

Consultation Brief

Event: Café Consultation

Date: 18-12-2018

Themes: Community safety, views on policing, reporting to the police and the OPCC

Background

The Performance and Information team are undertaking a pilot consultation to target those members of the public we would not ordinarily engage with at other face to face events or via our media channels.

The sessions focus on interacting with those accessing a local coffee shop. These informal discussions between OPCC staff and members of the public explore themes such as community safety, views on policing, reporting to the police and the OPCC. New themes and topics can be introduced at any time to reflect the needs of the OPCC and the PCC.

The aim is that the consultations will take place in a range of locations across Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton, building upon our community engagement and qualitative evidence base.

The first café consultation took place 18-12-2018 for two hours, with 100% response and engagement rate with members of the public who were approached to share their thoughts and views. Individuals approached were from Basingstoke and the surrounding areas, ranging in age from 27yrs to 87yrs.

Key themes and discussion highlights

A common theme discussed was the lack of residents seeing or feeling a part of their local community. One individual referenced the use of police houses many years ago, these were central to the community, both for reporting crimes and getting advice. The use of 101 or reporting online is not commonly understood/recognised by residents.

Those individuals who do feel a part of a community, who talk with neighbours and 'look out for each other' report being in smaller, more rural areas.

In talking to a groups of females (27yrs, 30yrs, and 36yrs) all from central Basingstoke they spoke of not having a huge amount of confidence in the police. Report feeling there is a lot of crime, drugs related and house/car break-ins and four young people overdosed this year in the town. Strong level of apathy in not reporting crimes to the police; lengthy reporting via 101, no visible response, repeat incidents. One individual is self-employed, reporting takes time away from their business.

Another spoke of feeling the 'police are frightened' of young people today. Police were once respected, they do not feel this is the case anymore.

There is recognition from individuals that police numbers have been cut and the police are dealing with an increase of mental health cases.

Sources of policing information were cited from the Basingstoke Gazette, local news, Facebook, word of mouth. Most had not heard of Hants Alert.

Many spoke of the lack of visibility of police, some recognise this does not impact upon community safety as they 'know the police are out there', others feel that the lack of visible policing negatively impacts upon communities. There is also recognition that policing has changed considerably over the years, however, the traditional crimes that residents are most frustrated with, many feel there is a limited policing response.

The role of the PCC and the OPCC was not widely recognised or understood by those approached, many feel that it is the role of the police to keep communities safe. There were discussions around the role of community responsibility and the role of the PCC.

Next Steps

- Develop A6 consultation poster cards for the tables to inform customers that there is an opportunity to share views.
- Develop a plan for 2019 on districts to visit and themes to address.
- Preferred timings moving forward:
 - 9am-11am
 - 2pm-4pm
 - 6pm-8pm
 - Weekends 8am-10am