

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY WEBSITE RE-LAUNCH

#### Background

The Authority's Continuous Improvement Group identified in 2009 that the Authority's website required a complete re-design. Through limited investment over a number of years the site was stale, infrequently updated and unimaginative. It was clear that this valuable tool, that could help engagement with the public and improve the visibility of the Authority, was not being used to its full potential. The Chairman wanted a website that was:

- Clean
- Precise
- Easy to navigate
- Transparent
- Accessible
- Future proofed

#### The Authority adding value

To coincide with the Authority's re-launched governance structure, where all meetings of the Authority, including the three scrutiny committees and the Professional Standards Committee, were to be webcast live on the site, the website was re-launched in October 2009.

The website is evolving all the time with new themes developing to reflect the four core areas of business that the Authority is involved in: Setting Strategic Direction, Scrutinising Performance, Engaging with You and Ensuring Value for Money.

The website is designed to communicate directly with the public and this is encapsulated by the new strapline: Sussex Voices Shaping Local Policing. The 'Engaging with You' pages allows members of the public to get in touch with the Authority, hear feedback and keep informed in a number of ways:

- [Twitter](#) – ensuring the Authority is more accessible to young people
- [RSS Feeds](#) – allowing interested parties to keep up-to-date with developments
- **Automatic Email updates** – to enable members and officers to notified of news and updates regularly.

All officers of the Authority have editorial access and each officer regularly updates their pages on the site. Members receive weekly 'latest headlines' emails and the site has [video links](#) embedded in it, taken directly from the Authority's You Tube channel.

## **Outcome**

The website has been a major part of the cultural shift in the Authority to that of continuous improvement. This change is reflected in the ever-changing status of the site and the following impressive early statistics:

### **Visitor figures relating to the period October 2009 - January 2010**

- 4,657 visits to the website since launch, an improvement of 500% from the same period in 2008-2009
- 63% of visitors to the site in this period were new users
- Average page requests per weekday 700
- Traffic to the site can be broken down as follows: 50% of traffic comes from search engines; 28% from referring sites (e.g. Sussex Police) and 22% is direct traffic.
- There are approximately 200 pages on the website (and this is growing), showing the depth of information available
- Our webcasts are, on average, viewed over 100 times each.

In addition to our innovations to engage with the public and partners in ever increasing means and ways, there are many new, innovative features planned for the website, reflecting its ever-evolving nature. We plan to launch the following initiatives very soon:

- **Chairman's Blog/Ask the Chairman facility**
- **Facebook page** - with considerable input from the Authority's proposed Young Person's Police Authority
- **Google Calendar** - allowing members, partners and the public to see at a glance the activities of the Authority
- **News Room** - a page where all previous new coverage is recorded, with links to local newspapers and broadcast stories

The objectives of the website to be the main portal of information for the public and members have been successful.

The Authority believes the website has been a great success and is helping to ensure that the Authority is more visible, accessible and accountable to the public we serve.

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