

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 1 JULY 2010

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2010

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide members with an update on the Authority's Community Engagement Programme and on the Police Authority (Community Engagement and Membership) Regulations 2010.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Police Authorities are responsible for ensuring that there are effective arrangements for consulting local communities about policing and for reflecting those views in local policing priorities and targets. The Policing Plan sets out the range of engagement that is undertaken by the Force and Authority to inform the priorities for policing. The majority of consultation is undertaken in partnership with the Force and Opinion Research Services (ORS).
- 1.2 The Police Authority also undertakes its own programme of engagement and, whilst acknowledging that the numbers of respondents are relatively small and not statistically relevant, the approach does enable members to hear first hand from the community and is a priority for the Authority. The Authority's engagement activities are further supported by member involvement in Safer Neighbourhoods across the County for which a Members' Protocol is in place. This report provides an update on the activities undertaken in 2010.
- 1.3 Members will also recall a report to the last meeting of the Committee on the Police Authority (Community Engagement and Membership) Regulations 2010, effective from 17 March 2010, which included a number of important provisions for community engagement. This report updates members on the work being undertaken to address these provisions.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2010

- 2.1 The 2010 programme sets out to continue with the 'mixed economy' approach to community engagement adopted in 2009, although there has been seen a slow start to date in terms of actual events attended or consultations undertaken. However, the measures below outline the work that is being undertaken with regard to consultation and engagement.

Community Safety Survey

- 2.2 For the first time, the 2009 Community Safety Survey (CSS) contained a specific section relating to the Police Authority, with one of the questions asking respondents of their preferred methods for the Authority to engage and consult. This will continue to be asked in the quarterly surveys due to commence in April 2010 and will provide statistically relevant data to help inform our future approaches to consultation. Unfortunately the results from the first quarterly meeting were not available in time to update members for this meeting. The three most favoured consultation methods identified from the 2009 CSS responses were completing a questionnaire through the post, completing an on-line questionnaire and completing a freepost postcard listing top policing priorities.
- 2.3 A consultation postcard has been drafted as part of the development of the members' consultation packs (see paragraph 2.8 below) and should be finalised shortly. This can then be used at a number of different future events as a simple means of capturing views from the public. A copy of the draft postcard is attached at Appendix A.

Supermarket / Shopping Centre Engagement

- 2.4 An introductory letter from the Authority has been sent to a number of supermarkets across the County, also exploring the potential for conducting consultation exercises within the stores. To date, twelve stores have responded and all have been positive with regard to the Authority attending and talking to shoppers.
- 2.5 Members will be contacted shortly with a view to establishing potential dates and availability to attend these stores. It is anticipated that these would be half-day sessions probably only requiring a single member to attend each, supported by an officer. A small display stand would be used and would help facilitate a consultation exercise and / or questionnaires to be completed. The supermarkets that have been in conducted have indicated a degree of flexibility around when these consultations could take and they are likely to occur on weekdays rather than weekends.

Children and Young People – School Council's

- 2.6 A meeting was recently held with the manager of the Safer Schools and Communities Team (SSCT) which identified the potential for the Authority to engage and consult with young people through school council's. An introductory letter was sent to a number of local schools, via the SSCT, along with some possible questions and themes for the pupils to discuss. It was then planned that a member may be able to attend a subsequent meeting of the school council to hear and discuss the emerging views.
- 2.7 Feedback from the SSCT suggests that a number of schools have expressed an interest in this initiative and the Team is currently trying to establish future school council meeting dates in order to progress this further. Again, once further details emerge, members will be contacted regarding their potential availability to participate. One school has responded directly to the questions and themes included in our original letter and these views will be assimilated with any future consultation findings for this important group.

Member Involvement in Safer Neighbourhood Engagement

- 2.8 Further development of the Safer Neighbourhood protocol and engagement by members will continue in 2010, not only to identify the issues and concerns being raised by the public but also as a means of identifying other potential engagement

opportunities. The annual review of the protocol is included as a separate agenda item for this meeting.

- 2.9 Since the last meeting, member feedback has been received for seven meetings / surgeries, two in the conurbation and five in the County Division. In the main, attendance by the public was low and not particularly representative of local communities, although one meeting in Chideock did attract 140 villagers to discuss local traffic concerns, highlighting the effectiveness of the process for addressing specific local issues. Members did note that the timings of meetings and surgeries may not always be conducive for attracting attendance. There was also concern that issues raised at surgeries did not appear to inform public meetings and the setting of local priorities.
- 2.10 Issues and concerns identified at the meetings were generally of a low level and often not direct policing issues, although traffic and parking concerns and youth engagement and facilities tended to be a common theme. Feedback from one meeting in Bournemouth showed residents to be particularly impressed with their local PCSOs and their role in reducing anti-social behaviour.
- 2.11 The Force has recently issued a reminder to Section Inspectors regarding the protocol and the role of members with regard to safer neighbourhoods. If members continue to face difficulties in identifying suitable involvement opportunities with their local SNTs I would encourage them to let me know of any ongoing issues, concerns or suggestions regarding this to help with the development of this valuable exercise. I would also remind members that the protocol is not intended to restrict members to solely attending public meetings and that visiting local surgeries or street corner meetings may be a more accessible way to engage with local SNT arrangements.

Community Groups / Talks

- 2.12 This approach remains a focal point for the consultation programme in the future in order to help the Authority engage with various strands of the community. A meeting has taken place with a representative from the Dorset Magistracy, who have similar arrangements in place already, and this has proven to be extremely helpful in the development of our own plans.
- 2.13 As members are aware, a consultation pack is currently under development to help facilitate this initiative and it is hoped that this can be issued to each member shortly. The pack will assist members in undertaking local consultation at smaller events and safer neighbourhood meetings and will include supporting material such as surveys, postcards, leaflets, scripts for facilitating group talks and other relevant information. Top-up supplies of leaflets etc will then be available from the office on request.
- 2.14 Officers already have the contact details for numerous groups and agencies across the County and will begin to approach them to establish their interest in this initiative once the supporting member packs are in place.

Public Events

- 2.15 Given the initiatives outlined above, less emphasis has been placed on the attendance at local public events as these have traditionally proven difficult as a means of engaging the public and also often entail interaction with visitors from outside of the county. That said, some events do provide good consultation opportunities and also go some way to raising awareness of the Authority and its work. A provisional list of events for the

remainder of the year is outlined below which, along with the supermarket consultations outlined at 2.4 above, is hoped to create a well balanced programme:

Streetwise 999 Fun Day, Bournemouth
Dorset Police Section Open Day – Wimborne
Thai Festival – King's Park, Boscombe
Community Fair – King's Park, Boscombe

Sunday 18 July
Sunday 8 August
Sunday 1 August
10 – 12 September

3. THE POLICE AUTHORITY (COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND MEMBERSHIP) REGULATIONS 2010

- 3.1 The new regulations have placed a number of community engagement requirements on police authorities, which can be summarised as follows:
- to have particular regard to the need to obtain the views of a wide range of people, including those aged over 65 or under 21, those from the business and voluntary sectors and people from diverse backgrounds;
 - to ensure that their arrangements facilitate obtaining a sufficient number and range of views to avoid acting on the basis of an unduly limited or unrepresentative sample;
 - to ensure that these views are obtained sufficiently often so that they are continually aware of such views, so far as this is reasonably practicable;
 - to ensure that the public are offered a range of different routes by which to communicate their views, avoiding unnecessary duplication with comparable arrangements made by partner agencies, but ensuring that the public are able to comment on issues of particular local concern.
- 3.2 The Community Safety Survey (CSS) remains the primary method for consultation and is now conducted on a quarterly basis thus providing sufficient thereby providing statistically significant results on a regular and ongoing basis. The 2009 survey included distribution to 2,000 named respondents, with a sample randomly chosen from groups that have previously been under-represented in survey returns with the aim of making the findings as representative of the Dorset residential population as possible. For the first time, the survey also included respondents aged 16 and 17 and could be completed on-line though take up of this facility was low.
- 3.3 In addition to this and other regular satisfaction surveys, safer neighbourhoods is a major vehicle for facilitating local participation and engagement and members' roles within this have been outlined earlier in the report. The Force 'One Team' review, on which the Authority is represented, will also identify ways to further improve Safer Neighbourhood policing and partnership working.
- 3.4 The planned initiatives outlined earlier in the report are all designed to broaden the reach of the Authority with regard to its own consultation programme, which in turn will complement the initiatives undertaken by the Force to engage with specific local communities e.g. the Jewish and Muslim communities.
- 3.5 In addition, under the new regulations, police authorities making or reviewing arrangements for obtaining the views of people concerning policing are required to have particular regard to the need to obtain views on the following:
- (a) whether people in the area consider that the authority gives due regard to their views in discharging its functions;
 - (b) whether people in the area consider that the police force is fulfilling its role in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter to them;

- (c) whether people in the area consider that the police force is providing a good service to the public; and
- (d) whether people in the area consider that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have appropriate powers to deal with local concerns, within the range of powers available under Part 4 of the Police Reform Act 2002.

All of these issues are specifically addressed through the CSS.

4. ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Consultation and engagement will always be subject to ongoing development and flexibility in the programme will be required to incorporate any opportunities that arise during the course of the year. As always, all members of the Authority are encouraged to continue to provide feedback and suggestions to the Chief Executive and Policy Officer to aid the ongoing development of the community engagement programme, including the Safer Neighbourhoods protocol, and to identify opportunities for consulting and communicating with the public.
- 4.2 This ongoing development will strengthen the Authority's existing arrangements as well as going some way towards meeting the requirements of the new community engagement regulations introduced in March 2010.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are asked to note this report.

M J GOSCOMB
Chief Executive

In the event of member queries, please contact Mr Jason Mumford on (01202) 223966



Giving you a voice in policing

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Giving you an opportunity to influence policing in your area

Dorset Police Authority is responsible for ensuring an efficient and effective police service for Dorset. One of our key ways of achieving this is to consult with local people to understand what matters to them with regards to policing locally.

1. Generally, how safe or unsafe do you feel living in your local area (i.e. within a 15 minute walk of where you live)? *Please cross one box only*
 Very safe Fairly safe Fairly Unsafe Very Unsafe
2. What are the 3 main issues that you feel the police need to address in your area?
(i)
(ii)
(iii)
3. Taking everything into account, how good or poor a job do you think the local police are doing? *Please cross one box only*
 Excellent Good Fair Poor Very Poor

You can find out more about the work of the Authority by visiting our website at www.dpa.police.uk or by calling us on 01202 or 01305 223966.