panels should be set up and run twice a year.

PC/263 Police Authority Consultation Priorities

The Policy Officer (Community Engagement) introduced a report setting out proposals for taking forward the Police Authority's consultation priorities as agreed by the Police Authority in February 2008.

Members made suggestions for the methodology to be adopted, particularly the layout of the questionnaire.

RESOLVED

- i. That the aims and objectives of the two priorities are accepted
- ii. That the proposed methods of consultation are endorsed.

PC/264 Public Survey

The Policy Officer (Community Engagement) presented a report providing detailed proposals for one annual large-scale public survey each year.

On 31 January 2008, the Committee agreed to the suggestion for reducing the number of public surveys each year from three to one.

Members questioned the cost of distributing the survey along with the follow-up analysis work required. It was unclear yet as to how the costs would be split between the Police Authority and the Constabulary; this would be clarified.

The Policy Officer (Community Engagement) requested the Committee agree to make the sample size of 25,000 a minimum, rather than a maximum figure as indicated in the report. This will provide the option of consulting at neighbourhood level if necessary.

Members agreed that the best time for conducting the survey would be September/ October. This would allow questions to be asked about the Local Policing Summary, which has a planned distribution date of September 2008. It would also allow questions to be asked and fed into the budget and target-setting process for 2009/10.

To supplement the postal survey, telephone surveys will be conducted throughout the year. This will allow for dips in service to be investigated and performance managed. Additionally, telephone surveying will provide the opportunity to focus in on specific geographic or performance areas.

RESOLVED That the proposed model is accepted.

PC/265 Police Authority Summer 2007 Survey

The Policy Officer (Community Engagement) provided a summary of the results from the summer 2007 Public Survey. Issues discussed during the consideration of this item included:

- Members were encouraged by the findings that suggested that the public were more satisfied with the way their locality was policed if they had seen a PCSO recently.
- Members expressed their satisfaction with the way PCSOs were being accepted by the public and the positive effect they were having on community confidence and satisfaction. The Committee was pleased that PCSOs were highly visible and approachable and Members reported much encouraging public comment.
- Members commented on the seemingly contradictory findings that suggested members of the public who had seen PCSOs in their local area were less satisfied with making contact with the police than those who did not recall seeing PCSOs. Members thought that this may be due to the way the question was worded. 'Making contact' may have been interpreted as purely ringing the police call centre rather than approaching and speaking to an officer or PCSO in their community.

- The Chairman updated Members on a national conference of the Special Constabulary, he attended recently. The conference discussed the approach to using Specials more effectively and making better use of volunteers as part of the extended police family. The Chairman stated he has accepted an invitation to become a member of the Constabulary's Police Volunteer Programme Development Group.

The full version of the findings from the summer 2007 Public Survey is available from the Police Authority office.

The results from the autumn 2007 survey will be available for the next meeting.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 10.45am