

LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

Meeting **POLICE AUTHORITY**

Date **TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2010 – 2.00 P.M.**

Report of **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Subject **PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN POLICING – A REVIEW OF RESEARCH**

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides feedback on the research commissioned out by the Association of Police Authorities which was circulated as GEM 253 on 29 October 2009.

Background

2. In July 2007, the Home Office published its crime strategy which introduced a measure of confidence to support its approach to reducing crime. The confidence measure is now the single remaining top down target, the Home Office having removed all others.
3. The Association of Police Authorities commissioned Evidence Led Solutions Ltd. to research into the ideas of confidence and trust as well as the specific issue of confidence in the police. The GEM contains 3 documents, firstly a covering note and then a technical Review of the Research and finally a Guidance document explaining how levels of Confidence can be influenced within a policing environment.
4. The results of the research were published with the aim of assisting those forces and authorities who already have confidence improvement projects in place as well as for those who want advice and guidance in looking at such improvements. Examples of initiatives in place in various forces and authorities have been included in the published report that invites authorities to consider whether these might be utilised locally either in full or in part.

Review of the Research

5. The research identified 6 main factors (drivers) which can affect the levels of confidence in the police.
 - Community engagement and problem solving
 - Procedural justice (fair treatment)
 - Police effectiveness
 - Contact with the police
 - Dealing with anti-social behaviour
 - Targeted foot patrol
6. It summarises that confidence is :
 - Easier to lose than to gain
 - Relatively easy to lose once gained; and

- Difficult to re-establish once lost
7. The research also concluded that in managing performance that resource is better spent “doing less bad” than trying to “do more good” since doing something well has less of a positive impact than the negative impact of doing something badly.
 8. The overall level of confidence is the aggregate of the levels of confidence of every member of the community and that according to previous research the level of confidence of every individual is influenced by :
 - A psychological state – Where confidence is related to the level of belief that an organisation can be relied on.
 - A Rational choice – Where the confidence is related to the belief that mutual trust benefits both individual and organisation more than if one or other party distrusts the other.
 - Relational – Where confidence is based on context.
 9. The levels of confidence that an individual has depends on their personal circumstances with one or more of the following “types of trust” impacting on their personal views.
 10. These multiple forms of “trust and confidence” are summarised as follows:
 - Dispositional trust – Some groups of people are more disposed to trust the police than others.
 - History based trust – Where a person’s confidence in the police is based on personal experience of the police.
 - Third parties as conduits of trust – Based on the views of a third party who has had direct dealings with the police.
 - Category based trust – Based on the perceptions of the policing organisation as trustworthy, so someone identifiable as a member of that organisation (i.e. a police officer) must be trustworthy.
 - Role based trust – Based on a depersonalised trust in a person’s role in an organisation without any personal knowledge of the person doing that role. It is the role that generates the trust rather than the organisation, so a Neighbourhood Officer on the beat might generate more trust than a Response Officer speeding past in a car.
 - Rule based trust – Based on the knowledge that the police is regulated and hence can be relied on.
 11. It is unlikely that an individual would fall entirely into just one category, for example a person could be a member of a community who don’t have confidence in the police (Dispositional) but that they themselves had had a personal experience which they found positive (History based).
 12. This highlights the complexity of generating trust and confidence and points towards the importance of matching any approach taken to the “type” of confidence that one is looking to influence.
 13. The key point is that it is not necessary for an individual to have had any personal experience of the police for confidence in the police to exist. It also comments that the wearing of a uniform generates trust as it clearly identifies an individual as part of the organisation. As an example, it suggests that more public confidence is gained from the visibility and any interaction with a uniformed officer than is the case with a plain clothes Detective.

14. As a follow up from this, this could be thought of being a reason why the levels of confidence in the Police as an entity in the British Crime Survey has always been higher than that for the "Police and Local Authorities". The suggestion is that it is the wearing of a uniform that generates more confidences.
15. The research concludes that for the police the "symbols of authority (its uniform, badge etc.) and its powers are vested only in those that can be trusted to act appropriately" and hence these "symbols" in themselves can raise confidence levels by being visible.
16. As an example, it follows that if a member of the Council engages with a member of the public regarding Anti-Social Behaviour in exactly the same manner as a uniformed Police Officer then it is likely that Confidence would rise more in the latter case.

Methodologies for assessing Public Confidence

17. The report suggests the following methodologies for assessing public confidence.
 - Surveys
 - Focus Groups
 - Audits of Complaints
 - Contents of PACT meeting minutes
 - Content analysis of media coverage
 - Mystery Shopper Exercises
 - Analysis of intelligence received from the public
18. The report gives examples of the subject areas and suggests lines of questioning that might be utilised within the listed methodologies.

Examples of Good Practice

19. The report gives examples of best practice summarised below. These have been mapped against the 6 drivers of confidence. More detail is provided for Initiative 7 as it reflects member activity. It is also worth noting that Initiative 7 has been mapped as meeting 5 of the 6 drivers of improving confidence which is the most of any of the examples given.

Initiative 1 – Greater Manchester Force

Operation Street-A-Week (assessed as addressing 4 of the 6 drivers)

20. Each BCU identifies one neighbourhood every week where trust and confidence is low. Letters are sent to every household in that Neighbourhood advising them of the current work and priorities. This followed up by Officers from the LPU visiting each household in the Neighbourhood to speak face to face with residents to listen to their concerns and record what worries them; this can take between 10 minutes and an hour at each address. LPUs then subsequently report back to the neighbourhood in a "You said, We did" format.

Initiative 2 – Humberside Police Authority

Media Work (assessed as addressing 1 of the 6 drivers)

21. A Media Officer undertakes a weekly scan of various media sources and where a story is likely to impact on confidence appropriate responses and communication messages are prepared.
22. In Leicestershire this work is already carried out by Corporate Communications Department.

Initiative 3 – Humberside Police Authority

“Mystery Shopping” and Public surveying of Policing Pledge delivery (assessed as addressing 4 of the 6 drivers)

23. Surveying is carried out of members of the public regarding the delivery of the commitments in the Policing Pledge, in addition “mystery shopping” is planned to assess how easy it is to access policing services.
24. In Leicestershire, mystery shopping carried out of Front Enquiry Office services, all calls to CMC are recorded and then dip-sampled.

Initiative 4 – Lincolnshire

Policing with PRIDE (assessed as addressing 4 of the 6 drivers)

25. All Police Officers and Police Staff (presumably including those who are Support Staff for the Police Authority) undergo a Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dedication and Empathy (PRIDE) programme. This is expected to improve the way all personnel interact with the community and improve confidence amongst personnel in their dealings with the public.

Initiative 5 – Metropolitan Police Service

Provision of Newsletters (assessed as addressing 2 of the 6 drivers)

26. A pilot has been undertaken in three London wards to provide up to date locally specific positive messages in the form of a newsletter delivered to people’s homes. It is hoped that this will positively impact upon the levels of confidence both in their local policing team and the force in general. Subsequent research has shown that this had proved to be the case. It is suggested that regular targeted newsletters of this type can act as a “buffer” against negative information published by other sources such as the national media.

Initiative 6 – Norfolk

Action Research project (assessed as addressing 2 of the 6 drivers)

27. Norfolk employ a former Police Foundation Researcher and utilise the services of Police Foundation Researchers who carry out qualitative research in areas where confidence has been identified as low, following this evidence gathering the researcher works with the LPU Inspectors to identify “quick wins” and a longer term action plan for change.

Initiative 7 – North Yorkshire Police Authority

Alignment of Authority members to LPUs (assessed as addressing 5 of the 6 drivers)

28. The Police Authority is involved in the service delivery at a local level.
29. Every LPU has a Police Authority member who is “marketed” to the public as part of a LPU “Management Team”, this is done both on the Force website, by newsletters but also by means of presentations at the local authorities.
30. These members are responsible for monitoring the LPU’s performance in terms of the Policing Pledge and working with the LPU Inspector to address any issues identified at this level. The member also “owns” the confidence level at the LPU level, obviously working with the LPU Inspector to address any issues.

31. Amongst the elements that members will be ensuring that the LPUs are delivering to a satisfactory level are:
 - Levels of local knowledge of neighbourhood officers, levels of visibility and turnover, promptness at returning messages and attending incidents.
 - Levels of community consultation activity and actions around dissatisfied members of the public and working with victims.
 - Whether local priority setting is working well and is accurately identifying priorities.
 - That Key Individual Networks are established and neighbourhood profiles developed and updated.
32. It should be noted that the member will not personally be delivering any of these services, just ensuring that they are delivered, as an example the member will not be consulting with the community themselves but rather ensuring that consultation is taking place in an appropriate manner.
33. The one aspect that the member will be personally responsible for direct delivery will be to ensure that appropriate links are maintained between the LPU “management team” and partner agencies and community leaders. To what extent the responsibility will be is not clear but the wording says “to assist the LPU...” rather “monitoring that the LPU...”.
34. The requirement is that LPU “management team” hold meetings at least monthly where these aspects are reviewed and actions agreed. The member is then responsible for providing feedback to the full Police Authority in relation to the LPU performance (in these areas) and action plans to a Police Authority Community Confidence Board (which is a newly constituted board).
35. Having made the point about members not delivering services themselves there is an additional requirement that members are being asked to ensure that the LPU management team (i.e. including themselves) undertake patrols at least twice a year. It is not clear whether the intention here is that the management team go out together or individually with the neighbourhood officers.
36. This felt to be a key part of the scrutiny process since it could clearly be seen by the public that the member is part of the team delivering the service rather than an “intrusive scrutineer” which the research had suggested can have an adverse impact on confidence levels.
37. The concept of this is not that the existence of a Police Authority member on an LPU management team will in itself improve public confidence but rather that:
 - It allows “management” of confidence at a more local level by the Police Authority
 - It gives additional expertise to the LPU Inspectors which will hopefully improve the service at an LPU level.

Initiative 8 – West Yorkshire

Quality of Service Reassurance Mapping (assessed as addressing 5 of the 6 drivers)

38. Actual levels of crime are mapped against fear of crime on a 6 weekly basis to identify those areas where there is a higher fear of crime than actual crime. Reassurance work is then targeted at these areas using a number of methods including identifying local concerns by use of surveying and focus groups and then work by Neighbourhood teams and partner agencies to address these issues. The completed work is publicised locally.

Initiative 9 – West Yorkshire

Community Involvement in Reward and Recognition (assessed as addressing 2 of the 6 drivers)

39. In each BCU, one LPU every 6 weeks is selected by rotation and nominations made of Officers and PCSOs (normally around 25 nominations per LPU), the LPU Inspector then convenes a public panel meeting where the nominations are reviewed and the panel select those to be rewarded.
40. The scheme both allows the LPUs to see the aspects of the policing that impress the public and also allows the public who are on the panel to see a wide range of elements of local policing that they may not previously have been aware of.

Initiative 10 – West Yorkshire

Confidence Packs (assessed as addressing 1 of the 6 drivers)

41. Information is provided to all LPU Inspectors regarding both survey data (both public perceptions and user satisfaction), but also includes crime and ASB data as well as demographic and socio-economic data. LPU Inspectors can view levels of confidence in conjunction with other issues that may affect them.

Initiative 11 – West Yorkshire

Increasing Public Confidence Project (assessed as addressing 2 of the 6 drivers)

42. 2 types of Newsletters (generic and localised) were delivered by 2 methodologies (hand delivered by PCSO and by Royal Mail) to areas of “low confidence” and, as a baseline, areas of “high confidence”. The changes in confidence levels were monitored by the Market Research team (which sits within the Police Authority) using surveys. Results showed that the hand delivered newsletters generated a greater increase in confidence levels but that there was no statistical evidence that the type of newsletter made a difference.

Initiative 12 – West Yorkshire

Changes to Neighbourhood sections of Force website (assessed as addressing 2 of the 6 drivers)

43. Training is given to Neighbourhood Teams to allow them to utilise the relevant areas of the Force website to produce bespoke local newsletters and to publicise local events and work undertaken.
44. Similar work is carried out in Leicestershire albeit the technical work is done centrally rather than by the Neighbourhood Teams themselves.

Summary

45. Based on both the research and the examples of good practice it is clear that the best way to influence confidence levels is to ensure that :
 - All engagement must be lead, wherever possible, by uniformed Police Officers.
 - Where there is any involvement by Police Authority members in interaction with the public this must be in a form where they are seen to be acting with Police Officers as part of a service delivery team.

- There is no evidence that being seen to scrutinise has any beneficial impact on confidence, indeed it may be seen to have an adverse impact as it may be undermining the perception of team working.
- The public are “happy” that as a public organisation the police are being monitored and scrutinised, no benefit is gained by demonstrating who and how is doing this scrutiny.

Recommendation

46. Members are recommended to consider the research and whether any of the findings could be utilised in improvement projects designed to progress towards the Confidence Target as set by the Home Office.

Implications

Financial – none; Legal – none; Diversity – none; Risk management – none.

Background Papers

GEM 253

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