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| Committee(s): Police: Performance and Resource Management Sub Committee | Date(s): 18 th March 2015 |
| Subject: Public Perception Survey update | Public |
| Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol 14/15 | For Information |

Summary

The City of London Police has carried out public perception surveys in the past few years and these were delivered through an external company. These surveys were carried out in the street but the results may not be as accurate as desired as, although respondents are asked to focus on the City of London area, there is the possibility that they may be influenced by media coverage of events in other Force areas and national coverage of policing issues. Consequently, the results may be influenced by other factors and may therefore not give a true perception of the Force.

In order for the Force to deliver its vision for City Futures, work was undertaken to survey the City Community, to better understand their needs and concerns. An external consultancy company was recruited to carry out this piece of work. The advantages of the consultants methodology is that respondents were fully aware of the services provided by the City of London Police. As such the responses were not predicated on feelings around the national policing picture.

The methodology used by the consultants also provides a template and question set for measuring satisfaction and perception in the future. The Force now owns the methodology and the question set. It is recommended that this survey is carried out annually and is managed in house. This will negate future costs of using external consultants in the region of £10-15k, yet still provide a strong evidence base in relation to our engagement with the many strands of the City community.

Recommendations

It is recommended that this report be received and note its contents.

Main Report

Background

1. In order that the public perception of the City of London Police could be measured, the Force used a company for 6 years from 2009/10 to conduct face to face interviews in the street. Participants were visually selected by researchers to achieve rough percentage quotas in terms of ethnicity, gender and age. The criteria was as follows:
 - Size and Frequency: 160 respondents per quarter.
 - Sample: workers (80%), residents (5.5%). Remaining 14.5% roughly split between students, shoppers and other frequent visitors
 - Exclusions: Tourists and people unfamiliar with the City environment, people under 16 years of age, people who work for City of London Police.
2. The cost of the surveys was £11k per year.
3. There was no statutory requirement to conduct these surveys; however, it was seen as a useful diagnostic tool of how the Force is perceived and where it might need to improve. It was used additionally to ask people about Policing Plan priorities and provide data for relevant Policing Plan targets, thereby bolstering the consultation aspects of the Policing Plan development process.
4. Public perception data is not ideal for target purposes as, although respondents are asked to focus on the City of London area, they are likely to be influenced by national media coverage of events in other force areas outside the City. Consequently, the results are likely to be influenced by other factors and may restrict the achievement of targets.
5. The use of these Surveys has been the subject of extensive debate at the Performance Management Group chaired by the Assistant Commissioner. It was generally felt by the group that the information provided by the company survey was not telling the Force anything new. In addition, there were no 'free-text' questions and so it was

not possible to use these to assist in analysing the reasons behind any impact on performance.

Current Position

6. In order that the Force could deliver its vision for City Futures, work was undertaken to survey the City Community to better understand their needs and concerns. An external consultancy was recruited to carry out this piece of work. The compilation and design of the survey and the administration and analysis of the results cost £15k and was paid for by the City of London Police.
7. A number of meetings took place involving both the City of London Police and City of London Corporation. This allowed both organisations to draft the questions in order that we could build a better joint understanding of customer needs from both a Police and Local Authority perspective.
8. The objectives of this work were to :
 - Gain a greater understanding of the customer and their requirements for the service provided and alignment of processes to meet that requirement
 - Understand customer profiles across businesses, residents and the transient population.
 - Provide services that meet customer needs through their preferred channels rather than one size fits all
 - Ensure areas of importance to the public are known and inform areas of work and the services provided
 - Ensure resources and processes are targeted on what the public actually wants and in doing so optimise cost
9. A key element to establishing a meaningful basis for the survey was direct engagement with customers and staff through research. The objective was to provide first hand external information on both the current state, and insight into the desired state that best met the needs of the customer. The research took the form of a survey based on questionnaire(s) with some variations dependent on the respondent type.
10. Respondents were split into 4 distinct groups
 - Residents

- Business community
- Short Stay (tourists, students, night time economy)
- Staff

11. Two methods of data collection were used based on the ability to engage with respondents and respondent preference: Either face to face (Data was collected by interviewers in person) or on line (Respondents were directed to web links where they were able to access an online questionnaire).

The sample sizes in each customer category were

- Residents 255
- Business 181
- Short Stay 303
- Staff 112

12. The questions were compiled to ascertain safety and security concerns, satisfaction and preferred contact channels. The advantages of the Consultants methodology compared to the previous supplier were that businesses and residents were fully aware of the services provided by the City of London. As such the responses were not predicated on feelings around the national policing picture. The 'short stay' sample was promoted through both organisations internet and social media channels ensuring that the responses were City specific. This will allow the development of a richer picture which can be utilised to develop a customer feedback process that will assist in the development of a Customer Strategy for both organisations. The results are currently being analysed and a full report will be delivered to the Force in March.

13. Members may wish to note that the Force will still be conducting the Victims' of Crime Survey in line with national recommendations and guidelines on a quarterly basis. The results of these surveys are analysed and reported to the Force Performance Management Group.

Conclusion

14. The methodology used by the external consultants provides a template and question set for measuring satisfaction and perception in the future. The Force now owns the methodology and the question set. It is proposed to carry out this survey annually and to

manage it in house. This will negate costs of using the external consultants in the region of £10-15k, yet still provide a strong evidence base to in relation to our engagement with the many strands of the City community.

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