

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE OF POLICY/PROCEDURE:	Police Authority Meetings
NAME OF AUDITOR:	Erika Faris
FIN OF AUDITOR:	11613
DATE COMPLETED:	27.05.2009

SECTION ONE – INITIAL ASSESSMENT TO BE COMPLETED BY (OR ON BEHALF OF) POLICY / PROCEDURE OWNER

Identify the aims and projected outcomes of the policy / procedure.

It is intended that the Police Authority's practice of holding public meetings is open, transparent, and accountable to the public by demonstrating how members make informed decisions whilst discharging the Authority's statutory duties. The Authority should ensure that all Members of the community are able to attend.

Which individuals and organisations are likely to have an interest in or are likely to be affected by the policy / procedure?

Residents of Surrey: taxpayers, individuals and community groups with an interest in policing, our many partners, including Surrey County Council and Surrey Police. The local press sometimes send representatives to public meetings.

SECTION 2 – IMPACT ON DIVERSITY

This policy / procedure must work towards eliminating discrimination, promoting equal opportunity and promoting good relations between the community and Surrey Police Authority.

Is there any reason why this policy / procedure would not achieve this? Please explain your justification below.

Please select: **YES** / NO

Currently the majority of Police Authority meetings are held at Surrey Police HQ. The accessibility of the HQ facilities may have an adverse impact on attendance by members of the public. This is due to the lack of facilities available and also the time of day and day of the week on which these meetings are held. However the Authority Offices have now been adapted to be DDA compliant therefore improving public access.

Improvements to advertising the Authority's meetings have been made which has resulted in an increased number of attendees. Two of the Authority's meetings per year are now webcast, allowing people who cannot attend the meeting to watch wherever they are, or at a later time for up to six months after the meeting has taken place.

Is there any potential implication for differential / adverse impact on people based on the following. Please indicate no impact / low / medium / high

Gender	NO
Sexuality	NO
Disability	YES
Age	YES- Meetings take place during working hours

Religion	YES- Dates falling on religious holidays
Race	YES- Languages

Is there any evidence that this policy / procedure will have an intentional impact, internally or externally, on people based on their:

Gender	NO
Sexuality	NO
Disability	NO
Age	NO
Religion	NO
Race	NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the above questions, please explain the evidence / reasoning behind your answers below:

Access to the premises for those with limited mobility or without their own transport could be difficult.

Currently we do not use microphones or induction loops and are therefore excluding the hard of hearing. However work is underway to purchase a hearing loop with the use of microphones.

Those of working age may be prevented from attending day time meetings. We do intend to trial the hosting of an evening meeting in 2010 to provide better access for this group of people.

Papers are printed in English but we would consider requests to provide in alternative formats.

SECTION THREE – CONSULTATION AND CONSIDERATION

Is there any evidence or reason to believe that some minority groups could be differently affected, either personally or negatively? (e.g. lower participation or success rates)

Please select: NO / **YES**

Please specify the reasoning / evidence behind your decision, including evidence of any consultation that has taken place.

Attendance is generally in single figures at the Authority's meetings and few attendees are from ethnic minorities and minority groups. A questionnaire on what visitors think about the meeting and the experience they have had is made available at every meeting. An online poll asking specific questions on access to Police Authority meetings could be used. This would have nil cost to the Authority.

The Authority intends to hold many of its meetings at venues across Surrey to encourage those who may feel uncomfortable coming to Surrey Police HQ.

Members of the Public who are members of ethnic minorities or from minority groups such as Transgender and those undergoing transition or from groups such as the Gypsy community may not feel comfortable attending a public meeting. The Authority is currently engaging with these groups in partnership and would welcome feedback or comments on the Authority, its public meetings or any area of business via the Authority's website. They would also be welcome to join the Citizen's Panel as a way of participating.

Young people are unable to come to the public meetings due to being in school. Again the Authority would encourage feedback and for young people to watch the Authority's web casts. The Authority continues to engage with Young People in a variety of ways and has strong links with groups such as Youth Parliament.

Is there likely to be any public concern that functions / policies are being operated in a discriminatory manner (e.g. expressed in media / research papers etc)

Please select: NO / **YES**

Please specify the reasoning / evidence behind your decision, including evidence of any consultation that has taken place.

There has been some feedback from the public on the accessibility of Surrey Police HQ and facilities available to those who attend. Other feedback suggests that attendees prefer the facilities of the Borough and District Councils. The holding of public meetings at alternative venues such as District and Borough Councils would have cost implications but would provide better access and allow members of the public from across Surrey to attend.

We intend to trial an evening meeting in 2010 and hold the majority of Authority meetings at alternative venues to be more accessible to all Surrey residents in order to address this criticism. This might cause Members and staff (in the Authority and in Surrey Police) some difficulties because of their own family commitments. It is intended that the evening meetings would allow those working full time and who have an interest in policing matters to attend. The pilot will be evaluated afterwards.

Is there any opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity?

Please select: NO / **YES**

Please specify the reasoning / evidence behind your decision including evidence of any consultation that has taken place.

The Authority could continue to make Surrey Police HQ as accessible as possible by ensuring that there are appropriate directions, parking, and catering and wheelchair access for expected visitors. Effective communication and awareness of Authority meetings to be maintained by the Communications Officer and opportunities to promote awareness of Authority business could be explored.

An evening meeting will be held in 2010 and if successful then further consideration could be given to holding additional evening meetings throughout 2010. The option of holding evening meetings would allow those who would like to attend but who work full time or who work some distance away to be able to attend.

We currently offer to print the agenda in an alternative language or format on the front of the published agendas of our public meetings and also on the Authority's website. This could have some cost implications but take-up has been nil since we added it to the front of our public meeting agendas. We also take into account religious holidays and consult the BCC Multi Faith calendar when setting our meeting dates. The Authority should continue with this practice and be open to any further opportunities in making Police Authority meetings more accessible to ethnic minorities.

The Authority provides a questionnaire to people who attend the meetings to seeking visitors' views on how easy it was to attend that day, whether their expectations had been met and also their views and thoughts on proceedings and what they suggest could be made better. An online poll could be added to the website to ask particular questions aimed at different groups to seek visitors' views on their opinion of the Police Authority.

These proposals have been discussed with the HR Panel.

What monitoring arrangements have been established for this policy or procedure?

A review will take place on an annual basis.

If the policy / procedure discriminates against certain groups, can it be justified because of the overall objectives?

Please select: **NO** / YES

If you have selected YES, please provide evidence of your reasoning below.

List those who were consulted in carrying out this assessment.

Colleagues from the Authority.
HR Panel.
Diversity Directorate
Authority's Lead Member on Equalities & Diversity

List any changes that will be made as a result of this assessment / consultation

- Locations of venue- make arrangements to hold 2010 meetings off site and trial an Authority meeting to be held in the evening.
- To consider holding additional evening meetings throughout 2010 if the first trial is successful
- Purchase and install a hearing loop system and microphones. Cost implications.
- Continue to offer the agenda in an alternative language or format
- Continue to consult the BCC Multi Faith calendar when setting meeting dates
- Be open to any further opportunities in making Police Authority meetings more accessible to ethnic minorities.
- Effective communication and awareness of Authority meetings to be maintained by the Communications Officer and opportunities to promote awareness of Authority business to be explored.
- Consider using an online poll to ask specific questions on access to Police Authority meetings or seek opinion on the Authority.
- Monitoring of the practice of Police Authority's meetings and how these changes will be made and whether they are having any effect.

Select the method of publication for this assessment.

Surrey Police Authority website

