

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Community Engagement Committee** was held on Wednesday 20th January 2010 in the Conference Room, Devon and Cornwall Police Authority, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10:00hrs.

Present:

Chairman Mr M Hicks

Members: Mr M Clayton, Mrs L Dunn, Mr M Hodge, Mr D Percival and Mr B Preston.

Also present: Mr M Bull (Chairman of the Police Authority).

Officers in attendance:

Police Authority

Miss J Norris (Assistant Chief Executive), Ms E Macaulay (Policy Officer), Mrs G Clifton (Administrator).

Constabulary

ACC P Netherton, Supt C Singer, Ms V Goodwin, Ms A Poole, Sgt P Trudgeon (Neighbourhood Team Leader – Axminster).

PC/352 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Owen, Mrs L Williams and Mrs J Zito.

PC/353 Declarations of Interest

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

PC/354 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements.

PC/355 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

Updates on the following items were given:

- PC/346 bullet point one – details of the social marketing seminar on 25th November had been fed back to members.
- PC/348 bullet point three – an interim arrangement had been made to provide funding for the confidence survey next year in the event that the Home Office did not provide support.

PC/356 Confidence Action Plan

The Assistant Chief Constable presented the report which outlined the Force's plan, developed in November 2009, to prioritise and monitor activity to improve public confidence. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Devon and Cornwall had been ranked in the top ten for confidence in 2008 but had recently fallen to 49.2% giving a rank of 16th out of 43 from the British Crime Survey. The results of the local surveys carried out also showed a fall in confidence. This action plan had been developed to address the decline.
- In the local survey the response to the question about confidence in the police was rising but overall confidence (which included confidence in the Local Authority) was falling. For example, if the bins had not been collected or pavements not gritted this resulted in a fall in overall confidence from the public. There needs to be better work in partnership to address this.

- The Force had previously not performed well at keeping people informed. Newsletters were now being produced that were locally based and gave information on the work of the police in a particular neighbourhood. These would be produced every four months and be distributed across the region by Royal Mail.
- The Force had written to the Chief Executives of all the Local Authorities setting out what the target was and reminding them that it is a joint target. This was reinforced at lower levels in the Local Authorities by BCU and LPA Commanders.
- Officers were instructed not only to provide a visible police presence outside schools etc. but to 'patrol with purpose' and go out with a message.
- Better engagement with the community was needed. Initiatives included:
 - i. Officers going door to door with a PACT leaflet to ask what the public's concerns were.
 - ii. A mobile Police Station had been set up in Devonport, an area particularly low in confidence.
 - iii. A "You said, we did" section had been put on the website.
- Dissatisfaction and complaints needed to be dealt with fairly. The gap in satisfaction between BME and white victims was closing but other diverse groups such as lesbian or gay victims might not be identified.
- CDRP meetings were valuable in identifying public concerns but the messages do not always get back to the Chief Executive. The role of Police Authority members could be to challenge Local Authorities about what they are doing.
- Anti-social behaviour can often be a hidden crime. A follow-up visit was now being arranged for all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Multi-agency strategic hubs had been developed in Devon and Torbay. Health, Social Services and Police were co-located to collate all available information and risk assess each incident to decide if immediate action was necessary. This was currently concentrating on children but would soon be extended to include vulnerable adults.
- A 'Harm Register' had been developed where every address has an action plan for repeat victims of crime or anti-social behaviour. This could include health issues, drug or alcohol addiction, mental health and domestic abuse.
- Joint communication with partners can be problematic as Local Authorities often do not like negative stories about their area to be publicised. Cost is also an issue, newsletter distribution costs around £125,000. The website needs updating but this also entails cost.
- Ultimately better partnership working is required. Liaison with Local Authorities on how to deal with the problems in their area is key. However, the General Election results or a unitary council for Devon might change things.
- Another element is employees and organisational attitude. Only 10% of Police Officers have faith in the Criminal Justice System. They need to learn to accentuate the positive when dealing with members of the public and concentrate on how, in their role, they can make a difference.
- Cornwall Community Network has 19 town and parish councils represented at its monthly meetings. A Superintendent should attend to note the councils' concerns.
- The local confidence survey had been running for several years and was felt to be reliable. It allowed different localities and different years to be compared. In future surveys the cost effectiveness of the newsletters could be tested.
- Devon County Council covered education and social services in the multi-agency strategic hubs, this was important as anti-social behaviour tended to start in school. It was agreed that a presentation on the hubs would be given to the next available full meeting of the Police Authority.

RESOLVED

(i) to note the report.

(ii) that a presentation on the multi-agency strategic hubs be given to the next available full meeting of the Police Authority.

PC/357 Community Messaging

The Neighbourhood Team Leader for Axminster introduced this item. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Community Messaging Service (CMS) provides an instant messaging service informing the public what is happening now by phone, fax or email. The system can contact 1000 people per hour. People can sign up to the service by filling in a form or signing up on line. There are 130 different categories of messages to choose from.
- Officers review all logs and decide what information they want to go on the system. The CMS officer then chooses which messages should go out and creates the message. The messages are filtered by category and sent to those requesting that category. Messages can be prioritised and a tracking system records those who have received the message and if the call has been answered. If two calls are missed a member of the neighbourhood team will visit the address to check if the person has moved. If the person is not in, an answer phone message is left. If this facility is not available the call is repeated later in the day.
- A recent initiative piloted in Axminster where officers knocked on doors and visited supermarkets to get people to sign up to CMS increased the number of recipients from 400 to 2000. This initiative was now being rolled out to other areas starting with Tiverton and Exmouth.
- Messages could include information about missing persons, crimes, positive feedback on arrests, alerts on flooding, scams, PACT meetings etc. Messages were generally limited to one or two per month.
- From the local survey it may be possible to check whether confidence levels have increased in the Axminster area as a result of this initiative.
- There are currently only five CMS officers and the use of volunteers to increase capacity is being investigated.
- It was important to get people to sign up to the service particularly Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators. In future PALM administrators would take a number of forms to meetings and the Chair would explain the service to those attending.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

PC/358 – Police Authority Consultation Results – ‘Daisy’ Consultation

The report was introduced by the Policy Officer and provided results and analysis of the consultation that took place in the summer of 2009. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The results were a snapshot of opinion in time. A total of 699 daisies were completed at PALMs and various festivals. There was a good spread of age and locality. 15% of respondents identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender compared with 5-7% as a national proportion.
- Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement – “I am confident that the police in my area deal with anti-social behaviour and crime”. The biggest proportion (65%) tended to ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement.
- It was intended that a further consultation would be implemented in 2010 following a review of the questions.

RESOLVED (i) to increase the number of diversity focused events the Authority attends and at which the Authority surveys to target gaps.
(ii) develop a passive communication plan with the forthcoming ‘Community Engagement Plan’) with a specific target on the 45 – 60 age group.
(iii) the ‘Daisy’ consultation is implemented again in 2010, following a review/update of the questions.

PC/359 Joint Police Authority and Constabulary Community Engagement Strategy

The Policy Officer introduced the report that outlined the joint strategy for approval by the Committee. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The strategy identified the occasions when it was appropriate for the Police Authority and the Force to work together and those when the Authority should act as a ‘checking mechanism’.

- The original brief was to clearly set out to the public when and how the Police Authority and the Force would engage together. This document did that in a short and succinct manner.

RESOLVED the Committee recommends that the joint strategy is adopted at the full Police Authority meeting.

PC/360 Police Authority's Community Engagement Plan

The Policy Officer introduced the report that represented the first draft of the plan that detailed activity to deliver the Community Engagement Strategy. :

- The plan was designed to sit beneath the strategy and provide information to the general public on community engagement. It was not an exhaustive list or a contract of obligations, more an indication as to how the message will be conveyed.
- A PowerPoint presentation was available for members and staff to use at talks etc. This needed updating. The information could also be put onto DVD and sent out to business leaders and the like. This would be looked at but would depend on resources available.
- A calendar of events was being drawn up to get an even spread of activity across the year. Some of these might be linked to the Force's confidence strategy.

RESOLVED that the plan be noted.

PC/361 Devon and Cornwall Policing Plan

This item discussed the first draft of the forthcoming three years' policing plan to seek amendment and approval of the Police Authority content:

- The Constabulary's section of the Policing Plan was not yet complete as the Target Setting by the Performance Management Group was not available.
- A small group of members would be set up to look at the complete draft plan before it went to the full Police Authority on 11th March 2010.
- Some changes were suggested for the Police Authority section.
 - In the 'How we work' paragraph the "approximately" five times per year should be changed to "at least" because, in addition to full Police Authority meetings, members attended seminars which could also be decision-making.
 - The Authority had other responsibilities such as inspection, special constables etc. that had not received mention.

RESOLVED that a group of members comprising Mr Hicks, Mrs Dunn, Mr Preston and Mr Percival would look at the complete draft plan before recommending it to the full Police Authority on 12th February 2010.

PC/362 Partnership Strategy – The Approach

The report, introduced by the Assistant Chief Executive, outlined the approach of the Authority and Constabulary in developing a working strategy for partnerships. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The strategy draws together best practice from other organisations and had been discussed with the Force to ensure there were no opposing views.
- The Authority should be involved in high level partnerships e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) where they are currently not represented. There are only two mandatory partnerships – the Children's Trust and CDRPs.
- The document provides guidelines to be applied to existing and new partnerships. It also outlines an exit strategy for when partnerships cease to be of benefit.
- An audit had been carried out some months ago of all the partnerships members were involved in. It was for the Chief Constable to decide on partnerships the Force was involved in and for the Police Authority to monitor and check that resources were being used effectively.

- With regard to the specific questions asked in the report, members were asked to respond by 30th January 2010 with their feedback. If a response is not received by a member by then it will be assumed that he/she is happy with the report as written.

RESOLVED that the Committee responds to the questions raised in the report to assist the development of the Partnership Strategy.

PC/363 Monitoring the Policing Pledge

The Chairman announced he had met with the Acting Chief Executive and the Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee to agree that the Community Engagement Committee would take on the role of monitoring the Policing Pledge. However, the formal agreement of the Committee to adopt this role was necessary. Any issues arising from monitoring the pledge would be brought to future meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the Community Engagement Committee adopts the role of monitoring the Policing Pledge.

PC/364 Confirmation of 2010 meeting dates for the Committee

The proposed dates for meetings of the Community Engagement Committee were as follows:

20 th January 2010	10.00	Endeavour House
11 th March 2010	10.00	Endeavour House
13 th May 2010	10.00	Endeavour House
20 th July 2010	10.00	Endeavour House
30 th September 2010	10.00	Endeavour House
9 th November 2010	10.00	Endeavour House
27 th January 2011	10.00	Endeavour House

RESOLVED that the above dates be confirmed.

PC/365 Briefing Sheets

RESOLVED that the list of briefing sheets pertaining to the Community Engagement Committee be noted.

The next meeting would be held on 11th March 2010 at 10.00 hrs at Endeavour House.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1245 hours.