

Warwickshire Police and Crime Panel

19 March 2018

Public Awareness of Police and Crime Commissioners

Recommendation

That the Police and Crime Panel considers the Police and Crime Commissioners approach to Consultation and Engagement, and provides any recommendations as appropriate

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) presented his Draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy to the Police and Crime Panel on 3 February 2017. At that meeting, it was explained that a yearly programme of work had been identified and that the strategy would be refreshed annually. Accordingly, the Panel's Chair has requested that the Strategy return to the Panel to consider what actions have been taken to fulfil the ambitions of the Strategy. This report also includes wider background information on voter turnout and the public awareness of and public PCC's nationally.
- 1.2 Recently, the Panel has requested that the PCC engage further with residents to explain the challenges facing policing in Warwickshire, such maintaining officer numbers and rising recorded crime. At its meeting on 1 February 2018, the Panel also made recommendations concerning the PCC's approach to consultation. The Panel recommended that:
- In future years, a proactive and targeted approach is taken to engaging with residents in the north of the county, and from demographic groups that may currently be underrepresented.
 - Consideration is given to ways of recording more details about respondents in consultations, whilst balancing the value of keeping the survey quick to complete.

2.0 Statutory Duties

- 2.1 The PCC has a statutory duty and electoral mandate to hold the police to account on behalf of the public. He also has a duty to provide the local link between the police and communities, working to translate the legitimate desires and aspirations of the public into action¹. The PCC must also oversee the extent to which the Chief Constable has fulfilled his statutory duty to obtain the views of local communities on crime and disorder in their neighbourhood.

¹ The Policing Protocol Order 2011

- 2.2 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 sets out the roles and responsibilities of Police and Crime Commissioners. The act states that “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.”² The Police and Crime Commissioner’s Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2016 – 2021 sets out the principles of how this will be achieved.

3.0 Voter Turnout

- 3.1 Overall turnout at the May 2016 PCC elections was 27.3%, representing a significant increase on the 15.1% turnout experienced in 2012. However, a parliamentary briefing paper suggests that because the 2016 PCC elections coincided with other local elections, this increased the percentage of incidental turnout. Reflecting on the 2016 PCC elections, the Electoral Commission said that “However welcome the increase in turnout, it did not translate into increased levels of awareness amongst voters of what the elections were about... it is still the case that people do not feel they know very much about PCCs.”³ The Home Affairs Select Committee noted that it may take several more years before the public are fully aware of the role of the PCC, which is still relatively new to them.
- 3.2 The voter turnout % for the Warwickshire PCC elections in 2016 was 26%, representing the lowest turnout of any election in that year. In 2012, the polling company Populus asked respondents the main reason they did not vote in the PCC elections. The largest group of respondents (45%) suggested that they did not have enough information to make a decision. On this basis, it can be concluded that a better informed electorate will increase voter turnout.

4.0 Public Awareness of Police and Crime Commissioners

- 4.1 A recent survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with 30,928 respondents, revealed that some people are particularly more disengaged and unaware of the PCC’s role than others. The findings of the Survey of Crime in England and Wales for the year ending March 2017 show that the people most likely to be aware of PCCs were well educated retired white men on larger household incomes, living in detached homes in rural areas. Conversely, those least likely to be aware of PCCs were young women from minority ethnic backgrounds, on low incomes in urban areas. The table overleaf highlights the individuals who are most and least likely to be aware of PCCs and their role, based on data collated by the ONS:

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents/enacted>

³ http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/215074/2016-PCC-elections-report.pdf

Crime Survey for England and Wales - Table S22: Awareness of Police and Crime Commissioners, by personal characteristics, year ending March 2017

Personal Characteristic	Most aware of PCC's	Least Aware of PCC's
Age:	65 – 74 (77%)	16 – 24 (41%)
Sex:	Men (67%)	Women (58%)
Ethnic Group:	White British (66%)	Arab and Chinese (23%)
Marital Status:	Married (70%)	Single (48%)
Employment Status:	Retired (70%)	Student (40%)
Occupation:	Managerial/professional (75%)	Long term unemployed (38%)
Highest Qualification:	Degree/Diploma (75%)	None (46%)
Household Income	£50,000 + (72%)	Less than £10,000 (49%)
Tenure:	Home owner (70%)	Social/private renter (48%)
Accommodation:	Detached House (74%)	Flat/maisonette (50%)
Area Type:	Rural (72%)	Urban (60%)
Indices of Deprivation:	20% least deprived areas (69%)	20% most deprived areas (50%)

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 In February 2017, the Police and Crime Panel asked to revisit the PCC's Consultation and Engagement Strategy after a year of it being in place. This report fulfils that request, and provides accompanying background information. The Panel are requested to consider the PCC's Strategy, and make any recommendations as appropriate

6.0 Appendices:

6.1 Appendix A – The Police and Crime Commissioner's Consultation and Engagement Strategy

7.0 Background Papers:

7.1 None

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