

Briefing for Police and Crime Commissioner

Topic: Engagement

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Purpose of briefing

To brief the PCC about why the PCC participates in community engagement activities to fulfil their statutory obligations, and how they have been undertaken.

Background

The purpose of engaging in events is to build the confidence of the public in the police service. Police & social responsibility Act 2011

- Section 14 – Arrangements for obtaining the views of the community on policing before issuing the Police & Crime plan and issuing the Precept
- Section 17 – In carrying out functions, the PCC must have regard to the views of people in the body's area about policing in that area
- Section 34 – Chief officer of police engagement with local people

What has gone before –

Previous aims: Inspiring confidence in the police and criminal justice system, support victims & the vulnerable, tackle crime & keep our communities safe. This was achieved by having two way communication, listening & understanding the needs of the communities thus giving us a 360 degree approach of **listening – evaluating – delivering.**

How we delivered this –

- **Attend Events** with information stand across the force area. This includes: Wolsingham Show, BikeWise, smaller community fairs and open days as well as partners coordinated events such as community safety carousels.
- **PCVC coordinated Events:** Since 2016, the ODPCVC has hosted the 'Celebration of local superheroes' which is a family engagement event. The event brings together 'local' heroes from across the emergency and voluntary sector to showcase how they work together to keep communities safe. The event has attracted between 5-10k people in the 1 day.
- **Electronic Engagement:** Social media, the PCC website, survey monkey, Elucd (public perception surveys company)
- **Other Activities:** School assemblies on awareness days such as safer internet day, guest speaker requests for the PCC, attend local forums such as Parish Councils, AAP & PACT meetings. Community days – where the PCC would get an understanding of the community by having a walk around with local leaders, meet with residents and the NPT. Workaround police stations to show support & listen to the staffs concerns

Lessons learnt

When attending events with the 'ODPCVC Stand' we have a range of 'giveaways' such as balloons & purse bells. These are used to help us to engage and communicate with the public.

This enables us to discuss issues that may be of concern in their area and allows them to identify where they think things could be better, as well as giving them the opportunity to say what they think works well. We are then able to note their concerns or signpost them to advice mechanisms such as leaflets on safety e.g. cybercrime, rural crime.

Usually the attendance at events with the information stand is shared across the whole of the ODPCVC team, however this is not everyone's forte. We have established that staff need to be outgoing and feel comfortable doing this in order for it to be successful.

We have always found that events are much more successful for engaging with public if the PCC attends the event for at least part of the day. This enables the community to speak directly to them, and therefore feel that their opinion is valued. This also enables good news stories to be generated to the press, as often when attending these events the PCC is asked by organisers, to open the event or judge a competition.

Current issues

Since August 2019 the amount of community based engagement from the office has been very limited. The loss of the PCVC and the COVID 19 pandemic have impacted on the amount of public facing engagement with has been undertaken. We try to ensure as an office we geographically cover the whole of County Durham & Darlington, as equally as possible with face to face engagement, but this can be a challenge.

Decisions needed

A clear strategy as to how the new PCC wishes to engage with the public needs to be established. This needs to include, their appetite for public facing activities. The strategy will link with the Police and Crime Plan. Members of the public have asked about the continuation of the annual Superheroes event that the PCC hosts as it has become a firm annual favourite. However, something bigger or better could be created in the name of the new PCC.

Partnership involvement

Effective engagement relies on effective relationships with partners and stakeholders. Often the office supports the local NPTs at station events and 'shares' stands. The office takes advantage of our presence there by ensuring we take a questionnaire about the confidence the local people have in the police or what they believe the main issues are at present in their local area. This gives us an indication of what the commissioner needs to go back to the force with and ask what they are doing about it in that particular neighbourhood.

Police involvement

The role of the PCC is to hold the force to account however we have established that this is often a blurred line when it comes to the public perception and the actual role of the PCC & the office.

People to Meet

The APP members

A number of community groups