



**Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland**  
**Cleveland Police Headquarters**  
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## **Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Chair and Members of the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel**

**22<sup>nd</sup> October 2013**

### **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To inform members of the youth engagement activities undertaken by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in fulfilling the statutory duty to consult with local communities, as defined in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

2.1 That members note the content of the report.

#### **3.0 Background**

3.1 During the pre-election period for Police and Crime Commissioners in 2013, the outgoing Police Authority established a Youth Forum in conjunction with the voluntary sector organisation Safe In Tees Valley. The purpose of the Youth Forum was to facilitate dialogue between the police and young people, potentially breaking down barriers that may exist, and also ensuring that the collective voice of young people was able to influence the strategic planning of the Force and incoming PCC.

3.2 The Youth Forum organised a Hustings event where each of the prospective PCC candidates faced questions from an audience of over 100 young people. They also undertook a consultation exercise across Cleveland to obtain the views of young people on policing and community safety with the purpose of influencing the successful candidate's Police and Crime Plan.

3.3 Also during the pre-election period a campaign was launched by The Howard League for Penal Reform, asking all PCC candidates to sign a pledge to 'consult with young people, including young people in contact with the criminal justice system' when developing Police and Crime Plans. Barry Coppinger pledged to back this campaign.

#### **4.0 Current Engagement**

4.1 Following the election, the PCC met with the Youth Forum, together with the Chief Constable, to discuss the results of the consultation exercise, together with their views on policing and community safety. A work programme was established which included the following activities:

- Visits to operational policing departments to enable the young people to gain a better understanding of policing processes.
- Audit of the PCC website to ensure it is 'young person friendly'.
- Design and implementation of a community project to improve community safety – this took place in the Billingham area.

4.2 The PCC has pledged to visit all 82 wards of Cleveland to meet with local communities and hear first hand their community safety concerns, in an initiative entitled 'Your Force Your Voice'. As part of this work he has visited several secondary schools and colleges to speak to young people. Issues discussed have included negative perceptions of young people by adults, disability hate crime, lack of diversionary activities for young people and the dangers of social media. As a result of one of these meetings some targeted work was done with a specific school on disability hate crime due to the behaviour of some pupils on buses.

4.3 The PCC attended the annual Hartlepool Primary School Conference in July 2013 where he spoke to members of Primary School Councils from across Hartlepool. As a result of this the young people designed young person friendly leaflets describing the role and priorities of the PCC.

4.4 As part of his commitment to improve support for victims, the PCC met with a group of disabled young people and their carers to discuss their experiences of hate crime and how the police could better tackle the issue. Education in schools was highlighted as a key factor in tackling attitudes in young people towards disability. Multi agency inputs already take place in schools across Cleveland. It is also planned to incorporate awareness around disability hate crime into future Junior Neighbourhood Watch sessions.

4.5 The PCC recently attended the Stockton Youth Forum, where he discussed the Forum's plans around community safety. As a result of this the PCC will be backing an antisocial behaviour campaign covering attitudes towards young people which is being developed by the

Forum. There were also discussions around highlighting what diversionary activities are available for young people. The PCC is part funding an initiative being developed by Cleveland Police, in conjunction with Teesside University, entitled Give It A Go. GIAG will use Bluetooth technology and a mobile phone 'app' to highlight what activities exist for young people in local areas. The Forum will assist in the work being done through the project.

- 4.6 The PCC established a Young Person's Strategic Planning Group, which brings together organisations who deal with young people from within both the voluntary and statutory sector. The Group has been tasked with looking at what engagement currently exists with young people in contact with the criminal justice system, and how this can be further developed and the results effectively utilised.

## **5.0 Future Plans**

- 5.1 Issues have been encountered with continuing a Cleveland wide Youth Forum, due to the logistics of bringing young people together from across a wide geographic area, and with engaging young people in projects that are not taking place within their locality. Following discussions with Safe In Tees Valley, an alternative strategy for future youth engagement has been developed.
- 5.2 There are currently Police Cadet units in each of Cleveland's four areas – Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton. The groups meet weekly and engage young people between the ages of 13 and 17. Referrals are taken into the units to ensure that young people from minority groups and those in contact with the criminal justice system are included within the scheme. It is proposed that every 4 weeks the cadets will focus on a PCC engagement activity. A work programme has been established covering a variety of issues including use of Stop and Account with young people, police engagement with young people and child sexual exploitation. This programme will commence in 2014.
- 5.3 The young people who were already engaged in the Cleveland Youth Forum will continue to be supported through the Youth Service.
- 5.4 The PCC will supplement the engagement being conducted with the cadets by engaging with other established young people's forums such as Youth Assemblies and educational establishments.
- 5.5 On 22<sup>nd</sup> November the PCC will be taking part in the national Children's Commissioner Takeover Day event. The day gives children and young people the chance to work with adults for the day and be included in decision-making, and will involve a young person shadowing the PCC for the day.

**Barry Copping**  
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland