

## **Report of the Chief Executive**

**To Chair and Members  
of the Policy and Resources Panel,  
27<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**Presenting Officer: Norman Wright  
Status: For Agreement**

### **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

#### **1. Purpose of the report**

1.1 To agree a revised Communications Strategy for Cleveland Police Authority.

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 Members agree the revised Communications Strategy (Appendix A).

#### **3. Reasons**

3.1 An update of the original 2007 Communications Strategy was approved by Members in April 2009. The Strategy is designed to describe the required standards for Police Authority communications and to improve stakeholder and public awareness of the Police Authority.

3.2 The Communications Strategy has been revised to take account of recent developments in policing services, such as the Policing Pledge, and in corporate governance, such as the development of the Business Plan.

3.3 The Police Authority's vision of for Cleveland's communities whereby people and businesses are allowed to prosper, free from crime and the fear of crime, will be supported by engagement and communication with communities to identify and develop responses to local priorities for policing.

## **External perceptions of Cleveland Police Authority**

- 3.4 In recent years Cleveland Police Authority has surveyed the public, including the local authorities' Citizen's Panels, to ascertain their perception of the Police Authority. Most of the public surveyed were aware of the existence of Cleveland Police Authority and felt positive towards it, but significant numbers were unaware of its specific roles and duties.
- 3.5 In February 2007 and again in February 2009, managers from both Cleveland Police Force and our stakeholder partners were surveyed to ascertain their perceptions of how well Cleveland Police Authority carries out its statutory duties. Most partners and Force managers praised the authority for its partnership commitment, its consultation work and its interaction with the work of the Force. However, some partners were unclear as to the difference between Authority and Force and this was assumed to be the reason why the Authority has not been included in some partnership bodies and partnership initiatives.
- 3.6 In April 2009 Cleveland Police Authority and Force sent out a postal neighbourhood survey to 25,000 residents (4163 returns) asking what information about policing they would like to receive and how they would like to receive it. The feedback was that the public want information about visible policing, contact names and numbers (neighbourhood policing), how problems are being dealt with, crime statistics and hot spots. The public would prefer to receive this information via community newspapers, flyers and articles in the local media.
- 3.7 In December 2009 Cleveland Police Authority held a stakeholder event to raise the profile of the Authority, to consult on budget priorities and to consult upon the draft Business Plan. Stakeholder feedback from this event included suggestions that the Police Authority should communicate more with the public on its strategy and progress with policing initiative, including the marketing of its successes.
- 3.8 In recent years neighbourhood policing has been rolled out across the force and in 2008 the citizen focus initiative was launched with full police authority support and involvement. Neighbourhood policing increased local communication and consultation activities at ward level and this was followed by the promulgation of the Policing Pledge from December 2008, which promises standards of contact, consultation and feedback of information to local communities. Neighbourhood policing is now being further developed within the partnership neighbourhood management service.

- 3.9 The citizen focus agenda has raised the public's expectations of their involvement in policing, both in terms of influencing policing priorities and in terms of receiving information on local crime and disorder issues. This agenda has been taken forward by the Authority and Force and one important outcome is the decision to instigate a joint in-depth, annual survey at BCU level to measure the public's perceptions of crime and disorder and their satisfaction with the policing services delivered.
- 3.10 Clearly it is very important to manage communications about policing so as to engender citizens' confidence and satisfaction, reducing the fear of crime and disorder whenever possible.
- 3.11 There are both statutory and business reasons to establish and maintain effective communications.

### **Statutory Communications**

- 3.12 When the Police Authority must communicate with the public:
- 1) Detail policing priorities, value for money initiatives and an annual report within the Policing Plan (1996 Police Act), which can be web based only.
  - 2) Produce a summary of the Policing Plan for circulation to every household (Serious Organised Crime Act 2005 and s6 of the 1996 Police Act).
  - 3) Produce a Precept Leaflet and details of efficiency savings (Local Government Finance Act 1992).
  - 4) A need to ensure that the public are offered a range of different routes by which to communicate their views to the Police Authority (1996 Police Act). The various media used are described throughout the Communications Strategy.
  - 5) Stop and search process – in Home Office guidance, not statute. This will be in the form of an annual report to the Operational Policing Panel, which will be published on the Authority web site.
  - 6) Publish local confidence measures at BCU level on a quarterly basis from February 2010 onwards (1996 Police Act). This will be published on the Force and Authority web sites, in local authority magazines and within the summary of the Policing Plan.

### **Business Drivers**

- 3.13 There are many current factors in the policing environment that will have a significant impact on communication activities. These includes:-

- The introduction of neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood management, with the consequent challenge to improve community engagement with policing.
- The citizen-focus agenda and the promulgation of the Policing Pledge, with the implicit duty to publish details of performance against the Pledge points.
- The recent neighbourhood survey feedback (April 2009) of communication requirements indicating what the public want. This is being met by regular publication of information in the 4 local authority magazines, and regular press releases, which cover all households and residents in the Authority area.
- The Government's Crime strategy 2008-11, which made a commitment to informing communities about crime and disorder at a local level.
- The Criminal Justice Strategic Plan 2008-11, which identifies key priorities of informing communities about performance and consulting and engaging about priorities, with an outcome that citizens can be confident that the criminal justice system is fair, effective and meets local needs.
- The new Home Office confidence measures (APACS 2.1 and 2.2) of how effectively the police and council are consulting on policing priorities at local level and are then dealing with issues that matter to the communities.
- The introduction of a new partnership performance regime (Comprehensive Area Assessment/OnePlace) which promulgates performance and qualitative data at both partner and area level.
- The Single Equality Scheme, which emphasises the need to consult with diverse communities and to Equality Impact Assess services.

3.14 Good communication is essential for any organisation that wishes to effectively engage with its communities and stakeholders. This communications strategy is about making the most of all these opportunities by promoting openness and accountability in the policing environment. It remains aligned and complementary to the (Joint) Consultation Strategy.

## 4. Implications

### 4.1 Finance

There are no financial implications.

### 4.2 Diversity and equal opportunities

The Communications Strategy takes account of the requirement to promote diversity and equality within policing.

### 4.3 Human Rights Act

There are no human rights implications in this report.

### 4.4 Sustainability

The Communications Strategy aims to create consistent and controlled communications products that are sustainable in the long term.

### 4.5 Risk Assessment

The Communication Strategy aims to ensure a systematic approach to communications, both the gathering and dissemination of materials, including quality controls. This should reduce the business risks associated with the process.

## 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 This Communications Strategy will facilitate the achievement of our objectives to consult with public and stakeholders, to promote confidence in policing and to promote a greater understanding of the role and responsibility of the Police Authority.

**Joe McCarthy**

**Chief Executive CPA**

[joe.mccarthy@cleveland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:joe.mccarthy@cleveland.pnn.police.uk)

01642 301291

# Cleveland Police Authority Communication Strategy 2010

## 1. Introduction

Key strategic objectives of the Police Authority include: increasing public and partnership awareness of the role and responsibilities of the police authority; and increasing public confidence in policing. This communications strategy will support achievement of those objectives.

The Strategy has been revised and updated to take account of the Authority's Business Plan objectives and the Policing Pledge.

The Business Plan promotes a vision for Cleveland's communities whereby people and businesses are allowed to prosper, free from crime and the fear of crime. The Authority intends to support this vision by engaging with communities to identify and develop responses to local priorities for policing. Strategic aims within the Business Plan include demonstrating how public priorities are sought through consultation, promulgating the benefits of consultation and partnership working, and by providing more information to the public in order to reassure them.

Over the past few years the aim of providing a "citizen focused" police service has been a priority for the Home Office, police authorities and forces. This policy originated from concerns that, although crime has consistently reduced since 1997, public perceptions of crime and fear of crime have not followed the same path. The Home Office has promulgated a single performance target based upon public confidence in the police and local council dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour priorities. The latest citizen focus initiative is the Policing Pledge, a 10 point service delivery promise to the public that all police forces have implemented.

The link between a well informed public and a satisfied public is well documented. In 2006 national research by MORI for over 400 local authorities clearly showed that there is a direct correlation between levels of awareness of, and support for, public sector organisations. More recent academic research (*Does fear of crime erode public confidence in policing?*, Jackson et al, 2009) has shown that one of the main drivers of public confidence in the police is the level of public engagement.

## 2. Scope

For Cleveland Police Authority's purposes, communications include marketing, public relations, media relations (press, radio, television and internet), partnership communications, the website, internal communication, environmental scanning and all methods of consultation.

This strategy is intended to provide guidance to:

- Cleveland Police Authority Members;
- Cleveland Police Authority officers; and,
- Cleveland Police Force.

The Chief Executive will work with the Chief Constable to deliver effective communications plans to achieve the strategic aims of Cleveland Police Authority and Force.

The co-ordination of Cleveland Police Authority's communications and consultation strategies with those of Cleveland Police Force is a prime consideration to ensure consistency of approach when dealing with the public and partners. There is currently a Joint Consultation Strategy and this may develop into a Joint Consultation and Communications Strategy in 2010-11.

Cleveland Police Authority communications will be referenced, as appropriate, to the Home Secretary's policing priorities. They may also be referenced to any partnership plans to which Cleveland Police Authority has an input and a responsibility.

## 3 Application of the Communications Strategy

A number of processes have, or will, require the application of this strategy. These include:

- The requirement for an annual Three Year Rolling Policing Plan.
- A Local Policing Plan Summary, or similar communication.
- Promoting the Police Authority Business Plan.
- The Policing Pledge, including performance feedback to the public.
- Partnership working arrangements, as appropriate.
- The Council Tax and budget process, including the production of the Precept Leaflet.
- Consultation and communication via the new Neighbourhood Survey.
- Consultation using focus groups.
- Public consultation events such as Tier Three meetings, "Face the People Sessions" and BCU public meetings where the Police Authority is represented.
- Police Authority meetings.
- Performance reporting to the public and partners, for example, via local authority magazines.

- Operating the Single Equality Scheme, including consulting on content and reporting on Equality Impact Assessments.

#### **4. Strategic Aims for Communications**

The basic premise of this strategy is that clear communications are essential to help explain how the objectives of Cleveland Police Authority and Force are being achieved and, in particular, the difference achieving these objectives will make to the confidence that the public, and partners, have in the policing services provided.

The most important strategic aims to be focused upon are as follows:-

- Encourage clear, consistent and coordinated communication;
- Periodically engage with the public to ascertain their communication requirements;
- Provide effective internal and external mechanisms for communicating;
- Increase partner, stakeholder and public understanding of the role of the police authority;
- Involve, inform and reassure the communities of Hartlepool, Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland with regard to policing;
- The promotion of diversity and equal opportunities issues;
- Ensure the corporate identity of the Police Authority and Force is consistently applied.

#### **Key Messages**

There are a number of key messages (Appendix 1) which can be adapted by Members and officer, and used in written communications, to enhance the public's and stakeholders' understanding of the role of Cleveland Police Authority. These may be used, for example, in external communications and news releases, to increase understanding of the general role of the Police Authority, its duties and its policies.

#### **5. Communications Principles**

The authority's communications must at all times be:

- Outward-facing, focused on the needs of citizens, stakeholders and partners, as appropriate;
- Open, honest and accountable;
- In plain, simple language;
- Timely;
- Accessible to all, including hard to reach groups;
- Alert to the need to build partnerships to deliver effective and efficient policing services;
- Cognisant of the need to reach all communities and to consider diversity and equal opportunities issues;
- A two-way process of giving and receiving information;
- Designed to build public confidence in policing;

- Where possible to complete the communications loop of “we asked, you said, we delivered...”

A multi-media approach is considered the best method to make information about Cleveland Police Authority more accessible. Coverage in local newspapers and on local radio is a very effective method of spreading information about Cleveland Police Authority, as is placing consultation items in local authority magazines and within a summary of the Policing Plan that is distributed to every household.

The police authority's web-site, public survey questionnaires and focus group consultations are considered to be effective two-way information channels.

### **Style**

The Police Authority should produce its communication materials in a minimum of Tahoma pt12, left aligned and unjustified, in contrast with the background colour, avoiding sentences of upper case, with spaces between paragraphs.

Alternative formats, including larger print and foreign languages, should be considered upon request. The Police Authority may have to accept different font standards when communicating through media controlled by other organizations.

Publishing material specifically targeted at “hard to reach groups” will be considered, where appropriate.

### **Logo**

The CPA logo should continue to be reinforced as the police authority's brand and all external documents should feature the logo.

### **External Communications Protocols**

Good corporate communications require a degree of consistency and quality control. Important messages are best delivered to the public over a range of media with a focus on reinforcing the message over a wide audience. Examples of how the police authority should communicate externally are as follows:-

1. News releases, briefings, interviews and publicity launches. These communications are channeled through the Authority's media advisor, who will amend, as necessary, to improve the impact. No such communication will be allowed unless authorised by the Chair or Chief Executive. Media interviews will be taken by the Chair or Chief Executive. Any other Member or officer engaged in this activity must have prior authority from Chair or Chief Executive.
2. Police Authority meetings. These will be public meetings conducted in accordance with the rules for meetings set out in the Code of Corporate Governance. Papers for these meetings will be submitted in draft for vetting by the Chief Executive and/or Monitoring Officer. The authority for the issuing of papers will come from the Chair or Chief Executive.

3. Police Authority publications. These will be produced in accordance with the guidelines in this Communications Strategy and they will be authorised for issue by the Chair or Chief Executive.
4. The Police Authority website is [www.clevelandpa.org.uk](http://www.clevelandpa.org.uk). This will be maintained by the officers of the Authority. Material that does not emanate from public meetings must be authorised by the Chair or Chief Executive. The website must have current information and it must have effective links to the Force website.
5. Local Authority magazines. These are issued periodically to every household in the 4 boroughs. The Police Authority regularly publishes a page of performance and consultation feedback information within these magazines. Although the Authority controls the content, it cannot control the format and style in most cases.
6. Force and partnership meetings. Police Authority representatives will conduct themselves in accordance with the procedures and codes of conduct contained within the Code of Corporate Governance.
7. Dialogue with local or national government will normally be conducted by the Chair or Chief Executive. Any other Member or officer engaged in this activity must have prior authority from Chair or Chief Executive.
8. Consultation events. Police authority representatives will conduct themselves in accordance with the procedures and the codes of conduct contained within the Code of Corporate Governance.

### **Internal Communications Protocols**

It is important that officers and Members share information amongst themselves where there are no formal minutes or notes readily available that provide for this:

- Where an officer or Member has responsibility for attending a partnership meeting (CDRP or Children's Trust Board) the minutes of the meeting, or a note of the meeting, should be made available for consideration at the Operational Performance Panel.
- Where an officer or Member attends an external seminar or briefing they should consider promulgating the papers, or a note of the meeting, to other Members and officers, as appropriate.

## **6. Publications and Media**

The following publications are covered by the requirements of this strategy.

- Precept Leaflet.
- Policing Plan and summary of the Policing Plan.
- Annual Report.
- Neighbourhood Survey.
- The Code of Corporate Governance.
- The Business Plan and any other public policy documents produced.
- Precept information.
- Local authority magazine articles, such as consultation feedback.
- Agendas, reports and minutes for police authority panels and committees, which may be reproduced on the authority web-site.

- Independent Custody Visitor information.
- Police authority web-site material. The web-site is to be kept up-to-date and reviewed regularly by the authority officers to ensure accuracy and relevance of content and to ensure it meets accessibility guidelines.
- Press releases in the name of Cleveland Police Authority or jointly issued by the Authority and Force.
- Other communications. The Chief Executive or Chair will authorise any other items produced in the name of the Police Authority.
- All other consultation material.

### **Publicity and Events**

The Police Authority will consider the use of publicity materials at public meetings and consultation events. The Authority has produced an explanatory leaflet covering the role and responsibilities of the police authority for issue on such occasions (see appendix 2).

### **Media Monitoring and Evaluation.**

Authority officers will monitor and report to Members on news stories about the Authority and Force that appear in the local press and media.

### **Environmental Scanning**

Authority officers will continuously scan the media and government initiatives to report on issues that have direct and indirect relevance to the Authority and Force. This will be supplemented by reports emanating from the Association of Police Authorities. Information will be reported to Members by way of reports and/or briefings.

### **Advertising**


The Authority officers will ensure that all consultation events are publicised in a timely manner and that feedback material is disseminated after the event. This will include, amongst other things, publicising Police Authority meetings, focus group consultation meetings, Tier Three (or equivalent) meetings and providing feedback on public survey exercises through the local authority magazines. Members will be made aware of and invited to consultation meetings.

### **Media Training**

The Chair, Vice Chair, Chief Executive and Members represent the Police Authority in the community, with the Chair providing key messages via the media. They are the guardians of the reputation of the Police Authority and they have a responsibility to promote the Authority's profile locally, regionally and nationally. Consequently, all Members and the Chief Executive will be provided with media training upon appointment. The requirement for refresher training will be assessed as part of the annual member and staff appraisal process.

## Key Messages

- Cleveland Police Authority is responsible for securing an efficient and effective policing service for the people of Hartlepool, Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland. We provide strategic direction for the Force, including the joint production of a Policing Plan, with priorities consulted upon with the public. The Chief Constable is then responsible for delivering policing services.
- Emphasise that Cleveland Police has the third highest confidence rating in the country (out of 43 Forces) for dealing with the public's local crime and disorder priorities (2009-2010).
- Both Authority and Force are determined to deliver on the promises given in the Policing Pledge, especially around improving communications between the public and police, and facilitating public input to policing priorities at a local level via the monthly neighbourhood policing meetings.
- Emphasise the positive aspects of recent and longer term performance in terms of the reducing level of recorded crime and the increasing percentage of sanction detections.
- Cleveland Police Authority works closely with partner organizations, for example, the local authorities, the fire authority, the primary care trusts and the probation service within CDRPs, to help tackle crime and disorder issues in the boroughs and to develop crime and disorder strategies.
- Cleveland Police Authority is a statutory member of Children's Trust Boards, which promote child welfare in the boroughs.
- Cleveland Police Authority sets the annual police budget for the Force, including the local Precept, and ensures that the force strives to continually improve its policing services and provides value for money.
- Cleveland Police Authority holds regular committee meetings at which it conducts its business. Members of the public are welcome to attend and they may access a timetable by contacting the secretariat section.
- Cleveland Police Authority has a statutory duty to promote diversity and equal opportunities. Cleveland Police Authority carries out Equality Impact Assessments of its policies and activities to ensure compliance with legal requirements.
- Cleveland Police Authority has developed pioneering work in explaining its Policing Plan to young people via a "youth proofed" version of the Plan.
- Where appropriate, indicate that Cleveland Police Authority is independent of Cleveland Police Force.



# 10 things you need to know about Your Police Authority

- 1 is an independent body of 17 local people including councillors, one magistrate and members of the public.
- 2 sets annual objectives and targets based on consultation with local people for the police to deliver in the year ahead.
- 3 manages the police budget and consults with local councils before setting the police part of the council tax.
- 4 appoints the Chief Constable and senior police officers.
- 5 monitors police performance including value for money and holds the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the community.
- 6 checks that the Chief Constable delivers a police service which balances both national strategic priorities with the concerns of local people.
- 7 ensures that citizens have a say in how they are policed.
- 8 monitors complaints against the police and the treatment of people in police cells.
- 9 promotes equality and good relations between different groups of people. As part of this, it ensures people know their rights if they are stopped or searched by the police.
- 10 makes sure the police service does everything it can to keep improving policing for your community.



To find out more about your police authority contact us on 01642 301446, write to Cleveland Police Authority, Police Headquarters, Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough, TS8 9EH. or visit our website. . . [www.clevelandpa.org.uk](http://www.clevelandpa.org.uk)