

Public Survey Update

Recommendation(s):

- (i) To note the update on the survey findings

Introduction

1. The Force consultation unit carries out continuous telephone surveying of the public in relation to confidence, satisfaction and perceptions of policing, crime and anti-social behaviour. The next full report of results will be prepared in February, following the completion of the new Home Office requirement to carry out 600 surveys in each Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area.
2. This report updates Members on the results for the key 'confidence' questions asked in the survey, in order that the Committee can consider them alongside the presentation to be made by ACC Netherton on the action being taken by the Force to improve public confidence.

Background

3. The report presented to the last meeting reported results from the public survey for the 12 months to the end of September 2009. From 1st October 2009 the Home Office has mandated that all Forces carry out surveys of the general public (previously carried out at the Authority and Force's own discretion) and that such survey include the question "To what extent do you agree that the police and council in this area are dealing with the anti social behaviour and crime that matter" (the 'confidence' question). The question includes a mandatory pre-amble emphasising that this is a key responsibility of the police and local authorities. Although the consultation unit had previously asked the question, it was not set in the context of this preamble. Other changes in the methodology since then such as the requirement to survey 600 members of the public in each Crime and Disorder Partnership (9 in Devon, 1 in Cornwall and 1 in Plymouth) rather than the 400 per BCU area carried out previously may account for some of the changes evidenced in the results.
4. As outlined in the paper on the new mandatory confidence surveying regime, from the end of February the Home Office requires confidence levels to be calculated in a different way than has previously been used by the Authority and Force. However for consistency and ease of comparison at this stage this report calculates the levels of agreement in accordance with previous practice.

Findings

5. For the 12 months to the end of December 2009 –
 - The percentage of people agreeing that the police and council in this area are dealing with the anti social behaviour and crime that matter has reduced significantly from 79.2% in September to 77.6% in December.
 - Since 1st October the same question has been asked again, but leaving out the words "and council". Although it is not possible to directly compare these results with those for the full year, early indications suggest that 'confidence' in the police alone is 5 to 9 percentage points higher than for the police and local authorities together.

- 62.8% of people agree that the police seek people's views about the anti social behaviour and crime that matter. There has been no significant change in agreement since September, however there has been a significant reduction from a high of 67.7% in December 2008.
 - The percentage of people agreeing that the police would treat everyone fairly regardless of who they are has reduced significantly from 90.8% in September to 83.9% in December.
 - 68.4% of people agree that the police in this area can be relied on to be there when you need them. There has been no significant change in agreement since September.
 - The percentage of people agreeing that the police understand the issues that affect this community has increased significantly from 87.6% in September to 91.4% in December and is at its highest point for the year.
 - The percentage of people agreeing that the police in this area are dealing with the things that matter to people in this community has increased significantly from 81.3% in September to 88.7% in December and is at its highest point for the year.
 - The percentage of people agreeing that they have a lot of confidence in the police in this area has increased significantly from 81.9% in September to 84.1%.
6. These results generally reflect the pattern of results found through the same questions asked in the British Crime Survey.

Conclusion

7. Whilst there are some clearly disappointing results in relation to specific questions regarding anti social behaviour and crime and perceived fairness of the police, the public have high levels of agreement that the police understand and are dealing with the things that matter in their local community. They also report high levels of confidence in the police, when asked this question directly rather than being asked about anti social behaviour and crime. This suggests that the Force is doing much to inspire public confidence but needs to take action, with its partners, to focus on dealing with and engaging with people about anti social behaviour and crime and on treating all people fairly. Details of the actions being taken by the Force in relation to the overall confidence agenda will be provided in the presentation by ACC Netherton.

Contact: for further information

Gill Sims

Consultation Manager

Telephone 01392 452676

E-mail: gillian.sims@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Date report collated: 29th December 2010

Sponsored by ACC Netherton