

Newsletter

SPRING 2007 • ISSUE ONE

FEEDBACK

Welcome!

This is the first in a series of newsletters for Panel Members.

I want to thank you all for taking the time and effort to give us your views on a number of issues.

We hope this newsletter will provide you with an interesting insight into the ongoing work of the Citizens' Panel. We really appreciate the time you take to make the panel a success. It is important to Northumbria Police Authority that your contribution is given the attention it deserves when planning policing services in your locality.

This newsletter includes:

- feedback from the restructure questionnaire (page 1)
- feedback from focus groups and other surveys (page 2 - 4)
- information about panel membership (page 5)
- an important note for all panel members (page 6)
- a competition to name the Panel (page 7-8) and
- a short questionnaire asking for your views on this newsletter (page 8)



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mick Henry".

Councillor Mick Henry
Chair, Northumbria Police Authority

Restructure Questionnaire

Background

When the Government announced its plans to reduce the number of police forces, to create fewer, larger strategic forces - enabling them to deal more efficiently and effectively with serious organised crime and terrorism, we needed to get your views and asked you to complete a questionnaire.

The questions covered three main areas:

- the issues you wanted to be addressed by Northumbria Police and Northumbria Police Authority;
- your views on a combined regional police force consisting of Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria; and
- the delivery of effective policing during the change process.

Your responses highlighted concerns about...

Loss of local focus, value for money, job losses and impact on local council tax.

However...

You also believed that the merger would result in greater efficiency. This was further supported by positive comments about being able to deal more effectively with serious crime and terrorism, and finally you recognised the benefits of sharing information, technology, ideas, techniques and resources.

What happened next?

In late 2006 the Home Secretary announced that he would not pursue the enforced mergers of police forces due to concerns around a number of issues that rose from amalgamation.

Since then, Tony McNulty (Minister of State for Policing) stated that although force mergers were not being progressed, it was still essential to address the gap in protective services as identified in Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's Report 'Closing the Gap' and ensure that police forces are able to deal effectively with serious organised crime and terrorism.

Next steps

In response to 'Closing the Gap' we have identified a need to improve our ability to effectively protect both individuals and neighbourhoods from a complex range of threats. We aim to achieve this through a range of policing activities, collectively known as 'Protective Services'.

The Force and Authority will continue to work to supply an efficient and effective Force, capable of delivering a full range of Protective Services to an exceptional standard, whilst delivering policing of the highest quality at Neighbourhood and Basic Command Unit (BCU) level.

Marketing and Customer Services

Background

During December 2005, six focus groups were held about marketing and customer service provided by Northumbria Police.

The police wanted to know about

First contact and response, subsequent contact, information provision, consultation and public perception.

Your comments

The feedback provided was significant and has helped inform the establishment of a new force policy development committee, the 'Citizen Focus Board', dedicated to improving the relationship between police and public.

As a result of the Board

The following measures have been put in place to make it easier for the public to get help from the police:

- minimum standards for front office opening hours, staff training and conduct, appearance of buildings;
- a single low call rate phone number - 08456 043 043 - for routine contact;
- better call handling systems, including a centralised helpdesk; and
- easier access to contact information on the force website.

Competition time

Please help us to give the Panel a name,
if you do you could win a prize.
See the information sheet at the back of this newsletter
for further details.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS)



Background

In September 2006, TWFRS began working in partnership with Northumbria Police Authority's Citizens Panel. Consultation events have since been held in Community Fire Stations around Tyne and Wear, with each focus group being preceded by a tour of the Community Fire Station facilities.

TWFRS wanted members views on:

- how much financial information you want to receive about the Fire and Rescue Service;
- how you would like to receive this information.

Taking into account your comments

The Summary Statement of Accounts 2005/2006 was published in October 2006 in full colour, using graphs and tables. The summary gave brief but relevant financial information. Subsequent feedback regarding the document has been positive.

You can obtain the summary statement of accounts either:

- Online - www.twfire.gov.uk and searching for the word 'accounts' or
- by calling 0191 444 1543.



Also

In December 2006, members of the Panel were invited to take part in a review of the TWFRS Risk Management Action Plan 2007/2008. This is a draft plan for reducing risk in Tyne and Wear for the coming year.

Groups were asked:

- what issues they agreed with;
- what concerns they had; and
- what they would like to see in future plans.

You can still view/comment on the document

The document is still available for consultation and can be viewed at www.twfire.gov.uk by clicking on the link 'IRMP'. It can also be viewed at local libraries.

Next steps

The Plan should be complete and approved by April 2007 and we will update you on its progress.

Did you know...

Northumbria Police and Authority work with a range of organisations to address crime and disorder across Northumbria including:

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs);
- Local Councils;
- Central Government;
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC);
- Audit Commission and ;
- Association of Police Authorities (APA).



Local Policing Summary

Background

During November 2006 the Citizens Panel took part in three focus groups to review Northumbria Police Authority's Local Policing Summary.

The document

The summary is produced every year and tells you about performance and future plans for policing services in Northumbria. It gives you contact details for Northumbria Police and other policing information.

Your views

The focus groups were useful with some excellent suggestions for improvement to the design and content of the summary including:

- advertising in the local press that the document is being distributed;
- putting copies into public buildings;
- inclusion of a tear off slip with contact information;
- inclusion of safety advice for young people; and
- more information about future priorities and actions for your neighbourhood.

Later this year

The 2007 summary is planned for distribution during August and September. It will incorporate many of the suggestions provided by the focus groups.

Look out for your next copy!

Diversity

Disability Equality Scheme (DES) 06-09

Last autumn we worked with Northumbria Police and Vision Sense, a user-led organisation of disabled people, to involve disabled people, Deaf people, and people with long-term health conditions, in developing our Scheme and Action Plan.

Involving people interested in policing

Panel Members, who had told us they were disabled, Deaf or living with a long-term health condition, were sent a survey asking about their views on disability equality and policing in Northumbria. They were also invited to attend one of three focus groups to discuss their views further.

What you told us was important

Our Scheme was published in December 2006 and uses what you told us was important to enable us to build disability equality into everything we do.

The Action Plan sets out how we will remove barriers to access and improve the quality of our services, information, facilities, communication and employment over the next three years.

How you can judge our progress

Each year we will tell you about the steps we have taken to meet the actions in our Scheme and what we have done to remove discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled and Deaf people in Northumbria.

How to get a copy of our Disability Equality Scheme

Our Scheme is available on our website or by contacting us using the details on the last page of this newsletter.

How to find out more

To find out more about what we are doing to improve diversity in Northumbria Police Authority, including information about our Race Equality Scheme and how we are developing our Gender Equality Scheme, contact us using the details on the last page of this newsletter.

Budget consultation

Background

Northumbria Police Authority is responsible for setting and monitoring an annual police budget of more than £200 million a year. A small portion of everyone's Council Tax (about 10%) goes to help fund policing in Northumbria. Three focus groups were held to discuss views on future policing priorities for the budget.

Your main priorities

The majority of attendees felt that the following should be given high priority for the force in the future:

- reducing crime and Anti-Social Behaviour;
- increasing public confidence;
- increasing safety and reducing criminal activity on our roads;
- tackling serious and organised crime and terrorism; and
- increasing the number of offences brought to justice.

Other issues/suggestions raised at the focus groups or through written responses included:

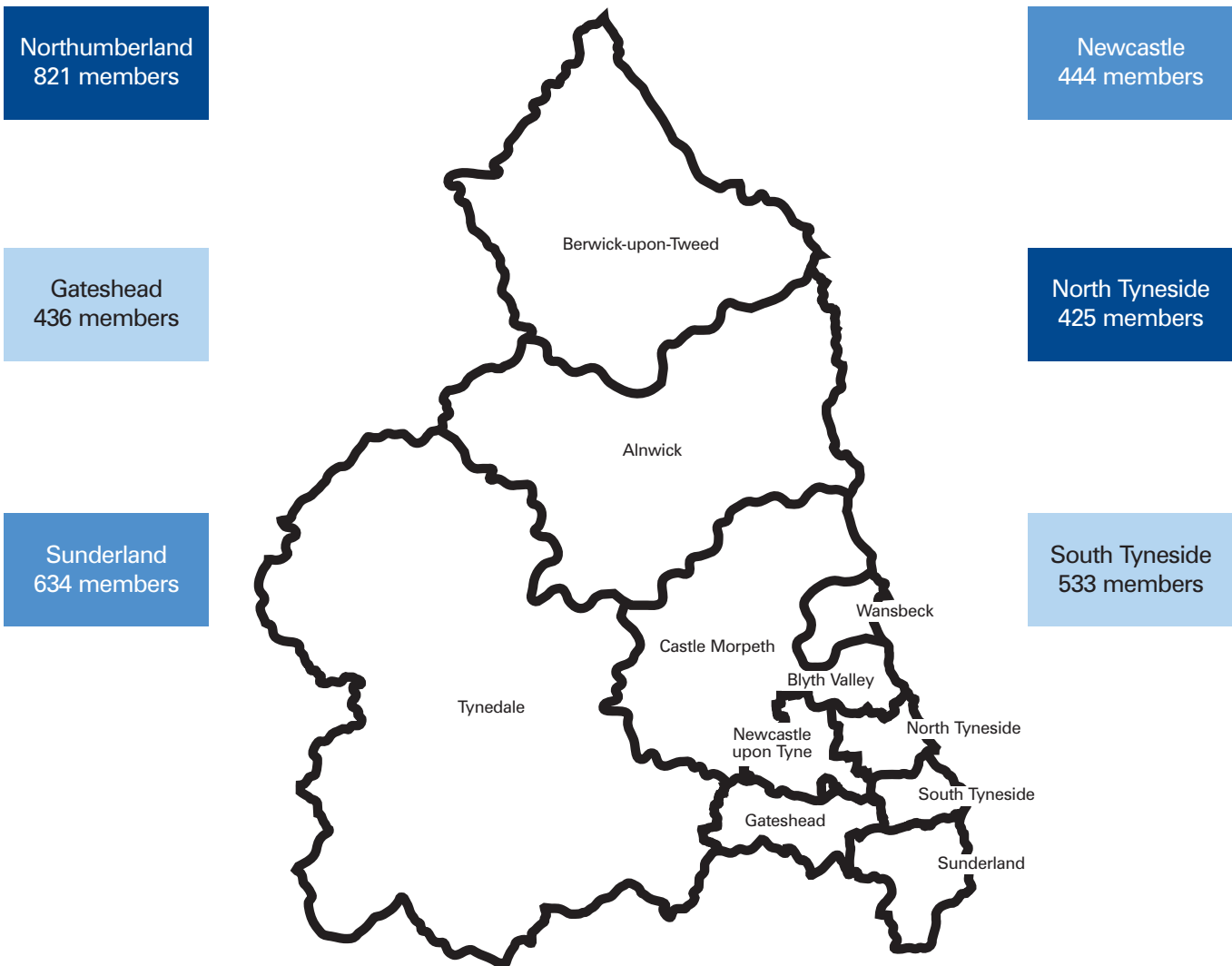
- lack of police presence in local areas;
- difficulties in communicating /developing relations with the police;
- lack of information about what the police are doing;
- lack of feedback leading to a reduction in reporting future crimes or incidents;
- more involvement with schools/youth groups to help prevent and reduce crime/anti-social behavior;
- concerns about the safety of Police Community Support Officers and their lack of powers;
- the police having too much paperwork or targets to meet; and
- lack of confidence in the Crime Prosecution Service/Courts.

What happens next?

The comments made will be used by the force and authority when developing future priorities.

More about the Panel

The Citizens Panel has over 3000 members from Northumberland and Tyne and Wear



Northumbria (Northumberland and Tyne & Wear)

We are always looking for new panel members so if you know anyone who wants to become involved, please ask them to get in touch and request an application form!

Did you know...

We have lots of useful information on our website:

- our new Disability Equality Scheme;
- our latest plans;
- more consultation results;
- Police Authority agendas and papers from meetings;
- police homes for sale;
- the time and venue for your nearest police and community forum meeting; and
- lots more.

Take a look!

Important note to all panel members

To save money and avoid duplication of work, other local public organisations have asked if they can consult with you on their policies, plans and priorities.

This would only involve public organisations such as Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and your local Council. Any documentation would be agreed by Northumbria Police Authority before it is sent to you.

If you do not contact us before 30 March 2007 we will assume that you are happy for us to share your contact details with them.

Let us know

Contact us by **30 March** by...

- Letter
- Telephone
- Email

...at the address below, thank you.

Northumbria Police Authority

Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH

Tel: 0191 433 2091 Fax: 0191 433 2834

Email: enquiries.npa@gateshead.gov.uk

Web: www.northumbria-police-authority.org

Different Formats

If you would like this newsletter in another format or sent to you via e-mail please do not hesitate to get in touch!

**Competition
time**

Complete the form
overleaf to win a prize!

Name Your Panel

This is an opportunity for you to become even more involved in the Northumbria Police Authority Citizens Panel...

We want to give the panel a name and need your help. Here are a few facts that may help you decide on the name:

- The panel has members from the following areas: Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Northumberland;
- Members are both male and female, aged between 16 and 80;
- Panel members are asked to give their views either in a focus group (small discussion group) or through a questionnaire;
- You will be asked to give your views on a variety of issues, mainly policing.

A number of entries will be selected and Police Authority Members will choose the final name. A small gift will be sent to first, second and third prize winners.

To enter the competition, please complete the form overleaf, detach it from the Newsletter as indicated and return it by **30 March 2007** in the pre-paid envelope supplied. **Good luck!**



Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Please indicate the area in which you live:

Gateshead

Newcastle

North Tyneside

South Tyneside

Sunderland

Northumberland

My chosen panel name is: _____

And finally, in order to help us improve future Newsletters, please tell us what you think....

Did this newsletter tell you what you wanted to know? Yes No

If no, please tell us why

How satisfied are you with the overall look of the newsletter? (e.g. layout and colours)

Completely satisfied

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Completely satisfied

Are there any ways in which you think future newsletters could be improved?

