

Councillor advocate scheme

The councillor advocate scheme aims to improve communication between local councillors, the police and the police and crime commissioner.

The police and crime commissioner's councillor advocate scheme aims to ensure that:

- consistent, accurate and honest information relating to crime and community safety is cascaded to the public
- councillors feel more equipped to inform the public about crime and policing, educate their communities about crime and support/encourage greater reporting of issues to the police and other appropriate partner organisations
- police officer time is used to its optimum by enabling the cascade of information to be efficient and without duplication
- councillors feel more informed about crime and policing in their local area
- a practical and positive route exists to enable councillors to bring overall views from their communities to the police
- the commissioner is kept informed of community views across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, so that she can effectively hold the chief constable to account for policing

The scheme works by improving the consistency and frequency of communication, and offers advocates:

1. Face to face discussions
2. Access to a quarterly meeting with the police at a local level (as a group of advocates, not individually);
3. Access to councillor advocate themed seminars each year (arranged by the office of the police and crime commissioner);
4. Access to a named contact within the commissioner's office.

Written materials:

1. A bespoke advocate information directory (prepared by the office of the police and crime commissioner);
2. Quarterly key topic briefing documents specifically for advocates (co-ordinated by the office of the police and crime commissioner);
3. Quarterly newsletter from the commissioner;
4. Monthly *Citizens in Policing* newsletter;
5. Notification of press releases issued by the police and the commissioner.

Campaigns and events:

1. Access to police campaign materials (e.g. posters and leaflets)
2. Prior notification of and invitation to police arranged community engagement activities

Councillor advocates are invited to volunteer for the scheme from each council in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Advocates are welcome from unitary, district, and parish councils. At a town and parish level advocates are identified 'single points

of contact' on behalf of their council. District and unitary councils may have more than one advocate. Councillors who have a desire to act as a positive and proactive communication conduit between the police, the commissioner and the public are invited to volunteer for the scheme. Advocates are not intended to be treated as political appointments.

Every quarter the councillor advocates for each policing area will meet with a representative from Devon and Cornwall Police. A representative from the relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will also be invited to attend, as will a police and crime commissioner community engagement officer (if there is one allocated to the area), along with any police engagement volunteers in the area.

This discussion will enable each councillor advocate to raise issues on behalf of their council's communities, and allow the police the opportunity to update all councillor advocates on relevant information and/or request support with a specific issue. After the meeting the police representative will send a brief written summary of the meeting, along with any other key documents and actions to the councillor advocates and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The councillor advocates will then cascade the information discussed to all elected members from their own council.

These discussions will not be for discussing individual cases or problem solving specific issues. Those discussions should take place within existing processes (e.g. crime reporting) and forums (e.g. community safety partnership).

Each quarter advocates will also be invited to attend a 'councillor advocate seminar' which will focus on one key issue for example:

1. Project Genesis / neighbourhood policing;
2. The police telephone 101 service;
3. Antisocial behaviour;
4. Road safety.

Attendance at seminars will be exclusively for councillor advocates and will provide opportunities to receive information and updates from professionals, and enable councillors to ask questions, raise queries and feedback the views of their communities to the police and the police and crime commissioner.