

## DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

### PUBLIC LIAISON MEETINGS

#### REPORT ON A PILOT FORMAT FOR CONSULTATION MEETINGS IN MID DEVON

The Police Authority has been seeking to experiment with some newer processes of conducting public consultation meetings across the Force area. It authorised an experiment involving “shared” meetings with a local Authority – in this instance Mid Devon District Council.

After various preparatory meetings and planning, the Council agreed with some enthusiasm to try this experiment. The Council had historically conducted periodic community consultation meetings and frequently there were difficulties in compiling Agendae which were sufficiently interesting to attract a wide audience. So, both organisations had a similar difficulty and saw potential benefits in this experiment. Combined with this, the former Police Authority Meetings tended to be dominated by Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators – a characteristic fairly common across the region it seems.

The new format meetings were held recently in three different parts of the District. They were supported by the local Geographic Inspector and either a neighbourhood policeman or a Sergeant. They were held at:

- 28 September at Tiverton;
- 6 October at Crediton; and
- 11 October at Uffculme.

The meetings were generally well attended – certainly with a more widespread nature of attendees. The first half of the meeting was Chaired by the Police Authority representative, and the second part by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the District Council.

There appeared to be widespread appreciation of the style and format. A “straw poll” of those attending was taken and with the sole instance of one individual everyone else felt that the arrangements were much better. They also gave physical evidence of authorities “working together” – something often spoken about but seldom actually seen in this way.

Furthermore, the Council would now like to extend this new style of public meetings. It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that arrangements are made for a further “round” of these meetings in the Spring of 2006.

**Mike Bull**  
Independent member of the Police Authority.

**15 October 2005**