



Dorset Police and Police Authority External Communication, Consultation and Engagement Policy

(Short title - Community Engagement Policy)

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Portfolio Holder	Deputy Chief Constable
Policy Owner	Head of PDDT
Owning Department	PDDT
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0.1		Initial Document	Ch Superintendent S Merry
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1. POLICY AIM

- 1.1 Dorset Police and Dorset Police Authority view this policy as a vehicle to support the adoption of a clearer citizen focus and to facilitate greater and more effective community involvement, engagement and dialogue. We see this joint policy as an important opportunity for the Force and Authority to work closely together to address issues that are fundamental to the ability of the police service in Dorset to reach out to the diverse communities we serve and to respond effectively to the Government's Citizen Focus and Safer and Stronger Communities agendas. The Police Authority has a statutory duty to provide information and to consult and this policy also sets out the relevant arrangements for this to take place. The policy aims to ensure that we adopt an open and pro-active approach to information provision and to ensure that our arrangements for consultation and engagement are corporate, co-ordinated, high quality and focused on the needs and expectations of customers and the community.
- 1.2 Specifically, we expect the policy to contribute to customers and the community being:
- Listened to,
 - Understood,
 - Informed,
 - Protected
 - Safer
- .
- 1.3 This will enable the Force and the Authority to:
- Better inform the community of services and safety
 - Be better informed about community needs and expectations
 - Be engaged with communities in decision making and action
 - Enable intelligence led policing at a neighbourhood, divisional and force level
 - Develop service delivery to meet individual and community needs.
 - Be more open and accountable
 - Increase confidence in the Force and Authority
 - Achieve the Force Aim and Priorities
- 1.4 It should be noted that the Force has separate and complimentary policies that relate to Customer Service, Community Policing and Internal Communications.

2. RATIONALE/LEGAL BASIS

2.1 The requirement to provide information and to consult arises from a number of pieces of legislation including:

- Section 96 of the Police Act 1996 which requires Police Authorities to make arrangements to obtain the views of local people about matters concerning policing in the area and to obtain their co-operation with the police in preventing crime.
- The Local Government Act 1999 imposed a Best Value duty on Police Authorities which included the duty to consult.
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and subsequent amendments in the Police Reform Act 2002) requires 'responsible authorities' (which include police forces and authorities) to consult the public in connection with the production of a community safety strategy.
- The Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 requires police forces and Authorities to assess and consult on the likely impact of their policies on race equality and to ensure public access to information and services.
- The Government's 2005 White Paper "Building Communities: Beating Crime" and the National Policing Plan 2004-7 set out clear expectations for forces and Police Authorities to adopt a customer and community focus that is supported by external communication.
- The Governments Local Area Agreement programme and Safer and Stronger Communities agenda that requires partnership working across a range of social and environmental community factors that, in part, will be measured by the percentage of residents who feel they can influence local decisions.

2.2 In addition, the Force and Authority consider it a priority to raise public confidence which is reliant on effective external communication, consultation and engagement, specifically:

2.2.1 **Information Provision** enables Communities to be informed about actual crime and disorder and therefore develop an accurate perception of safety as well as how to access services, be aware of policies, aspirations and constraints. To achieve this it is necessary to better understand our communities, learn about how people from different backgrounds access and use information and identify what they need and expect to know. We must also understand the barriers to contact including those that are derived from disability, language, culture or preference.

- 2.2.2 **Consultation** empowers communities to influence policing aims, priorities and the services provided but to achieve this we recognise that our arrangements for consulting the community do not stand alone. Instead they must form an integrated and inherent part of our ongoing communications. We recognise also that our consultation arrangements must address both the objective view and subjective feelings of the communities we serve and that our surveying requirements and opportunities must be well focused and, where appropriate, co-ordinated with other bodies and agencies.
- 2.2.3 This knowledge and empowerment encourages communities to **Engage** in decision making, resolution and prevention of problems that affect them. Engagement has three levels. The first encourages others to jointly decide on action. The second involves an equal participation and the third is where the community take the lead and the police support them in achieving a resolution. The latter is a stage more advanced than partnership. information provision and allows Dorset Police to publish local service commitments that in turn provide the basis for local people to hold local policing services to account.

3. POLICY CONTENT

3.1 The Context of Communication

- 3.1.1 Communication can be categorised in terms of its **formality, purpose and operating level**.
- 3.1.2 To support a consistent and coherent approach, communication will be corporate in standard and style but adapted to address the purpose and local circumstances. It should be noted that the focus on individual circumstances and needs is reinforced by the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 which requires communication to address individual needs and to cater for diverse communities. A pre requisite for communication is a full understanding of the communities served and the generation of effective methods for communicating.
- 3.1.3 It is recognised that communication methods can be categorised as formal and informal and, whilst this policy addresses formal communication in particular, in so doing it also aims to set the standards and framework within which informal communications take place in a complementary way. As a general principle, communication is to be seen as a tactic and must therefore always have a purpose.

3.2 Information Provision

- 3.2.1 Information provision focuses on the transmission of information to individuals, groups and the wider community and is often one-way only, not inviting a response. It should be noted that communication to individuals as

victims, witnesses or other customer/user contacts is addressed separately within the Force's Customer Services Policy.

- 3.2.2 Information Provision may be further categorised as basic information provision, Public Relations and Marketing.
- 3.2.3 Information provision to groups, sections or wider communities will principally be reactive or proactive one way transmission of information that must be provided by law or in pursuit of a local agreement or a general or specific operational policing objective. For example, by Web site, poster, signage, mail, press, radio or TV. This type of information provision will be proactive in terms of Access to services, types of service and policies, aspirations and constraints. Information provision may be reactive to an event or request. However, many of these methods also present opportunities for pro activity by anticipating events or requests as well as developing responses to support Aims and Priorities. This approach extends information provision into the area of Public Relations.
- 3.2.4 Public Relations relates to the proactive promotion of organisational aims and priorities and specific initiatives. Marketing is the process of providing information that promotes but also tests views on the policing approach, highlighting new segmented markets for the force in key areas in line with force objectives. This extends into consultation.
- 3.2.5 The Dorset Police Website (which includes the Police Authority) will be the standard route for external information provision and, in the interests of corporate identity and purpose, all other communications will be coordinated and consistent with the information provided on the website. In practice, the website is only one of a number of external communication media that are available to the Force and the Authority and the emphasis in any proposed communication must be to select the means (or combinations of means) that is best suited to reach the intended recipient(s).

3.3 Consultation

- 3.3.1 Consultation should ensure that all communities have an equal opportunity to influence the development of their policing services at the strategic and operational levels. The information provided will be incorporated into local and force strategic assessments and therefore lead to priority and tactic setting. It will also inform the Authority's strategic and annual policing plans.
- 3.3.2 Consultation extends information provision by seeking a response that will inform decision making. In practice information provision will often precede consultation and such consultation may then be followed by further information provision based on the resulting decisions. Consultation may be ongoing and performance monitors may be set to assess the impact of decisions and actions.

3.3.3 Consultation should be conducted relative to the purpose to be served and the audience to be reached. We recognise the imperative to focus on citizens and community and this is reinforced by the Race relations Amendment Act 2000 which places a duty on the police service to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations between people of different racial groups. This is achieved by consultation in a focused and proportionate way with those who are affected by the exercise of powers and duties. The significance of impact will determine the proportionality of consultation having regard to the circumstances of each particular case and the consultation itself will be based on an open, restricted, random or targeted selection according to those circumstances.

3.3.4 Methods of consultation include group meetings, individual postal questionnaires and telephone interviews. The overall consultation requirements, which must be consistent with the National Policing Plan and the Strategic and Annual Policing Plan, are agreed annually by the Police Authority. These comprise:

- A Community Safety Survey to inform the Force Policing Plans
- A specific Business Market Survey to inform Policing Plans
- Best Value Consultation to inform Reviews of force processes and arrangements.
- Race Equality Scheme Policy Consultation
- Victim surveys to inform the level of effectiveness
- Survey of access and quality of service across all contacts including Diverse groups

3.3.5 In addition, thematic or local consultation will be commissioned from time to time focused on specific service areas or focused on geographic or other community groups.

3.4 Engagement

3.4.1 Engagement extends information provision and often consultation by seeking to engage people and secure their participation in resolving a problem. A good example is the development of the Community policing Model which encourages local people to work with their neighbourhood policing teams to agree priorities and resolve local problems.

3.4.2 Information provision and consultation are regarded as pre-requisites for effective engagement but in practice the degree of engagement can take place at a number of levels:

- **Basic Engagement** - when communities are invited to be part of a decision to prioritise and set the tactics for action.
- **Enhanced Engagement** - when a community participates in taking action with the police service and partners to resolve a problem.

- **Advanced Engagement** - when a community delivers action supported by the police service and partners.

3.5 Operating Level and methods/processes

3.5.1 Information Provision, Consultation and Engagement may be conducted at Strategic, Tactical or Operational levels. For coherence the Police Authority requirement to consult is also incorporated at the Strategic level. In normal circumstances this will relate to Force, Divisional and Section /Beat level.

3.5.2 The relationship between Purpose and Operating level is set out at Figure 1 below. Figure 1 also gives examples of methods of information provision, consultation and engagement relative to the operating level. (This is not an exhaustive list)

Figure 1

Type Operating Level	Information Provision	Consultation	Engagement
Strategic/ Police Authority (PA)	PA joint Force Newspaper, annual report and provision of local policing summaries	PA Consultation programme – Community Safety, Business and other surveys	Membership of CDRPs
	Website	Development of interactive web surveys	Divisional IAGs
	Use of 'road shows' and attendance at public events	Monitoring and analysis of feedback to identify community priorities	
Strategic/ Force level	Force Newspaper 'Safer Dorset' briefing	Force Newspaper reply invitation	Diversity Board incorporating lay membership
	Website	Force Community Safety, Business and other surveys	

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

	Media Releases	Black and Ethnic Minority Advisory Panel Website	
Tactical/ Divisional level	Divisional Section of Force Newspaper	Divisional Section reply invitation	Basic Engagement – Joint decision making on Priorities and tactics.
	Media Releases	Division IAG	
	Division wide newsletter	CDRP	
	Website	Website	
Operational / Operational level	Personal briefing of Community Groups	CBO discussion with Community Groups	Advanced Engagement – Participation by members of Community Groups with CBOs.
	CBO newsletter and/or webpage briefing		
	Website	CBO on street meetings	Enhanced Engagement – Delivery of action by community Groups supported by CBO's.
	Media Releases Direct messaging via SMS/text, fliers, one off campaigns, posters, door-to-door	Neighbourhood and other Watch groups	

3.6 Standards

- 3.6.1 All Force communications must reflect the Force Aim, Priorities and values. The communication will be customer/community focused in achieving the purpose at the relevant operating level and all communication will seek to take into account user needs such as language and disability.
- 3.6.2 The Force Aim, Priorities and Values are separately established and compliance with these requirements will be a subjective judgement by both organisation and recipient.
- 3.6.3 In the case of Dorset Police communications, the corporate identity is the approved design for external and internal communication that defines a cohesive set of visual expressions of messages from the organisation. The corporate identity will be defined by guidelines setting out a recognisable organisational image in design and colour, as well as typeface. It will enhance and assure the Force Vision Statement and will be established separately. Compliance with this requirement will be based on the use of the approved Corporate identity. The Media and Corporate Communications Department (MCCD) are responsible for developing the Corporate identity and will also advise the Force on communication in general in so far as it relates to media, public relations and marketing messaging. The Partnership and Diversity Development Team (PDDT) and Contact Management team within the

Operations Division will advise on additional methods of more direct communications that will reach and be acceptable to diverse groups.

- 3.6.4 Customer/ Community Focus defines the absolute requirement to consider the audience for a communication in terms of individual or group characteristics or needs. This may be specific to individuals or groups or to meet diverse needs within a group, for example, one message may need to be repeated in different languages, in Braille and in large print to overcome disability or transmitted through different media to reach all members of an intended audience. .
- 3.6.5 Communication will ensure recipients receive information in the appropriate language and form relative to researched needs about:

Emergency and Non Emergency Telephone Contact
Access to Police Stations and points of contact
Information about Policing Services
Information about the Local Neighbourhood Officer
Access to Plans and Policies

- 3.6.6 This Policy and the Diversity Strategy will be available in relevant languages and form relative to researched needs.

3.7 Tasking and Co-ordination

- 3.7.1 Information provision, consultation and engagement are tactics to be deployed in the achievement of Aims and Priorities and consequently can be tasked and coordinated by the relevant Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) and intermediate command arrangements. The Police Authority will task through relevant committees, the Force will task through The Level 2 Strategic, Level 2 Tactical and Level 1 Operational TCGs.
- 3.7.2 A separate Force Communications TCG will manage the coherence and consistency of Dorset Police corporate information provision and consultation.

3.8 Functional Responsibilities

3.8.1 Understanding Communities and guidance on communication

- 3.8.1.1 Territorial Divisions in conjunction with PDDT will research and incorporate information about diverse communities within Local Strategic Assessments.
- 3.8.1.2 PDDT will maintain a database of diverse community groups and provide guidance on appropriate methods of communication.

3.8.2 Monitoring and Analysis

- 3.8.2.1 Territorial Divisions will monitor and advise on Community Tensions and change including confidence in Dorset Police that may have implications for communication tactics.
- 3.8.2.2 Monitoring of standards and impact of specific communication will be the responsibility of the relevant TCG.
- 3.8.2.3 The Media and Corporate Communications Department (MCCD) will have a responsibility for monitoring force wide standards and the real time assessment of the impact of media, public relations and marketing information provision.
- 3.8.2.4 The head of MCCD will chair the Communication TCG that will be attended by divisional Communications officers, other relevant Department Communications officers and the Safety Camera Partnership PR officer.
- 3.8.2.5 The Quality and Development Department (Q&D) will be responsible for analysis of force wide consultation results and sources of aggregate customer and community perception.
- 3.8.2.6 Q&D will generate survey questionnaire to elicit relevant information to assess the value and relevance of communication methods.
- 3.8.2.7 The Police Authority's Community Engagement and Communications Committee will monitor the effectiveness of its community engagement activities and will monitor and analyse feedback for the purposes of identifying community priorities and concerns.

3.8.3 Information Provision

- 3.8.3.1 Services that support information provision by the Force and Police Authority will be provided as follows:
- MCCD will provide the corporate management and standards for Information Provision relating to media, Public Relations and Marketing. The Department will be resourced by dedicated Media Relations staff, Public Relations staff and a Marketing Officer.
 - Territorial Divisions will be resourced by a dedicated Communications Officer responsible for internal communications and Public Relations in coordination with the MCCD Communications Manager and Officer. Divisional Communications Officers will also offer non-rota, localised media relations support as required by their Divisional Command

Teams. Headquarters Divisions and Departments designating Communications officers will operate within this same framework.

- MCCD in conjunction with territorial divisions will maintain a database of all media communication contacts including press, radio, television and internet.

3.8.4 Consultation

3.8.4.1 Services that support consultation by the Force and Police Authority will be provided as follows:

- The Quality and Development Department will provide management of strategic level and thematic consultation surveys, analysis and presentation of results.
- The Q and D Policy Audit Team will advise on consultation for the purpose of Policy generation and review.
- Q and D will manage a database of all partner consultation and opportunities for consultation.
- Territorial Divisional Commanders will be responsible for establishing localised divisional and Section/Beat level consultation groups relevant to diverse communities.
- Territorial Divisions will support Independent Advisory Groups.
- Headquarters CID will support a Force wide Independent Critical Incident Advisory Group.

3.8.5 Engagement

3.8.5.1 Services that support engagement by the Force and the Police Authority will be provided as follows:

- PDDT will provide management of strategic level Engagement and support tactical and operational level Engagement to territorial divisions.
- Territorial Divisional Commanders will be responsible for establishing localised divisional and Section/Beat level Engagement consistent with the Community Policing Model.

3.8.6 Diversity of Customer and Community Focus

3.8.6.1 The following assessments will be used by the Force and Police Authority to inform their information provision, consultation and engagement activities:

- The Local and Force Strategic Assessments will define the existing and potential diversity of communities residing in or visiting the force area and therefore recipients of the policing service. Diverse needs may result from differences in Race, Ethnicity, Language, Faith, gender, sexual orientation or be defined by a disability.
- Tactical Assessments will identify any tensions occurring within and across diverse communities. The strategic and tactical assessments will both reflect the product of consultation but also define the information provision and consultation needs as well as potential for engagement.
- Community Impact Assessments will identify communication needs based on specific events.

3.8.7 Community Engagement Tactical Options Menu

- 3.8.7.1 A Tactical Plan for the Force will set out mandatory tactics defined in this policy as well as developing good practice options for providing information, consultation and engagement. The Tactical Plan will be owned by The Head of PDDT.

4. LEGISLATIVE AND RISK CONSIDERATIONS

This policy has been assessed to establish its impact in relation to the requirements imposed by a range of legislation that might be affected by its implementation. A complete record of the impact assessment related to this policy is retained within the Quality & Development Department. A summary of this assessment is published on the Dorset Police website.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE/AUTHORISATION/APPROVAL

Version 1.0	Name	Signature	Date
Prepared:	Ch Supt S Merry		
Quality assured:	C Insp T Dymott		
Impact Assessment Questionnaire Completed:	Ch Supt S Merry		
Authorised:	Ch Supt S Merry		
Approved:	(ACPO portfolio owner)		

6. STAFF ASSOCIATIONS

	Name	Signature	Date
Police Federation			
Superintendents Association			
Unison			