

BVR of Community Engagement Reality Testing Report

Northern Ireland Policing Board

April 2010

This report outlines findings of reality testing in PSNI resulting from the implementation of recommendations from Best Value Review of Community Engagement. Findings focus on two outstanding recommendations and are outlined in a bullet format. Evidence has been sought from strategic and tactical documents, interviews and other research. The on-site work was conducted during April 2010

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Please Note

This report is intended to highlight to the Northern Ireland Policing Board independent findings following reality checks undertaken. It does not purport to be comprehensive in terms of its evidential value as sources of evidence were deliberately limited to a small number of internal interviews with lead officials and examination of key strategic documents. Due to time limitations no external views have been sought or any observational testing undertaken.

1. Methodology and General Observations

1. The Best Value review of Community Engagement was undertaken during April 2007 and March 2008. The work was outsourced to KPMG who undertook the review and later conducted a post implementation review during April 2009. The aim of this BVR was to consider how the NIPB's legislative obligations functions and processes relating to community engagement were being fulfilled. The focus of the review was on the Board's province wide community engagement activities. The review resulted in 12 recommendations. The activity undertaken by KPMG to test whether all recommendations had been implemented found that 2 recommendations (numbers 10 and 11) were not complete. KPMG concluded that all other recommendations were implemented.
2. This assessment seeks to test whether those remaining recommendations have now been completed.
3. The methodology agreed for reality testing involved reading the BVRs and other key documents and undertaking interviews with key officials to form views on the reality of discharge of recommendations, general improvements and strategic intentions in the functional areas under review. There was evidence that there was a clear intention to seek opportunities to broaden the scope of consultation and community engagement within the context of Northern Ireland.
4. An indication as to whether the functional area/service has or will improve is indicated by a RAG rating shown in the matrix of evidence commencing on page 5.
5. In summary, in respect of recommendation number 10, I am confident that this recommendation has been implemented to an adequate extent and the Policing Board can be satisfied that improvement has been made. **This recommendation should be marked as finalised.**
6. In respect of recommendation 11, there was no evidence of further development of NIPBs approach to either the evaluation of community engagement, or the identification of specific outcomes and impact of relevant activity. Additionally, there has been no attempt made to systematically identify efficiency savings from implementation of recommendations. **This recommendation has not been finalised.**
7. **Action required** - The NIPB should drive and monitor this recommendation at executive /senior level and through the development

of a time-bound action plan providing a renewed focus on implementing this recommendation.

8. This area of business will be further examined in detail as part of the forthcoming independent assessment of the NIPB functions, when the approach and methods employed by NIPB, to evaluate the impact of community engagement activity, will be examined and commented upon.

2. Overview of Key Findings

BVR of Community Engagement – Completed 2007/08

Recommendation	Recommendations	Findings
<p>Number 10</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION CONSIDERED TO BE FINALISED</p> <p>Confidence in level of implementation.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #92d050; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p>GREEN</p> </div> <p>The NIPB should provide appropriate feedback to all those organisations involved in its community engagement activities.</p>	<p>Previous Comments by KPMG – progress marked as ‘Recommendation not fully implemented, to be carried forward’.</p> <p>‘Where appropriate, feedback and information is now provided at Reference Group meetings to update the Reference Group members by explaining how the issues they have raised at previous meetings have been progressed and addressed by the NIPB. Minutes from various recent Reference Group Meetings shows that while some feedback is being given, it does not appear to be substantial. NIPB should consider providing more detailed feedback going forward’.</p> <p>Findings from this reality testing activity.</p> <p>Feedback continues to be provided to Reference Groups which outlines how issues raised have been progressed and addressed by the NIPB. Minutes from various recent Reference Group Meetings shows that valued feedback is being provided although the NIPB should, within the ethos of continuous improvement continue to seek ways to improve the feedback methodology to make it more regular, relevant and informative to the public and partners.</p> <p>a. The NIPB has in place a Community Engagement Strategy which clearly outlines a vision for community engagement. The strategy states that the NIPB will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information – ensure that the public have access to information that is accurate, relevant, appropriate and easy to access and understand. • Consult – through a variety of surveys and research projects to seek and receive views from the public. • Participate and work in partnership – ensure the community voice is heard and that issues of concern are identified and addressed. Additionally,

		<p>it is stated that the NIPB will respond to issues in a way that raised public awareness and confidence in the police.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. To support and complement the Community Engagement Strategy the NIPB has developed detailed guidance on its implementation which is dated July 2008. c. The Strategy and guidance provide a varied approach to consultation and community engagement which focuses primarily on surveys and public facing contact and engagement. d. Surveys are extensively used with approximately 60,000 being distributed per year to help assess public priority and community issues. Results and feedback from these surveys are published on the NIPB web-site which is readily accessible to the public and are also included in the Policing Plan. e. Reference groups meet every 6 to 8 weeks with attendance of between 8 to 10 people (although membership is wider). The Reference groups currently in existence are LGBT, Disability, Older People, Young People, Minority Ethnic, Women's Reference Group and Language Groups. Actions tracked from initial identification through to action by PSNI. There is acknowledgement by NIPB that reference groups could be more effective and the NIPB is in the process of reviewing and repositioning them with a view to making them more strategic and meaningful. Discussions are yet to take place with existing groups. f. Although not systematic, there is clear evidence of valued feedback being given to these low level (tactical) groups. It is recognised and acknowledged by NIPB that feedback could be more systematic and focused for these groups. g. Feedback on policing activity (in relation to policing priorities contained in the Policing Plan) is provided through the 26 District Policing Partnership meetings as part of the district policing update. At each of these public meetings the District Commander represents his/her report. The DPP then questions the District Commander on issues that have been raised in the report. They will also ask the police questions that may have been forwarded to them by members of the public. In order to give everyone in the community an opportunity to attend a meeting in public the DPP rotate their meetings across
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		<p>different venues and locations throughout the local area. A key responsibility is to monitor the performance of the police in carrying out the policing plan and make arrangements for getting the views of the public on matters concerning the policing of the district and gaining their co-operation with the police in preventing crime.</p> <p>h. DPPs must submit an annual report on how they have exercised their functions during that year, to the council. A copy of the annual report will also be sent to the Policing Board. The Policing Board may also ask the DPP to report on any other matter connected with the DPPs functions.</p> <p>i. The district commander will consult the DPP in setting targets for the local policing plan. The DPP may make arrangements to help the police consult any local community within the district.</p> <p>In summary, I am of the view that ‘appropriate’ feedback is currently being given, however its provision could be more systematic and documented accordingly. This recommendation should be marked as finalised.</p>
<p>Number 11</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION CONSIDERED NOT FINALISED (or SUPERCEDED)</p> <p>Confidence in level of implementation.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p>RED</p> </div> <p>As the community engagement activities delivered by the NIPB increase it is vital that effective systems to monitor their usefulness and value are introduced.</p>	<p>Previous Comments by KPMG – Previous Comments by KPMG – progress marked as ‘Recommendation not fully implemented, to be carried forward’.</p> <p>‘A work plan has been developed showing the type of activities which are undertaken under each of the three elements of community engagement. NIPB are currently working to create specific actions and targets for each of the activity types to ensure that the activities are linked to the outcomes obtained. NIPB Officials informed us that a survey is currently being developed to ascertain the opinions of those involved in community engagement activities’.</p> <p>Findings from this reality testing activity.</p> <p>a. The Community Engagement Strategy guidance referred to earlier in the report indicates that NIPB identify generic benefits from community engagement that fall into two categories: improved community engagement decision making and enhanced citizenship. Direct and indirect outcomes are identified as greater confidence in policing and a reduction in crime both of which contribute to an improved quality of life. There is no focus in the guidance on the identification</p>

		<p>of specific outcomes or benefits for engagement. Currently, following community engagement activity and events a report outlining generic benefits is provided to the appropriate NIPB committee. Additionally, a summary of issues is provided for the ACPO team.</p> <p>b. A Community Engagement implementation plan exists which highlights activities within the three elements of community engagement (outlined previously in the report). The implementation plan outlines the timescales, links to the Policing Plan and NIPBs Corporate plan and outcomes of intended activity however intended outcomes are generic and are not detailed or specific to individual pieces of work. The implementation plan does not indicate specifically what is to be done in terms of tasks and activity. Specific actions and targets for each of the activity types should be developed.</p> <p>c. In summary, currently, there is no meaningful or effective evaluation of community engagement which will allow the NIPB to realistically and credibly assess the impact of activity on policing. Although accepted that this is a difficult exercise NIPB should seek to identify and introduce suitable evaluation criteria for the intended activities. Currently activities are principally aimed at increasing cooperation and confidence and there is a view that community engagement is 'the right thing to do' rather than bringing evidence of real outcomes and 'added value'.</p> <p>d. It follows there is no effective systematic approach in place to monitor usefulness and value of engagement as originally intended by the recommendation.</p> <p>In conclusion, there has been no notable progress made on implementing this recommendation. There is no evidence of any further development of NIPBs approach to either the evaluation of community engagement, the identification of specific outcomes or impact of relevant activity. Additionally, there has been no attempt made to systematically identify efficiency savings from implementation of recommendations. This recommendation has not been finalised.</p>
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Suggestions Actions / Improvement for NIPB

1. More opportunity could be made to provide feedback on public priorities through DPP meetings and ensure that this approach is properly documented. This could for example be through the DPP newsletter (published four times per year on the DPP web-site).
2. Electronic means of communication and engagement with the public should be further explored with a view to enhancing opportunities to obtain views and provide feedback.
3. There is no meaningful or effective evaluation of community engagement which will allow the NIPB to realistically and credibly assess the impact of activity on policing. Although accepted that this is a difficult exercise NIPB should seek to identify and introduce suitable evaluation criteria for the intended activities.
4. In the Community Engagement Implementation plan, intended community engagement outcomes are generic and are not detailed or specific to individual pieces of work. The implementation plan does not indicate what is to be done in relation to each activity or event in terms of tasks making evaluation more difficult. Specific actions and targets for each of the activity types should be developed to facilitate effective evaluation of effort and expenditure.