

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Planning and Consultation Committee
15 November 2005
Open for FOI
Report of the Chief Executive

Review of Police Authority Liaison Meetings Pilot Schemes and Recent Innovations

Recommended

- (i) that the sector level meetings in North and East Devon Basic Command Unit continue;**
- (ii) that in Exeter, working in partnership with the City Council continues and special Police Authority Liaison Meetings be arranged for specific topics and areas as required;**
- (iii) That the Authority continue the arrangement with Mid Devon District Council for meetings in 2006;**
- (iv) That a “drop-in” style meeting be arranged for Torquay and one other Sector (preferably covering a rural area) in the South and West Basic Command Unit.**
- (v) that Police Authority Liaison Meeting Chairmen consider arranging appropriate presentations for their meetings;**
- (vi) that following each Police Authority Liaison Meeting the Chairman reports the main comments and suggestions made at the meeting to the Police Authority office so these can be incorporated into the report for the Police Authority.**

Introduction

1. A number of pilot projects have been taking place with a view to making partnership working part of our community engagement processes, increasing the number of people with whom engagement takes place and ensuring that the meetings have a focus and are effective.
2. In addition the supporting documentation and administrative procedures have also been reviewed during the past 12 months.

Background Information

3. Police Authority Liaison Meetings (PALMs) grew from Police Community Consultative Groups which were a way of fulfilling the Authority's duty to consult.
4. In the Authority's area, meetings were set up based on District and Unitary Council boundaries. Generally there were 4 meetings scheduled per year in each council area.
5. Recently there has been concern expressed that the meetings are not as effective as they could be.
6. In Autumn 2004 the Authority agreed, informally, that a number of pilot projects would be implemented in the North and East BCU area and that generally the number of Police Authority Liaison Meetings in other areas would be reduced to 2 per year.
7. A view generally expressed by Members was that due to the diverse nature of the geography and people within the Authority's area it was unlikely that a uniform approach would be appropriate. The North and East Basic Command Unit was chosen as the pilot area because it contained both the

City of Exeter and remote rural areas therefore a variety of meeting formats and partnerships could be tested. This has subsequently proved to be a good choice as the BCU is now a pathfinder BCU for neighbourhood policing.

8. At Police Authority Liaison Meetings in Cornwall the public have generally indicated, when asked, they are happy with the current meeting arrangements.

Pilot Projects

9. **Sector Based Meetings.** The intention when planning the sector based meetings was that meetings would be held at a more local level so people would not have to travel so far to attend. Also the scheduling should avoid peak holiday time and dark evenings. A meeting was held with the relevant sector Inspectors to explain what we were trying to achieve and, seek their ideas on the format and content of the meetings.
10. The invitation list for each meeting was compiled by use of postcodes, from the existing list for the meeting at a district level. Each invitee was advised of the details of the meeting nearest to their home and also given information about the other meetings taking place within the district.
11. In practice, the format of the meeting remained very similar to the previous PALM meetings; this is an issue that will need further consideration.
12. The attendance figures for the sector based meetings indicate that the North and East Devon Sectors attracted similar numbers of people to all the meetings held at the district level in 2004/2005. Appendices 1a and 1b give the attendance figures.
13. **Mid Devon.** Police Authority Member Mr Mike Bull is taking the lead on this pilot and agreed with the Leader of Mid Devon District Council that we would jointly host a series of "Local Area Forums".
14. There are a number of advantages to this partnership approach including the promotion of joint responsibility for community safety issues and the possibilities of reaching a wider audience than would be interested in purely police related issues. From an administrative viewpoint it should be possible to provide a more effective and efficient administrative process.
15. A report from Mr Bull regarding the Mid Devon pilot is attached as Appendix 2.
16. **Exeter.** Police Authority Liaison Meetings have been held to meet specific needs identified by local Police Officers and the Community Safety Partnership rather than general scheduled meetings. This approach has resulted in well attended, vibrant and participative meetings which have identified possible solutions to problems.
17. In addition, following a meeting with the City Council's Chief Executive, it has been agreed; a) the Authority will ensure that there is a representative at meetings of the Exeter City Forum which is held 5 times a year (January, March, June September, and November) and; b) one of these meetings will have a community safety focus and be chaired by a Police Authority representative.
18. The advantages of such a partnership approach have already been outlined in paragraph 14.
19. **Torbay** A "drop-in" style meeting was held in the foyer and open areas of the Apollo Cinema in Paignton. All the Neighbourhood Beat Managers for Paignton were present as well as the Community Safety Partnership and traffic police.
20. The meeting was publicised with the help of the BCU Marketing staff and local Police Officers as "come and meet Police Authority representatives and your local Police officers."
21. The style and format of the event were generally praised. There was a high level of media interest with a live radio interview taking place from the event and positive coverage in the Herald Express later in the week.
22. The Sector Inspector for Torquay has indicated that he would like a similar event to take place within his Sector.
23. **Themed Meetings/ Presentations.** Some PALM Chairmen regularly arrange for a presentation to a meeting on a subject of interest such as traffic policing or the work of the air support unit. This

has been well received by those attending the meetings and has been a source of media interest which in turn promoted both the Authority and the meeting in a positive manner.

Improvements to the Documentation and Administrative Procedures.

24. A simple guide has been produced for the PALM Administrators containing sample minutes and action lists to assist with achieving a consistent standard for all the meetings;
25. Action lists have been introduced which detail all actions that need to be taken following a meeting –these are circulated to the relevant officers as an aide memoir. We have received positive feedback for implementing this approach and as a result copies of the action lists are sent to the geographic Chief Inspectors to allocate and monitor the actions and to the PALM Chairman to relay the actions taken to the next meeting.
26. Regular (6 monthly) meetings are held with all the PALM administrators together with the relevant staff based at Endeavour House. This helps to identify problems, find solutions and agree common standards and ways of working. It also provides an opportunity for the Administrators to meet and share experiences.
27. Dates and venues of meetings are posted on the Authority's website as are the notes of the meetings.
28. A "Pop-Up Banner" displaying the Authority's logo has been ordered for display / as a focal point at meetings.
29. A Question Form has been introduced at PALMs to encourage and enable greater participation by people who are not keen to stand up and speak in public.
30. PALM Leaflet. The format and style of the leaflet has been substantially revised and improved. Feedback that we have received includes phone calls asking if articles can be reproduced in parish magazines and reports of spare copies being collected up after PALMs for redistribution at parish and town councils and neighbourhood watch meetings.
31. Work is currently underway to update the posters used to advertise the PALMs incorporating the Police Authority logo and website address; consideration is also being given as to the distribution of the posters. The invitation letters and meeting signage are being similarly reviewed.
32. A database programme is being written which will be used to contact people to advise them of PALM meetings. When the database is working, everyone listed will be contacted and asked if they wish to continue receiving notification of the meetings.
33. Work is currently underway to develop "A Guide to Police Authority Liaison Meetings" which should help the understanding of everyone involved.
34. It is planned to contact all Parish and Town Councils (when the database referred to in 32 above is complete) and ask them to identify suitable local magazines and newsletters e.g. parish magazines, which can be used to publicise Police Authority Liaison Meetings.
35. The Police Authority has requested that a report summarising the main issues raised at Police Authority Liaison Meetings to be presented at each full Police Authority meeting. In order to do this Police Authority Liaison Meeting Chairmen will be asked to report the main discussion points at each of their meetings as soon as possible after the meeting.

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