

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The Police Authority has undertaken a review of its public consultation process with the aim of identifying new ways of effectively engaging with the community. The quality of our communication will play a significant part in how well the role of the Authority is understood and appreciated, i.e. to secure an effective and efficient police service, in consultation and with the support of the community.

OVERARCHING AIM

To facilitate a managed two-way communication process with our internal and external audiences and generate support for the aims and objectives of the Authority.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- To publicise the Authority's identity, its roles and responsibilities and to increase public confidence by reassuring the community that the police service is monitored by the Authority
- To promote the Authority's partnership working with local authorities, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and Strategic Partnerships in East and West Sussex and the work of individual Authority members
- To explain decisions taken by the Authority and their effect upon policing in Sussex, including the choices that have to be made when reconciling both need and expectations with available resources
- To promote the Authority as the formal link between the community and the Force and to represent one to the other and vice versa
- To promote the style and standards of policing in Sussex and maintain public support for the police service

TARGET AUDIENCES

We must identify specific audiences to ensure the most effective and efficient targeting of our messages.

Our principal target groups at force and national level can be summarised below:

- The public
- Government

- MPs
- HMIC
- Association of Police Authorities
- Relevant partner agencies
- Extended Sussex Police family (jointly with the Chief Constable)
- The media – for the access they offer to all others

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Consistent messages and co-ordination in all areas of public relations will give increased recognition and weight to the identity and reputation of the Authority. Therefore the Authority must continue to improve communication with target audiences through the following channels:

- External website
- Formal Police Authority publications
- High Vis
- Mainstream PR techniques – information leaflets/posters
- Communication channels of other partners
- Media
- The Authority portable information stand
- Consultation with sections of the community

The Authority is not only reliant on these channels for communication but it will also include all interactions that the Authority members have with the public and the police. Public relations is a responsibility of all Authority members and the Press and PR Officer will brief and support Authority members accordingly.

DELIVERABLES

- To develop and deliver a Sussex Police Authority publicity programme that complements the Authority's consultation strategy and the Force's marketing strategy. To raise the profile of the Authority and promote the good work that is being achieved by the Force. This will also tie in with the Chairman's rolling programme and support the Chair as the Authority's spokesperson

- To support and brief Authority members in relation to current issues, divisional and individual interests
- To manage the interface between the Authority and the media and distribute media releases on behalf of the Authority
- To update all Authority members in relation to key initiatives in the Force
- To provide timely and well-researched responses to media enquiries, thus reassuring the public and managing the reputation of the Authority
- To submit articles to High Vis about the Police Authority
- To utilise every appropriate and relevant opportunity to promote the Authority
- To develop consistency of messages through the preparation of key messages for use by members
- To monitor the media – a press cuttings service will continue to be provided
- To liaise with web contact in relation to the continued development of the Authority website
- To manage events – to launch new campaigns and initiatives to support the aims and objectives of the Authority
- To liaise with the Force Press Office, Public Relations Team and Divisional Press Officers to ensure awareness and joint public relations and that any legitimate differences between the Authority and the Force are handled in the most appropriate way

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- A monthly update will be given by the Press and Public Relations Officer at a meeting with the Chief Executive to the Authority
- Regular updates will be given at the Chief Officers' meeting
- Periodic feedback and review by members
- Liaison with media

PRESS PROTOCOL

The press protocol will inform members of their roles and responsibilities in relation to contact with the media. It follows from the Police Authority

Communications Strategy. Its aim is to enhance the profile of the Police Authority and to increase media and public understanding of the role of the Police Authority.

1. **Spokespersons**

The Chairman of the Authority will be the spokesperson for the Authority where possible to present a consistent public image. In instances where the Chairman is not available the Vice Chairman will deputise. The Chief Executive will also speak on behalf of the Authority as necessary. If the matter is specific to a committee, the relevant Chairman or Authority officer may speak.

In some circumstances, the Press and PR officer will speak on behalf of the Authority.

From 1 April 2003 the Police Authority will become a partner in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), and members will be able to speak in conjunction or if authorised by the CDRP on behalf of relevant CDRPs. Further guidance will be produced to explain how members will be supported as communicators in their new roles in CDRPs. Feedback from members about the support that is required will be invited.

2. **Contact**

The Press and PR Officer should be the first point of contact for the media. If members are approached on something which affects the Police Authority generally they should ask the media to contact the Chairman via the Press and PR Officer, and alert the Press and PR Officer. If members or officers are minded to answer media queries, give an interview, etc. they should inform the Press and PR Officer if possible before the interviews/response and seek any advice/assistance, and feed back after the event in case any further action is needed.

It is not appropriate for members of the Authority, credited as such by the media, to comment on operational policing matters. Such requests from the media to the Press and PR Officer will be referred to the Headquarters press office.

The Authority's Press and PR Officer is responsible for the co-ordination and management of day to day media work and planning for the Authority. This will be in liaison with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chief Executive, committee chairs, members, and Treasurer.

3. **Image**

It is important to have a consistent image. This includes both the use of the Authority logo and a concordant voice from the members and the Authority officers. This can be largely achieved through information management by the Press and PR officer.

The logo should be a banner for the Authority. By using the image without the text (i.e. "Sussex Police Authority") or by changing the colours to suit the document the logo can lose its impact.

4. Literature and Publications

The Press and PR Officer will assist with publications and literature produced in the Authority's name in line with the Authority's corporate objectives. Literature and other material in the public domain produced by the Authority, such as leaflets on consultation, etc. will follow a consistent style.

5. Divisional PR Officers Support

Divisional PR Officers will update the Authority Press and PR Officer regarding forthcoming events taking place locally which will be added to the publicity programme. The Authority Press and PR Officer will also attend monthly PR meetings.

6. Conclusion

It is important that the Press and PR Officer is kept up to date with members and Authority officers contact with the media to ensure consistency of messages and to avoid duplication of effort.

The press protocol is intended to act as a guideline for those involved in the communications for the Police Authority. It is not fully inclusive and will need to be updated to include any relevant changes.