

"Your views are very important..."

Thank you for continuing to take part in Opinion."



Lancashire
Constabulary
police and communities together

Opinion

have your say

Issue 1 March 2006

Last September the Home Secretary asked all police forces to look into the feasibility of merging with neighbouring forces to create bigger organisations that would be better able to deliver some policing services. There were a number of options for Lancashire and we asked you what you thought. Of these options, most people preferred a merger between Lancashire and Cumbria Constabularies. In February the Home Secretary made it clear that he intended to pursue this option. Further discussions are currently taking place. Acting Chief Constable Steve Finnigan said: "It is a quickly moving situation. Please be assured that we have Lancashire's best interests in mind and will do all we can to make sure local policing services are unaffected by any merger that may take place."

Your policing priorities

Every year the Police Authority asks you what you think should be the priorities for the police. This helps to target resources at the priority areas that are of most concern to the public by setting annual policing objectives that reflect those priorities. You said that a visible, accessible and responsive policing service is crucial while you felt it most important for us to tackle violent crime and terrorism. The proposed objectives which will be discussed by the Police Authority at its meeting in March are:

"To reassure the public, particularly those who are vulnerable"

By providing high quality, flexible and responsive policing services which give emphasis to:

- Visibility and accessibility
- Anti-social behaviour including alcohol-related
- Diversifying our workforce
- Equitable service delivery
- Positive engagement with young people
- Road safety
- Safer environments
- Support of victims and witnesses

"To reduce and investigate crime, particularly those offences that are of concern to the public."

By providing high quality, flexible and responsive policing services which give emphasis to:

- Acquisitive crime including:
 - o Domestic burglary
 - o Street crime
 - o Vehicle crime
- Counter-terrorism
- Crimes arising from prejudice (hate crime)
- Crimes associated with class A drugs
- Offences brought to justice
- Serious and organised crime
- Violent crime including domestic violence

Dear Panel Member

We would like to offer a warm welcome to new panel members and say 'hello' again to those of you who've been involved with Opinion for a while.

This is the first edition of our 'new look' Citizens' Panel newsletter, which tells you what the responses were to the questions we asked last time and gives you information about what we're doing with the results.

Your views are very important to both Lancashire Police

Authority and Lancashire Constabulary as we truly value public involvement in the planning, prioritising, monitoring and scrutinising of policing services. The information you give us is vital to these processes and plays an important part in helping to inform, influence and shape the future provision of policing services in the County.

Thank you for your commitment to Opinion, we really do appreciate your involvement.



Malcolm Doherty
Chair of the
Lancashire Police Authority



Steve Finnigan
Acting Chief Constable



Recommend to a friend

We are always on the look out for new people to join our panel to make sure that we gather a wide variety of views and opinions. If you know anyone who would be interested in becoming an Opinion member please ask

them to contact us in any of the following ways:

Via Darren Hornby at SMSR, our research agency:

Telephone: 01482 301043

E-mail: dhornby@smsr.co.uk

Fax: 01482 211201

A look ahead

We want to make sure that the questionnaires we send to you are addressing issues that are important to you so we would like to hear from you about any issues or topics that you would like us to look at in the future. Please complete the space at the end of the questionnaire or email our Market Researcher clare.hands@lancashire.pnn.police.uk

How to contact us

If you have a query about completing the questionnaire, a question about being a panel member or have any change of details e.g. name or address, please contact Darren Hornby at SMSR 01482 301043 or e-mail dhornby@smsr.co.uk.

Just a reminder....

As a panel member you have agreed to complete three questionnaires a year. We send these to you in the post with a freepost envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire to us. We always include the closing date for returning questionnaires and contact details for our research agency, SMSR, in case you have any queries.

So we can monitor your confidence in Lancashire Constabulary and your feelings of safety we ask you the same set of questions about these issues at

the beginning of every questionnaire before moving on to new topics – so please don't assume that because you've seen these questions before that you must have completed the same questionnaire previously.

Occasionally we may have an issue that we want to ask you about in addition to the three surveys and we may do this by post, phone or e-mail (if we have your e-mail address) but as always, it is your choice whether you take part or not. You can choose to leave the panel at any

time and just need to contact us (see the How to contact us section) and we will remove your details from the database.



Opinion newsletter

In This Issue

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In these pages we aim to update you on the main findings

We also tell you what we are doing with the results to improve policing in Lancashire



For more information visit our websites
Lancashire Police Authority www.lancspa.gov.uk
Lancashire Constabulary www.lancashire.police.uk

How safe do you feel?

In every questionnaire we ask you about how safe you feel in various situations. Most of you feel safest in your own homes and least safe in your nearest town centre both during the day and after dark. In any situation there are two main things that make you feel less safe - seeing groups of young people hanging around and seeing or hearing about anti-social behaviour.

These issues are high on the Constabulary agenda as Chief Inspector Ian McCann from the force diversity unit explains: "We make full use of all the tools we have available to use to tackle these issues. This includes, ASBO's (Anti Social Behaviour Orders), Acceptable Behaviour Contracts - voluntary agreements between people involved in anti-social behaviour and the local police, housing department or school and Dispersal Orders for use in areas where residents are concerned about people gathering in large groups and causing a public nuisance. We will continue to address these issues in conjunction with other local partners and will keep you updated on any developments"

What affects your confidence?

Since the start of the panel in 2002 we have been asking how confident you are in the police and what things affect the way you feel.

Things that increase your confidence:	Things that decrease your confidence:
Seeing police around your local area	
Seeing or hearing positive things about the police in the media	Police focusing on minor motoring offences, especially speeding
Hearing about successful raids, arrests and convictions	Experiencing or witnessing crimes
Seeing or hearing about the police tackling anti-social behaviour	Seeing or hearing about anti-social behaviour in your area
Receiving a quick or helpful response from the police	Receiving a slow response or a response that does not meet your expectations
Receiving a good service or follow-up to an incident	Perceiving a lack of police interest or action

Stops

The Police Authority is required to monitor police use of stop and search/stop and account powers, making statistics on their use available for scrutiny by representatives from local communities. In our last survey we asked you how you thought the public would prefer to be involved in the monitoring of stops information.

Naomi Walker, Communications Manager for the Police Authority explains what your responses were: "48% of you are interested in having access to stop and search information particularly relating to the number undertaken and any action that resulted. Your preferred option for feeding back results and greater public involvement was the creation of an advisory/monitoring panel.

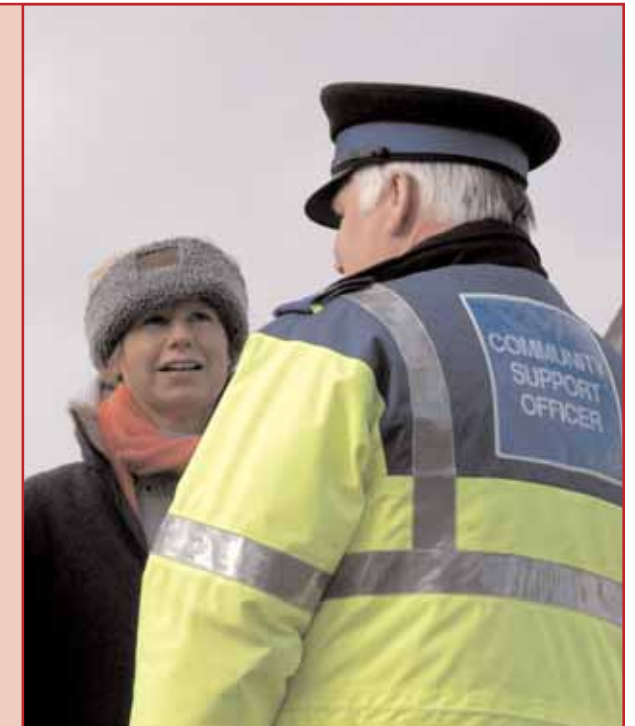
The Authority will use your responses to build upon the current feedback process and further develop ways of communicating information about stops with the public at a local level."



Police and Community Support Officers – could they do more?

We asked what you thought about the role of PCSOs in your local area and how you would feel about them having a wider role, to include things like responding to incidents of assault or burglary or patrolling in vehicles. 77% of you thought it was a good idea and 75% of you had no problem with a PCSO attending to an incident such as burglary or assault as long as the incident was dealt with quickly and efficiently and that a police officer would be available if the PCSO could not deal with the incident for any reason.

As a result of public support for PCSOs the Constabulary has recently launched a major recruitment drive for over 100 new PCSOs this year, with a further 300 next year. Chief Inspector Bill McMahon, who is leading the recruitment drive, said: "Neighbourhood policing is all about policing at the local level and here in Lancashire, we have what we call an extended police family to help us to do that. Police Community Support Officers, along with the Special Constabulary and Volunteers help us to add value to the regular policing work we carry out. Our Community



Support Officers should not be seen as alternatives to regular constables. They have an important role to play in their own right and

here in Lancashire, we have recognised that which is why we are delighted to have been successful in securing the funding for more."

Setting the Council Tax for policing



Delivering a budget decision is not easy as a balance has to be struck which enables the Constabulary to continue to provide high quality policing services whilst being mindful of the cost to the Council Tax payer. This year we thought we needed to increase by an average of £15 per year just to stand still. Over half of you said you were willing to pay an increase of above 15 per cent which would mean we would be able to pay for improvements to the service.

However, the final government grant received, the revised shortfall and the government capping rules limiting the overall size of the council tax increases have meant that at the meeting of the Authority on 15 February 2006 a council tax for policing in Lancashire for 2006-2007 of £113.09 for a band D property was agreed, an increase of only £5.37 or 4.99%. This lower than expected increase still allows for numbers of police officers to be maintained at current levels.