



Community Confidence Action Research – Levenmouth Engagement Results

Introduction

On May 15th 2023, the Scottish Police Authority and Police Scotland held an engagement session with representatives from the community of Levenmouth as part of the Community Confidence Action Research Project.

Two sessions were initially scheduled at different venues in Leven and Methil. Attendees could select which session they would prefer to attend. Unfortunately, the second session in Methil was cancelled due to external factors, thus the session in Leven was the only one to be held. Attendees for the Methil session were invited to respond to the engagement session questions via email and given the option of an MS Teams meeting.

At the Leven session, there were 20 attendees, including council officers, locally elected members and community group leaders. The day focused on the findings of [recent surveys conducted in Levenmouth](#) and sought to gain insights on how people felt policing in Levenmouth could be enhanced via table and room discussions of the following questions:

1. Do you recognise Levenmouth in these findings and in what ways?
2. Is there anything you feel is missing from the findings or would want to add?
3. What do you think could enhance confidence in policing in Levenmouth?

This paper summarises the key themes from this engagement and the ideas people had for enhancing confidence in policing. Notes taken by facilitators at each discussion table were collated, along with notes from the engagement with the community groups, to identify ideas expressed by people that could enhance confidence in policing in the area. This led to the identification of three key areas which are detailed in this paper (Communication and Engagement, Visibility, and Education).

Views on the survey results

Participants largely agreed with findings of survey. Participants highlighted concerns surrounding police response times and call handing. Long call waiting times were seen to discourage local residents from contacting the police. Waiting times for 101 calls, in particular, were identified as a concern. Participants recognised that, whilst a separate issue, it would reflect badly on police officers on patrol.

It was noted by participants that previous issues in the area informed local action, such as crime stoppers initiatives, the creation of leaflets, and organising

local meetings. The Improving Levenmouth Together (ILT) programme was also cited as an example of good practice.

Participants noted that poverty is a driving factor, particularly in a handful of streets where problems are more engrained. However, it was also noted that there is a stigmatisation for people who live in the bad streets that affects their opportunity, aspiration and can lead to disruptive behaviours.

Motorcycle crimes were discussed by participants. Whilst it was noted that local initiatives helped in addressing this, with one table describing how motorcycle crimes weren't as common as previously, there were concerns that the issue could resurface in the future.

Some participants noted that it would be helpful to know whether or not there was a correlation between those who felt they had confidence and those that didn't.

Ideas for Enhancing Confidence

Communication and Engagement

Communication and engagement from the police was felt to be a key element in building confidence. Greater police presence at local venues was seen as invaluable by respondents. Attendance at local community meetings and running coffee with a cop/coppucino events were highlighted in particular.

Social media was identified as an area of improvement in order to increase engagement. Social media posts were considered too corporate and not local, thus not feeling genuine. The use of social media, as well as other Police Scotland media streams, to let local residents know that their needs and concerns are being addressed was also highlighted.

It was highlighted that previously an engagement officer was in post who would attend local groups/events. This was a funded post that has since ended, however, it was noted that Police Scotland are seeking to have another engagement officer in post by October 2023.

It was also noted that local police currently work with young people in the area. In some cases police work out of uniform which helps to create a sense of trust with young people. It is hoped that these engagement activities with young people continue.

Visibility

The clear visibility of police officers in the local community was highlighted and reflects comments submitted as part of the Levenmouth survey for those aged 16 and over. The presence of "on the beat" police officers, rather than the use of CCTV, in crime hotspots was seen as more valuable in combatting crime in the local community.

As highlighted in 'Communication and Engagement', police attendance at local meetings and events would be seen as positive according to attendees. This included meetings in the local community to explain the role of the police.

Education

Linked to communications, it was felt there needed to be more education about the Scottish criminal justice system. It was also noted that local residents may not know what constitutes a police matter or the roles and responsibilities of police and other agencies in order to effectively seek assistance.

Event Feedback

In total 7 feedback forms were received. All 7 found the event useful, and of the seven comments it was noted that it was useful to hear from Police Scotland (e.g. more information on day to day duties, workloads etc.), other services and allowed service providers to present issues experienced by their users.

The feedback form also asked if there were any other suggestions on how confidence in policing could be enhanced. Out of the five comments received, three related to a greater understanding of the role of the police and the work they do. Ideas included police officers attending local tenants and residents groups to increase engagement, stronger police communications with local residents (e.g. advising on ongoing situations) and prevention-focused work.