

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

**CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY**

**CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Consultation Working Group held on Wednesday 6 December 2006 in Conference Room 1, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10.00am.

**PRESENT**

Mrs C A Egan (Chair)

Mrs P M Halfpenny  
Ms J Lashmar

Mrs L L Shaw  
Mr R Watson

**Also present:**

Assistant Chief Constable (Mr N Rhodes)  
Director of Partnerships (Supt T Thwaites)  
Head of Strategic Planning (Inspector G Rutherford)  
Planning and Performance Officer (Mr L Richardson)  
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

**10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Slavin.

**11. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

There were no declarations of any personal interest relating to any item on the Agenda.

**12. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 5 September 2006 had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

The Assistant Chief Constable updated Members on the Partnerships Audit, reminding them that a paper on partnership working had been submitted to the full Police Authority in September. The Chair advised that a full list of 216 partners had been identified as a result of the work being undertaken by the Constabulary on Business Continuity, and this list would be made available to the Authority once finalised. This would then enable the Authority to liaise with those partners, when appropriate, over consultation matters.

**RESOLVED,** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 5 September 2006 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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### **13. WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Working Group's Terms of Reference had been amended by the full Police Authority on 25 September 2006, and now read as follows –

- (1) to develop, in conjunction with the Force, a comprehensive Communication and Consultation Strategy, including an Action Plan;
- (2) to oversee the implementation of, monitor and review the Communication and Consultation Strategy and the supporting Action Plan; and
- (3) to coordinate the Police Authority's role within the Strategy.

Since those Terms of Reference had been agreed, the Authority had reviewed its Committee and Working Group structure and, with effect from 1 January 2007, the work of the Working Group would be incorporated within the remit of the new Communities, Equality and Diversity Committee.

The Chair thanked Members and Officers for their contributions to the work of the Working Group.

**RESOLVED,** that the revised Terms of Reference be noted.

### **14. UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ACTION PLAN 2006/7**

The Head of Strategic Planning presented a report, appended to which was the most up to date version of the Joint Consultation Action Plan for 2006/7. In considering the Action Plan, the following issues were discussed –

- (a) It was noted that due to the Resolve programme of work and its possible impact on priorities for 2007/8, no themed consultation had been undertaken in the second Community Voice slot in October. Members were assured that there had been no financial consequences of not undertaking this consultation and that an alternative slot would be available in early 2007.
- (b) Detailed consideration was given to the outcome of the written consultation with minority ethnic communities conducted in October 2006. A paper containing the free text comments received as a result of the consultation was tabled at the meeting.

Members noted that, whilst the quantity of consultations returned had been poor, the quality of the responses, and the responses themselves, had been heartening. Members stressed the importance of providing feedback to those people who had responded and consideration was given to delivering that feedback.

Members then discussed the consultation exercise itself, and in doing so noted moves by the Home Office to require telephone surveys of certain

areas of activity and the shortcomings of particular individual types of consultation. They concluded that a broad range of consultation types were required to ensure the maximum response rate from the widest range of people. The importance of keeping methods of consultation under review was stressed.

It was considered that this had been the first step in a long process of engagement with the BME community in Cumbria and that, in the longer term, and by using a variety of consultation methods, response rates would improve. Some thought was given to using community leaders as main contact points, but it was noted that this could then lead to responses being filtered and particular groups being excluded.

- (c) Members then considered consultation with young people and the Director of Partnerships briefed them on work being undertaken by the Constabulary and his particular role on the Cumbria Children and Young People's Partnership Board. "Speak up Cumbria" was the process recognised by that Board as the preferred means for engagement with young people. The County Council had commissioned them to consult with young people about their Children's Plan. The various methods available for consultation with young people were considered, as was the current position with regard to resourcing this work within Cumbria. The current position was that as partners had lacked sufficient staff resources it had not been possible to deliver the work anticipated in the current year, though things had been achieved. The process known as "Hear by Right" was seen nationally as best practice and he undertook to provide Members with further information on this process if required.

A Member then provided the Working Group with a briefing on working with children and young people as discussed at the recent APA Conference in Leeds. Police Authorities were to receive new responsibilities with regard to consulting young people; but extra resources were unlikely to be available. The Authority would need to be aware of the likely impact of "Every Child Matters" on its work.

Members then referred to work undertaken by the Authority directly in a number of schools and considered the need to ensure that any work undertaken by the Authority was focused and coordinated with wider consultation being undertaken with young people.

- (d) Members then gave consideration to the operation of the Police Community Liaison Forums throughout the County noting that, in the main, neither young people nor representatives of BME groups attended Forum meetings. The possibility of the Authority linking with other consultation meetings, such as County Council Neighbourhood Forums, was considered. Reference was made to a suggestion made at the time of the establishment of the LPT programme that the Authority would be able to nominate Members to LPT consultation meetings, and the benefits that this might entail.

Two Members also referred to their recent involvement in the "Streetsafe" initiative, which they considered to have been most beneficial and worthy of further involvement from the Authority.

The role of the PCLFs within a varied portfolio of consultation methods was noted.

- (e) Members noted that a number of staff meetings had been held as part of the consultation on the Resolve programme and they considered that it would be helpful if these were reflected within the Action Plan.
- (f) In considering both BME and young persons' consultation, Members noted the appropriateness of undertaking a gap analysis to identify possible work areas for 2007. Undertaking a gap analysis would identify areas upon which it would be appropriate for the Authority to focus its consultation activity in the forthcoming year. The importance of ensuring that any work the Authority undertook dovetailed with that being undertaken by the Constabulary and other partners was emphasised. It was considered that it would be appropriate for the Authority to attend the recently established "Community Gateway" for Cumbria starting with the meeting in January 2007.

**RESOLVED,** that the report be noted.

## **15. POLICE AUTHORITY CONSULTATION 2007**

Members considered a report by the Chief Executive, the purpose of which was to prompt a discussion on possible areas of consultation by the Authority in 2007. In addition, Members were asked to note that under amendments made to Section 96 of The Police Act by the Police and Justice Act 2006, Police Authorities had been given an additional duty to obtain the views of the community on anti-social behaviour.

Members were keen to consolidate the consultation with young people undertaken at a number of schools in Cumbria during 2006. Reference was made to an opportunity to undertake consultation with a group of young people in Brampton that would build on this work.

In considering consultation activity in 2007, Members noted the importance of ensuring that consultation activity, which required a significant input in terms of time and effort, was appropriate and that the results could be used across the whole of Cumbria, rather than just in the specific areas in which the consultation was undertaken. Consideration had to be given to how any consultation undertaken was mainstreamed and how it could be incorporated within the overall Joint Action Plan. How the product of the consultation could best be used was also a matter for consideration, as was the cost of processing any information obtained as a result of written questionnaires. Whether consultation with young people should be undertaken separately or in conjunction with partners was a further matter for consideration. Members indicated that they would look to the Constabulary for advice on such matters.

The Assistant Chief Constable informed the Working Group that appropriate advice could be obtained from the Strategic Development Department within the Constabulary.

**RESOLVED,** that the Chair of the Working Group discuss the way forward with appropriate officers from the Constabulary.

(NOTE: The Constabulary's Diversity Adviser joined the meeting at this point. The Assistant Chief Constable and Director of Partnerships left the meeting at this point.)

## **16. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT**

The Constabulary Diversity Officer delivered a presentation on the Disability Discrimination Act, and the implications of that Act for consultation activity undertaken by both the Authority and Constabulary. Copies of the slides used in the presentation were circulated.

As a result of the presentation, specific issues discussed by Members included the readability of documents, the provision of documents in various formats, accessibility to premises and the need to ensure that disability was considered in the widest possible way.

**RESOLVED,** that the presentation be received.

The Meeting ended at 12.05pm