

**LANCASHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2008- 2011**

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

FOREWORD

This is the Authority's first Community Engagement Strategy. It has been developed as part of the Authority's recognition of the importance of community capacity building and the need to provide appropriate opportunities for Lancashire communities to participate and influence police service delivery, decision making and policy development.

We are committed to ensuring that policing services are responsive to the needs of all of our residents and provide good value for money. This can only be achieved if we ensure that the views of our local communities are informing the decisions that we make. This is why community engagement is so important to the Authority.

We regard Lancashire residents as 'Investors in Policing' and believe that as investors, residents deserve high quality policing services shaped around their needs; they should be involved in the policing decisions that affect them and that Lancashire Police Authority and Constabulary policing plans and strategies should reflect local priorities, requirements and aspirations as identified by Lancashire communities.

This strategy demonstrates the Authority's commitment to strengthening the Authority's interaction with and accountability to local residents, by being a 'citizen focused' organisation that consults, communicates and makes changes as a result of the views of communities and service users.

I am confident that this strategy will encourage local residents' active participation and that their views are then reflected in the decisions that we make.

Malcolm Doherty
Chair of Lancashire Police Authority.

PART A: THE POLICY ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Commitment

Effective and meaningful community engagement is at the heart of the Authority's drive to secure better policing services, a stronger public realm and more involved communities. It helps us to respond effectively to local needs and priorities for policing services.

Evidence based decision making

Whilst the Authority is committed to greater resident involvement in decision making, the Authority needs to ensure that decisions are made that serve all communities generally. The Authority has to consider a range of other sources of information when making decisions and balance these with the findings of community engagement activity. These other factors include:

- Government policy
- Statutory Requirements
- Cost benefit and effectiveness assessment
- Equalities Impact Assessment
- The views of key partners and stakeholders
- Best practice.

What are we aiming to achieve through Community Engagement?

To ensure that, through the use of a wide range of approaches to public community engagement, the Authority actively listens, considers and effectively uses the views of residents as an integral part of its decision-making processes.

To do this, the Authority needs to ensure the following in order to deliver on its commitment to community engagement:

- Community engagement is undertaken to a high standard to ensure that the findings are robust and that we can use them confidently
- The findings of community engagement and how these have been used to influence decisions are fed back to residents
- Appropriate community engagement intelligence is gathered and available at a corporate level to help support decision making
- There is a clear approach to how we will develop the use of community engagement knowledge and mechanisms with our partners

Maximising the benefits of community engagement

The Authority acknowledges that community engagement contributes to a range of other priorities for the Authority summarised in the table below. These need to be considered when planning community engagement to ensure that the outcomes are maximised.

Table 1: Links between Community Engagement & Citizen focused policing services

1. Engaged residents supports...			
Residents are supported to fully engage with and represent the views of others	Local residents expect to participate regularly in decision making and make use of opportunities for them to do so	Community engagement activity strengthens learning for the Authority	More local residents participate in community engagement activity
2. Cohesive Communities which supports...			
Relationships are strengthened by increased participation and interaction amongst local people	Community engagement is used to dispel myths and fosters understanding between both Lancashire communities and the police service	Communities are able to identify with other communities of interest as well as work positively with the authority and police on the neighbourhood management agenda	Community engagement enables individual views but nurtures a sense of community wellbeing and trust
3. Partnership working which supports...			
Community engagement provides opportunities to develop existing partnerships and engender new relationships between organisations	Information and issues of interest to the Authority and its key partners are gathered through shared Community Engagement activity and channels	Joint Community engagement activity enforces a partnership approach to tackling crime and disorder	The Community Safety Partnerships have direct understanding and knowledge of issues for residents in their local area
4. Neighbourhood Management which supports...			
Local people are able to influence the priorities and shape of local policing	Improved sense of ownership of the social and physical environment	Residents have shared ambitions for the policing of their neighbourhoods	Residents are actively engaged in achieving local solutions to local problems
5. Improved Reputation which leads to...			
Greater transparency and accountability to local people in the Authority's decision making process	Local people understand the decision making process and their ability to get involved and influence decisions	Residents are confident that their views are regularly being gathered and used to improve services	Residents feel their contribution is worthwhile and actively participate in the engagement process
6. Improved Police Service Delivery			
Views and experiences of residents are regularly gathered to inform and improve service delivery	High quality community engagement is integral to the decision making processes across the Authority	Communities feel empowered to contribute to the neighbourhood management agenda via community engagement activity	The Authority has a good understanding and knowledge of its communities

PART B: THE STRATEGY

Introduction

Community engagement is about giving Lancashire people a voice and involving them in decisions that affect them, their community and their neighbourhood. Our aim is to have 'engaged residents' who will be able to participate in decision making and work alongside us to help design, deliver and monitor policing services.

This goes beyond consultation and participation; it means ensuring people have the opportunities and capacity to be heard and that the Authority and its partners promote genuine partnership and collaboration. This strategy reflects and reinforces this commitment.

The Business Case

The Authority's first Public Consultation Strategy covered the period 2005-07. The Authority has taken stock of its approach to this work for a number of key reasons:

1. The Authority has become more ambitious and is aspiring to improve the scale and range of activity; learning from residents and gaining 'customer expectation' data resulting in improved information about policing performance and greater dialogue between residents and the Authority.
2. Reviewing our business requirements, internal committee processes, and engagement activity, highlighted some weaknesses in both our approach to engagement, the scope of coverage, and consistency in ensuring the intelligence gathered drove real improvements to policing services. Action is needed to address those issues. Key to this is improving the value and emphasis placed on community engagement, improving coordination with partners, promoting greater accountability for delivering engagement across the Authority and fully resourcing this area of work to ensure organisational capacity to deliver.
3. A more outward facing 'citizen focused' approach is required to reinforce to residents that they are 'Investors in Policing' and are able to participate in the shaping of police services. This relates to the underpinning theme of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill (developed through the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper) to enhance the 'citizen's voice', and to ensure that public services are made more personal and that local authorities bring local services closer to their communities. Through the involvement of citizens and communities in decision-making, local authorities should be better equipped to deliver improved services and help build stronger, more confident communities. This theme is also prevalent in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) structure.

Purpose

The strategy reinforces our ambition to involve all of Lancashire's diverse communities more effectively in police service planning, service delivery, and strategic decision-making. It is a plan for how we get from where we are now to where we want to be in terms of consultation and community engagement and is about how the Authority will improve the way we consult and engage our communities.

For the purpose of this strategy, Community engagement involves:

- **Empowerment** – we want local residents to have opportunity to really get involved, to influence decision making and to have a say. This is the best way of developing long-term sustainable solutions.
- **Consultation** – we want to actively interact with local residents by listening and talking to them in order to find out and understand their needs and views. We aim to involve people in making decisions about the things that affect them and respond to what community groups tell us (e.g. the Police Performance Assessment Framework User Satisfaction Surveys, Opinion Surveys or collection of other local relevant data).
- **Information** – we aim to keep local residents informed about such things as decisions, services and local events (e.g. ‘Spotlight’ the local policing summary, E-newsletters and media information).
- **Capacity building** – this means developing the skills, abilities and confidence of the community resulting in communities where residents can take effective action and play a leading role in further developing their communities (e.g. Investors in Policing campaign, Independent Custody Visitor volunteer scheme, and Independent Advisory Groups).

Every type of involvement is important in the community engagement process and different methods will be used depending on the activity and circumstances. Sometimes it may be appropriate to inform or consult on some activities, while at other times we will seek to involve communities and individuals in much greater depth.

Defining a ‘community’ is not just about geographical location. The term community can represent:

- the sharing of personal attributes or beliefs (such as age, ethnicity, gender, disability or religion).
- individuals who share a sense of belonging (such as the same neighbourhood or village) or
- those who share similar hobbies, skills or interests.

It is important to note that many people belong to many different communities at the same time.

The aim of ‘engagement’ is to develop greater trust and co-operation, which in turn encourages more active citizenship (through involvement in decision making processes) and ultimately builds up local capacity by working together to bring about change.

The National Perspective

The changing nature of Government policy is placing increased importance on effective consultation and engagement. Effective and meaningful community engagement is at the heart of the government’s drive to secure better public services and more cohesive communities.

As an Authority, it is important that we understand the full remit of activities that combine to deliver effective community engagement and provide a framework against which we can

build an engagement strategy that meets the needs of our community, the organisation and our partners; as well as addressing the national agenda for better engagement set out by government legislation¹

The Authority believes that its role as the body which holds the Chief Constable to account is important. It also understands that more work is needed to make services answerable to stakeholders at a district and neighbourhood level. The continued development of responsive, citizen focussed services is one of the key drivers in the success of answerable, accountable local services.

The Authority wants the views of its residents and service users to be at the heart of police service provision in Lancashire.

The Local Perspective

There are a number of areas that involve or are reliant on community consultation and engagement:

- Citizen focused policing –delivery of Neighbourhood policing, citizen focused services, and user satisfaction surveys.
- Partnership activity – CDRPs, Local Area Agreements, Community Safety Agreements, Face the Public sessions, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and proposed Community Call for Action.
- Diversity issues, such as Every Child Matters, Equality strands,
- Statutory duties- Policing priorities, resources, reduction of crime and disorder.

Currently the Authority has access to a range of statistical information which supports its decision making capacity as detailed in the table.

Source	Data available
Quality of Service Standards	The Authority has a role in monitoring the implementation of these standards. The citizen focus domain of the Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) is able to provide a great deal of information relevant to monitoring the Quality of Service Commitment.
User satisfaction surveys	Lancashire Constabulary carry out user satisfaction surveys as part of Police Performance Assessment Framework. Consequently, the Authority has access to information regarding the level of satisfaction of victims of crime.
Complaints data	The Authority considers the complaints process applied by the Constabulary, and in doing so has access to a variety of information regarding areas of dissatisfaction.
Stop and search data	Authority receives quarterly bulletins on stop and search data for members use at divisional IAGs.
PACT (Police and Communities Together) - Neighbourhood Policing	Neighbourhood Policing is about delivering local solutions to local policing problems to understand and respond to the needs of the community.

¹ The Police Act 1996
The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
The Local Government Act 1999
National Community Safety Plan 2006 – 09
The Police Reform Act 2002
Home Office - Building Communities, Beating Crime – a better police service for the 21st century

	PACT is one of the delivery vehicles for this. The Constabulary will have access to considerable information regarding local priorities, concerns and issues which are responded to at a local level.
Opinion data	3 surveys a year providing comparison data on confidence and feelings of safety in each wave. Ability to ask questions about police initiatives and related Authority business.
Focus group data	Focus groups used to probe issues/outcomes arising from opinion or other Authority business as required.
East Lancashire partnership survey outcomes	Survey data benchmarks feelings of safety and can provide other relevant information on an ad-hoc basis
Pan Lancashire 'Place survey'	One survey every two years providing data on residents' perception of feelings of safety, anti social behaviour (ASB), perceived success of police to deal with ASB

THE NEW APPROACH

The Authority has made progress in recent years improving its approach to engagement. The newly formed Community Engagement Team has a range of responsibilities that lead the improvement of engagement across the Authority:

- **Strategic business.** e.g. policing objectives, resources consultation road-shows, disability event
- **Managing key corporate engagement mechanisms-** e.g. Hutton open day stall, road shows, partnership Face the Public work
- **Working with committees to identify corporate engagement needs.** e.g. Minority recruitment and retention survey, BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) perception of racism project
- **Supporting the delivery of new innovative engagement projects.** e.g. 'Investors in Policing' campaign.

All of our community engagement activity needs to be relevant, meaningful, targeted and timely. In addition the purpose and use of the outcomes needs to be clear to participants. This supports the delivery of successful engagement activity and support the provision of information that can be used to influence and improve policing service delivery. This strategy champions the following objectives:

Promoting a 'customer focused' culture

The Authority represents Lancashire residents in ensuring that the policing residents receive is efficient and effective. As part of that role we need to develop our local leadership role and ensure that we consistently listen to and understand our diverse communities and that their views are central to our decision-making processes'.

Our priorities are to:

- Strengthen the Authority's interaction with and accountability to local residents
- Be a 'citizen focused' organisation that consults, communicates and makes changes as a result of the views of communities and service users.
- Work with Members to strengthen the value placed on community engagement activity and its subsequent links to performance scrutiny and delivery against targets detailed in policing plans.

Developing Capacity and Knowledge

The Authority needs to continue to develop its internal capacity for undertaking high quality community engagement. There needs to be a strong focus within the business process on utilising intelligence gained from both Authority engagement activity and partner activity to support the understanding of the needs and experiences of residents when scrutinising the constabulary and setting policing targets.

Our Priorities are to:

- Strengthen the role of community engagement activity and outcomes within the Authority's performance management framework
- Agree an annual plan for community engagement initiatives with a plan for decision making and activity development to ensure the content of community engagement is appropriate and timely
- Produce an Annual outcome report of community engagement findings that will bring together the information from corporate engagement activity into one document

Developing local leadership and participative engagement

Our priorities are to:

- Position Members as local leaders and advocates by developing their role at external meetings, with the public and with our partners.
- Enhance performance scrutiny by ensuring that community engagement consistently supports policing service developments
- Strengthen the relationship between performance management/scrutiny and the role of the Authority to ensure that the concerns of local residents are informing the core business of the Authority.

Sharing knowledge and skills

Our Priorities are to:

- Share Opinion and other consultation/research outcomes with partners on the views of local residents
- Develop regular dialogue with key partners that will enable the sharing of information and dissemination of good practice and provide an opportunity to explore ways in which more collaborative working can be developed.
- Work more closely with other public authorities, the voluntary and community sector to learn from and increase our potential for effectively representing the views of local people within the wider partnership and influencing the Authority's decision making.

Who we will consult with

This strategy covers any consultation, research, engagement or involvement activity with:

- All Lancashire residents
- Groups of people defined by a common factor such as age, disability, gender, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation
- Police service users and potential users of police services
- Communities and neighbourhoods
- Public and private sector stakeholders

STRUCTURES - PARTNERS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This strategy seeks to engage everyone who lives or works in Lancashire. Our capacity and processes will allow for the involvement of current and future 'customers', members of communities of place, interest, identity or experience, and all current and potential partners.

The following structures and processes form the core of our Community Engagement arrangements. They essentially work on 4 levels. These are:

1. Pan Lancashire/strategic level
2. Local district based
3. Neighbourhood
4. Engagement by issue or theme.

1. Community Engagement – Pan Lancashire/Strategic Level

Safer Lancashire Board and Officer Working Group

The Authority is represented as a statutory partner on the board, Chairs the officer group and takes the secretariat lead for the board and officer group. LPA is particularly interested in the Safer and Stronger Communities theme.

14 Local Crime and Disorder Strategic Partnerships (CDRPs)

Authority members engage with key strategic partners through membership of the CDRPs. Partnership representatives also include Health, Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Local Authority and the Voluntary and Community Sector, making members ideally placed to interact with other agencies.

2. Local district based

LPA public meetings

The Authority currently holds 14 public meetings open to local communities which the Police, CDRP and Town and Parish Councils attend. Future shaping of these meeting moving to Face the public events will ensure even greater accountability and performance scrutiny and more enhanced collaboration with partner agencies.

Parish Councils

The Town and Parish Councils are currently represented via the Police Authority Community meetings structure and play a role in community engagement as PAC member representatives of local people. This involvement will be carried over into the new public meeting formats.

Specific LPA Activity

The Authority undertakes a range of community engagement activities such as road shows at a divisional level and well as participating in a number of local open days, information road show events with our partners at a district level.

3. Neighbourhood

PACT

The introduction of neighbourhood policing by Lancashire Constabulary has provided an opportunity to engage local people about the priorities for their communities much closer to where they live.

4. Engagement by theme or issue

Each of these has a role in and responsibility for the process of community engagement.

Residents and members of communities of interest (e.g. disability events, IAGs)

- Provide constructive feedback on proposed policies and plans; the quality of services and gaps in provision
- Participate in the decision making process
- Represent those groups in their communities who are often excluded
- Listen and talk to service providers, helping everyone to prioritise fairly.

LPA Members

- Provide leadership in meetings
- Develop relationships with individuals and groups related to their role/special interest
- Represent the views of the Authority
- Take account of the outcomes of engagement in Authority decision-making.

LPA Officers

- Listen to feedback about services they provide
- Take account of what people say to develop and change services
- Acknowledge equality and diversity and work inclusively
- Provide professional information and advice
- Use the most relevant processes and structures to engage.

PART C: PARTNERSHIP WORKING POLICY

Introduction

The provision of a focused and partnership supported vehicle for the Authority to support ongoing dialogue and consultation with residents about policing services is critical. The Authority recognises that working in partnership makes good business sense, as partners gain additional capacity, investment, and greater reach in service delivery mechanisms.

The Authority has already made a genuine commitment to partnership working and is involved in a number of partnerships (locally, pan Lancashire wide and regional) based on the belief that effective partnership improves the provision of high quality, value for money services.

In addition, effective partnership working is detailed as a key Government priority – providing genuine partnerships with the people we serve - (White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities).

The Purpose

The range of community engagement activity undertaken in Lancashire is vast. The intention of this policy is not to replace this work but to connect, develop, co-ordinate and bring resource to current activities to fill gaps that restrict or prevent residents from making a full contribution.

Vision

'To ensure we connect into and manage relationships with our partners in an efficient and effective way and that our partnership involvement supports the Authority's main role and functions in regard to efficient and effective policing and our legislative responsibilities within crime and disorder reduction partnerships.

Aims

To work within existing and emerging partnerships to support the co-ordination and delivery of community engagement at a range of levels:

- Nationally and Regionally
- Pan Lancashire wide
- Local district based
- Neighbourhood
- Engagement by issue or theme.

Formal Partnership Working

The Authority defines formal partnership working as a statutory working arrangement involving one or more independent bodies, from any sector, who share legislative responsibility for agreeing and/or then delivering a set of planned actions and outcomes.

Our current formal arrangements include membership of national, regional and Lancashire county strategy groups and crime and disorder reduction partnerships where we agree:

- Shared strategic vision/objectives
- Resource availability/requirements
- Clear measurable outcomes
- Added value
- Risks

As a strategy group/partnership member the Authority:

- Recognises the statutory obligations of the Authority and its discretionary functions
- Works with the Lancashire county strategic group to take a strategic approach to working together with Lancashire's 14 partnerships, to develop, implement and monitor a joint programme of work that utilises policing and other resources.
- Agrees to co-operate and commit resources to achieve common goals.
- Is prepared to share relevant information.

Joint Working Arrangements/Collaborative Working

Forums or groups that the Members and/or Officers belong to who come together to discuss policy, strategy or forthcoming issues. Whilst these involve collaborative working and are similar to partnerships, the key difference is there is no formal agreement or in some cases agreed outcomes.