

Voluntary Sector Criminal Justice Forum
Notes from Group Session
21st June 2012

1. What would you change about current policing? How would you go about protecting people and communities from harm?

- Spend more on community development, engagement/social inclusion/reaching the 'hard to reach'
- Forming good relationships in community and gaining an informed understanding of the needs and desires of that community.
- The role and responsibilities of the police should be well communicated so that communities are clear about what they can expect from local policing e.g. priority should not be given to crimes that have caused no direct harm to an individual
- Victim support are experts and should be adequately funded to provide this service rather than the police who would be commissioned to deliver crime reduction and public protection
- Joint training for police with Community Mental Health Teams/drug agencies/vulnerable people as victims and perpetrators.
- Draw up a robust effective marketing/ communication plan
- Carry out a needs analysis and risk assessment process by district/unitary authority
- Clear identification of roles, responsibilities and areas of expertise. Use funding to commission other agencies as a cost effective solution rather than using police resource.
- Set of clear delivery guidelines for public sector – additional delivery needs to be identified.
- Level playing field between organisations working together.
- Improve partnership working between local authorities/voluntary sectors.
- Could we have a Third Sector Rep within the Police?
- Model is one size fits all - tailored to the majority. Any commissioning of services needs to have enough flexibility to ensure that diverse needs can be met
- Landlords should be engaged to help to reduce anti-social behaviour and be accountable for their tenants actions. They work with individuals at risk of offending and could make an impact on low level offending
- Concerns about people who have less than 12 month prison sentencing (from Kerry's presentation) these gaps need to be addressed
- Keep Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) – supportive, known, rep in schools. Community involvement of police – link to community is essential.
- PCSO more effective in some areas than others.
- Partners could do more to promote work of PCSO's.
- Grass roots issues – effective home watch co-ordinator, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, mechanism for identifying local needs/priorities. Safer Neighbourhood Teams play key role in community engagement.

2a. What challenges do you think you would face?

- Will take time for people to become aware of an election and understand the concept
- In order to generate interest it is going to become a very political election. (Will there be votes for personalities rather than policies?)
- Saying things that would be popular to the masses to get elected but not actually being right- eg Asbos – abolished by Theresa May- they are actually a good thing but..

- Getting the message out to the party members who vote for PCC candidates
- Finding out what the public want
- Politics – he who shouts loudest gets more service
- Budget cuts
- Over reliance on partner agencies; relying more heavily on VCS when funding is being cut
- Loss of people/ police on the street, losing PCSO's- already these have decreased in number
- Lack of time, need to re-prioritise resources in community.
- Shifting emphasis from crime detection to crime prevention (being aware of risk factors)
- Public perception.
- Resources and capacity.
- The geography of Dorset makes cross county delivery challenging. Will additional funds be required for wider delivery?
- Limited local voices on the countywide panel.
- It is likely that all candidates for the PCC will be from similar backgrounds (because the process itself is discriminatory) and will therefore not be representative of the local community

2b. How would they be overcome?

- Police need to be more open – share services/resources
- Needs to be more welcoming to volunteers. Perception of VCS as 'amateurs'
- Place more emphasis on the work of PCSOs Sharing priorities and vision across Dorset

3. What Skills and knowledge would be required?

- Honesty, integrity and ability to be a-political
- Listening skills
- Understanding of roles (own and others)
- Thorough understanding of the local community and what is needed
- Ability to develop appropriate responses
- Knowledge of individual communities and differing needs within communities
- Ability to balance needs of different areas.
- Ability to speak up for communities that can't speak for themselves.
- Track record of good partnership working.
- In depth knowledge of what organisations there already are in the area
- Knowledge of police and criminal justice.

4. How do you think the Voluntary and Community Sector could assist the Police and Crime Commissioner?

- Be part of the process
- Some parts of the Sector could be used as a resource for the PCC.
- Get the PCC to come along to these CJ forums in order to network and find out what we do
- Show what we can offer to the preventative element.
- Assist with the commissioning framework
- All agencies need to pull together
- Have a rep from the VCS on the Police Panel
- Help the PCC to reach victims and ex-offenders and the most vulnerable communities

- Become a channel of on-going communication
- Consultation body – who in the VS can communicate with them, better articulate their needs. Point of contact.
- Someone from VCS on the Police Panel – what the VCS can provide and how can we best meet the needs of the community?
- We can help to make people feel involved.
- Restorative justice and the after effect.
- Multi-agency support and action plans with troubled families.
- Footprints – supervision, budget work, church space for community issues.
- Probation moving towards partnership working – increased opportunity/influence of CVS.

5. What are the top three priorities for the new Police and Crime Commissioner?

- Increase priority of crime prevention.
- Better partnership working including support of volunteer representation and VCS representation on the Crime Panel on a local level
- Early interventions – listening to and learning from the public, unattractive issues to be identified and acted upon, tackling intergenerational offending, reducing re-offending when offenders are released back into the community. Focus on areas of highest need

6. Early Tasks for the Commissioner

- Engaging, educating and galvanising general public.
- Raising public awareness and building public confidence.
- Listening to local people and the VCS – Get a real understanding of the different organisations by going out and meeting people
- Proactively involve VCS (as Fire and Rescue Service do).
- Carry out a needs analysis and risk assessment to identify gaps. (How can you commission when you don't know what you need to commission?)
- Develop a Voluntary and Community Sector engagement plan, consultation with the Sector linked to the needs informing commissioning
- Community involvement with partners across the board.
- Localised training – the VCS is a source of specialised training – learn who is in your area who could contribute to training of police
- Be the voice of the unheard.
- Ensure there are sufficient officers on the beat
- To be a-political - Ensure they are not influenced by a political party

7. Additional Points

- Voluntary Sector challenge in raising awareness of service – if agencies are not on a framework, how will they be heard, are they at risk?
- Is there a risk that organisations currently being funded will lose funding? Is there a danger of re-inventing the wheel?

