

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

POLICE & CRIME PANEL

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Report of	POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
Date	MONDAY 23RD MARCH AT 1:00pm
Subject	COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE
Author	DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides the Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) with an update on the creation of a shared service communications and engagement directorate (“the Directorate”), which the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable agreed to develop last year, and the emerging service delivery of the Directorate.

Recommendation

2. The Panel is asked to note the contents of this update.

Introduction

3. Work began last summer to create a new Directorate for communications and engagement activity, working for both the Chief Constable and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner.
4. As reported to the panel at its meeting on September 29th 2014, the Directorate’s structure comprises three core elements: a media relations team, a digital media team, and a behaviour change and communications team.
5. Following formal consultation with staff and unions, work began in the late autumn using formal selection processes to start filling the posts within the structure from existing staff. As a result, two members of existing staff left under Voluntary Redundancy mechanisms, two others failed to secure new roles and were made compulsorily redundant, and the remaining staff secured new roles.
6. Recruitment processes to fill those posts which remained vacant began before Christmas. Subject to successful pre-employment checks, it is anticipated that all posts bar that of Web developer (see below) will be occupied – as anticipated - by March 31st 2015. The author was successful in applying for the post of Director and is due to commence in his new, permanent role on April 1st.

Governance

7. As always planned, and as the Home Secretary was informed during Phase 2 transfer, the staff working within the Directorate will revert back from the OPCC to the

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employ of the Chief Constable by midnight on 31st March 2015. Whilst the Directorate will operate as a shared service, its Director will report to the Deputy Chief Constable and be accountable to the Chief Executive of the OPCC.

Continuing structural change

8. There are a total of 20 FTE posts within the current iteration of the Directorate, namely:
 - 1 x Director
 - 1 x Head of Media Services
 - 4 x Media Relations Officers
 - 1 x Head of Digital Services
 - 3 x Digital Media Officers
 - 1 x Web Development Officer (vacant)
 - 1 x Head of Behaviour Change and Communications
 - 3 x Communications and Campaigns Officer
 - 3 x Community Engagement Officer
 - 1 x Stakeholder and Engagement Officer
 - 1 x Marketing Officer, Volunteers in Policing programme
9. With several members of staff electing to work part-time / reduced hours, savings on the salary budget have been accrued as posts have been filled.
10. Based on predicted future need and cost effectiveness, consideration is currently being given to making further structural changes to the directorate, including the replacement of the (unfilled) Web Developer post with an in-house online designer to support the channel shift activity of the directorate.
11. Discussions are also being held about the possibility of adapting the existing Youth Commissioner co-ordinator post to create a broader role which encompasses all communications, co-ordination and engagement work with young people within the community.
12. These further changes can be made without adding to the overall staffing budget and so remain within forecast.
13. As the Directorate has taken shape, the original intention to absorb within it the functions of customer insight and research (currently located within the Corporate Services Department) have been revived and is currently under discussion and review as part of a programme of work to make more efficiency savings in backroom support service functions.

Enhanced communications and engagement activity

14. Although work has begun to embed a revised working practice amongst staff, and new policies and strategies are being developed and implemented, it will inevitably take some time before the Directorate is functioning as planned and at optimum levels.
15. However, since the late autumn when work began on constructing the Directorate there have been increasing signs that the anticipated, revised approach towards communications and engagement activity for both the Force and the OPCC is emerging and producing results.

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Insight-driven behaviour change communications activity

16. A new approach is appearing which delivers communications activity, and in particular campaign work, with far greater emphasis on customer insight and statistical evidence and which focuses on delivering a change in behaviour and attitude.
17. Internally, for example, significant work has been conducted to raise awareness of, and to encourage the participation and “buy-in” of the workforce in, the recent structural changes produced by Project Edison. This has included the development and delivery of a wealth of communications and engagement work comprising focus groups with officers and staff, the introduction of “hotline” days for staff to ask questions directly of the project team, regular updates on the Force intranet, personal emails to all officers affected and roadshows led by chief officers.
18. Externally, several campaigns and initiatives have been developed and implemented based on both research of crime types and customer feedback. The Love Your Phone campaign implemented among a largely young and student population in December helped secure a 60% reduction in reports of theft of mobile phones in the city. A twitathon staged in car parks in the city, in Leicestershire and in Rutland in October helped raise awareness of the need for car owners to secure vehicles and target-harden them by not leaving property on display.
19. The Behaviour Change team has developed a financial year calendar looking at the profile of crime going back five years in the Force area, overlaid with known seasonal crime. This campaigns calendar is now being shared and discussed with partner agencies including Local Authorities to ensure co-ordination of messaging across several agencies and to help achieve cost efficiencies.

Engagement activity

20. Much work has been done to improve the engagement activities of the Force and the OPCC with the public in the reporting period.
21. Having successfully launched the country's first trip advisor-style online feedback tool for the Police Service (Rate Your Police), the system is now being developed to allow members of the public who are stopped and searched to provide feedback on their experiences. This will further help the Force understand the impact of stop and search and to improve its performance and proportionality in this important but contentious area of policing.
22. Several other online initiatives have also been developed, including a cyber crime online chat session and the launch of the Beat Safe website aimed specifically at young people and issues that most concern them. Work will begin shortly in developing a new website for the PCC to provide greater interoperability, and a new website for the Force to support the transactional digital media strategy (see below).
23. A new IT system is shortly to be launched to help develop, log, track and encourage greater involvement among local residents to help shape the policing priorities in their local neighbourhoods. The system will be used extensively by the new Community Engagement Officers in liaison with local Neighbourhood Policing Area commanders to ensure a more responsive policing service to local communities.

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24. A major marketing campaign is in development to help the OPCC secure its aim of recruiting 1,000 volunteers by March 2017. The campaign will be spearheaded by a video and supported by a range of public events, leaflets, posters and website activity, focusing on Special Constables, Police Cadets and Police Service Volunteers.
25. Launched in November, the "What matters to you?" series of public meetings, allowing residents the opportunity to talk directly to the PCC and the Chief Constable, are providing popular and providing the force and PCC with further insight into issues that matter to the public. Four such events have been held - in Coalville, in the Highcross shopping centre, at the Robert Smyth Academy, Market Harborough and at the Beaumont Shopping Centre - and attracted more than 300 people.
26. Significant work has been undertaken to support the PCC's Youth Commission and in particular its conference held earlier this month at which the young commissioners outlined their thoughts about how better the police could tackle the six issues of most concern to young people in the force area. This work including the production, with the young people, of a video about their work, now available on YouTube.
27. To help increase public awareness of the commissioning and other work undertaken by the PCC, and in addition to targeting mainstream media publicity opportunities through local newspapers, radio stations and TV, a monthly PCC newsletter has been re-launched, first person singular articles are being written for specific audiences (for example, the latest Age UK edition of EngAGE) and more targeted public engagement events are being organised, from visits to educational establishments and meetings with faith groups, to attending both regional and national policing events.
28. To help emphasise the Force's and PCC's commitment to encourage community action to create safer communities, both organisations are sponsoring the annual Pride in Leicestershire Awards scheme, organised by the Leicester Mercury, with the PCC as the event's overall sponsor and the Force sponsoring the award for Courage and Bravery.
29. Internally, work is underway to revamp the Force's approach towards reward and recognition, and create greater internal awareness of the values of both the Force and PCC.

Enhanced communications services

30. A suite of new communications services are beginning to be delivered by the new directorate. These include the launch of a new internal online force magazine to compliment more formal publications (for example, Weekly Orders) and to replace the former BCU-specific newsletters.
31. A drive towards channel shifting has seen an increasing use of video as a communications mechanism, for example to publicise the 2nd anniversary of the PCC in office, to relay Christmas messages from both the PCC and the Chief Constable and to highlight the successful outcome of a court case (including a signed version of the video for the deaf).
32. Automatic feeds from media releases to Twitter and Facebook have been turned off, and the department is now producing bespoke messages for these social media channels.

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33. A growing push towards working in partnership with other organisations has seen the Directorate's Head of Media Services take over the chair of the communications sub-group of the LLR Local Resilience Forum, and regular multi-agency meetings are now being chaired by the interim Director of key partners in relation to campaign planning and specific issues / crimes, for example Child Sexual Exploitation, in order to develop, where appropriate, joint communications strategies.
34. An emphasis is now being placed on effective forward-planning within the department, not least within the media services team which is horizon-scanning, in partnership with other organisations, forthcoming events, trials, and other criminal justice issues. This is enabling the team, led by values of transparency and public-accountability, to generate publicity and public awareness of important issues, from external audits to criminal justice outcomes, and so give the public a more rounded picture of local policing.

Transactional service delivery

35. The Directorate has developed, in liaison with other key departments in force, a draft Digital Media Strategy setting out how the Force could further harnesses the power of new technologies to reduce and prevent crime and to enhance community engagement. The area where the strategy can have perhaps greatest and most significant impact, however, is in the transactional area of service delivery, not only advocating the delivery of services in a way that a growing proportion of the population would wish for, but at a significantly reduced cost to traditional service delivery methods. The strategy highlights, among other things, the opportunity to make available digitised online forms (for example, for firearms renewal applications) and to allow the public to report crime online.

Conclusions

36. The work to complete the establishment of the new Directorate structure is on schedule to finish by March 31st as planned, and there is emerging evidence of its changing approach to deliver a more effective, joint service on behalf of the OPCC and the Force for the public benefit.

Implications

Financial:

No additional spending is being incurred in creating this new Directorate of Communications and Engagement. All expenditure has been kept within existing budgets. This report is an update for the Panel to note, and does not have financial implications.

Legal :

No legal considerations have been identified.

Equality Impact Assessment :

The changes that have been made are aimed at enhancing the quality, quantity and reach of communications and engagement between the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Force with all the many diverse communities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland as well as with the workforce.

Risks and Impact :

There are no specific risks identified at the current time.

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Link to Police and Crime Plan : The creation of the new Directorate is helping to support the successful achievement of the aims contained in the Police and Crime Plan and therefore the operational goals and strategic priorities of the Chief Constable.

Person to Contact

Name: Matt Tapp

Email: matt.tapp@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk