

A CONFIDENCE STRATEGY FOR HUMBERSIDE POLICE AUTHORITY

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to introduce to members a confidence strategy for Humberside Police Authority.

BACKGROUND

2. Despite falling crime levels both locally and nationally there has not been an increase in public confidence in the Police. The Green Paper "From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together" focuses on delivering for the public and driving up confidence – providing a new deal with the service in the form of the Policing Pledge. The Green Paper introduced a single top down target on confidence that crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter locally are being tackled. This has been adopted by the Home Office.
3. The National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) comments that "*Public confidence is a broad concept closely associated with trust, legitimacy and perceived effectiveness.*" It is likely to include prospective assessment by an individual, unlike user satisfaction which is primarily a retrospective assessment.
4. The NPIA. Research concludes that the main factors associated with public confidence in the police are neighbourhood policing (dealing with the things that matter – local priorities), "procedural justice" (treating people fairly and with respect) and peoples perceptions of their local area (anti social behaviour and whether there is more or less crime)
5. The quality of police/public contact is also seen as important, as poor contact can have a negative impact.
6. Concerns about safety are at or near the centre of most, if not all communities; not only that local people *are* safe but also that they *feel* safe. Performance of forces in relation to local crime and policing – the everyday policing issues that are likely to effect most people, play a major part in derterminining how safe people are. Consistently, national survey results show that a significant majority of the public put crime and safety at the top of their list of concerns, this despite the statistical evidence that crime has been falling for several years as referred to at the commencement of this report.

THE BRITISH CRIME SURVEY AND THE HOME OFFICE TOP DOWN TARGET

7. The British Crime Survey (BCS) measures a range of policing activity. There is some lack of clarity locally around the methodology of this survey but nonetheless it currently has primacy over all surveys and is the one by which forces are measured

The indicator that is germane to the confidence issue is "Percentage of public who think the Police in their area are doing a good job" The latest BCS survey (year end September 2008) produced a score of 36.6% in respect of that question for Humberside Police. This places the force at or near the bottom of forces in the country. This is regularly the case, with Humberside Police bumping along the bottom of the "league table". This is a source of continuing frustration to both the Authority and the Force as even acknowledging the reduction of crime nationally; the performance of Humberside Police in the past few years has improved beyond recognition. So why so little local applause? Local surveys, for example the Police Authority MRUK survey, consistently produce more optimistic results.

8. HMIC have indicated however that when developing its Rounded Assessment for Local Crime and Policing it may take into account local surveys in arriving at its overall assessment of individual force performance in this area.
9. In December 2008 the Home Office announced its Indicative Confidence Targets for Police Forces. The question that communities will be asked relate to the level of confidence that they have in "*police and public services successfully dealing with crime and anti social behaviour in their area*". It will be noted that local authorities are now included within this indicator.
10. The target set for Humberside Police is 55% to be achieved by the 31st March 2011 against a baseline of 39%.
11. A joint response on this target has been delivered to the Home Office by the authority and the force through the APA and ACPO, with reservations expressed around the achievability of the target and highlighting other factors, for example that it is not a target for the police solely and thus what is achieved will not be a reflection of pure police activity. Whilst this has yet to be resolved, it is clear that the force will be set stretching targets in relation to confidence against a background of low performance in this area.

WHY A POLICE AUTHORITY STRATEGY?

12. Given the primary responsibility of Police Authorities to ensure and efficient and effective Police Service, the Authority must play a leading role in ensuring that not only do Humberside Police deliver a style of policing that will drive up levels of confidence locally, but that the authority itself contributes to the greater understanding and if necessary appreciation by the public of the work of Humberside Police. The authority will take a strategic approach to this issue.

WHAT THE STRATEGY WILL DELIVER

13. The strategy at Appendix A is an incomplete draft which will require further development, however it is key to any strategic approach taken by the Authority; it must:
 - identify the critical issues, in so far as they are known, that impact on confidence
 - take cognisance of what is included within the Policing Pledge
 - fully understand what the force and the Authority will be judged upon
 - identify the resources and methodology that the Authority will deploy to address the confidence issue.

14. In respect of the issue of how the Authority will deliver the strategy it would be inappropriate for the Authority to coordinate delivery of the activity and therefore a specific committee or group will be tasked to develop and implement an action plan, but to report exceptions and its impact on a regular basis.
15. The nominated committee or group will be required to develop an action plan and ensure that the elements are delivered. However, due to the 'cross cutting' nature of certain aspects, different committees maybe be required to take ownership of specific actions e.g. performance committee being responsible for oversight of the 'policing pledge', communities and partnership committee responsible for oversight of the impact of neighbourhood policing.
16. It will be the responsibility of the Strategic Development Manager – Communities and Partnerships to develop the action plan and present to the Police Authority in June 2009. However, in the meantime the following core responsibilities will apply:
 - Communities and Partnership Committee – oversight of the 'policing pledge', citizen focus work programme and neighbourhood policing; public consultation: partnership activity,
 - Performance Committee – oversight of call handling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

17. It is recommended that:
 - i. Members discuss the contents of this report
 - ii. Members approve the development of the strategy.
 - iii. Members receive further reports on the implementation of the strategy.

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Background Papers: None

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