



Police and Crime Panel

6 October 2017

Report from the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable

CONNECTIVITY AND THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

Scope of this report

At the July 2017 Police and Crime Panel meeting the Panel requested that a paper was brought to the next meeting on plans for enhancing connectivity with communities under the Police and Crime Plan, in particular on the Chief Constable's Connectivity Plan.

This report introduces two key areas of work which are being progressed to support the delivery of 'safe, connected and resilient communities' under the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.

- The Chief Constable's 'Connectivity Framework' for Devon and Cornwall Police
- The Commissioner's Councillor Advocate Scheme

Alongside this paper the Chief Constable will provide a presentation to the Police and Crime Panel on current connectivity, the draft Connectivity Framework and future work in this area.

The 'Connectivity Framework' links to the Neighbourhood Policing Review but that is not its sole remit. The Connectivity Framework and underlying Delivery Plans will encapsulate the wider policing functions operating within a local area, such as crime investigators, roads policing and armed response.

Background

In January 2017 the Commissioner published her Police and Crime Plan for 2017-2020 'Safe, resilient and connected communities'. This Plan was developed following broad consultation over the summer of 2017 and reflected the views expressed by communities and partners. In particular the consultation on the Plan, which included public surveys and focus groups, identified that many people felt 'disconnected' from the police service and that a strong desire was expressed for more opportunities to access and connect with our police service. The Local Policing Promise was developed, jointly by the Commissioner and the Chief Constable to reflect this – focusing on actions to help ensure that policing in a local area is Accessible, Responsive, Informative and Supportive.

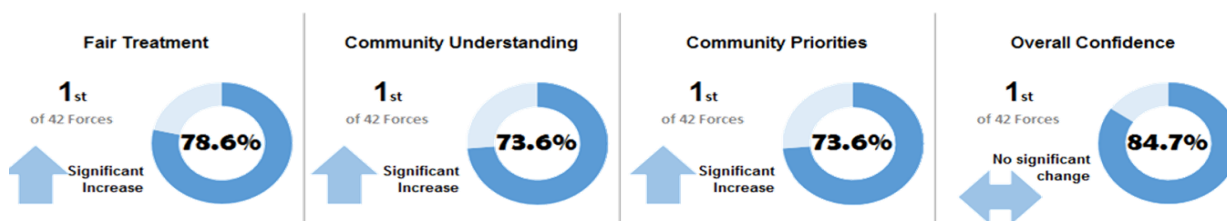
Introduction and Context

A good connection between communities and policing is considered important for a number of reasons.

- It is important to ensure that our police understand the communities that they serve and the issues that concern them – helping the police to better deploy resources and make decisions around activity.
- It is also important in building confidence within communities that the police hear them and understand their issues and that they will respond appropriately and to explain what the police are doing in a local area (this is particularly important given the increased focus on high harm ‘hidden’ crimes).
- A strong connection with a community – in terms of listening and providing feedback - is a fundamental building block in encouraging members of our communities to come forward with information and intelligence that can help the police to keep them safe.
- Finally it is important in ensuring legitimacy for policing – working with and as part of a community not in isolation – is a fundamental premise for policing by consent.

Connectivity is not the sole responsibility of the police or the Commissioner. In the same way that community safety is a shared responsibility so must connectivity be – and the police and the Commissioner are looking to work closely with partners in local areas to see how we can collectively provide a stronger connection to our communities.

It is important to note that we are not starting from a position of failure – rather from a desire to excel. The most recent crime survey for England and Wales which covers the 12 months to March 2017 shows Devon and Cornwall as being ranked #1 across 42 forces in response to the question “How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?” This measure looks at four key components: fair treatment, community understanding, community priorities and overall confidence and Devon and Cornwall is ranked #1 in all four areas.



In setting the Police and Crime Plan for 2017-2020 the Commissioner included a number of specific measures related to connectivity in ‘Measuring success’ which will be assessed through customer surveying. These questions were drawn from a wider national HMIC survey to allow a greater level of benchmarking. The initial baseline survey was carried out in June/July 2017 by an external surveying company. This survey is supplemented by a broader online survey that ran throughout the summer to provide a fuller information set – and these two sets of results are currently being compiled. The findings of the initial baseline surveys will be provided to the Panel in December 2017 and regular surveying will take place.

This report focuses on two areas of work which are being progressed to enhance ‘connectivity’ and the delivery of ‘safe, connected and resilient communities’ under the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan.

- The Chief Constables ‘Connectivity Framework’ for Devon and Cornwall Police

- The Commissioner's Councillor Advocate Scheme

Other actions are also being taken forward, including the Commissioner's Community Link Officer Scheme. Under the scheme members of the commissioner's staff have taken on responsibility for a geographic area – to help improve the Commissioner's understanding of local issues and facilitate closer working with communities. A full list of Community Link Officers for each area is available on the OPCC website.

1. The Chief Constable's Connectivity Framework – “Connect to Protect” A report from the Chief Constable

Connectivity is not a prominent word in current policing strategy documents but it is a key component of local policing and delivery of the Force mission and is a core focus of the Local Policing Promise under the Police and Crime Plan.

In developing the framework we have focused on reflecting on how we currently work 'to identify and support all communities and understand their issues', followed by understanding how we can be better connected to our communities. We want to highlight the best practice, provide great initiatives consistently across the Force area as required and address any gaps.

The progress of this work gave consideration to the structures and process we use to deliver activities such as engagement that provide connectivity as an outcome. This enabled a dialogue to identify which activities were essential and which were desirable in the context of meeting the purpose of 'connect to protect'.

Methodology

The Force Executive, the Police and Crime Commissioner and OPCC provided their interpretation of connectivity in the context of the work required, with clarity that progressing this work should enhance delivery of the Force mission. 'Connect to Protect' captures this.

Internal workshops were held with representation from local policing across the Force area. The workshops were titled - How well do you know your neighbourhoods?

The work explored:

- Identifying stakeholders and understanding what they expect from the police and how we share information with them.
- Identifying the resources and connections between the local policing teams and the specific neighbourhood policing teams to identify how other departments contribute to the connection with local communities and how the information is shared. This included citizens in policing.
- Benchmarking what we currently do to connect with our communities. Understanding how the activities add value and consider how consistent they are across the Force.

After considering the three key areas we identified the tools already in place to support delivery alongside acknowledging the changes in technology and crime types so discussing what tools may be helpful in the future to support improved connectivity.

An external workshop has been held with Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Managers. The workshop focused on neighbourhood policing in the future and connectivity was an integral part of the discussion. Key interactions and the interface points between the CSPs and the local policing teams were identified. The CSP managers supported the importance of the relationship development between the police and both the community and the partners. The CSP managers agreed that throughout the Force the public did have confidence in the police. The attendees discussed their desire for consistency and continuity from the Force.

Devon and Cornwall Police plans include holding further external workshops with other partners, stakeholders and community in the future, so a dialogue can be held and expectations considered and managed.

The final internal workshop discussed the proposed connectivity framework and how the work would be developed into a delivery plan.

The proposed framework

The Chief Constable's draft 'Connectivity framework' is annexed to this paper.

The framework provides clarity of the objectives and how we will achieve them by robust links to the Police and Crime Plan. The key activities and actions that will be undertaken to achieve the connectivity objectives are grouped around the four elements of the Local Policing Promise: Accessible, Responsive, Informative and Supportive. The hallmarks of excellence have been identified and are consistent with expectations of the HMIC.

The framework should be considered for both the service delivery to our communities and the connectivity within our organisation. A lack of internal connectivity impacts on how we develop our one team principle.

Being connected to our communities strengthens the legitimacy of policing by consent and will provide communities with the belief that we do understand their issues and will respond accordingly when appropriate.

To achieve connectivity we need to provide clarity and direction to all people involved both internally and externally to influence their behaviours and mind-set. We need to manage expectations by recognising what activities add value and how resources can support each other so the Force achieves connectivity with all communities including the hard to reach and the most vulnerable.

Devon and Cornwall Police staff, officers, our volunteers and our estate will be instrumental in the success we achieve in connecting with our communities – we will need to work to ensure that communities are supportive and enable our work on connectivity.

To deliver connectivity we need to have effective and efficient methods supported by appropriate capacity and capability – providing guidance, training and tools to help our officers and staff connect effectively with their communities.

Delivery Plan

An overarching delivery plan will capture the most strategic aims. It will provide guidance and expectation, it will record our commitment to delivering essential activities to meet minimum standards consistently across the force.

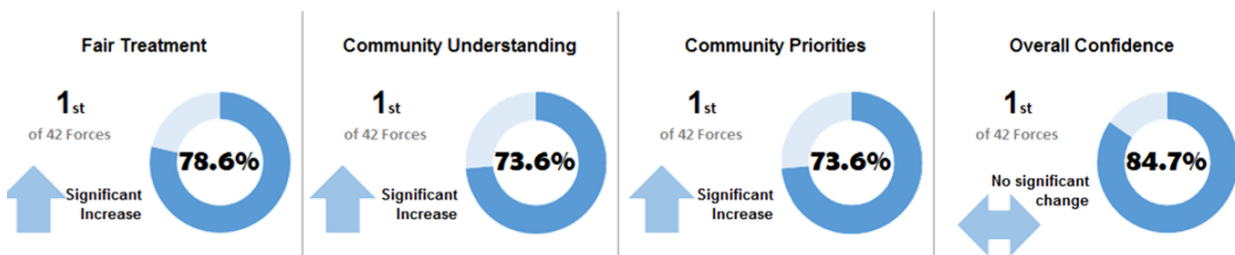
A requirement for flexibility across such a diverse Force is accepted but every member of our communities is entitled to know what we have committed to deliver. The essential activities will have clear local ownership for delivery and a minimum standard that is measurable through key performance indicators.

There will be flexibility for the plan to be further populated with tactical descriptors of desirable activities specific to departments or geographic areas that would enhance further connectivity as capacity allows. The plan will include detail of how it will be delivered locally or internally.

Connectivity is essential both internally and externally, together the department or geographical delivery plans will provide a complete picture of activity to connect to each other and to communities at every level considering all geographical and virtual communities.

How will Devon and Cornwall Police be measuring/demonstrating our improved connectivity

From the Crime Survey for England and Wales for the 12 months to March 2017 in response to the core question 'How effective is the force at preventing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe?' Devon and Cornwall Force is placed first nationally out of the 42 Forces.



This provides a starting position of confidence but as an aspirational Force we will continue to reflect, seek best practice and strive to improve so we deliver the high quality service in our mission consistently across the whole Force.

We will continue to ask for public and partner perception and feedback through various methods. We will also utilise our customer insight capability as we continue to develop our future model.

Accountability and responsibility for delivery to achieve connectivity will be held at each department and BCU against the delivery plans submitted.

The Police and Crime Plan also provides measures of success linked to connectivity, including the PCC's Public Perceptions Survey and these will be regularly analysed and assessed – to understand progress and identify areas for further development.

2. The PCC's Councillor Advocate Scheme

A report from the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police and Crime Plan 2017-2020 'safe, resilient and connected communities':

The following commitment is made in the Police and Crime Plan under the Local Policing Promise. *Working closely with local councillors – who play a key role in connecting with their communities. The PCC and Chief Constable believe that local councillors have a key role to play in keeping their communities safe and in helping to connect the public and policing locally. Councillors across the peninsula have indicated to the PCC that they would like to play a greater role in working with the local police – such arrangements are already in place in some council areas through police liaison councillors - but there is a desire to expand and strengthen that approach. **The PCC will explore establishing a PCC councillor advocate scheme whereby nominated councillors can provide a formal feedback route to the police on behalf of their community and to take back matters to their own councils on behalf of the police.***

Approach

The Councillor Advocate Scheme (the Scheme) aims to foster closer working relationships between the OPCC, local police and councillors through an agreed contact route. It is intended to improve information flows in all three directions, supporting early resolution of issues and wider dissemination (through the Councillor network) of key messages and information. The Scheme will be voluntary but will be supported by the OPCC who will seek to recruit a network of Advocates across the peninsula. The Scheme is not intended to work in isolation – it will link into the wider Connectivity Framework being developed by the Chief Constable and to the Commissioner's Community Link Officer Scheme.



A broad range of engagement has taken place to inform the development of the Scheme, including meetings with councillors from a number of areas and local police inspectors as well as the team developing the Connectivity Framework for the Chief Constable. An initial 'expression of interest' request has recently been sent out to local councils to ascertain whether there is an appetite for the Scheme.

The key finding from development phase is that engagement and interaction with local councillors is mixed. In some areas there is regular contact and two-way information exchanges – through council meeting structures and/or bilateral discussions while in other areas the relationships are less developed. Similarly, some councillors reported positively on the developing connection between them and the OPCC Community Link Officers while for others their interaction had been limited to date.

A number of general observations can be drawn from engagement work to date:

- Better communication for and from everyone is wanted and needed.
- There was a desire on all sides for frank dialogue – if something can't be done then say so, but explain why – regular face to face time would assist here
- Councillors expressed a desire for more information about what police have done/are doing in the local area – recognising that information on positive police work raises confidence and public perception of the work of the police
- Councillor advocate could provide a valuable 'cascade' function with other councillors and their wider community – relaying good news and key messages back to other councillors who in turn pass that on to the community
- Councillor advocates may be able to act as conveners and local problem solvers – taking the lead on some local issues – in particular those that are a partnership issue.
- Enhanced contact between local police and a councillor advocate could play an important role in early resolution of concerns or tensions, without the need to escalate.

In some local areas the relationships between police and local councillors are operating in this way in many respects, through Police Liaison roles. It is not proposed that this scheme replaces existing arrangements where they are working well but that it may be able to enhance and support those local arrangements where there is an appetite for it to do so.

The next phase is to work with those who have responded to the 'Expressions of Interest' to pilot the Scheme – working closely with the team developing the Connectivity Framework and the local police.

Next steps

The views of the Panel are welcomed on both of these approaches, to inform further development and implementation.

Contact for further information

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