

PUBLIC CONSULTATION STRATEGY

1. Consultation Arrangements

- 1.1 The consultation arrangements instituted by the Sussex Police Authority (SPA) are intended to provide the consultation that is now required to underpin policing of a diverse society.
- 1.2 The main aim of consultation is to position the SPA strategically as relates to policing issues, in negotiation with the Chief Constable, policing priorities and setting of targets within the Policing Plan; and setting the precept.
- 1.3 The Policing Plan itself recognises the need to engage with the whole community. The consultation arrangements will be inclusive both of the whole community and the groups which represent the wider diversity of Sussex.
- 1.4 Wherever possible consultation will be undertaken in co-operation with partners and be part of what they may be doing. That reflects the key part that better partnership working must play in both community planning and community policing.
- 1.5 This will be delivered in two ways – core elements and other opportunities for consultation which will be used as both need and opportunity dictates. This will deliver more coherent and better results and better value for money.
- 1.6 **The Core of the Consultation Arrangements**

(a) (i) Sussex Police Public Consultation

The SPA strategy will link to that adopted by Sussex Police, and will seek to obtain the necessary quantitative and qualitative data from the various methods used, including:

- Public opinion surveys (questionnaires)
- Focus groups
- Citizens' panels etc.

Similarly public consultation carried out by the SPA will follow the same basic structure used by Sussex Police Consultation Co-ordinator, thereby enabling greater cross analysis and therefore added value.

- (ii) Sussex Police has introduced Neighbourhood Reassurance Surveys (NRS) across the Force. These are locally focused questionnaires designed to capture information specific to particular locations and times.
- (iii) Sussex Police has also established an External Reference Group on Race issues which will monitor the performance of Sussex Police

under the Race Equality Scheme. The Group has representatives from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups across the Sussex Police area as well as links to the Independent Advisor Group (IAG) network. The External Reference Group has served as the model for several further planned groups in other areas of diversity, and discussions are taking place regarding the formation of an external reference group on disability issues.

- (iv) Sussex Police are piloting Quality Check Interviews where local supervisory rank police officers make a set number of calls to members of the public each month in order to quality of service of their local officers. These interviews assess the frequency and quality of the engagement that the public has had with the Force. Some data remains localised for consideration on Personal Development Reviews but it is planned that Corporate Development Department (CDD) will be automatically sent general feedback in order to make district, divisional and Force wide assessments.
- (v) A Staff Survey was conducted in April 2009, which included an invitation to staff and officers to register for Staff Panels. Staff will be contacted throughout the year in their capacity as residents and community members across the county. This recognises that Police Staff and their friends and families are usually resident in the county and active in their communities as parents, carers and in a variety of other ways. It is planned to continue to regularly utilise this valuable resource.

(b) Local Authority Consultation

Increasingly local authorities at all levels and across departments are having to consult with their communities. The SPA will seek to develop a closer working relationship with those charged with consultation responsibility.

It is recognised that those with responsibility for the Race Equality Scheme in each area do not necessarily link to the Crime and Disorder Reduction agenda for instance, and the SPA will seek through its offices to draw different strands together in partnership to maximise available resources.

(c) Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

CDRPs have a statutory duty to consult on local crime and disorder priorities as part of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Following the inclusion of the SPA as a member of every Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) from 1 April 2003 (Police Reform Act 2002), there is a great deal of room for joint consultation.

1.7 Other Opportunities for Consultation

- 1.7.1 The SPA will continue to identify opportunities to obtain views of local people both formally and informally.
- 1.7.2 Many organisations with a county wide or sub-county remit, already come together to discuss wider issues affecting their respective roles. This is particularly the case with tiers of local government such as Parish Councils and other statutory bodies who meet annually across Sussex. All of these bodies have a need to consult the community in more depth on a wide range of issues, (e.g. Community Planning by Local Strategic Partnerships requires more in depth public consultation).
- 1.7.3 The SPA will seek to negotiate access to county or sub-county meetings held by statutory or voluntary sector organisations to set in place a range of public consultation measures.

1.7.4 Local Action Teams (LATs)

LATs will provide further opportunities for consultation where Members will have a key role to play in the LATs in support of the district policing teams.

1.8 Informal Public Consultation

- 1.8.1 In addition to the above opportunities, other additional ways to obtain public opinion present themselves. These include:
- County or sub-regional public events
 - Public surveys at shopping malls and leisure centres
 - Public open days at District Authorities, Police Stations etc.
- 1.8.2 The aim will be wherever possible to meet people where they are, at different times and places and to plug into and co-operate with other consultation wherever feasible, so that the wider picture can be assessed.

2. Implementation, Co-ordination and Resource Issues

- 2.1 Members in their area/CDRP roles will have to ensure that Divisional/District/CDRP consultation proposals are known to the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 2.2 The way in which the Authority's public consultation takes place will produce a considerable amount of extra data, all of which will need to be processed to extract important trends and areas where improvements in respect of policing are required.