

POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE JOINT AUDIT, RISK & ASSURANCE PANEL

PAPER MARKED

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| Report of | OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER / OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE |
| Subject | COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT PROGRESS UPDATE |
| Date | MONDAY 2 ND FEBRUARY, 2015 – 13:00. |
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Purpose of Report

1. This report provides the JARAP with an update on the planned improvements to the functions of communications and engagement which have been agreed by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable. A paper was tabled at the Police & Crime Panel in September 2014 which provides the background to this paper and to which reference should be made (see Appendix A).

Recommendation

2. The Panel is recommended to note the contents of the progress report.

Progress

Staffing

3. Significant progress has been made to develop the new Directorate of Communications and Engagement since September 2014, when members of the Police and Crime Panel were last formally updated.
4. Three specific units have been created within the new Directorate, namely a Media Services unit, a Digital Media unit and a Behaviour Change unit.
5. Following lengthy consultation involving Unison, all staff previously employed within the Corporate Communication Department underwent formal selection procedures in the late autumn / winter and all but two, who were made redundant and left the Force last week, secured new roles within the new directorate. Two other members of staff, including the former Acting Head of the department, have left under Voluntary Redundancy.

6. Five posts are yet to be filled, namely two digital media officers and a web developer, (within the Digital Media unit), the post of Head of Behaviour Change and the post of Director. Following advertisements over the Christmas period, interviews with shortlisted candidates for these posts will take place within the coming weeks. Subject to the notice periods of preferred candidates, it is anticipated that all posts within the new Directorate will be filled, on schedule, by March 31st 2015, and that the new department will be officially launched on April 1st 2015.

Constitutional Governance

7. As planned, the Directorate will be a shared service, supporting the communications needs of both the Force and the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner. It had always been the intention of the PCC, having retained “ownership” of the communications department during the Stage 2 transfer process in 2012/13, that once the new Directorate had been created it would be transferred back into the employment of the Chief Constable, and this transfer will take effect by midnight on 31st March 2015.
8. While the post of Director will be line managed by the Deputy Chief Constable he or she will be jointly accountable to the Deputy Chief Constable and to the Chief Executive of the OPCC.

Developing revised working practices

9. With the Directorate structure now in place, significant work is underway to embed change and enhance performance.
10. Policy and Strategy: A number of new policies and strategies are being developed to underpin the work of the Directorate and the approach to be taken by the Force and by the OPCC in relation to the full gamut of communications activities. This work includes revising existing media policies in the light of changed legislation and new national guidance arising from, inter alia, the College of Policing, and a new Social Media Policy to create greater consistency and effectiveness in the use made by officers and others of various social media platforms.
11. Engagement initiatives: A number of plans have been developed to better support engagement activity (including a stakeholder and engagement plan for the PCC) and initiatives launched to support greater liaison with the community (including the launch of the nationally-acclaimed, Trip Advisor-style Rate Your Local Police online feedback tool and the highly successful interactive Love Your Phone campaign, which reduced the theft of mobile phones by 60%).
12. Targeted campaigns: The Behaviour Change unit has developed, based on empirical evidence of the last five years, a campaigns calendar which will help ensure that campaigns and other communications activities are focused on those crimes causing most concern to the diverse communities within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. These campaigns take account of the national and regional picture, of the Strategic Risk Assessment, and, where relevant and achievable, will be developed and delivered in partnership with partner agencies and organisations both locally and nationally.
13. Communications channels and events: significant work has been undertaken to scope the range of communications channels that will help enhance dialogue

with all sections of society, from “spotted” microsites to community newsletters, from online meetings to face-to-face meetings. Overlaying this work has been a project to scope the plethora of public events taking place this year, and the identification of engagement opportunities therein for local officers. Monthly “Have Your Say” events are now a regular feature of the calendar, at which the public in different locations have the chance to question the PCC and Chief Constable about issues that matter most to them. January’s “Have Your Say” was held last week in Market Harborough.

14. Channel shift: whilst recognising the importance of traditional communications platforms and the continuing use that needs to be made of these platforms, with nearly 80% of the population in Leicestershire now having daily access to the internet and against the backdrop of falling circulation figures of local print media groups, the Directorate is engaged in spearheading a channel shift, making greater use of social and digital platforms and channels for relaying information and engaging more effectively with the public. This work includes producing more bespoke messaging via, for example, Twitter, and greater use of video (illustrated, for example, by the PCC’s two year anniversary message and a “signed” video following a trial involving the murder of a deaf man).
15. Partnership working: greater emphasis is now being placed on forging closer working relationships and joint working with partners. This is manifest in not just planning for joint campaigns to take place later this year, but in the appointment of the Media Services Manager to chair the communications officers constituent within the Local Resilience Forum and regular attendance at the Communications Advisory Group of ACPO (Association of Chief Police officers). Regular meetings are also now taking place with the communications officers of local authorities, neighbouring Forces and other blue light services amongst others to forge more effective, joined-up communications activity.
16. Organisational change programme: significant communications work, internally, externally and with partners, has been undertaken to ensure that the impending changes to the force structure are well understood. This work will culminate today (February 2nd) with the publication to the media of a series of briefing documents setting out the detail of those changes and the effect they will have in the various different Neighbourhood Policing Areas of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.
17. Innovation: Having launched Rate Your Police, the department is developing proposals to further enhance engagement and business transformation. These plans include the development of a new Force Intranet to allow for greater engagement, not least through a bespoke Facebook site for officers and staff. Additionally, a new Force website will be launched early in 2016 which will provide greater interoperability and transactional service delivery, including the provision on online forms and – potentially – the ability to report crime on line. Other plans include hosting a Hackathon, in liaison with the Vice Chair of the panel, to help encourage a change in behaviour among those most vulnerable to certain crime types.

Summary

18. Plans are on schedule to meet the deadline of March 31st 2015 to launch the newly-configured Directorate of Communications and Engagement. Most posts

are now filled and the early signs of a change in working practice and culture are beginning to be seen among staff and their output.

Implications

- Financial: No additional spending is being incurred in creating this new Directorate of Communications and Engagement. All expenditure will be 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 being planned 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 : The risk of redundancy has been realised for two existing communications staff.
- Link to Police and Crime Plan : The creation of the new Directorate will help 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.

List of Attachments / Appendices

Appendix A: Police & Crime Panel report

Background Papers

None

Persons to Contact

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