

From: Ann Barnes, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner  
To: Kent Police and Crime Panel  
Subject: Corporate Communications

### **Introduction:**

1. This report provides the latest position on the new public relations and communication team in Kent Police.

### **Background:**

2. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act created two new corporation soles, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable. At the point when Police Authorities ceased to exist in 2012, all police staff (previously employed by the Police Authority) 'transferred' to the employment of the Commissioners, which was referred to as the Stage 1 transfer.
3. The Government then directed that there should be a second transfer of police staff between Commissioners to the Chief Constable. This was referred to as Stage 2 Transfers and occurred on 31 March 2014. As part of the process, 'Transfer Schedules' (which essentially set out who will employ which groups of police staff) would need to be agreed between a Commissioner and their Chief Constable by late 2013 - in order to allow for the necessary consultation periods with unions and staff before the March transfer. Transfer Schedules would then be submitted to the Home Secretary for approval.
4. In Kent a transfer schedule was agreed between the Commissioner and Chief Constable. It set out that all police staff would transfer to the employment of the Chief Constable with exception of staff working in the Commissioner's office, the Corporate Communications Team and the Research Bureau - the rationale for this approach is set out below.
5. Kent's transfer schedule was approved by the Home Secretary and the transfer of police staff (with the exception of the groups listed above) occurred without incident on 31 March 2014.

### **Transfer schedule rationale**

6. Effective public engagement is a key component of the Kent Police and Crime Plan, with a move towards more community involvement or participation in communications being supported by research published on the College of Policing website.
7. Given the long lead-in for decisions to be made (December 2013) coupled with the change of Chief Constable in early 2014, neither the Commissioner or Chief Constable wanted to be rushed into making a decision by the tight Stage 2 Transfer deadlines. This included decisions around the delivery model, how operational independence is maintained between both organisations, whether it is a shared or separate platform of delivery and where employment of the staff best sat. Therefore it was agreed that employment of the groups listed in paragraph 4 would remain with the Commissioner until further work had been done to find the right strategic model. While this work was ongoing, there was no change to day-to-day work for staff.
8. To further understand the above issues, research was commissioned in early 2014 to consider what the public require from the Police and OPCC in terms of the engagement, and to understand the needs and expectations of intended audiences. The research, understood to be the first of its kind nationally, involved speaking to the Corporate Communications team as well as exploring the issues with a cross section of the Kent public.
9. The research reported back in May 2014, with the core recommendation being to focus on engaging with the public through communications by establishing a listening, dialogue and feedback loop which provides them with highly relevant, local information. This approach also complemented the new Kent Police Model, which was close to being rolled out operationally.

10. The research was internally presented to the Commissioner, Chief Constable, Corporate Communications team, Research Bureau and OPCC Staff where it was discussed with interest and constructively debated. The end result has seen the team lead on the design of a pilot engagement model, which blends the strategic intent coming from the research with the ideas and suggestions of those who will be delivering it operationally on the ground.

### **Next steps**

11. The Chief Constable and Commissioner are extremely pleased with the direction of travel. The research recommendations complement the new policing model, support the research from the College of Policing and a great deal of work has been done to create the new engagement pilot. The new engagement model clearly indicates a closer linkage between operational policing and engagement, so for this reason the Chief Constable and Commissioner agree that employment of staff working in the Corporate Communications and Research Bureau should transfer to the employment of the Chief Constable. The Head of Corporate Communications (which is currently temporarily filled) will be replaced by a new Head of Community Engagement. This role will oversee the operational roll-out of the new engagement model to ensure it meets the requirements of the OPCC as well as Kent Police.

12. Staff have been briefed about the upcoming transfer and have been advised there will be no change in terms and conditions (as a result of the transfer) or break in service. The exact date of the transfer is anticipated to be as soon as possible (date being finalised at the time of writing) to ensure the smooth roll-out and implementation of the engagement model.