

OPCC Report on Engagement Options

For the Period: 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.



1. OPCC Engagement Programme

The OPCC engagement programme must be in line with the Strategic Planning Group (SPG) timeline for 2016/17. The timeline identifies when the key statutory documents required for planning and service delivery are required. It also identifies periods that are available for project work aligned to OPCC activities and service development.

The engagement work programme is cognitive of the national standards of participation, as outlined in the Joint OPCC and Gwent Police Force Engagement Strategy¹. All engagement activities are to be optimised by a robust communications strategy.

2. Local Matters of Note

We are aware that many people regularly complete OPCC consultations and surveys, which we are thankful for, recognising that it is very important that the public have an opportunity to comment on their policing needs and influence the service received.

In line with current Home Office and Welsh Government policy, one of the aims of the engagement programme is to encourage working across boundaries in the Gwent force area. This would be particularly relevant to the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015) and the introduction of Public Service Boards.

Another point of note is the technological revolution that is seeing the much wider use of online media platforms. This is an area of public engagement that should be broadened by the OPCC. Gwent OPCC has a website, Twitter account and a Facebook page. However, if more online engagement is to be achieved, such as online surgeries, online chats with the PCC, video announcements, a consideration of capacity within the current system would be required.

¹ http://www.gwent.pcc.police.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Publications/2015-17_Joint_Community_Engagement_Strategy.pdf

3. OPCC Engagement Programme:

The engagement work programme for 2016/17 is designed to meet a number of needs.

Statutory Requirements:

- Ensure the PCC is visible and accessible enabling the public to influence policing policy and their policing service.
- Police and Crime Plan Priorities consultation² – to date, it could be argued that this is an area that has been over consulted on. Ideally, this should be done once following the PCC election. The priorities are evidenced by a robust strategic assessment and at a high level for the flexibility to accommodate emerging crime trends. The Police and Crime Plan takes into account the Strategic Policing Requirement, as set out by the Home Secretary. It should be noted that the Force's local engagement work with Your Voice provides regular updates and reassurances regarding the policing matters that are important to the public.
- Setting the Precept³ – this consultation is required annually and informs the PCC's deliberations prior to setting the policing precept (approx. 11% of council tax) each year. This should include the business sector.
- To support partnership working⁴:
 - ❖ Meeting with Local Authority Councillors
 - ❖ Meeting with Town and Community Councillors
 - ❖ Regular Safer Gwent (community safety) meetings
 - ❖ Meetings with Welsh Government and Secretary of State for Wales
 - ❖ High level Strategic Commissioning Board Area Planning Board for substance misuse
 - ❖ Area Planning Board (Substance Misuse)
- To monitor Gwent Police force's engagement activities⁵ to inform the PCC's holding the Chief Constable to account for the effective delivery of the policing service to the people who live, work and visit in the Gwent area. This is primarily achieved by internal processes and procedures and performance management. Public feedback and qualitative data does inform the PCC's considerations.

4. OPCC Opportunities for Engagement:

A good engagement programme will develop a participatory approach to building an open and transparent OPCC that provides opportunities for the public to influence their policing service and hold the PCC to account.

² Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2014 s.14

³ Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2014

⁴ Crime and Disorder Act 1998, PRSR Act 2014, Future Generations and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2015

⁵ Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2014 s.34

There are a number of options for effective community engagement and participation. An engagement toolbox is attached at ANNEX B. The engagement toolbox will enable planning for the short, medium and longer term throughout the PCC's tenure.

There are also a number of policy requirements that need to be met by the OPCC, such as informing the equalities agenda, working with diverse groups to encourage participation to ensure that all voices are heard and have the opportunity to feed into consultations and policy development.

A proposed framework of engagement options is attached in ANNEX C.

5. Communicating with our audience

A programme of action is required to inform both internal and external stakeholders about what the Police and Crime Commissioner is 'doing' in respect of meeting the police and crime priorities for Gwent. The OPCC will advise the PCC on major operational, corporate and policy developments relating to communication and advise the PCC on public relations matters.

The aim and objective of the Communications and Public Relations strategy is to provide a specific focus on communications activities (internal and external) in the areas of press, public affairs, public relations, marketing and communications and digital communications.

The objective is to:

1. Increase knowledge and understanding about the role and responsibilities of the PCC and his office (both internally and externally) by identifying positive opportunities to increase awareness of the work of the PCC;
2. Ensure that the policies and decisions of the Commissioner are communicated to the public;
3. Highlight the effectiveness of the PCC in holding the Chief to account for the delivery of local policing;
4. Reach a broad cross-section of the population by ensuring that communication takes into account the diverse needs of our communities;
5. Seek opportunities to improve public confidence in policing throughout Gwent.

6. Working with Partners

The objectives are:

- To build and enhance relationships, the PCC will work with local and regional elected officials, the public, key stakeholders and partner agencies. This will be supported by maximising opportunities for joint communications and deliver co-ordinated and consistent messages
- For the PCC to work closely with relevant partners at the Welsh Government, Ministry of Justice and the Home Office to raise awareness of joint initiatives and areas of work
- For the PCC to work closely with Gwent Police to identify opportunities to increase awareness of the role of the PCC through the operational activities of Gwent Police
- In an environment of continuous change, the PCC will also use a variety of formats to communicate internally with all staff and officers to reinforce key messages and provide timely updates.

7. Evaluation

The OPCC has a policy of evaluating specific community engagement projects and consultation processes to assess its impact and outcomes. Evaluating both produces a product with which to inform policy and decision making. The choice of methods should fit the need for the evaluation, its timeline, and available resources.

OPCC evaluations collate quantitative and qualitative information. Our approach to evaluation aims to be:

- Rigorous
- Ethical
- People centred
- Use plain English
- Reflective, to encouraging continuous learning.
- Use a mix of methods for triangulation of approaches and data.

8. Conclusion

A number of lessons learnt have been noted in previous practice and mainly due to limited community involvement in a number of consultations. A revised approach to engagement would benefit from a more personal approach that could be focussed on events in the community such as public surgeries and walkabouts with snapshot polls online to garner public opinion on policing matters.

Annex A

The OPCC has always highlighted the importance of effective community engagement and as a result of the engagement activity outcomes the OPCC has made significant changes to the way police service delivery in Gwent is provided. The OPCC believes the local policing service in Gwent must be informed by the people who live and work in the force area. A comprehensive Engagement Plan for 2016/17 will enable citizens and communities to influence their local policing service, see ANNEX C.