

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item No. 6
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Report of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S APPROACH TO COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

1.	PURPOSE
1.1	The purpose of this report is to share with the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (the “Panel”) details of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (the “Commissioner”) approach to communications and engagement.
2.	RECOMMENDATION
2.1	The Panel is recommended to note the contents of this 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 & LEGISLATION
4.1	The Commissioner is required to produce a Police and Crime Plan (“the Plan”) which sets out how he will deliver against his statutory role set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the “Act”) and the responsibility to engage with local communities.
4.2	The Plan sets a number of objectives which enable him to deliver his statutory role in a way which reflects the local landscape and the views of the people who live and work in the county.
4.3	The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 , supported by other legislation, places statutory duties on PCCs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the views of local people on policing and have regard to those views. • Make arrangements for engaging with local people in setting police and crime objectives. • Obtain the views of local people and Council Taxpayers on budget and precept proposals. • Obtain the views of victims of crime about matters concerning local policing. • Engage the public on their budget proposals on an annual basis (PCCs have flexibility as to the precise method by which public views are sought, as these are not prescribed).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish specified information including details about the PCC and their team – inc. force performance and that of the Chief Constable, financial info, detail about grants, info about properties, assets and liabilities and decisions and policies. • Provide Police and Crime Panel members with the information they need to carry out their function – as well as publishing an Annual Report which must be presented to the PCP at a public meeting. [PRERA, Ss11-14; and Schedule 11].
5.	THE APPROACH
5.1	<p>In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, engagement activity is a key part of the Commissioner’s business. It is aligned to the delivery of the five key strands of the Police and Crime Plan and is managed through a number of traditional and digital methods, listed below (5.3).</p> <p>The team adopt a ‘virtuous circle’ approach to delivery – starting with listening and recognising local issues through direct correspondence, emerging trends and engagement opportunities. Concerns are then followed up with a response to those affected. Every effort is made to respond in the most appropriate and effective way possible whether via face-to-face meetings, public events or via a wider press release.</p> <p>An example of this direct approach is the way in which the Commissioner responded to concerns about anti-social behaviour in Cambridge City. Following concern that outdoor group activities for young people could not go ahead safely in the darker evenings in the city centre, the Community Safety Partnership was encouraged to apply for funding from the Commissioner’s Youth Fund. This resulted in the provision of portable outdoor lights which enabled events to go ahead.</p> <p>An example of where we work with partners to address concerns is a face-to-face event organised by the team in November 2022 to listen to concerns about the impact of hare coursing and poaching on local farmers, as well as other crimes. A ‘Rural Crime’ Round Table event was held in partnership with the Constabulary’s Rural Crime Action Team, National Farmers Union and Cambridgeshire Countryside Watch to listen to concerns and help reassure communities that these issues are being tackled. Afterwards any operational concerns were immediately relayed to the Chief Constable who has since met with representatives of the National Farmers Union.</p>
5.2	<p>Communications is delivered in a different way from engagement, i.e. for “communications” the team adopt methods to proactively push information out to the public, such as policy and legislation changes, crime prevention measures whereas engagement activities use a ‘listening and responding’ approach.</p>
5.3	<p>All activities and content are carefully crafted to support delivery of five key themes in the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan across various proactive and reactive response methods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Local issues (inc. heightened community tension) – addressed via ‘District Days’ – Topic specific engagement, e.g. Violent Crime (including knife crime), Anti-social behaviour and hare-coursing – through public and representative meetings and surveys – Audience segmentation – Platforms used to tailor messaging to maximise reach (events/direct mail etc) – Use of direct and indirect communication channels to engage with as many people who live and/or work in the county as possible

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use of regular newsletters to keep local residents updated on progress against the Police and Crime Plan – Volunteer recruitment campaigns to encourage citizen involvement in policing – Social media channels – Public surveys – Annual Report – Information leaflets – e.g. volunteer opportunities, precept and what it pays for
5.4	<p>Output between March 2022 and end of February 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 press releases • 472 social media posts (across three separate channels – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, with a recent Instagram reel reaching 500k views) • 116 responses and statements (including media coverage) • 50 public engagement events (including Round Tables for local councillors) • Five District Days (Cambridge, South and East Cambs, Fenland and Huntingdonshire since January, 1 2023) • A public survey on the proposed precept • An Annual Report • Targeted crime prevention events including a Rural Crime Round Table • Six local authority area precept information leaflets (for Council Tax bills) • Volunteer recruitment campaigns for the Community Scrutiny Panel and the Independent Custody Visitor Scheme • A new digital newsletter • A new website (under development)
6.	SURVEYS
6.1	<p>As set out in section 4.3 the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 states that the Commissioner should fulfil the following duties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the views of local people on policing and have regard to those views • Make arrangements for engaging with local people in setting police and crime objectives • Obtain the views of local people and Council Taxpayers on budget and precept proposals • Obtain the views of victims of crime about matters concerning local policing • Engage the public on their budget proposals on an annual basis (PCCs have flexibility as to the precise method by which public views are sought, as these are not prescribed) <p>A primary vehicle for the Commissioner to carry out these duties is by conducting public surveys. A distinction should be made clear, these are not legal consultations. Despite this, every effort is made to ensure that those who wish to take part in surveys are provided the opportunity to do so.</p>
6.2	<p>The Commissioner launched a public survey regarding his 2023/34 precept proposals on 21 December, 2022.</p> <p>The survey was launched and communicated to the public via the following methods:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A press release containing a link to the survey and wider background distributed to all Cambridgeshire and Peterborough media with an offer of broadcast interviews with the Commissioner. • Regular social media posts on the Commissioner’s Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts signposting to the press release, wider narrative and survey link. • Regular sharing by OPCC staff on LinkedIn. • Distributed through the Commissioner’s Neighbourhood Alert account (c.15,500 subscribers) with a reminder sent at the start of January 2023. • Distributed through the Commissioner’s new monthly newsletter as part of its countywide launch. • Shared with colleagues through the countywide Warn & Inform (public sector) Communications group for publication on staff intranets and sharing on their social media accounts. • Disseminated via partnership networks. • Shared with victim and witness service providers. • Shared with all councillors. • Shared with seldom-heard from representative groups (including those representing Black, minority and ethnic, non-English speaking and youth groups). <p>In total, 640 people responded to the survey.</p>
7.	WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
7.1	<p>Much of the work that the Commissioner carries out is in partnership with other organisations. This requires the Communications and Engagement team to work in partnership to deliver activity.</p>
7.2	<p>An example of effective partnership working can be evidenced through the Commissioner and his team’s work on the Home Office’s Safer Streets fund.</p> <p>To date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total investment from all four rounds of Safer Streets funding comes to £1.8m across the county. • This includes £634,285 of improvements to tackle anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls over 15 months in Peterborough and Wisbech – a successful bid developed and submitted by the OPCC and the Constabulary on behalf of all partners. • The joined-up approach is already starting to make a difference with extra mobile CCTV cameras, and an additional camera operator trained in spotting predatory behaviours.
8.	REACHING YOUNG PEOPLE
8.1	<p>Every effort is made to engage with young people. Engagement activities are targeted, using those issues that directly affect and/or interest young people – for example, knife crime and drug dealing.</p> <p>The Commissioner regularly includes school visits in his District Days to deliver messaging in an age-appropriate way, for example, using animated videos about the role of police officers in primary schools and sharing the Cambridge City Community Safety Partnership</p>

	<p>County Lines video in secondary schools. This has resulted in a number of schools proactively approaching our office with regards to future visits.</p> <p>As the Commissioner is also the national forensics lead, the Team has used the topic as a way of engaging young people. We joined forces with the forensics team at the 2022 County Day and the stall attracted hundreds of secondary school children, and a recent Instagram reel depicting how footprints are taken has to date attracted over 650k views. This indicates that we are able to engage with young people (the primary users of Instagram) when it is a subject of interest to them.</p> <p>Through the Commissioner’s Youth Fund, regular posts are shared with local councillors about how grass-roots funding can help provide young people with opportunities to positively contribute within their communities.</p> <p>Work continues with the Safer Schools partnership regarding crime prevention messages.</p>
8.2	Serious Violence Youth Listening Project
	<p>The OPCC commissioned Inclusive Development to design and deliver a programme of engagement with local young people; produce analysis of young people’s views around how safe they feel in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough; and provide insight into how feelings of safety could be improved locally. Although safety was discussed in a broad sense, serious violence-related issues such as knife crime, drugs and gang violence were focused on specifically.</p> <p>The Youth Listening Project engages a mixed-method approach, utilising a combination of surveys, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with young people from across each of the six Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas.</p> <p>One school from each CSP area was invited to become a partner of the project, with school selection informed by policing and practitioner input. Within each school, a short digital survey was shared with the school population, while focus groups were held with a smaller number of students. A select number of young people from across the county then participated in individual in-depth interviews.</p> <p>The survey was shared with young people aged 11 to 18 who were attending one of the partnered schools. To date, 1,574 survey responses have been received with representation across all ages, genders, ethnicities and CSP areas. Survey responses may increase further following additional engagement with young people.</p>
9.	REACHING THOSE ‘HARD TO ENGAGE’
9.1	<p>Efforts are continuously made to reach those harder to engage/seldom heard from through targeted engagement with specific communities through issues of relevance.</p> <p>Traditionally we have found that people are generally interested in policing when they are directly affected by issues. For that reason, we have invested in a new digital newsletter which allows individuals to ‘sign-up’ for updates about those issues they are interested in (see 9.1).</p> <p>Our new newsletter provides opportunities for us to organically grow our reach as it allows individuals to self-select areas of interest, e.g. rural crime in a particular geographical area. As the newsletter platform serves public sector service providers only, those engaged for example through the NHS receive targeted invitations to hear more from the Commissioner.</p>

	<p>Relevant content continues to be shared directly to representatives such as Parish Councils who are encouraged to disseminate to local residents. A good example of this is the Commissioner’s recent Precept Survey which was shared by a number of Parish Councillors to local residents.</p> <p>Contact has been made with community leaders representing minority and ethnic groups with a round table discussion held by the Commissioner to address concerns in October 2022. Those present were encouraged to/share opportunities to volunteer on our scrutiny panel or as Independent Custody visitors</p> <p>Volunteer recruitment campaigns continue to target minority and ethnic groups through digital and traditional methods to encourage opportunities to learn more about policing and represent communities.</p> <p>Engagement is also currently targeted at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, those in receipt of services through the Victim and Witness Hub and young and disabled people. A sample list of groups we are targeting is provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority leads – e.g. housing, children in care • Voiceability/Speak out council • Head teachers – District Day itineraries all include a school visit • Minority groups – Eastern European, Religious groups, socially excluded • New communities – e.g. Northstowe, Cambourne and plans to attend Waterbeach Community Hub as the new town there develops.
10	DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT
10.1	<p>Over the past twelve months, the team has been reviewing its output to ensure every piece of comms is delivered in the most effective and accessible way possible.</p> <p>A rapidly disappearing local news service (BBC regional news) has made getting air-time for the Commissioner more challenging however the Team has maintained good relationships with journalists on first-name terms and often helps out by providing pre-recorded interviews and audio pieces (e.g. Heart FM).</p> <p>With every story, we make personal contact with relevant local media to try to gauge interest. A current example is the production of ‘role profile’ biographies on staff supporting victims and witnesses of crime. From what ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advisors) do to what Migrant Support Workers offer, these short pieces of content are providing better opportunities for people to understand the range of commissioned services. See recent Migrant Support Worker blog.</p>
10.2	<p>A new digital newsletter</p> <p>The Team has researched a digital newsletter product to provide regular opportunities for members of the public to see progress against the Police and Crime Plan. The previous solution which we have a licence for (Neighbourhood Alert) tends to attract those already engaged in policing (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch existing members).</p> <p>A new monthly digital newsletter was launched in December 2022 as a result of this research using a public-sector engagement software digital platform (GovDelivery) which</p>

provides opportunities for organic growth (through allowing subscribers to select areas of interest). The platform is used by other public sector bodies such as the NHS and Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Services.

All those currently signed up to Neighbourhood Alert are being regularly encouraged to switch to GovDelivery and content is provided against the Plan graphics – to increase awareness of the five themes.

Numbers have grown since the first newsletter was launched on 21 December 2022 to 750 and continue to grow.

An example of the newsletter can be found here:
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKPCCC/bulletins/33eac6e>

10.3 A new website

With at least 1 in 5 people in the UK having a long term illness, impairment or disability, the Team strive to ensure all content and design is clear and simple enough so that most people can use it without needing to adapt it, while supporting those who do need to adapt things.

In Cambridgeshire, an [accessibility statement](#) is reviewed and published annually on the PCC’s website in line with government website and mobile app accessibility regulations.






The OPCC invested in **Recite Me**, an Accessibility tool to enhance accessibility and the PCC’s website is regularly reviewed.

In July 2022, the team began a process of developing a new and more accessible website as part of a TriForce project to improve digital accessibility. The new website is being delivered by the Team with support from the national Single Online Home project team and will provide the public with a user-experience similar to that provided by gov.uk.

The website is expected to go live in May 2023.

11. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Communications and Engagement Strategic Objectives 2022 – 24

				
<p>To have a police force that provides two-way engagement with the public, listening and responding to local policing concerns.</p> <p>To ensure the police force is always accessible and visible.</p> <p>To support the Chief Constable to increase officer numbers in Neighbourhood Policing.</p>	<p>To raise awareness about the importance of crime prevention and the Commissioner’s role in influencing and supporting projects that reduce re-offending.</p> <p>To highlight reductions in crime statistics where local evidence points to a decline.</p>	<p>To raise awareness about the Commissioner’s statutory duty to support victims and witnesses.</p> <p>To promote the range of targeted and accessible services commissioned.</p> <p>To build public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>To provide an ongoing narrative to the public about how the Commissioner supports and challenges the Chief Constable ensuring the police always act with integrity and social responsibility.</p> <p>To remind the public about the ongoing investment in officer numbers and BAME recruitment.</p>	<p>To continue to clarify the Commissioner’s role in supporting the Chief Constable with the resources he needs to tackle criminality.</p> <p>To raise awareness about the Commissioner’s role as Chair of the countywide Criminal Justice Board and his power to influence/support other partners.</p>

12. RESOURCES

12.1	The Commissioner has a team of 1.9 fte staff : a Comms & Engagement Manager and a Communities Policy Officer recruited to support community engagement delivery against the Police and Crime Plan.
13.	BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
	Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents
14.	APPENDIX
	Appendix 1 is a visual of how communications and engagement is tactically delivered.