

Communications Strategy 2010-12

Version v, March 2010



DOCUMENT HISTORY

Document Location

This document is only valid on the day it was printed. The source of the document will be found in folder:

S:\Police Authority\Communications & Consultation

Revision History

Date of next revision:

Revision Date	Author(s)	Summary of Changes
5 May 2009	James Fearn	First draft
7 May 2009	James Fearn	Second draft
18 August 2009	James Fearn	Third draft
4 Nov 2009	James Fearn	Fourth draft
10 Feb 2010	James Fearn	Fifth draft

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Chair and Vice-Chair of Derbyshire Police Authority's Citizen Focus & Partnership Committee (empowered by the Committee following 3 rd draft reading, September 2009)	February 2010
--	---------------

Distribution

This document will be distributed to:

Community Engagement Officer	Draft Version 1	5 May 2009
Chief Executive	Draft Version 2	7 May 2009
Derbyshire Police Authority Chair & Vice Chair	Draft Version 3	19 Aug 2009
Members of the Police Authority's Citizen Focus & Partnership Committee	Draft Version 3	8 Sept 2009
Chair & Vice Chair of Citizen Focus & Partnership Committee	Draft Version 4	4 Nov 2009
Chair & Vice Chair of Citizen Focus & Partnership Committee	Draft Version 5	10 Feb 2010
All Members of Derbyshire Police Authority	Approved version	3 March 2010
All Officers of Derbyshire Police Authority	Approved version	3 March 2010
Head of Force Corporate Communications	Approved version	3 March 2010
Chief Officers of Derbyshire Constabulary	Approved version	3 March 2010



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
Communications Strategy Objectives & Supporting Actions	6
Aim 1: Improve Communications with Communities	6
Aim 2: Improve Internal Communications	9
Aim 3: Improve Communications with Partners	11
Aim 4: Adopt Quality Standards.....	12
A. Stakeholder Analysis	12
B. Written Communications	13
C. Plain English.....	13
D. Website	15
E. Dissemination.....	15
F. Corporate Identity	15
Aim 5: Ensure the Authority has the resources it needs dedicated to the communications task	16
Conclusion.....	17



INTRODUCTION

As part of the Police Authority's Business Plan 2009-2010, the Authority was required to produce and publish its own Communications Strategy. The aim of this Communications Strategy is to support and enhance the activities of Derbyshire Police Authority through effective communications, promoting it as a modern and forward thinking Police Authority.

Derbyshire Police Authority has faced up to enormous challenges in recent years. This period of change is set to continue with Home Office initiatives such as the Single Confidence Target and the Policing Pledge. There are many factors in the Police Force and Police Authority's environment that will have a significant impact on us all.



These factors will include:

- Publication of the Annual Policing Plan and Local Policing Summaries.
- The impacts of new legislation, which may affect how the Police Authority and force operate in future.
- The challenge of better community engagement and raised awareness and profile of the Police Authority.
- The challenge of addressing the Counter Terrorism and Protective Services agenda in a way that raises awareness in communities without raising the fear of crime.
- An increasingly sophisticated consumer market that requires continuously improving standards and levels of service.

The result of these changes is that the Authority should be offering brand new opportunities to people and organisations to have their say on and be kept informed of policing in Derbyshire.

This Communications Strategy is about making the most of all these new opportunities by communicating the role and importance of openness and accountability in policing and is closely aligned to the **Joint Authority and Constabulary Engagement Strategy**.

Clear communications are essential to help explain how the objectives of the Authority are being achieved and, in particular, the difference achieving those objectives will make to the policing services provided to the people of Derbyshire.

To be effective, the Police Authority must continue to make citizen focus the cornerstone of activity. For example, once information has been gathered about the conduct, role and performance of the police service, processes should be in place to ensure this information is fed through a range of



channels to reach a wide audience.

The Authority has distinctive qualities and should continue to communicate these attributes to the people it wants to reach. It is appropriate therefore to build communications skills across the organisation, supported by an in-house communications resource, which is empowered to identify and solve communications problems, and resourced to implement solutions.

This Strategy is designed to help the Authority to continue to deliver two overriding themes:

- Communicating effectively both internally and externally as an organisation.
- Acting decisively to promote positive perceptions of policing in Derbyshire. Working with the crime and disorder partnerships across the county, and other partners, the Authority must continue to demonstrate there is openness and accountability in policing in relation to crime and disorder in each community – aims that fit into the Single Confidence Target and the final target set by the Home Office for Derbyshire of 60.4% by the end of March 2012 (milestone target of 55.4% to be achieved by the end of March 2011).

A positive and consistent brand is important for the organisation, as is the consistent promotion of its core activities, to which all its partners can contribute and from which they can all benefit.

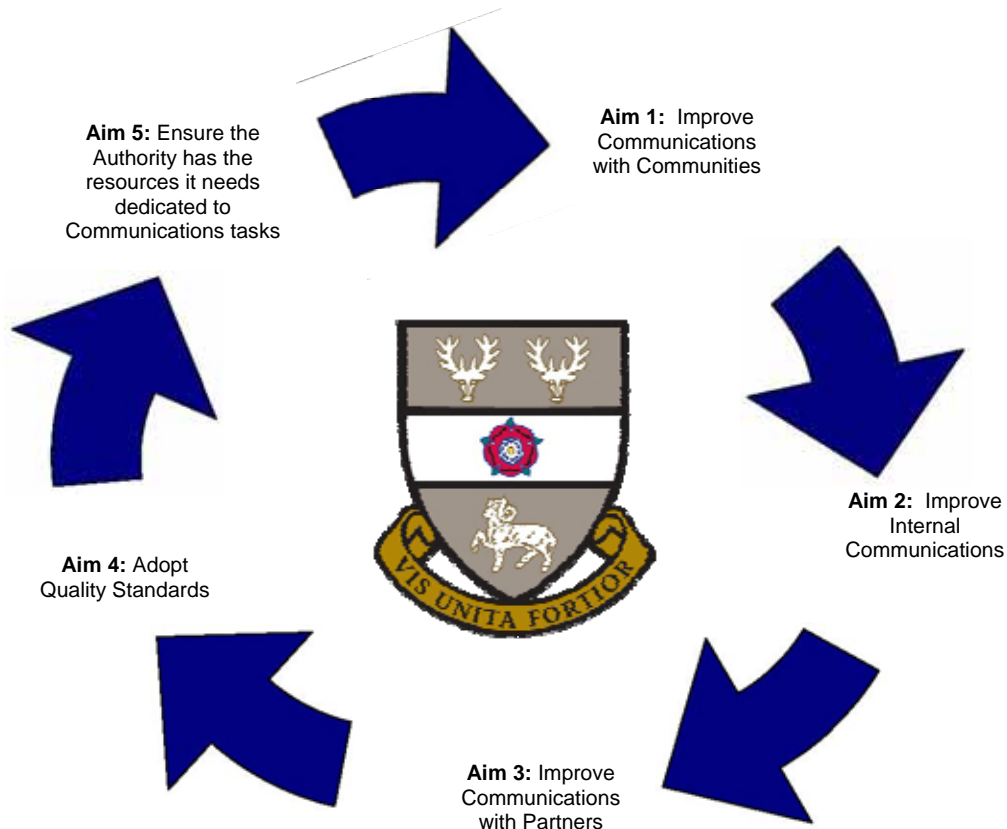
This Communications Strategy underlines the need for the Authority to aim for clarity in its communications to achieve credibility for its key message through consistent repetition. To do this successfully, key messages will be communicated to key audiences in a timely way using the wide range of media most appropriate to each of those target audiences. The Authority's communications will at all times continue to be:

- outward-facing, focused on the needs of the customer so it can take account of their needs in all the Authority does;
- open, honest and accountable;
- user-friendly, timely and accessible to all;
- alert to the need for joined up government, the need to build partnerships with people in the Authority and in partner organisations;
- a two-way process of giving and receiving information;
- the responsibility of everyone involved, not just a small group of practitioners.

Communicating effectively is part of delivering a good service. The Police Authority should plan ahead and build any costs involved into future budgets.



Communications Strategy objectives & supporting actions



Aim 1: IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

Communication is a two-way process and the Authority needs to obtain information as well as put its point of view effectively to people with a wide range of differing interests.

External communication is also an opportunity to better explain the role of the Authority and make an easily understood distinction between the Authority's work and that of the Derbyshire Constabulary. Recent public consultation exercises have indicated public awareness of the Police Authority's role is extremely limited in some areas of the county.

To improve understanding of the Authority's role as an independent body that oversees the Police service, this Strategy will propose that new opportunities are taken to explain what the Authority does. In addition to public consultation exercises, this will include maximising the potential of statutory publications such as the annual Policing Summary, which is delivered to the 440,000 households in Derbyshire.

In a climate of rising expectations, people expect high quality



Derbyshire Police Authority Communications Strategy 2010-2012

information and an unprecedented degree of openness from organisations like Derbyshire Police Authority.

The actions underpinning this aim are:

Supporting Actions	Timescale	Owner	Estimated Financial Value
Establish a Working Group to examine the most effective use of the Policing Summary in explaining the Police Authority's role and value	Complete	Communications Officer	N/A
Use the Policing Summary to create a volunteer consultation panel for future consultation	Ongoing	Communications Officer	
Create a web form to enable local people to submit personal details towards membership of our consultation panel	Complete	Communications Officer	
Establish a Working Group to examine the most effective use of public consultation events around the budget process	Complete	Communications Officer	N/A
Develop a Media Protocol for members and staff dealing with the media	April 2010	Communications Officer	N/A
Establish a media contacts list – local and national (currently Authority media releases are sent to the Force's media contacts)	April 2010	Communications Officer	N/A
Develop and implement a media consent protocol for use of pictures/ personal materials	May 2010	Communications Officer	N/A
Create a new vibrant look for website	Ongoing	Communications Officer/Constabulary Webmaster	N/A
Investigate other communication channels, eg social networking websites such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Create an e-newsletter for local residents	September 2010	Communications Officer	N/A
Actively seek press releases, statements and interviews with media	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Publication of committee agendas, reports and minutes	Ongoing	Committee Services Officer	N/A



Derbyshire Police Authority Communications Strategy 2010-2012

Supporting Actions	Timescale	Owner	Estimated Financial Value
Standardisation of formats e.g. report, minutes and presentation templates	Complete	Chief Executive	N/A
Develop and implement a Police Authority strap line and establish clear guidance for its use (Corporate Identity Guidance)	June 2010	Communications Officer	N/A
Use the new strapline and key messages on all written communications eg email sign-off, letter templates	August 2010	Communications Officer	
Investigate cost of displaying Police Authority Name and Logo prominently outside Butterley Hall and HQ main gates	April 2010	Communications Officer	Financial Year 10/11
Develop an appropriate language policy and implement accordingly	June 2010	Communications Officer	£5,000 for translation costs
Investigate and implement new communication aids for consultation events - Portable Loop System and Portable Projector	Complete	Community Engagement Officer	£900
Develop a properly costed approach to communications with ongoing evaluation	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Establish and compare best practice in Police Authority Communications	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Establish and ensure links between community engagement and communication activity	Ongoing	Community Engagement Officer & Communications Officer	N/A
Support the Force Communications Team in its promotion of the principles of the Policing Pledge through Authority literature, media releases and website material, particularly in raising of awareness of Safer Neighbourhood Teams	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Implement targeted literature/publications to market DPA	Complete	Community Engagement Officer & Communications Officer	£300





Aim 2: IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The actions underpinning this aim are:

Supporting Actions	Timescale	Owner	Estimated Financial Value
<p>Implement a series of quick wins to improve communications internally (and externally). Examples include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aim to issue minutes at least 5 working days before a meeting 	Complete	Committee Services Officer	N/A
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop an information leaflet (as above, page 8) outlining the role, responsibilities and point of contacts within the Police Authority 	Complete	Community Engagement Officer & Communications Officer	£300

**Derbyshire Police Authority Communications Strategy
2010-2012**

Supporting Actions	Timescale	Owner	Estimated Financial Value
Link with the Force in obtaining access and a presence on Derbyshire Constabulary's Intranet	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Link with all Local Authorities in Derbyshire to have presence on their intranet	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Regular Newsletter for members to enhance communication of information from committee and external meetings	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Agree processes with the Force's Press Office and Head of Corporate Communications to improve internal communications between Force and Authority and external communications with key stakeholders	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Encourage use of the Extranet (https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/npa/eastmids_extranet) by Members as a repository for information	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Conduct regular member and staff surveys to evaluate communication processes and to identify any new requirements	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A
Establish internal brief system, which ensures consistent and targeted messages are cascaded through the Authority and Force and provides opportunities for feedback	Ongoing	Chief Executive/ Communications Officer	N/A
Ensure the Police Authority is prominent at Police Headquarters, including new staff induction sessions, stating the roles and responsibilities of the Police Authority	Ongoing	EOAS officers	N/A

Aim 3: IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARTNERS

The actions underpinning this aim are:

Supporting Actions	Timescale	Owner	Estimated Financial Value
Develop a corporate communications toolkit to assist communication processes with partners and publish it on the website as appropriate. This would include materials such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact files • Leaflets • Performance updates • Newsletters • Survey reports 	Ongoing	Communications Officer & Community Engagement Officer	N/A
To put in place arrangements to provide individual members with appropriate briefing and support so they are able to represent the Police Authority's position in a clear, consistent and distinctive manner at all meetings of partners they attend on behalf of the Authority.	Ongoing	Chief Executive	N/A
To help all staff and members build on the existing programme of activity to promote the Authority through events, awards programmes and public speaking	Ongoing	Chief Executive	Covered in existing budgets
To procure a Police Authority events stand and banners that can be used at public forums and partner events to raise the profile of the Police Authority	Complete	Treasurer & Community Engagement Officer	£350
Networking with all communications officers across Derbyshire to share best practice	Ongoing	Communications Officer	N/A



Aim 4: ADOPT QUALITY STANDARDS

This communication strategy proposes the use of a quality framework that will assist the Authority with the effective delivery of information and two-way communications:

A. Stakeholder Analysis

People have different needs. The following golden rules should be applied to any internal or external material:

The Police Authority needs to make sure its communications are fit for purpose by keeping in mind:

- Who are our audiences?
- What is our message?
- What is the best way to reach each audience?



People are different and like to receive information in different ways: TV, radio, newspapers and the internet, to name a few.

When we as a Police Authority communicate, we need to be alert and sensitive to these differences. If an audience is hard to reach, for whatever reason, then we have to try harder. We have to make sure information is tailored to people's needs, not written to reflect our own organisational structures and processes. The starting point must always be the customer.

B. Written Communications

It is important we communicate clearly by using plain language and for written communications use appropriate formats and simple clear design.

The key rules are:

- Text for print should be 11 point Arial (text for the website should be default sans serif point 10)
- Don't put text over pictures or patterns
- Be careful about the way colour is used – do not make the text harder to read
- Make sure there is enough contrast between text and the background - use colour to make the text stand out such as black and white or black and yellow.
- Don't crowd the page with text.
- If a Police Authority document is being produced, it is important to make sure contact information is placed somewhere prominent, so people know they can ask for more information or alternative formats and languages if they need them.
- Well-chosen pictures can help to get messages across and help people to recognise your information is for them.
- To make sure people know who is communicating with them, always use the Derbyshire Police Authority logo and follow the Corporate Identity Guidelines.

C. Plain English

Derbyshire Police Authority adopts the principles of the plain English campaign (<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>).

Writing in plain English takes a bit of getting used to but it is easy.

Four basic rules will help:



1. Don't use jargon

We must avoid using jargon, initials and words that just aren't appropriate for our audience. It can be especially hard in the public sector where we deal with jargon and abbreviations every day.

The best way to avoid jargon is to put yourself in the readers' place. What are they likely to already know about the subject? What are you trying to get across? If you have to use jargon, legal or technical language, make sure you explain what it means and if necessary give an example.

2. Use short sentences

Long sentences are hard to read, hard to write and more easily misunderstood. The relationships between the ideas you are putting across can get confused.

Shorter sentences are friendlier and they can help to punch a fact home.

3. Use active language

An example of a passive sentence is – “The letter was written by John Jones.”

An example of an active sentence is – “John Jones wrote the letter.”

The active sentence is:

- Shorter
- Easier to understand
- Gets the message across very clearly
- Sounds friendlier

We tend to use passive language in public sector because it sounds more official. But it is not as easy to read as active language and can make sentences much longer.

4. Keep layouts simple and clear

Dense text with little or nothing to break it up is difficult to read and boring. It is much easier to hold the reader's attention and get your ideas across if you break text into manageable chunks.

Inclusions that help readers to understand your message:

- headings
- sub headings
- short paragraphs
- numbered paragraphs
- bullet points
- an index
- page numbers

When the Plain English Campaign awards a Crystal Mark the layout is looked at as well as the text.

D. Website

Derbyshire Police Authority is committed to improving accessibility to its services. One arm of this commitment is to improve the look, feel and overall accessibility of its website. For some people, the website will be a first point of contact with the Authority when they are seeking or querying information.

The use of the internet for contacting the Authority is not expected to make up more than 20% of contact with the public in the short term. However this area is expected to grow and keep growing as today's children become adults and expect services to be provided in this way.

The Authority aims to achieve the following in respect of its website development:

- Provision of an accessible, informative and up to date website, initially focusing on the provision of information and downloadable minutes and reports.
- Development of the website to allow maximum access to the Authority's services, for example online polls, questionnaires and local performance data.
- Development of Internet facilities for Police Authority Members to be able to access online calendars, agendas and reports and be accessible to the public via electronic channels.

Web Accessibility Initiative

The Police Authority will work with the website supplier to ensure compliance to the Web Accessibility Initiative (<http://www.w3.org/WAI>). The Web Accessibility Initiative develops strategies, guidelines and resources to help make the Web accessible to people with disabilities.

E. Dissemination

If we are producing information, the Police Authority should inform of availability. We should provide copies and/or web links to community groups, information networks, key staff and partners.

We should participate in events and seminars that will raise the profile of the Police Authority and provide information in relevant formats.

F. Corporate Identity

Projection is perception and Corporate Identity has become a universal technique both for promoting an organisation and improving its corporate



culture. It is often viewed as comprising three parts:

- Corporate Design (logos, strap-line, etc.)
- Corporate Communication (newsletters, reports, website etc.)
- Corporate Behaviour (internal values, norms, etc.)

It is apparent from numerous engagement activities with various stakeholders, including Local Authority representatives, that there is a misunderstanding and/or lack of awareness about the role of the Police Authority.

In many instances, the Police Authority is viewed as a single entity with Derbyshire Constabulary. While there are positives to this perception, there are also negatives. These being:

- Lack of understanding/awareness of the Police Authority's specific role in the Policing tripartite system (which also consists of the Home Office and Forces).
- Lack of understanding/awareness of the Authority's role in community engagement and priority setting processes.
- Lack of understanding of the Authority's role in holding the Chief Constable to account and ensuring an effective and efficient police service.

It is important that as part of this Communications Strategy, the Authority now considers its own Corporate Identity. Actions underpinning this include the launch of a new strap line and the use of standard templates and our logo for presentations and reports to promote the Authority in a consistent business-like way.

Aim 5: ENSURE THE AUTHORITY HAS THE RESOURCES IT NEEDS DEDICATED TO THE COMMUNICATIONS TASK

The actions underpinning this aim are:

Supporting Actions	Timescale	Owner	Estimated Financial Value
To annually review the resourcing requirements of Police Authority communications and feed into annual business planning processes of the Authority	Ongoing	Chief Executive & Treasurer	N/A



CONCLUSION

Communication and Community Engagement with local people are the life blood of policing. Without them we cannot hope to deliver a policing service that meets the needs of the people who live and work in Derbyshire and our visitors. This is why the Police Authority is determined to continue to seek ways of improving how we communicate both with individuals and agencies.

This strategy and the Joint Community Engagement Strategy outlines a broad range of initiatives that will make communication between public and police more meaningful, and engagement with local communities more effective.

While many of the actions within this strategy have no financial implication other than staff time, there are some that do. The total cost of taking this strategy forward is, however, minimal.

