

**LINCOLNSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY
 SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
 26 NOVEMBER 2008**

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SUBJECT		ACCESS TO POLICING – A THEMATIC SCRUTINY
REPORT BY	SCRUTINY PANEL	
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SUMMARY AND PURPOSE OF REPORT		
To consider the current position, level of performance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Force with regard to Access to Policing.		
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p><i>That:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Force provides updates to the Authority on the progress made with regard to the roll out of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs). 2. The Authority monitors the Force's progress with regard to delivering the assurances made in the Quality of Service Commitment. 3. The Force is advised to check out the viability of gaining funds to train call handlers/PCSOs through the Train to Gain (TtG) initiative. 4. The Force considers incorporating a corporate approach to their customer satisfaction training programme in order to ensure consistent standards of customer focus across the organisation. 5. The Force consider applying the 'organisational raid' methodology to develop Service Improvement plans. 6. The Force considers providing clear external signage to the 18 stations identified as not having this currently. 7. The Scrutiny and Audit Committee are updated on the Force's intention or otherwise, to provide professional internal signage to stations across the county. 8. The Force considers the costings associated with providing Braille signage at their Police Stations 	

	<p>and provides an update to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee on their decision.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. The Force considers ways to maximise access to police stations through flexible working arrangements and innovative initiatives (e.g. volunteers) where possible.10. The Force investigates the requirement and cost of introducing minicom facilities to the larger, more frequented stations.11. The Force considers developing an awareness raising campaign to promote access opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.12. The Force considers how it gathers feedback from customers and updates the Authority on any plans for improvements.13. The Force review accessibility at Boston Police Station, Wainfleet Police Station and Wragby Rural Beat Office as the Police Authority were unable to make contact and include these stations in the review.14. The Authority review the Access Audits on an annual basis and note progress made from the audits carried out in 2003.15. The Force takes a corporate approach to managing the mobile police stations to ensure efficiency in deployment, to maximise usage and to ensure consistency in their overall management, monitoring of usage, deployment to schools, sharing of good practice and partnership working.16. The Authority considers undertaking further scrutiny of the Force Communication and Control Centre (FCCC) to further look at issues raised in this report.17. The Force investigates the viability of developing a self service strategy.18. The Force considers developing a single email point of contact and publicising email addresses of local Neighbourhood Policing teams on the Force website.19. The Force considers the provision of a 24 hour email service (out of office hours emails possibly monitored via the FCCC).20. The Force update the Authority on any decisions/progress made with regard to the 'out of
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	<p>office' function.</p> <p>21. The Authority shares the results of the scrutiny consultation exercise with members of the public via the website and email.</p>
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A. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting on 31 July 2008, the Scrutiny and Audit Committee approved the subject of 'Access to Policing' for scrutiny on 26 November 2008.
- 1.2 Scrutiny work comprises detailed evidence based assessment of particular services or issues of local concern that can be developed or improved.
- 1.3 The Access to Policing Scrutiny aimed to address the following key areas:
- Carry out a review of the current situation in regard to Access to Policing.
 - Assess the customer's experience of accessing policing services through consultation and engagement.
 - Identify best practice.
 - Identify areas for improvement.
 - Make recommendations.
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Report on Access to Policing is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 1.5 As Members will be aware, on 25 January 2008, the Police Authority approved the introduction of a revised methodology to select and conduct scrutiny work that included the introduction of a Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.6 The Scrutiny Panel for the Access to Policing scrutiny comprised: Mr Przyszlak (Panel Lead), Mr Underwood Frost, Mr Cooke, Mr Fppard, Deborah McGovern and Ginny Mason.

Methodology

- 1.7 The scrutiny was carried out during the period August to November 2008 using the following methodology:
- Undertake a literature review and conduct desk research.
 - Conduct a review of the current state of access for the public to policing in Lincolnshire.
 - Carry out consultation with members of the public to inform the evidence base and to identify the accessibility issues that are important.
 - Where appropriate, link in with the Force Neighbourhood Matters survey and the Force's Neighbourhood Matters report into the key observations.
 - Provide questionnaires for completion at the September/October round of Police and Community Forums to give members of the public the opportunity to feed comments in.
 - Develop an online questionnaire (and associated awareness raising for targeted groups including children and young people, ethnic minority groups and gay/lesbian groups) through the Authority's website.
 - Link in with Force Neighbourhood Panel engagement event (25 October 2008).

- Devise a separate questionnaire for elderly people and people with disabilities to complete (using Disability Group contacts from previous Authority consultation).
- Carry out any relevant analysis and assessment of Force performance information and compare performance against peers' data.
- Research any good practice and take advice from HMIC, APA and NPIA.
- Gather data and consider evidence-based research from Force staff/officers and carry out reality checking in order to produce a report that outlines suggestions for improvement.

1.8 The Scrutiny Panel has met on the following occasions with Force representatives as indicated below:

- **4 August 2008 – Initial Scoping of the Scrutiny**
 - ACC Elaine Hill and Ginny Mason
- **20 August 2008 - Scoping the Scrutiny**
 - Panel meeting (no Force representatives).
- **20 August 2008 - Scoping the Scrutiny**
 - Panel meeting with ACC Elaine Hill.
- **5 September 2008 – Conducting Fieldwork**
 - Panel meeting with Chief Inspector Terry Ball (East Division) Community Safety.
- **9 September 2008 - Conducting Fieldwork**
 - Panel Meeting with C/Supt Alec Wood (Strategic Lead for Citizen Focus).
 - Panel Meeting with Acting Chief Inspector Jackie Rowe (Force Communication and Control Centre [FCCC]) and Julia Redfearn (FCCC Supervisor)
- **11 September 2008 - Conducting Fieldwork**
 - Panel meeting with C/Inspector Ian Gorst (Community Safety) (South Division)
 - Panel meeting with C/Inspector Daryl Pearce (Community Safety) (West Division)
- **17 October 2008 - Conducting Fieldwork**
 - FCCC Visit
 - Panel Meeting with C/Supt Russ Hardy (Strategic Lead for Neighbourhood Policing)
- **23 October 2008 - Review**
 - Panel Meeting (no Force representatives).

2.0 Review of Access Points to Policing Services

2.1 The Panel conducted a review of the current policing access points available to the public in Lincolnshire. This included a baseline assessment of the access points that can be categorised in three broad communication channels:

i). Face to face

- Police Stations (including the Town Enquiry Office)
- Police Sub Stations or 'Boxes'
- Mobile Stations
- Neighbourhood Policing teams (Officers and PCSOs on foot patrol, available to engage with local communities)
- Neighbourhood Panels
- Street Surgeries
- Partner Surgeries

ii). Telephone

- Force Communication and Control Centre (FCCC)
- Telephone call to a Station
- Mobile call to Officers
- Language Service

iii). Technological

- Website
- Email
- Information Kiosks
- Minicom

2.2 The key observations of the review are reflected in the recommendations.

3. Consultation

3.1 A key part of the scrutiny included the development of a consultation exercise. The aim was to consult with local communities in order to inform the evidence base and to identify the accessibility issues that are important to people in Lincolnshire. A paper based and online survey was used to consult with various groups to gather feedback, views and experiences about how people currently access police services and how services can be developed.

3.2 The total response to the Authority's consultation was as follows:

Online survey	541
Paper Survey (that included:)	135
Disability Groups	47
Elderly Groups	24
Police and Community Forums	49
Neighbourhood Watch	15
Total Respondents	676

3.3 The key observations from the paper based and online consultation are as follows:

- 71% (419 out of 589 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'it's easy to contact the police'.
- The majority of respondents' preferred method of accessing the police was by telephone.

- 84% (543 respondents out of 647) were of the opinion that local policing was accessible¹
- 32% (160 out of 507 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagree with the statement 'I can access my local police team in a way that is convenient and appropriate to my needs and circumstances'.
- 28% (158 out of 569 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagree with the statement 'I have adequate access to police services at all times'.
- The key issues for respondents when getting in touch with the police for a non-emergency incident are:
 - 77.4% (523 out of 676 respondents) felt that 'Friendly and helpful staff' was a key issue
 - 77.2% (522 out of 676 respondents) felt that 'Seeing more Police/PCSOs patrolling' was a key issue.
- 23% (153 out of 670 respondents) did not know how to contact their local police.
- 16% (104 out of 647 respondents) felt that their local police were fairly inaccessible or very inaccessible.

3.4 In addition to the 676 respondents to the online and paper surveys, 51 replies were recorded that missed the deadline date for counting responses. The majority (43) were from Boston Borough Council who circulated surveys to all five of their parish councils and responses from the Committee of School Governors in Fishtoft. The responses broadly support the overall key messages derived from the online and paper survey results. The additional comments have been shared with the Force.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Panel have been impressed with the commitment and calibre of Force officers, and have appreciated the full and frank engagement with staff. In addition, the Panel have identified aspects of good practice from national guidance, other forces and from Divisions that could be shared across the Force.
- 4.2 The Panel acknowledge the Force's work in 'meeting the standard'² for Neighbourhood Policing and Developing Citizen Focus Policing. This is a particular achievement given the severe resource constraints that the Force has faced in recent years.
- 4.3 The Panel also note the national issues that face all rural police forces around physical accessibility, meeting the duties set out in the Disability Discrimination Act and the challenges of delivering the Policing Pledge. There is recognition that the mobile data project will have significant impact on officers undertaking their daily duties.
- 4.4 However, the Panel has identified a number of key areas in which further work and improvement is necessary.
- There is a need to deliver a more corporate approach to customer focus and customer satisfaction training in the Force to ensure standards are upheld. The temporary appointment of the Public Service and Engagement Manager

¹ Accessible, fairly accessible or very accessible

² HMIC Inspection Report (2008) Neighbourhood Policing/developing Citizen Focus Policing

in October 2008 will provide a dedicated corporate post to enable improvements to be driven forward.

- The Force would benefit from work to improve the operation of the FCCC and contact management. There is also an acknowledgement from the Force that further work is required with regard to encouraging access through the mainstreaming of neighbourhood policing.
- Police stations across the county offer different levels of service depending on their location, local demography and resourcing. There are a number of inconsistencies in terms of opening hours, signage, opportunities for customer feedback and in the availability of hearing loops, Braille signage and minicom facilities. The Force is in the process of exploring further options in relation to volunteers and extending the policing family to meet certain needs.
- The scrutiny has highlighted the need for the Force to consider offering alternative technological points of access (such as email, text and web based services) in addition to the traditional access routes.
- The consultation exercise showed that nearly one third of respondents disagreed with the statement that 'I can access my local policing team in a way that is convenient and appropriate to my needs and circumstances'. Nearly 25% of all respondents did not know how to contact their local police. These are clearly strong messages for the Force to take on board.
- The Scrutiny Panel support the Chief Constable's view that many improvements can be made with regard to accessibility through changes to working practices, procedures and processes and by changes in attitudes and behaviours of staff.

4.5 Overall, the Panel has been reassured that the Force are aware of the current weaknesses with regard to access to policing and believe that there is a commitment to address these areas to drive improvement. It is hoped that this scrutiny has gone some way to confirming the critical issues and that the recommendations outlined in this report will improve local people's access to policing services in Lincolnshire.

B. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no specific additional financial considerations for the Force and Authority arising from the Scrutiny report.

C. LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no specific legal or human rights considerations for the Force and Authority arising from the Scrutiny report.

D. PERSONNEL, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None specific.

E. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee will determine the review date.

F. RISK MANAGEMENT

The risks associated to the Authority and the Force with 'access to policing' are highlighted in Chapter 9 of the full report attached at Appendix A.

G. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

See Appendix 3 of the Scrutiny Report (Appendix A to this report)