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Communication and Engagement Strategy

2022-25

Reduce crime, support victims, make communities safer

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Foreword from the Commissioner

My role as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire is to work in partnership with other services to ensure the safety of the community and deliver effective criminal justice. This involves listening to people and taking their views on the issues that affect them in their community, as well as hearing the good practice and ideas for improvement which residents often tell me about.

I must also ensure that my Police and Crime Plan meets their needs and expectations, ensuring that the public has a strong voice in how their community is policed.

Communication and engagement form a fundamental part of how I will achieve this and this strategy sets out how I will give the public and stakeholders that strong voice.

My approach will be to:-

- communicate my activities comprehensively to the broadest range of audiences
- consult with the public and stakeholders to listen to their views and ensure due consideration is given to them when policy and decisions are made;
- engage widely providing residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss issues that impact and affect them.

As a result of these activities I aim to have a better understanding of:-

- the public's and stakeholders' needs and expectations of the police and local partners;
- how effectively Warwickshire Police and partners currently meet those needs;
- what needs to change in order to meet these needs in the future.

This will give me an informed position to hold the Chief Constable and local partners to account to ensure that the services they deliver to the public continue to improve.

Philip Seccombe TD

Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire

Introduction

Communication and engagement have a key role in ensuring that the Police and Crime Commissioner can carry out his duty to inform people about policies and activities which have an impact on them and, crucially, involve them in the decision-making process. By engaging as broadly as possible with all relevant individuals and organisations, insights into the key challenges for Warwickshire can be gained, allowing the right policing objectives to deal with them.

A well-informed and engaged community is much more likely to have increased trust and confidence in the police and to be supportive of measures and initiatives which seek to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Equally, by giving the public and stakeholders a genuine opportunity to shape and influence policing and community safety priorities, service delivery can only improve.

This strategy sets out how Warwickshire Police and Commissioner Philip Secombe, aided by Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Emma Daniell and the wider office (OPCC), intend to communicate and engage with communities and key stakeholders across the county, regionally and on a national level.

It also ensures the Commissioner demonstrates compliance with his statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to communications, consultation and engagement, as outlined in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Supporting the Police and Crime Plan

The Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan sets the strategic direction for policing, community safety and criminal justice in Warwickshire. It outlines five priorities to guide the work of the Commissioner and the OPCC, one of these being to 'Strengthen Communities'. The shared outcome from this priority is that communities are empowered to shape how policing and community services are developed and delivered, with strengthened partnership working building public confidence and resilience to crime.

A key focus area under the Strengthen Communities priority is 'Involving Communities', from which the bulk of the activity of this Communications and Engagement Strategy will sit. Some of the key communications activity under this heading includes:

- an extensive and expanded programme of engagement and consultation
- engaging with communities at events and meetings
- using feedback to keep the police and other organisations focused on the issues that matter
- listening to groups who are particularly underrepresented
- ensuring there are opportunities which encourage young people to be active and productive citizens

- actively supporting the Citizens in Policing Programme, including the successful Citizens' Academies organised by Warwickshire Police.

What do we mean by communication and engagement?

The dictionary defines communication as the 'giving or exchanging of information' but effective communication requires much more than this. Simple broadcasting of information without knowing who the intended audience is or listening to what they may have to say is unlikely to be successful and open to misunderstanding and confusion.

That's why engagement sits alongside communication activities to ensure that we make sure that we listen to communities and ask for their input and feedback, actively involving them in decision making and building stronger relationships. At the same time, it helps us monitor and improve the understanding of our communications messaging across a breadth of often complex topics.

The heart of the Commissioner's role is to be the voice of the public on policing and community safety matters and it is therefore imperative that he engages widely with communities across Warwickshire and is able to communicate effectively while doing so.

Our communications activity is therefore designed to inform the public, raise awareness, correct inaccurate information, build trust and confidence in policing and criminal justice while also demonstrating the work of the Commissioner and wider OPCC.

Our engagement activity helps us to build relationships, steer activities and influence strategic decision making.

Our strategic objectives

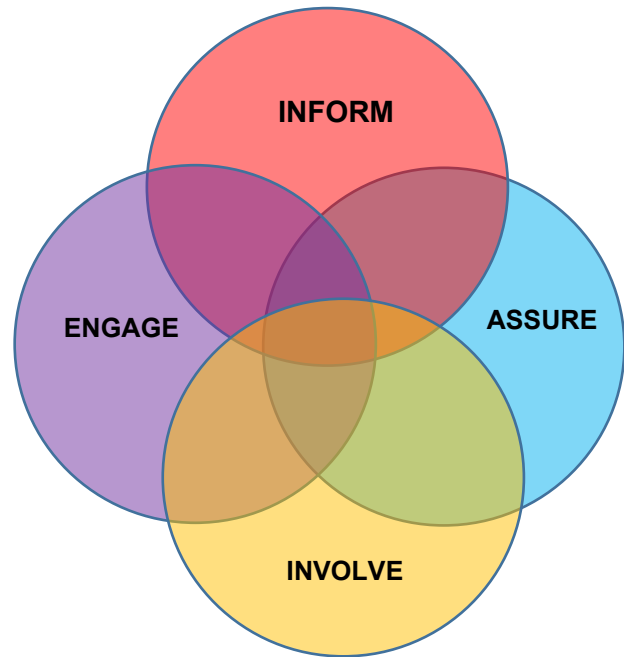
By having an overarching strategy for communications and engagement, we can ensure our activity is effective and targeted at the right people and at the right time, supports our strategic vision and ensures that we monitor the outcomes

Equally, it is important to provide a clear framework for delivering communication and engagement activity to ensure that it produces effective, measurable outcomes which support the overall vision. There is little value in doing things well if they are the wrong things to do.

To ensure this is the case, our communications and engagement activity will meet at least one or more of the following strategic objectives:

- **Inform** – communities and service users have a clear understanding of the role, priorities, services, activities and achievements of the Commissioner and his office (OPCC).

- **Engage** – communities have opportunities to engage with the Commissioner and his office to raise issues, highlight the priorities that are important to them and gain feedback on the actions taken by the OPCC to address them.
- **Assure** – communities have trust in the OPCC and are confident that public money is used wisely and in accordance with the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan. They are also assured that the OPCC meets its statutory obligations and is effective in holding the force to account and delivering an efficient and effective policing service.
- **Involve** – residents, service users, partners and businesses are involved in decision making, helping to shape and scrutinise service delivery and allowing them to take action to make communities safer.



Our values

We will apply the following values to ensure that all communications and engagement activity is:

- **Representative and inclusive:**
Activities should be fair and representative in terms of geography, demography, identity. We will be proactive in ensuring to those that may be under-represented, seldom heard or disengaged can actively be represented, including those with direct experience of the criminal justice system.
- **Collaborative and joined up:**
The OPCC will work collaboratively with Warwickshire Police and partner agencies to minimise duplication and share skills, resources and results of consultation and engagement activity across partner agencies. This will help to deliver efficiencies, identify benchmarking opportunities, share best practice and reduce 'communications overload'.
- **Cost effective and provides value for money:**
The OPCC is committed to fulfilling the PCC's statutory duties for engaging and consulting communities, victims of crime and other stakeholders in an effective, meaningful and cost-effective way. We will aim to ensure a

proportionate balance between cost, quality and benefit.

- **Planned and purposeful:**

The OPCC will aim to ensure that consultation and engagement activities are properly planned and appropriate for their target audience, clearly articulated to the public and are afforded sufficient time to be effective and inclusive.

Time will also be appropriately allocated to collate, analyse and communicate findings as part of the strategic decision-making process.

- **Receptive to change:**

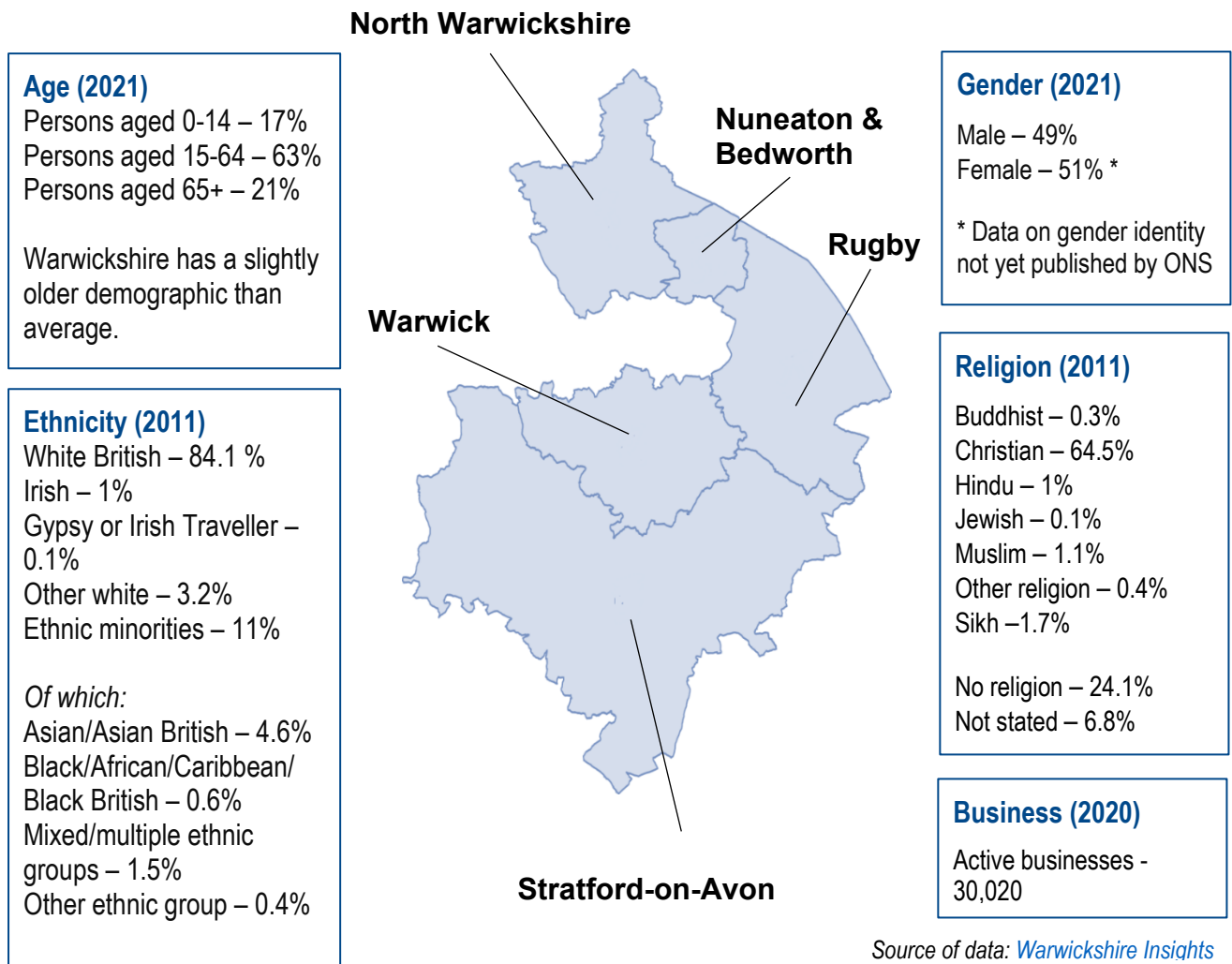
The way individuals engage and communicate has undergone unprecedented change over recent years, particularly with the growth of social media and online communication. The OPCC will work to use both new and traditional means of communicating and engaging with communities to maximum effect, seek innovate new ways of working and embrace new technology and techniques.

Who are our audiences?

Warwickshire has a growing total population of 596,800 (according to Census 2021 data) and 253,300 households. These are spread among the five districts and boroughs and in a mix of rural and urban areas. Our largest population centres are in Nuneaton, Rugby, Leamington, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon and Kenilworth, with smaller towns at Coleshill, Atherstone, Bedworth, Alcester, Southam and Shipston. The remainder of the county is rural in nature, with sparser population centres.

An overview of some of the key demographics is shown overleaf.

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The Commissioner and the OPCC will engage with the public of Warwickshire regularly, openly and through a wide range of channels. Our communications and engagement activity will be targeted to ensure we reach communities across Warwickshire in the most effective way, including those who are traditionally under-represented and seldom heard.

This strategy therefore seeks to engage audiences in the following groups:

- **According to geography:** ensuring there is good coverage for each borough and district within Warwickshire, reflecting the mix of urban and rural communities present across the county.
- **According to protected characteristic:** specifically, age, disability, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, recognising that other protected characteristics can be captured as part of other audience groups.
- **The seldom heard:** including those within the criminal justice system, refugees, the homeless, those with substance addictions or mental health issues and members of the Gypsy, Roma and Travelling community.

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- **Victims of crime:** both those who report crimes to the police and those who choose not to.
- **Service users:** including those who use policing services and service users from commissioned services and grant-supported organisations.
- **Businesses:** small, medium and large enterprises within Warwickshire and their representative organisations.
- **The police workforce:** the officers, staff and volunteers of Warwickshire Police.
- **Partner agencies:** such as local authorities, the NHS, community safety partnerships and those involved in the criminal justice system;
- **The third/voluntary sector:** including those we fund through our grants and those working within the community that we do not fund.
- **Elected members:** including Members of Parliament and councillors (at county, district, borough and parish levels), the Police and Crime Panel.
- **Advisory groups:** such as Independent Advisory Groups, custody visitors; Joint Audit and Standards Committee

Delivery overview

The workplan supporting the delivery of this strategy is segmented into three broad categories:

- **Internal audiences** (within Warwickshire Police)
- **External audiences** (the general public – residents, businesses and visitors to the county, service users).
- **Stakeholder audiences** (politicians, local government organisations, third sector providers, health providers, criminal justice providers).

A broad calendar of activity is planned which will be tracked through a delivery plan and reported in our Annual Report and to the Police and Crime Panel, as well as the OPCC website.

Summary of suggested activities

Internal audiences

- Visits by the PCC/Deputy PCC to each department and geographic base in the force area, giving an opportunity to speak to officers, staff and volunteers. (ENGAGE)
- Establishment of an OPCC section on the force intranet site, to showcase the Police and Crime Plan and the work of the office. (INFORM/ASSURE)
- Use of guest blog posts on the intranet, covering a variety of topics to further introduce the work of the OPCC to the force workforce. (INFORM)

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- Engagement with staff associations and unions, including as part of the annual budget consultation. (ENGAGE/INVOLVE)
- The OPCC will have its own stand at any future Warwickshire Police family day. (ENGAGE)
- The OPCC will seek to have questions relating to the Police and Crime Plan objectives and commissioned services in future Warwickshire Police workforce surveys. (INVOLVE)
- Engagement with Warwickshire Police Cadets, including use of the PCC Cadets to assist wider engagement with young people. (ENGAGE)

External audiences

- Establishment of a virtual PCC surgery, providing opportunities for residents to talk through issues with the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner via Microsoft Teams. Appropriate cases for discussion to be selected by the OPCC Business Services and Assurance team from the casework received by the office. (ENGAGE)
- Attendance at key community events with an OPCC stand to showcase the work of the office and commissioned services and providing an opportunity to engage with residents. A mix of events will be required across the county in order to engage a broad number of people. This could include having a stall at weekday/weekend markets in town centres, high footfall areas (such as supermarkets/shopping centres/places of worship) and community events such as Warwickshire Pride and The Big Conversation. (ENGAGE/INFORM)
- Seeking opportunities to talk to communities at existing meetings and forums, such as youth clubs, faith organisations, community forums, business networks etc. (INFORM/ENGAGE)
- An ongoing online consultation to inform decision making around priority setting and the budget process. This would run year-round (with refreshed question sets at key intervals) and be promoted at engagement events, through our website, social media and as part of our regular communications. Targeted communications would seek to broaden the response to under-represented communities and the seldom heard. (INVOLVE)
- A secondary set of consultation events regarding the precept level to be run in later December/early January each year once the options for the precept and an outline budget requirement are established. This would include a short online survey, as well as focus groups and online Teams meetings to gather feedback from community representatives, elected members, young people, the third sector and the business community. (INVOLVE)
- Digital newsletters – re-establishment of the OPCC monthly newsletter and targeted use of Warwickshire Connected, the police communications platform. (INFORM/ASSURE)

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- Expanded social media, with new channels established to broaden reach (such as Instagram) and greater use of infographics and video. (INFORM/ASSURE/ENGAGE)
- Redevelopment of the OPCC website to place a focus on engagement opportunities and provide feedback on action against issues raised. (INFORM/ASSURE)
- Attendance at Youth Council and wider engagement with youth leaders. (ENGAGE)
- News and media - press releases, TV and radio interviews, etc. (INFORM/ASSURE)
- Co-ordinated information campaigns, including supporting communications activities of commissioned services to promote their use to potential service users. (INFORM)
- 'Traditional' communication methods including leaflets, booklets (such as the annual report) and articles in published materials (such as Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Stratford View publication, which is delivered to every household). (INFORM)
- Continuing to actively support the Warwickshire Police Citizens in Policing Programme, including the successful Citizens' Academies as they recommence post pandemic. (INVOLVE)

Stakeholder audiences

- The PCC/Deputy PCC will visit all commissioned services and grant funded projects to engage with staff and where appropriate, service users. (ENGAGE/INVOLVE)
- Establishment of online engagement events for parish councillors (one per district and borough each year), advertised via the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC). In Nuneaton & Bedworth, engagement to be held at borough level reflecting the lack of parishes. (ENGAGE/ASSURE)
- Continued attendance at parish and district/borough council meetings, as and when requested, with signposting to the online engagement sessions where diaries preclude attendance. (ENGAGE/ASSURE)
- Quarterly meetings with county Members of Parliament (ENGAGE/ASSURE)
- Organisation of conferences and face-to-face events to encourage partnership working with partners, grant recipients and commissioned service providers (ENGAGE/INVOLVE)
- Reports on communications and engagement activity will be proved as a standing item within the PCC's reports to the Police and Crime Panel (ASSURE)

Evaluating and monitoring

To ensure that our communication and engagement activity is both successful and adds value, it is important to have a continuous system of monitoring and evaluation.

While digital communication techniques often provide a wealth of metrics which can help with evaluation, other methods may be less tangible.

Nevertheless we will continuously monitor a range of indicators to evaluate our approach:

- **Consultations and surveys**

The number of people who respond to us, who they are and what they tell us.

- **Media coverage**

The amount and tone of the media coverage achieved for the OPCC and the Commissioner's work is measured, with the aim of achieving positive coverage on radio, television and in print.

- **Digital analytics**

Social media growth and engagement, website insights etc.

- **Direct engagement**

Levels of direct engagement with the OPCC and the public in terms of monitoring of the engagement opportunities outlined in the delivery overview, including data such as the number of meetings / events, their locations, the types of communities present, the questions / issues raised and subsequent action taken. Similar data can be gathered from engagements with police officers and staff.

- **Referrals and self-referrals to commissioned services**

Improving numbers of referrals to commissioned services and the feedback of service users.

- **General correspondence**

Letters, emails, phone calls, freedom of information requests etc received by the OPCC.

- **Other consultation data**

Other surveys by national and local bodies can help to understand the success of the delivery of elements of this strategy. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for example, provides data at a national level on attitudes towards policing and community safety, as well as general awareness of the role and work of PCCs. Some data at police force area level

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are also available from the CSEW. Partner consultations and the work of the Warwickshire Insights team will also need to be taken into consideration.

Performance against these measures will be monitored through the main delivery plan for the Warwickshire Police and Crime Plan.

This strategy will also be reviewed annually in order to take in new developments and to ensure that it continues to be fit-for-purpose.

Appendices

Legal framework

Appendix A: Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act

The law sets out a number of specific duties and responsibilities in relation to communications, consultation and engagement. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, together with other legislation, places statutory duties on the PCC to:-

- Obtain the views of local people on policing and have regard to those views¹;
- Make arrangements for engaging with local people in setting police and crime objectives²;
- Obtain the views of local people and ratepayers prior to setting the precept (the charge for policing services paid by the tax payers) and the police budget;
- Obtain the views of victims of crime about matters concerning local policing and where appropriate feedback to them on actions taken to address them.

The Commissioner is also responsible for overseeing the extent to which the Chief Constable has fulfilled their statutory duties³ to:-

- Obtain the views of local communities on crime and disorder in their neighbourhood;
- Provide local communities with information about policing in their neighbourhood;
- Hold regular police and community meetings in local neighbourhoods.

Appendix B: Equality Act 2010 – Engagement and the Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 brings together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act includes a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty) which replaces the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The equality duty came into force on 5 April 2011.

The Equality Act refers to nine different protected characteristics, as follows:

- Age

¹ Statutory duties to consult with local people and have regard to their views about policing in their area:- the Police Act 1996, Policing and Crime Act 2009 and Community Engagement and Membership Regulations 2010.

² Make arrangements for obtaining, before a police and crime plan is issued, the views of the people in that police area, and the views of the victims of crime in that area, on the plan:- Section 34 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act & Section 96 of the Police Act 1996 as amended.

³ Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

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- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

While there is no explicit legal requirement under the Act to engage with people with different protected characteristics, the Act does require public authorities to have an adequate evidence base for their decision making, and engagement can assist with developing that evidence base.

It is recommended that public authorities publish information⁴ about who they have engaged with. This will help in being transparent and clear to stakeholders about how their contribution has informed work.

The key areas where engagement can assist in fulfilling the duties of the Act are:

Improving Services

The key reason public authorities engage is to help them understand how their policies affect, or will affect, people who use their services. Engagement can be used to improve decision making, both in policy and service development and in identifying priorities for action.

Improving Equality Information

Robust equality information is necessary to enable public authorities to design and deliver effective and efficient policies. Where there are gaps in the information base engagement can help to fill these gaps, and also to interpret existing information.

Assessing the Impact on Equality

Engagement can help to assess the impact of policies on people with protected characteristics. It can help to gather the views, experiences and ideas of those who are, or will be, affected by an authority's decisions.

Setting Objectives

Public authorities covered by the Act must prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the general equality duty. Engagement can

⁴ Taken from the Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance, 'Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities'

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help to determine and prioritise these objectives, by helping to make clearer which are most likely to make the biggest difference to tackling inequality.

Fostering Good Relations

Engagement with people with protected characteristics and other stakeholders can be useful in fostering good relations with the public and local communities in general.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the communications and engagement strategies of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as Chelmsford City Council's *Consultation and Engagement Strategy* and the College of Policing's *Authorised Professional Practice for Engagement and Communication*, which have all proved useful references in developing this strategy.