



**Consultation & Engagement
Strategy
2017 – 2020**

Introduction

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act came into force in November 2012. The Act redefines the accountability of policing to the public, replacing Police Authorities in England and Wales with a directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) covering an entire police force area.

Consultation is seeking the views and opinions of others to gain a broader understanding of the needs and experiences affecting people. By listening to people's views through effective dialogue the PCC can make better informed decisions to help meet community expectations.

This strategy provides a broad framework to underpin the wide range of public consultation carried out by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. It does not include details of staff consultation activities.

The introduction of Neighbourhood Policing has strengthened the focus on increasing local communication, consultation and engagement activities to ensure that people have more involvement in their local policing, especially in terms of influencing policing priorities.

The introduction of PCCs aims to build on this by providing stronger and more transparent accountability of the police. PCCs are elected by the public to hold chief constables and the Force to account, effectively making the police answerable to the communities they serve. A key role for PCCs is therefore representing and engaging with local communities to help ascertain and deliver their policing priorities.

Consultation Duties

The PCC has a clear duty to consult with local communities as set out in several pieces of legislation. Duties which were previously placed upon Police Authorities have been transferred to the PCC. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act expands upon these duties, conferring additional duties to the PCC. These duties are listed in more detail at Appendices A and B.

- **Obtaining the views of local people on policing**

The Police Act 1996 sets out a statutory duty to 'consult with those in that policing area, about the policing of that area.' The Policing and Crime Act 2009 and Community Engagement and Membership Regulations 2010 adds the requirement to 'have regard to the views of people in the authority's area about policing in that area.'

- **Police and Crime Plan**

The PCC produces a Police and Crime Plan covering their term of office that sets out the priorities for local policing for the whole force area, and how they are going to be addressed. This document sets out the PCC's objectives for policing and reducing crime and disorder in the area, how policing resources will be allocated, agreements for funding and performance reporting requirements. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act states that before the Police and Crime Plan is issued the PCC must make arrangements for obtaining the views of people in that police area on that plan.

- **Budget Proposals**

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act states that the PCC must make arrangements for obtaining the views of the people in that police area, and the relevant ratepayers' representatives, on their proposals for expenditure in that financial year.

- **Obtaining the Views of Victims of Crime**

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act states that the PCC must make arrangements for obtaining the views of victims of crime in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area, and the views of the victims of crime in that area, on the Police and Crime Plan

- **Equality and Diversity**

As a public sector body the PCC has to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which brings together all previous equality legislation and includes a new public sector equality duty. The Equality Act refers to nine different protected characteristics - Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation. While there is no explicit legal requirement under the Act to engage with people with different protected characteristics, the Act does require public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making, and engagement can assist with developing that evidence base.

Consultation Programme

Engagement and consultation has to be focused and have a purpose. It has to genuinely influence decision making otherwise it is a not a valuable use of resources and will lead to disillusionment amongst those being consulted. There are a number of statutory responsibilities that require consultation to be undertaken during a specified timeframe, principally:

- Setting priorities through the publication of a Police & Crime Plan
- Setting the police precept and budget

The consultation and engagement that will feed into these activities must be clear to ensure that input from consultation is received at the right time to be taken into account.

Quarterly consultation reports are produced as part of the PCCs scrutiny programme, and discussed through the Performance Scrutiny meeting. These reports are also used as part of the strategic planning process in setting policing priorities and developing the Police and Crime Plan.

Engagement Methods

Your Force Your Voice

The PCC is a directly elected post and as such has a clear mandate to engage directly with the public to gain an insight into their views. Your Force Your Voice is a structured programme of engagement which involves the PCC attending public meetings in every one of Cleveland's 79 ward areas to hear directly the community safety concerns of local residents.

This ensures that local communities have an effective say in how their streets are policed. Issues raised are fed directly into Neighbourhood Policing teams for action, and are also monitored through the PCC Performance Framework. This allows the PCC to assess any trends in community concerns and to direct resources accordingly, both through the Police and Crime Plan priorities and also through additional investment in community projects through the PCC Community Safety Initiatives Fund.

As a directly elected representative of the local community the PCC receives regular contact through his office from members of the community wishing to raise issues on a variety of community safety and victim related issues. In the same manner as for direct face to face engagement these issues are fed into Cleveland Police for resolution. They are also tracked through the PCC's case management system.

Together with engagement with members of the public, through the Your Force Your Voice programme the PCC also meets with all specialist policing units, together with police staff and staff employed by private sector partners Reliance and SopraSteria on behalf of the Force. This ensures that internal staff are given the opportunity to identify any possible service improvements which the PCC and Force can then consider.

A detailed calendar of public meetings involved in the Your Force Your Voice initiative is published on the PCC website and also through the PCC Newsletter.

Consultation Roadshows

The PCC holds periodic consultation roadshows to engage with local communities on specific themes. These are held in busy community areas such as shopping centres and public events to allow maximum opportunity to engage with members of the public who may not participate in traditional consultation meetings.

Surveys

Local Public Confidence Survey

The Local Public Confidence Survey asks a range of questions to measure public confidence and to understand the factors associated with it. The survey is conducted via telephone interview by a third party independent market research company.

A total of 2400 interviews are conducted each year on a rolling basis, providing a statistically significant and representative baseline sample from each of the four Local Policing Areas.

Demographic data on age, gender and ethnicity is collected, which enables the Force and PCC to determine if certain sectors of the population are under represented in the survey results. If this is the case then additional consultation activities are organised with the under represented groups.

An action alert system is incorporated into the Local Public Confidence Survey. This provides the interviewer with a mechanism through which to pass back specific concerns raised by a member of the public during an interview. Action alerts will usually be raised when the respondent raises a repetitive issue of dissatisfaction, an issue of significant concern or where a member of the public has specifically requested that the police contact them. On such occasions details of the respondent will be provided to the relevant district research officer for consideration and, where appropriate, further action.

User Satisfaction Surveys

User Satisfaction Surveys are carried out by every Force as part of the Home Office performance requirements. The surveys are conducted via telephone interview, with a mandatory framework of core questions, covering:

- User satisfaction with the whole experience, i.e. the overall service provided
- User satisfaction with:
 - First contact – making contact with the police
 - Action taken by the police
 - Follow-up – being kept informed of progress
 - Treatment by staff

The surveys are conducted by a third party independent market research company, and cover victims of four specific crime types:

- Domestic Burglary
- Vehicle Crime
- Violent crime, including Domestic Abuse
- Racist Incidents

A service recovery process is incorporated into the User Satisfaction Survey. This provides a mechanism by which Cleveland Police are made aware of any expression of dissatisfaction raised during the interview which relates to the service received by a specific victim. On such occasions, and where the victim consents, personal details together with information relating to the reason for dissatisfaction will be provided to the relevant district research officer for consideration and, where appropriate, further action or subsequent contact with the victim. Results are used to monitor performance and to drive continuous improvement.

Crime Survey for England and Wales

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (previously known as the British Crime Survey) is a national survey which asks people about their experiences of a range of crimes in the 12 months prior to the interview. Respondents to the survey are also asked about their attitudes towards different crime-related issues, such as the police and the criminal justice system and perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour. Results are available at Force level only.

The survey collects information about:

- the victims of crime
- the circumstances in which incidents occur
- the behaviour of offenders in committing crimes

The survey is also an important source of information about other topics, such as people's perceptions of anti-social behaviour and attitudes towards the criminal justice system, including the police and the courts. It also looks at people's attitudes to crime, such as how much they fear crime and what measures they take to avoid it.

Due to funding constraints it is proposed that the survey is reduced from October 2017 to remove questions relating to:

- Performance of the Criminal Justice System, excepting those related to the performance of the police.
- Experiences of the Criminal Justice System
- Attitudes to the Criminal Justice System
- Questions relating to victims' experiences of the court system and use of victim services

Despite these changes the survey will remain a valuable insight into people's perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Engagement with Diverse Groups

The PCC will ensure that they engage with special interest groups to ensure that the views of all of Cleveland's diverse communities are listened to and taken into account in strategic planning. This will be done in a number of ways.

Independent Advisory Groups

Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) were first introduced in 1999 following the Stephen Lawrence enquiry and the recommendations of the subsequent report. They form a vital role in building trust and confidence between the community and the police, particularly from 'hard to hear' groups.

An IAG is a body of volunteers from various backgrounds that advise the Force and PCC as a 'critical friend' in a wide range of policing activities, from strategic advice about policy to tactical and operational advice. IAG members are people within the community who have an interest in policing and its effect on the local area. They can advise on issues regarding policing that may cause concern in the local community.

There is currently a Strategic IAG covering the whole of Cleveland, and District IAGs in each of Cleveland's four Local Policing Areas. The Police and Crime Commissioner sits on the Strategic IAG and the Commissioner's Officer for Consultation and Engagement sits on each of the four local groups.

Cleveland Safer Future Communities Network

A Cleveland wide network of representatives from key voluntary organisations has been established through the Safer Future Communities Network to be used to engage with the voluntary and community sector through a single mechanism. Amongst others, the network contains representatives from groups covering the various strands of diversity, so forms a key means of engaging with Cleveland's diverse communities.

Face to Face meetings

As part of the 'Your Force Your Voice' initiative, face to face meetings are held between the PCC and a wide range of community groups representing diverse groups, such as Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities and Disability groups.

Young People

Young people are often considered 'hard to hear' because they don't usually participate in traditional consultation methods. The PCC engages with young people through a variety of mechanisms, including visits to schools and colleges within the Cleveland area and regular attendance at each of the four Cleveland Police Cadets units. The Cadets is a scheme for thirteen to seventeen year olds which aims to develop the young people involved in the

areas of teamwork, decision making, leadership and communication.

The PCC also uses interactive voting technology as a fun and innovative means of gaining the views of young people through events such as Crucial Crew with Primary School pupils. The use of individual voting handsets gives the advantage of being able to anonymously record and present the views and opinions of audiences.

Engagement with Victims

The PCC has a specific duty to consult with victims of crime, both on general policing issues and specifically on the Police and Crime Plan. This will be done in a number of ways.

Satisfaction Surveys

The User Satisfaction Survey mentioned above provides information as to the quality of service received by victims of crime when they report incidents to the police. The results of this survey will be monitored to look for areas of improvement in the general service provided.

Victim Care and Advice Service

All victims who receive support from the commissioned victim services provider, Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS), are asked whether they are happy to be contacted as part of a user satisfaction survey to monitor VCAS service. This takes place when victim's cases are closed as part of their exit needs assessment. Anyone who consents to be included in consultation receives a telephone call at a later date asking them a dataset of questions relating to VCAS service delivery. The results of these surveys are reported to the PCC on a quarterly basis as part of the monitoring of the VCAS contract.

Focus Groups

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner work with the commissioned victim services provider, Victim Care and Advice Service (VCAS), to undertake regular focus group sessions with victims who have been supported by VCAS and who have agreed to participate in consultation. VCAS support staff attend these focus groups to ensure that the appropriate support is in place for victims as discussing experiences may in some cases cause distress. The feedback from the sessions is shared directly with the Cleveland Police Executive to highlight best practice and to enable continued service improvement.

Cleveland Strategic Victims and Witnesses Planning Group

A Cleveland wide Strategic Victims and Witnesses Planning Group of representatives from key organisations who provide services to victims and witnesses has been established which enables the PCC to obtain the views of a wider proportion of victims for consideration in strategic planning. The draft

Police and Crime Plan and budget proposals are taken to this forum for consultation.

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch Schemes exist across Cleveland's four Districts. Schemes are run by members of the public, receiving information from the Police through District Coordinators. Schemes act as enablers to community cohesion, bringing communities together with a shared aim to make the areas where they live safe, friendly and pleasant places to be. They also assist the police with community engagement through a two way process of giving and receiving information and community intelligence.

Members of Neighbourhood Watch receive information via email through an automated system. This is used both to communicate messages and also to facilitate engagement and consultation with members. Specific interest groups can be targeted for more focused engagement through subgroups of Neighbourhood Watch such as Farm Watch for rural communities.

A strategic Cleveland Neighbourhood Watch Executive Group has been established to oversee schemes across Cleveland. The Commissioners Officer for Consultation and Engagement sits on this group, who are also supported by Cleveland Police in driving forward community activity in local areas.

Cleveland Connected

Cleveland Connected is a crime and community safety messaging and advice system operated by Cleveland Police working in partnership with other relevant community safety organisations. Members of the public can sign up to the system and then receive email messages, tailored to their requirements, updating them on crime and antisocial behaviour in their local area, crime prevention information and details of community safety events and activity. This enables the public to access timely information on local issues, and also feedback any intelligence regarding crime and antisocial behaviour happening in their local communities. Members are also given the opportunity to join Neighbourhood Watch or other local watch schemes such as Rural Watch or Student Watch.

Neighbourhood Priority Setting Meetings

Neighbourhood Police Teams hold regular public meetings allowing the local community to influence the policing priorities which their teams will focus on. These priorities and action taken in addressing them are recorded on the 'My

Neighbourhood' section of the Force website.

Social Media

The emergence of social media has created an additional mechanism for communicating with local communities. The PCC has dedicated Twitter and Facebook sites, which provide communities with key information regarding the activities of the PCC and which can be used to consult and engage on specific issues. The use of online webchats enables the PCC to engage with people who might not participate in more traditional consultation methods. The PCC website (www.cleveland.pcc.police.uk) is also used as a means of consulting with local communities, both through online surveys and consultations on specific policies. Members of the public can also sign up to receive a monthly e-newsletter giving details of activities undertaken by the PCC and any consultation activities.

Police and Crime Plan

The Police and Crime Plan is prepared by the PCC in consultation with the Chief Constable. The PCC has a duty to consult with the community on the plan which sets out their priorities for local policing for the whole force area, and how they are going to be addressed. This must take place before the draft plan is issued. The plan is refreshed on an annual basis during the term of office of the PCC.

Consultation on the plan takes place on an annual basis between December and February. Details of the draft plan are put online with an online mechanism to comment, with hard copies available on request. This is supported by extensive media coverage, including through social media. A specific engagement event is held with partnership agencies, and the draft plan is taken to the PCCs strategic groups to ensure full consultation with partners. The draft plan is then sent to the Police and Crime Panel, allowing a reasonable amount of time for it to be considered. The PCC must have regard and provide a response to any report or recommendations made by the panel.

Budget Consultation

The PCC has a duty to consult on their budget proposals for the forthcoming year. A specific engagement event is held with partnership agencies, including elected representatives from each of Cleveland's Local Authority areas, to consult on the PCCs budget proposals, in particular any proposed precept increase.

If there were plans to considerably alter the way in which the budget is currently allocated, especially if this was to lead to a significant precept increase, then this would necessitate more focussed consultation, which could take the form of:

- Open meetings in each of the four policing districts where budget proposals are outlined and members of the public are invited to comment.
- Online consultation detailing budget proposals and inviting comment through an online form. This would also be promoted through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Consultation with businesses – through business forums, Chamber of Commerce, Chambers of Trade etc.
- Consultation with ratepayers representatives through Local Authorities.

Partner Engagement

A large amount of consultation and engagement takes place across Cleveland, through a variety of agencies and organisations, and it is essential to ensure that the results of consultations are shared with partner agencies and that consultation is not duplicated.

The creation of strategic groups such as the Cleveland Safer Future Communities Network and the Cleveland Strategic Victims and Witnesses Planning Group will also ensure that an inclusive partnership approach to consultation and engagement is adopted and that duplication is minimised.

Feedback

It is essential that we “*close the loop*” to complete the consultation process through building in systematic feedback. This includes not only to the people who have participated, but also to the general public. If people perceive that consultation is worthwhile, then we hope that the number of respondents will increase.

In particular, the PCC will use available media to promote positive messages highlighting what has changed as a result of consultation. This will enhance trust and a willingness to participate. A means of providing such feedback may be through information provided through the PCCs monthly newsletter, social media or information in Local Authority publications.

**Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act
PCC Consultation Duties**

Part 1 – Police Reform

Chapter 3 – Functions of elected local policing bodies

14 Arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing

(1) Section 96 of the Police Act 1996 (arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing) is amended in accordance with this section.

(2) In subsection (1), after paragraph (b) insert “;

and for obtaining the views of victims of crime in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area.”.

(3) After subsection (1) insert—

“(1A) Those arrangements must include, in the case of—

(a) a police area listed in Schedule 1, or

(b) the metropolitan police district,

arrangements for obtaining, before a police and crime plan is issued under section 5 or 6 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the views of the people in that police area, and the views of the victims of crime in that area, on that plan.

(1B) Those arrangements must include, in the case of a police area listed in Schedule 1, arrangements for obtaining, before the first precept for a financial year is issued by the police and crime commissioner under section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the views of—

(a) the people in that police area, and

(b) the relevant ratepayers’ representatives,

on the proposals of the police and crime commissioner for expenditure (including capital expenditure) in that financial year.

Equality Act 2010 – Engagement and the Equality Duty¹

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty) which replaces the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The equality duty came into force on 5 April 2011.

The Equality Act refers to nine different protected characteristics, as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

While there is no explicit legal requirement under the Act to engage with people with different protected characteristics, the Act does require public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making, and engagement can assist with developing that evidence base.

It is recommended that public authorities publish information about who they have engaged with. This will help in being transparent and clear to stakeholders about how their contribution has informed work.

The key areas where engagement can assist in fulfilling the duties of the Act are:

Improving Services

The key reason public authorities engage is to help them understand how their policies affect, or will affect, people who use their services. Engagement can be used to improve decision making, both in policy and service development and in identifying priorities for action.

Improving Equality Information

Robust equality information is necessary to enable public authorities to design and deliver effective and efficient policies. Where there are gaps in the information base engagement can help to fill these gaps, and also to interpret existing information.

¹ Taken from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance, 'Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities'

Assessing the Impact on Equality

Engagement can help to assess the impact of policies on people with protected characteristics. It can help to gather the views, experiences and ideas of those who are, or will be, affected by an authority's decisions.

Setting Objectives

Public authorities covered by the Act must prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the general equality duty. Engagement can help to determine and prioritise these objectives, by helping to make clearer which are most likely to make the biggest difference to tackling inequality.

Fostering Good Relations

Engagement with people with protected characteristics and other stakeholders can be useful in fostering good relations with the public and local communities in general.