

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Communications and Engagement: The Next Chapter

Introduction

I am writing a personal introduction to this paper because I want no one to be in doubt of my absolute commitment to ensuring effective engagement. At our last meeting, you sent me a very clear message that I have listened to and I am now acting upon.

I have reviewed every aspect of my engagement with communities in Kent and considered where and how things could be done differently. Some of the changes referred to in this strategy can only be achieved through time, others can be implemented and achieved sooner rather than later.

I will implement this strategy to bring about positive engagement and I look for your support to do this.

Background

1. At the Police and Crime Panel on 5 June, the Panel requested that the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (the Commissioner) report back on a revised engagement strategy in light of the comments following the Channel 4 documentary.
2. The Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's engagement strategy is the means by which the promise of being highly accessible to the people of Kent is achieved. It also facilitates the way in which a number of wider responsibilities are delivered including:
 - To understand community needs and perceptions of the police service in Kent.
 - To gather information to influence priorities in the Police and Crime Plan and undertake the statutory function of holding the Chief Constable to account; and
 - To develop trust and confidence in the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner corporate identity.

Way forward

3. The Commissioner has always and continues to be committed to listening to the views of the people of Kent, but recognises the need to ensure the right style and tone of engagement. Effective engagement is based on the following principles:
 - Style and tone
 - Narrative and timing
 - Audience; and
 - Relationships.

There will be full consideration given to these throughout all aspects of this strategy in order to support delivery of a first-class policing service for the people of Kent.

4. Changes that can be implemented immediately include altering the corporate identity so that there is a continued focus on the work of the Commissioner as the elected Member, as

well as a greater focus on the work of the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). A further change is to make the website reflect a more 'business oriented' corporate identity.

5. There are three key areas where change will be made in order to address the shift in focus:

Engagement and communication

6. Future engagement and communication plans will link to the Commissioner's strategic objectives as well policy and business arising from the office. This will assist the public in understanding the work of the OPCC and the added value that this work brings to policing in Kent.

7. Rather than a "one size fits all" approach to engagement, we are developing Local Profiles to drive engagement. These draw upon a range of data sources including: demographic Mosaic information, indices of deprivation, Kent Crime and Victimisation Survey (KCVS) data, User Satisfaction Survey data and crime trends. This will present an opportunity to engage with each of the 12 Districts and Medway to build a full profile reflecting:

- The demographics within a community
- Their preferred method for engagement; and
- Their likely priority issues.

8. This data will enable a better understanding of the issues that are impacting Kent's communities and allow more targeted and appropriate engagement. As part of engagement planning, there will be management of expectations to clearly define the Commissioner's role and ability to influence within the bounds of statutory responsibility.

Partnership Working

9. The Commissioner is committed to building meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with partners and stakeholders and there is full recognition that the objectives in the Police and Crime Plan cannot be delivered without a coordinated approach to partnership working.

10. The Commissioner will renew focus on partnership working, with particular attention on developing existing and forging new working relationships such as:

- Further discussions with the Police and Crime Panel to enhance working relationship whilst ensuring statutory responsibilities are met by both parties.
- Enhancing and developing two-way information flows, communication, understanding and dialogue with all partners and stakeholders, in line with the Commissioner's aspiration to be a 'hearing and listening' organisation.
- Undertaking regular programmed meetings with key partners / stakeholders to further develop dialogue, communication and develop relationships.

Internal communication

11. The Commissioner has acknowledged the concern recent events have caused to police officers and staff and is absolutely committed to addressing the situation. The Kent Police workforce is the driver behind the quality service that the people of Kent receive and their trust and confidence is paramount.

12. The Commissioner has already put in place a People Board and the first meeting was held in early July. The board provides the opportunity for the Commissioner, on behalf of the people of Kent, to ensure that Kent Police's Mission, Vision and Values are being truly engrained within the workforce. The Commissioner wants the People Board to be a place where officers and staff can talk freely and openly about matters which are affecting them and their ability to do their job. The Commissioner intends to invite representatives from a wide variety of staff (with the agreement of the Chief Constable) to give their perspective on the organisation and the issues that matter to them.
13. In addition to the People Board, the Commissioner's internal engagement plan will seek to include more face-to-face engagement and briefings with officers and staff. The Commissioner will continue to work closely with staff associations and support groups to understand their members' issues and concerns to forge greater and more trusting relationships.

Conclusion

14. This paper sets out the high level strategy for change and areas where the Commissioner can bring about a shift of focus whilst fulfilling the promises laid out in the manifesto. The Commissioner is steadfastly committed to change and seeks the full support of all partners and looks forward to discussing some of further detail in the oral presentation.