

## **CHANGES TO POLICE AUTHORITY CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS – A DIVISION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This report seeks to inform Members of the changes in relation to public consultation mechanisms within A Division that are currently being developed with the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing. It proposes adjustment to the current arrangements where the Police Authority consult through the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams (PACDTS). It makes recommendations as to how the Police Authority could capitalise on these revised arrangements in terms of obtaining a more informed and inclusive level of consultation within North East Lincolnshire.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. Police authorities have a requirement under Section 96 of the Police Act 1996 to consult with communities in respect of policing in their area. Police authorities also have a statutory requirement to review those arrangements from time to time. Formerly Humberside Police Authority achieved this through the establishment of Police Community Liaison Committees (PCLCs) around the North East Lincolnshire area.
3. In September 2004 these arrangements changed with the establishment of Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams (PACTDs). These were an amalgam of the former PCLCs and Crime and Drug Teams which were forums operated by the local Drug Action Team (DAT).
4. An important element of Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams was that they were to be outward looking, that is to say as well as recording the views of communities on policing and crime and disorder they were to address those concerns in a proactive way with a process whereby those matters could be addressed jointly not just the police. Progress in relation to their resolution would be reported back to the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams. This was to be achieved through co-opting onto the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams members of the relevant agencies (i.e. Local Authority Crime and Disorder Partnership, Neighbourhood Watch, etc.), and also the inclusion of an

officer from the local Crime and Disorder Partnership who would signpost and progress-chase those issues.

5. The new Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams were also coterminous with the then existing Local Police Team Areas.
6. Between September 2004 and June 2006 a total of 18 Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams have been conveyed. Over 800 members of the community have attended raising approximately 50 issues. All this information has regularly been analysed and reported to the Police Authority through the Consultation Partnership Committee.
7. Shortly after the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams were established the officer designated to drive the issues raised was withdrawn due to resourcing reasons within the Local Community Safety Partnership. Humberside Police have continued to support the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams with each meeting always well attended by a member of the local management team. There has been a noticeable decline in attendance recently.

## **THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE**

8. Since the introduction of Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams there have been a number of emerging national drivers in relation to the effective consultation of communities. These have included:
9.
  - **The Neighbourhood Policing Regime**  
There is a national requirement for Neighbourhood Policing to be in place by 2008. In Humberside Police the target for the introduction of neighbourhood policing is the end of 2006.
10. Under the Neighbourhood Policing regime local neighbourhood officers must identify local representative networks and key individuals. These must include minority groups. These networks will be used in the identification of key local policing priorities and to support the dissemination of accurate information, as well as providing an assessment of community impact following police activity.
11.
  - **Local Area Agreements**  
Local Area Agreements are aimed at providing simpler funding streams and greater coordination of control over delivering services that matter to local communities. Whilst administered mainly by local authorities they embrace all local public services. In particular the Safer and Stronger Communities block of local area agreements bring together a number of funding streams, a significant proportion of which are delivered from the Home Office as funds previously available to CDRPs to tackle specific crime reduction issues. An essential element to securing funding and operating a Local Area Agreement is to consult with

communities to determine what local priorities are so that funding can be effectively targeted.

12. In North East Lincolnshire a Safer Stronger Communities Fund for 2006-2007 has been established as a precursor to a full Local Area Agreement for 2007-2010.
13. The products of Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams were used as part of the consultative process in the establishment of this Agreement.
14. ● **The Respect Action Plan**  
This is the Government's drive to address anti-social behaviour and deal with the wider culture of public disrespect. This is to be delivered in part through consultation with communities in relation to what effects them in respect of local anti-social behaviour.
15. ● **Review of the Partnership Provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Justice Bill 2005**  
This Bill, if enacted, will replace the existing Section 96 of the Police Act (the requirement on police authorities to consult). This duty will be removed from primary legislation and will be replaced with secondary legislation enabling the Secretary of State on his request to require authorities to undertake consultation, as opposed to authorities being required to do so by statute.
16. In contrast the review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act introduce the requirement for CDRPs to ensure that they consult and engage with their communities on a regular and on-going basis and to provide regular opportunities for local people to raise their concerns and to provide valuable community intelligence.
17. In addition it is intended to make CDRPs more democratically accountable and CDRP managers will be expected to hold regular "face the people" briefings which, it is suggested, will be question and answer sessions open to the public, media and community groups.
18. The review on the Crime and Disorder Act states:
19. *"The Police Reform Agenda will mean that the creation of larger forces will require police authorities to take a more strategic view when discharging their functions. Concerns have been expressed that this may lead to strategic forces and authorities being remote from communities at neighbourhood and district levels. We believe that the measures set out for improving democratic accountability of all CDRP partners including BCU Commanders together with the introduction of neighbourhood policing across the country ..... will allay such concerns. BCU*

*Commanders, alongside other responsible authorities would be answerable to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their contribution to the delivery of local community safety priorities. The Police Authority would be co-opted to sit on the Committee to ensure that they play a role in ensuring local police authorities are reflected at a more strategic level and vice versa.”*

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN A DIVISION/NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE**

20. In respect of the development of Neighbourhood Policing in A Division the current situation is:
- 25 Neighbour Beat Managers (Constables) have been established.
  - An anticipated 72 PCSOs are to be appointed.
  - A commitment has been established for the appointment of 40 -50 Neighbourhood Wardens.
21. It is intended that, together with Special Constables, the above resources will form four Neighbourhood Teams. They will be managed by three Neighbourhood Inspectors working with three Local Authority Tasking Officers. Work has been undertaken which has identified 12 neighbourhoods within the North East Lincolnshire area.

## **THE FUTURE OF POLICE AUTHORITY CRIME AND DRUG TEAMS**

22. Whilst it is widely acknowledged that Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams fulfil the current requirements of police authorities under the developing landscape as outlined above, it is becoming apparent that they are not the appropriate vehicle to discharge all the consultative requirements for Humberside Police, The Local Crime and Disorder Partnership, the Local Authority and others as:
- They are focused on the Local Policing Team areas which have been retained and they move from location to location within those areas. Whilst this is effective in ensuring that forums attempt to reach as many people as possible, in practice this has resulted in a lack of continuity in respect of reporting back on how problems raised in the previous area have been addressed. The issues are often considered to be irrelevant and stale.
  - There is concern that the meetings do not always identify key priorities or result in positive outcomes for communities.
  - They are well attended but only when there are hot issues of local concern.
  - They are used, quite understandably, as a means of complaining to the police about individual incidents rather than using problem-solving approach.

- They have suffered with the withdrawal of the designated officer from the Local Crime and Disorder Partnership.

## **FORWARD GROUPS**

23. These have been developed in parallel with the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams over the last twelve months. The core group members of the Forward Groups are police, partners, both statutory and non-statutory and community members.
24. Within North East Lincolnshire it has been proposed by the Local Authority to develop twelve Forward Groups currently identifiable in neighbourhoods that qualify for Neighbourhood Renewable Funding (NRF). These will be located at:
  1. Immingham
  2. Willows
  3. Yarborough
  4. Grange
  5. West Marsh
  6. West Marsh Macaulay
  7. Nunsthorpe and Bradley Park
  8. East Marsh and Freeman Street
  9. East Marsh/Grant Thorold
  10. Hainton/Heneage and Park
  11. Cleethorpes North
  12. Cleethorpes Sea Front
25. The purpose of Forward Groups is to enable the community to identify within its area the priorities and concerns in respect of crime, antisocial behaviour and local services.
26. There are currently in existence Forward Groups located within:
  1. Nunsthorpe
  2. Freshney and Yarborough
  3. Yarborough
27. It is proposed that existing community networking groups, where they exist, will also be embroidered into the new Forward Groups with the intention to work with what there is rather than create something new. When these groups are fully established they will cover a considerable geographical area. However they will not cover some of the more rural

areas within North East Lincolnshire. The Neighbourhood Policing Plan within A Division proposes that in rural areas consultation will be continue via parish council meetings and there is an assurance that police representation will be established at each meeting, or in the very least a report from the police presented to that parish council meeting.

28. It is intended that issues most effecting communities will subsequently be identified through Forward Groups. The core group will meet monthly to progress the work in relation to community concerns. Public meetings will be held once very six months and the work of the group will be reported to the open meeting. It is proposed that the groups will be self-administered with chair persons being elected as the groups mature. It is hoped that local people eventually lead the groups which will be fully constituted to allow for funding applications.
29. Meetings will be minuted and actions and onus clearly identified with timescales for work to ensure that real progress is made. It has been agreed that a manager and six Local Authority community engagement workers will be employed using the Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. It is anticipated that they will work with the Forward Groups and lead on some areas of work.

## **PROPOSAL**

30. It is proposed that if the Forward Groups become established and effective they would adequately discharge the current obligation of police authorities in relation to consultation. A process could be established whereby the products of the groups in relation to consultation be analysed and presented to the Police Authority Consultation and Partnership Committee as per the current arrangements. There would be no identifiable resource implications on the Authority. On the contrary, the requirement to resource Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams in terms of administration and payment of fees to the clerks would disappear. A negative aspect would be that the Police Authority would no longer have hands on control of public consultation within North East Lincolnshire with an accompanying loss of profile within the community. However, having regard to the proposals in the White Paper as outlined previously in the Report this may appear to be inevitable in the long term as authorities take up a more strategic role.
31. It is not recommended that Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams be disbanded at this point. It is recommended however that, as and if the Forward Groups become established, mature and demonstrate that they are discharging the functions for which they have been designed then they replace by stages the Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

32. It is recommended that:
1. Members consider and discuss the contents of this report.
  2. Members approve the proposal to utilise Forward Groups for the purposes of Police Authority consultation.
  3. The minutes and reports produced by the Forward Groups and at parish council meetings be analysed and presented before the Consultation and Partnership Committee.
  4. That Police Authority Crime and Drug Teams be replaced conditionally on the successful establishment of Forward Groups

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Background Documents: