

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item No. 11
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Report of Acting Police and Crime Commissioner

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ACTING POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER’S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (the “Panel”) with a response to their questions as follows:

- the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (OPCC) and Cambridgeshire Constabulary’s (the “Constabulary”) communication strategy through Covid to ensure they are reaching people who are potentially in need of support (from the police, or from the Acting Police and Crime Commissioner (the “Acting Commissioner”) if they have a question or potential complaint to make about the police); and
- the penetration rates for each type of communication, and what communications are being used to reach people who are not on social media and not subscribed to the Neighbourhood Alert newsletter.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Panel is recommended to note the report.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 Item 6 – to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Police and Crime Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner’s functions.

Item 8 - To support the effective exercise of the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the “Act”) the Panel has a role in scrutinising the Acting Commissioner’s exercise of his statutory functions. The Policing Protocol Order 2011 (the “Protocol”) is clear that an effective, constructive working relationship between Acting Commissioners, Chief Constables, and Panels is more likely to be achieved where clarity of understanding are at their highest as this will enhance policing for local communities. The Protocol goes on to state that whilst Panels provides checks and balances in relation to the performance of the Acting Commissioner, they do not scrutinise the Chief Constable.

5. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- 5.1 As given in the Protocol, the Panel do not hold the Constabulary to account for their communications strategy. However, the Constabulary are a key partner and work closely with the OPCC Communications Team to support the Warn and Informing Group linked to the county's Local Resilience Forum (LRF) rather than working separately to this.
- 5.2 Throughout the pandemic, both the OPCC and the Constabulary continue to work with other partners at county level to develop and support clear, consistent, and focussed communications, signposting to support services, such as mental health.
- 5.3 In this way, campaigns can be co-ordinated. The OPCC has not sought to promote 'its voice' at this time but in line with the purpose of a LRF, has worked as part of the multi-agency environment to ensure efficient, effective and consistent communications across the county on issues the LRF have prioritised.
- 5.4 The overall communication strategy for Covid is managed by Cambridgeshire County Council. Covid-19 campaign messaging continues to be distributed by public sector Communications staff who sit on the cell, with content approved at Strategic Command Group level.
- 5.5 Organisations in the Warn and Inform cell are: Public Health England, NHS England, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation Trust, the OPCC, the Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue, East of England Ambulance Service, Defra, Department for Work and Pensions, Health Watch, Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, District Councils, Clinical Commissioning Group, Addenbrooke's NHS Trust, Papworth Hospital, Combined Authority and the Met Office.
- 5.6 As the pandemic unfolds and evolved messaging is required, campaigns are updated and distributed by all members via their own channels. All campaign materials are translated into different languages and are available through Cambridgeshire County Council's resource hub. The following links might be useful:
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-campaign-for-communities>
<https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/healthcare/public-health/coronavirus/campaign-for-communities>
- 5.7 For its part, the Acting Commissioner's Communication Team responds to the overall plan by sharing community safety messages which include updates on restrictions, social distancing, hand washing, keeping fit and active, maintaining mental health, tackling isolation and loneliness and support for victims of crime.
- 5.8 The OPCC website has a bespoke Coronavirus response page which is regularly updated here: <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/pcc-covid-19/> and shared with local MPs, through Ecops, social media and via Watch organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch and volunteers.
- 5.9 If Panel members wish to see a copy of the Covid-19 Communications Strategy, they can contact the Communications Team at Cambridgeshire County Council.
- 5.10 The Acting Commissioner's own Communications Strategy is published on the OPCC's website:
https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/media.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/uploads/2020/04/Acting-PCCs-Comms-Engagment-Strategy-April-2020.pdf?sm_au=iVV3v1Q1v41DQDZM8sV46K3tJ6JjC

- 5.11 With regards to people who may have a potential complaint to make about the police, the complaints process remains as outlined on the OPCC's website: <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/accessing-information/complaints/>

6. COMMUNICATION REACH

- 6.1 The Acting Commissioner's Communications Team uses a range of channels to reach Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents which include the following: regular press releases posted online (on the OPCC website) and distributed to local media and key stakeholders; statements; responses on emerging issues (both proactive and reactive); interviews on local radio and TV; and targeted articles and blogs for national and local networks.
- 6.2 Given the fast-changing nature of media and how people access their news, use of social media channels, i.e. Twitter, Facebook and Instagram remains a key activity.
- 6.3 For those members of the public who are not on social media nor subscribed to the Neighbourhood Alert Newsletter, the OPCC uses traditional and online media, broadcast and TV interviews, and contribute to partnership communications campaigns. The OPCC also provide articles to partner networks and through Parish Councils.
- 6.4 The OPCC work with community leaders to help engage 'hard to reach' groups, utilising a number of methods including 'round table' discussions, targeted surveys or (outside of the pandemic), street surgeries and visits to communities where they are based (e.g. the Rosmini Centre in Wisbech).
- 6.5 It is not possible to accurately measure the effectiveness of the Acting Commissioner's/OPCC's communications to hard to reach groups who are not engaged, however we can monitor changes in behaviour (e.g. increases in reporting). Where relevant and resources withstanding, surveys are conducted. The OPCC Communications Team measure the effectiveness of the channels used through a variety of ways: by monitoring the growth of subscribers to social media channels, (with 'follow us' campaigns held when resources are available) to clicks on website pages, through surveys, the number of emails/letters received by the public into the OPCC and through the use of newspaper circulation figures.
- 6.6 In terms of those who subscribe to the Acting Commissioner's Newsletter (just under 20,000) and those who follow our social media channels, the OPCC Communications Team measure effectiveness by growth, using social analytics. Additionally, the Team use engagement tactics to make sure 'hard to reach' audiences have clear access to the Acting Commissioner. A recent example of this is the Hate Crime Round Table event held in October. Over 25 organisations attended and were able to put forward their concerns in a supportive environment.
- 6.7 It is worth noting that the last 12 months (November 2019 to November 2020) have seen unprecedented challenges for the Team beginning with the resignation of the previous Commissioner (November 2019); a general election (December 2019) which brought with it weeks of Purdah (restricting the level of engagement the Acting Commissioner could get involved in^{1*}) the process of appointing an Acting Commissioner; and the need to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020.
- 6.8 Between March and June 2020, the Communications and Engagement Officer was seconded to support the Covid Intelligence cell, leaving one member of staff in the OPCC Communications Team.
- 6.9 The full list of channels with the reach (where available) is provided at Appendix 1.

7. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

¹ Pre-election Period (Purdah) Guidance – 2019 General Election, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
<https://www.apccs.police.uk/media/4766/purdah-guidance-final-gen-election-2019-for-pccs.pdf>

'Police and Crime Plan 2017-20 – Community Safety and Criminal Justice', Police and Crime Commissioner

<http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/>

8. APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Acting Police and Crime Commissioner's Communication channel reach

ACTING POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER’S COMMUNICATION CHANNEL REACH

Channel	Reach
OPCC Ecops account	Approx. 20,000 subscribers
Acting Police and Crime Commissioner’s website	As an example, there were 2,500 clicks on the PCC’s Autumn Newsletter
Social media channels	Twitter - 3,593 followers Facebook – posts reached over 105,768 (Jan 20 – end Oct 2020) Instagram –318
Media – print and online	<p>Cambridge Independent: 19,703 weekly readership(2019 figures), 102,714 unique browsers (May-July 2019) Cambs Times - 10,300 per issue (2019 figures) Ely Standard - 5,301 per issue (2019 figures) Hunts Post - 34,832 per issue (2019) Peterborough Telegraph – unavailable (Locked to subscribers) Fenland Citizen –36,274 weekly readership, 24,849 unique browsers (March – May 2019) Wisbech Standard - 8,864 per issue (2019)</p>
Local TV/Radio	Heart FM BBC Cambs Anglia News BBC Look East Youth Radio (Fenland)
Warn & Inform group	As described above
Citizens in policing emails	Speedwatch members (2,135 countywide) Neighbourhood Watch Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) (20 volunteers)
Targeted networks	

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership (CAPASP) Network	20 partners (business, voluntary all with their own network) 5,500 Friends Against Scams 24 Scams Champions
Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)	6 x District CSPs networks
Cambs & Peterborough Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Partnership (DASV)	DASV newsletter. Link: https://www.cambsdasv.org.uk/website
Local business networks	Quarterly meetings with representative business groups, relevant messaging e.g. business crime reporting
Rural Crime Network	Regular meetings with representatives, targeted comms
Association of Police and Crime Commissioners	'In Focus' publications
Local MPs & Assistants/Researchers network	Quarterly meetings with targeted comms for sharing (e.g. from Warn & Inform group)
Schools, colleges & universities	News releases and community safety messaging are shared when relevant (e.g. Youth & Community Fund updates)
County, District, Parish Councillors	Crime prevention articles provided where appropriate
Faith groups	News releases and invites to events are shared through key representatives of faith groups E.G. recent Hate Crime Round Table
Migrant groups	Targeted messaging as appropriate