

Commissioner's approach to engagement

The legislation

The Commissioner has a duty to obtain the views of the community under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 stating:

“Arrangements shall be made for each police area for obtaining...the views of people in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area, their co-operation with the police in preventing crime in that area and for obtaining the views of victims of crime in that area about matters concerning the policing of the area.”

Commissioner's Stance

Sir Graham Bright has said he wants to be the voice of the public, not the police. He has also talked publicly about the diary challenges of trying to replace a committee of 17 people. The Commissioner sees effective engagement with the public as crucial to the success of the role and improving further trust in the police. In order to do this he has articulated his broad aspirations for engaging with the public both individually and collectively as well as identifying some specific tactical initiatives to support those aspirations.

Voluntary organisations

The Commissioner is committed to promoting the increased use of volunteers and improve links between Watch groups, the Constabulary and partners. His aim is to foster a more effective two-way flow of communication which improves the quality of information given to the police and reassures the public that their voice is being heard. The Commissioner supports the introduction of the Neighbourhood Alert system to facilitate the effective response to crime and issues community safety, this improving the quality and quantity of information provided to and received from Neighbourhood Watch.

Young people

Sir Graham is keen to prioritise crime prevention through early intervention initiatives involving young people that aim to prevent young people getting into trouble. The Commissioner has spoken of his aspirations to ensure effective preventative initiatives between the police, other agencies and partners, voluntary youth organisations such as the Scouts and Guides, academies and other educational establishments. Together with the force, he will support and advocate the aspirations of the Safer Schools initiative and other similar schemes throughout Cambridgeshire.

Businesses

The Commissioner believes that building close relationships with business can help to support reductions in crime and offending. Sir Graham is keen to build links with business against crime organisations and to support the Constabulary's Employer

Supported Policing scheme which provides a framework for employers to support their employees to be part of the Special Constabulary. He is also keen to build links with businesses that do or may in the future carry out or support activity through their corporate social responsibility strategies that help to reduce crime and offending directly and indirectly.

Parish and town councils

The Commissioner has highlighted improved engagement with parish councils as a priority. An Outlook database of contacts has been established with a view to the Commissioner providing regular e-bulletins to parish councils. The updates will provide parish councils with assurance of the existence of effective feedback mechanisms and enable them to see what action has been taken forward as a result of communications. Planning is in the early stages, so suggestions as to the possible content of the updates will be considered in consultation with other parties. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner also aims to attend as many parish council meetings as possible to listen to the issues raised. This will also be done on a 'by invitation', rotational and availability basis.

Surgeries

These are regular (currently monthly) one to one meetings that give members of the public a chance to meet the Commissioner and raise any concerns regarding crime and community safety. The meetings are by appointment and are 15 minutes long. Surgeries have so far taken place in Peterborough, South Cambs and Fenland. Further surgeries are planned for Hunts, Cambridge and East Cambs over the coming months. Details can be found on the Events section of the Commissioner's website www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk. The format of the surgeries will be evaluated and adapted according to feedback from the public. Anyone seeking to make an appointment with the Commissioner at one of his surgeries is asked to contact the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (details at the end of this briefing sheet).

Outreach workers

During his election campaign, Sir Graham stated that he would create two new 'outreach worker' posts for Peterborough and southern Cambridgeshire. The key purpose of the posts is to listen to the public as individuals and collectively and to work in partnership with local agencies and voluntary organisations to identify and deliver shared solutions to local crime and anti-social behaviour problems in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's priority areas. The Peterborough post is a 12 month contract and will be viewed as a pilot. Any lessons learned will be taken forward to develop the southern Cambridgeshire post. Recruitment to the Peterborough is underway.

Neighbourhood panels, committees, forums etc.

The Commissioner has committed to attending neighbourhood meetings in whatever guise they take (forums, area committees and panels) where he is invited to do so. Where invited, he or his Deputy will aim attend one such meeting in each command area per quarter. In this way he hopes that in rotation he will attend every area. The initial round of meetings will be an introduction to the role of Commissioner and an update on Sir Graham's work since his election. The following rounds will focus on Sir Graham's commitment to keep the Police and Crime Plan under continuous review, thus ensuring it is a 'living' document that is both flexible and responsive to our communities needs and concerns. The OPCC maintains a record of which meetings the Commissioner has attended and plans to attend, managed and coordinated by the Commissioner's Head of Engagement & Communications and PA.

Other methods of engagement

Since his election the Commissioner has received and responded to around 700 emails and letters from members of the public and elected representatives. His Twitter feed now has almost 600 followers and his website allows members of the public to comment on news articles in an open but moderated forum.

Force Engagement Board

The Police & Crime Commissioner will continue to be represented on the force Engagement Board by Anna Horne as the Commissioner's broad aspirations for community engagement are in line with the Force's. Sir Graham's aim is to add value to the good work of the Constabulary in this area. It is on this basis that the work of the two 'corporations sole' (Commissioner and Chief Constable), as prescribed by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, will continue to complement one another.

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