

CUMBRIA POLICE AUTHORITY
CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP

Minutes of a Meeting of the Consultation Working Group held on Thursday 9 March 2006 in Conference Room2, Police Headquarters, Carleton Hall, Penrith commencing at 10.00am.

PRESENT

Mrs C A Egan (Chair)

Ms J Lashmar
Mrs L L Shaw

Mr R Watson

Also Present:

Assistant Chief Constable (Mr N Rhodes)
Constabulary Head of Strategic Planning (Inspector G Rutherford)
Deputy Director of Strategic Development (Ms J Saunston)
Deputy Clerk (Mr S Edwards)

26. MEMBERSHIP

The appointment of Ms J Lashmar to fill the vacancy for an Independent Member on the Working Group was noted.

27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Moth and Mrs L Slavin.

28. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of any personal interests relating to any item on the agenda.

29. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 7 December 2005 had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

The Head of Strategic Planning reported that whilst the initial response to the questionnaires had been slow ultimately a response rate of 32% had been achieved.

With reference to the partnership activity mapping exercise (Minute No 23 refers) Members were advised that this matter had still to be finalised and referred to the Chief Office Group (COG). The Assistant Chief Constable offered to circulate the finalised document to Members once it had been agreed so that they had early sight of it rather than having to wait for the next meeting of the Working Group. Members welcomed this suggestion.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting of the Working Group held on 7 December 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

30. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The Head of Strategic Planning presented a report by the Chief Constable a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting. Appended to the report were –

- A Consultation Risk Assessment
- The Community Consultation Action Plan 2006/07
- The updated Action Plan for 2005/06

Members worked through the updated Action Plan for 2005/06 and then the Community Consultation Action Plan for 2006/07. They noted that most actions within the 2005/06 Action Plan had been completed.

They noted that insufficient feedback had been received from contacts with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and this was again included in the Action Plan for 2006/07. However relationships had been forged with the LGBT community and work on developing relationships was ongoing. This in itself was a very positive development.

A similar situation existed with regard to work undertaken with the BME community where time was being taken to build relationships and gain the confidence of the community so that at a future date consultation activity could be taken forward.

Members then considered the Consultation Action Plan for 2006/07. They noted that there was an intention to carry out two surveys through Cumbria Community Voice (The Citizens Panel). At the present time there was no theme for these surveys, but the timeslots available were in late June/early July and in September. The Head of Strategic Planning suggested that consideration of appropriate themes and questions could be undertaken by the Working Group at its meeting in June.

Members suggested that as one theme running through the Action Plan was consultation with young people then this was an area which might help shape the theme for the surveys. However, if this was the case they had some concerns about the slot in late June/ early July as that was a time when many students might not be available. Although the Head of Strategic Planning assured Members that advice received from an agency specialising in

consultation with young people (Hear it Right) had provided assurances with regard to timings Members asked that positive evidence be provided that it would be appropriate to proceed with consultation with young people at that time. Members suggested that beneficial work could be undertaken with regard to consultation with the student community and noted contacts that already existed between the Police Service and that particular group.

The Deputy Director of Strategic Development reported that Independent Advisory Groups (IAG's) were being established through the Confidence and Equality Board and that these Groups would be looking at consultation with BME groups and other minorities. She undertook to ascertain what work was being conducted through the Confidence and Equality Board to ensure that there was no duplication of work with the Joint Consultation Strategy.

Members then gave consideration to staff consultation for 2006/07 and noted the proposals contained within the Action Plan. Members considered that any consultation with staff would inevitably highlight concerns and issues arising from the amalgamation with Lancashire. They suggested that it would be appropriate to liaise with Lancashire in terms of staff consultation and outcomes to identify if there were any common concerns that could be jointly addressed. In addition it was suggested that it might be appropriate to hold two separate staff surveys, one earlier in the year as part of the process of identifying priorities and issues and one later in the year to address issues arising from the amalgamation.

The Members noted that based on experience in the current year work was ongoing to identify appropriate alternative methods of consultation at a very local level by LPT's. Assessments of an appropriate consultation format would be assisted by consideration of ward profiles.

Members also gave consideration to the consultation proposed with young people and a Member offered to facilitate a pilot exercise at Barrow FE College if that was considered appropriate.

Members also gave thought to the appropriateness of including targets within the Action Plan but concluded that it might be more useful rather than having firm targets to identify outcomes and benefits which could be listed within the timing column.

Members noted that the proposed programme for 2006/07 was an improvement over that for 2005/06, and was being achieved without any additional resources.

In considering the Risk Analysis circulated with the report Members were advised that the Constabulary had acquired new software which would enable it to do on line surveys via the Constabulary website. They asked for further information on this development for their next meeting, including whether it contained the potential to do more than one online survey simultaneously,.

In terms of the Risk Assessment Members were advised that the exercise highlighted those things which must be done and enabled the Constabulary to identify whether or not they were being addressed. That did not mean that the Constabulary would not be undertaking items that were only identified as “should do” or “could do”.

Members advised that they were very pleased with the proposals for 2006/07 and considered that this work would enable Cumbria to leave a legacy of excellent consultation for the new, merged Police Authority.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) The proposed Action Plan for 2006/07 be approved;
and
- (2) The current updated position with regard to the Consultation Action Plan for 2005/06 be noted.

31. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PUBLIC CONSULTATION – INTERIM REPORT

The Assistant Chief Constable provided a brief overview of the report by the Chief Constable which had been previously circulated to Members. The purpose of the report was to inform the Working Group of results from the initial analysis of numerical data.

The Deputy Director of Strategic Development then took Members through the report in detail. Three thousand surveys had been sent out to members of the Community Voice Panel and 1153 completed surveys had been returned, a response rate of 38%. This was better than the average response to Community Voice surveys. Members were asked to note that 95% of respondents were aged 35 and over, which was significantly higher than the age distribution for the population of Cumbria as a whole (72%).

91% of respondents perceived that they had been affected to some extent by Anti Social Behaviour. The areas of greatest concern were litter (91.2%), speeding (90.5%) and vandalism (87.6%). The categories where respondents were most affected were litter (82.8%), speeding (80.6%), and vehicle related nuisance (66.3%). 73% of people who considered themselves affected by Anti Social Behaviour had taken some form of action, with 22% contacting the police in some way. 13% of respondents had contacted other agencies. 27% of the respondents who reported that they were affected by Anti Social Behaviour took no action, with 6% taking no action because they felt intimidated. 53.5% of respondents were satisfied with the action that had been taken by the police. 25.5% of respondents identified that the Police had a role in dealing with Anti Social Behaviour rather than other agency.

Further analysis of the returns, including the “free text” boxes was required to enable more detailed results to be produced. Further work would also be undertaken in terms of age profiles and geographical location of respondents.

This later was important as it would help identify potential hotspots on which the police might wish to focus attention.

Members welcomed the report and looked forward to receiving further detail in due course. They welcomed the fact that further work was to be undertaken to drill down in to the information that the survey had produced, particularly as the high level of return made the information more useful than might have been the case with a lower level of return. They also suggested that it might be worthwhile applying a weighting to responses in terms of the age distribution of respondents to see whether that in any way altered the results of the survey.

Members were anxious that at the appropriate time the Constabulary responded to those areas of the survey that fell within their remit. They asked that the results of the survey were shared with partner agencies where they had responsibility for the area concerned. Members also suggested that it would be appropriate to develop a media strategy so that reassurance could be provided to the public in areas where there was a high level of concern but in reality a very low level of incidents.

In considering the format in which the further findings were presented to the Working Group, Members indicated that they would be guided by the Constabulary, but would welcome a presentation if that was considered appropriate.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) The interim analysis of the survey on Anti Social Behaviour be noted: and
- (2) A detailed report be submitted to the June meeting of the Working Group.

32. PARTNERSHIPS AUDIT

A report by the Chief Constable had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

It was noted that this matter had been dealt with during consideration of the Minutes of the previous meeting (Minute No 29 refers).

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.