



**Northamptonshire
Police Liaison Representative Scheme
Annual Conference
1900 – 2100hrs, 28 June 2022**

The 2nd PLR Annual Conference was held on 28 June 2022 on Zoom. 54 PLRs attended from across Northamptonshire.

Danny Moody, Chief Executive of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (Northants CALC), opened the conference and welcomed the delegates and special guests. He provided a short overview of how the concept of the PLR Scheme started and noted that it is a unique scheme, the first of its type anywhere in the country, so there is much learning to do and not everything that is tried in the scheme will be successful. It's a case of quickly discontinuing what doesn't work and building on what does.

Stephen Mold, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire gave an overview of policing, crime, and fire safety in Northamptonshire and set out the aims and objectives of the Police, Fire and Crime Plan 2021 - 2026. He included information on the three key grant programmes available for supporting communities (see slides) and gave examples of parish and town councils that have accessed them. Stephen said that the PLR Scheme was important to him as a vehicle for two-way communication. The Commissioner then took questions from the PLRs, including questions on how the PLR Scheme will dovetail, or not, with Joint Action Groups (JAGs) (see also the Conference Q&A).

Chief Inspector Pete Basham, Head of Neighbourhood Policing, addressed the PLRs. He said that communications between Northamptonshire Police HQ and parish and town councils was vital but that the most important link for PLRs would be with the local police officers. He noted that the PLR Scheme had been a "slow burn" in its first year but welcomed the fact that 190 PLRs are now registered across the county. Ch Insp Basham said that use of Neighbourhood Alert would be critical to the success of the PLR scheme and so all PLRs will be encouraged to sign up to it. The PLRs can play a major role in helping identify Locally Identified Priorities (LIPs) and helping to promote LIP surveys. LIPs are used for the basis of resource allocation, so it is very important that they accurately represent community need.

Chief Inspector Pete Basham also introduced the new PLR Handbook, which has been developed by Dawn Allingham from Northamptonshire Police Comms and the design of which is funded by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC). The Handbook will be published within the next few weeks.

A Q&A session followed with many questions on Neighbourhood Alert, JAGs, comms in general, how to contact the Neighbourhood Police teams, and the issue of rural v urban policing and resource allocation. A separate record of the Q&A is at Appendix A. The PLR Steering Group will follow up all the points raised. In relation to the questions on Neighbourhood Alert specifically, Dawn Allingham undertook to produce a simple guide for circulation.

The meeting closed at 9.04 p.m.

PLR Conference – 28 June 2022

Questions & Answers

1. Linkages with Neighbourhood Watch

- 1.1. How are PLRs and Neighbourhood Watch working together and are there examples of where it works well and what we can do to dovetail more? As PLR I find that I'm doing the information sharing of NW alerts.
- 1.2. Anyone requiring information about NHW should contact me via a.g.crisp@outlook.com (Andy Crisp – Vice Chair, Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch)
- 1.3. As a Neighbourhood Watch Area Coordinator, many very good questions have been raised that would be of great interest to Alan Earle who the Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch Lead. Was Alan considered as an invitee to this meeting as I am sure there would be good synergy between NHW & PLR?
- 1.4. Details on the Northamptonshire NHW and how to contact the Area Support Teams are available at <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/area/northamptonshire>.
- 1.5. NHW Co-ordinators can / should communicate with adjacent NHW Scheme co-ordinators particularly when crime incidents are taking place.

Whilst the PLR Scheme is completely different to Neighbourhood Watch (NHW), there are clear and obvious synergies. The NHW Co-ordinator is the link between the police and the community, whereas the PLR is the link between the police and the parish or town council. It is essential that there is good communication between the PLR and the NHW Co-ordinator. At a strategic level the PLR Scheme is working closely with NHW. Alan Earle, Chair of Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Watch attended the PLR Steering Group meeting held on 15 November 2021 for a *"Discussion on how the PLR Scheme can support NHW and vice versa"*. The strategic links will continue to be forged.

2. Linkages with Joint Action Groups

- 2.1. Is this forum intended to replace Joint Action Group (JAG) meetings?
- 2.2. A local PLR meeting could enable 10/20 parishes to meet with a local PC.

There is a clear need to understand more about the JAGs. Perhaps PLR involvement can help reinvigorate the JAGs countywide, or it might be that groupings of PLRs can come together with other agencies to essentially pick up where the JAGs left off. This will be taken forward by the PLR Steering Group (noting that it can only feed into wider discussions and cannot itself decide what the future of JAGs is).

3. Neighbourhood Alerts

- 3.1. How do we sign up please? I'm on Neighbourhood watch, is this different?
- 3.2. How to sign up to Alerts?
- 3.3. Sadly, I find Neighbourhood Alert of little use. It covers such a wide area and gives so little information in respect of the crime committed, that I rarely circulate them any further and delete most of them.
- 3.4. I rarely circulate the alert messages for exactly the same reasons. They are so vague as to be meaningless and do nothing other than increase the fear of crime.
- 3.5. I have just signed up to Neighbourhood Alerts and provided my address and contact details. But I do not live in the community that I represent - how can I flag up that I want info for the Parish Council area?
- 3.6. I feel it is important to make sure NW alert recipients are setup correctly for their specific areas to make sure relevant information is sent to the correct areas/residents.
- 3.7. The Neighbourhood Alerts have the local police email.
- 3.8. How about making the sign up to neighbourhood alerts a part of the onboarding process for all PLRs and retroactively ensuring that the PLRs that are in place are matched against the alert mailing list and contact those that aren't to get them on board?

The aim is that every PLR is signed up to Neighbourhood Alerts. Work is underway to achieve that and to understand and overcome any barriers. Clearly there is more that needs to be done to understand how Neighbourhood Alerts works, what the geographical granularity of it is, and how it is used. Information on Neighbourhood Alerts will be included in the PLR Information Booklet, which is due for publication in July 2022.

4. Communications Generally

- 4.1. My main Q for this forum is all about reciprocity. We as PLRs want to be able to communicate INBOUND.... I have no idea yet re: how best to do that. Nor, conversely, am I yet receiving PLR focused "outbound" stuff.... so there must be an ability / capacity for better utilisation?
- 4.2. We need some guidance on how to best address issues with the council and/or members of the public. A good starting place would be to put us in touch with the local PCSO and promote meetings to enable us to better understand the issues in our areas.
- 4.3. A PLR bulletin (weekly/monthly) from the police would help in differentiating between NW matters and the messages that the police want us to focus on.
- 4.4. Do police attend all PC AGMs to give updates and field questions? That's just one meeting a year.
- 4.5. The perception of the police cover in Brackley is very poor, the communications that I currently get highlights lots going on in the north of the county and only fuels this issue to my residents. More targeted communications is essential for us.

- 4.6. Engagement with PCSO is vital and [our] PCSO is very good at staying in touch with me and building the relationship is key.
- 4.7. I can say that our PCSO does exactly that and has made me aware of everything going on in the area such as the bus at Harlestone Firs.
- 4.8. At least one member of the Neighbourhood Policing Team always attends - and provides valuable information to - our monthly meetings.
- 4.9. So many things have been highlighted tonight such as LIPS or alerts. Can this info be communicated to the group PLEASE?
- 4.10. It is all very well seeing the list of Police names on the web page, but the Parish have never met any of them! I invite the Police every year to our Parish Meeting and this year they said they would attend. We kept a slot open for them, but no one showed. I understand they may have been diverted, but I still have no idea why no one came!

There were lots of comments and questions about communications, and clearly it is fundamental to the PLR Scheme that there are good communications between PLRs and Northamptonshire Police / the OPFCC. Proper use of the Neighbourhood Alert system will facilitate the flow of information but establishing good local contacts will help build relationships. There needs to be clear information provided on things such as the expectations around attendance of uniformed officers at parish and town council meetings. The PLR Steering Group can take that forward and could produce a clear Guidance Note on it.

5. Rural v Urban Policing

- 5.1. To what extent across this evening's participants are we "rural" vs. "Urban"? It may help keep a focus.
- 5.2. All good for the Urban community - what about Rural. This is all big picture, very little relevance to the rural area this meeting should be split N&S to bring it closer to PLR.
- 5.3. The grants that have been received [by Northants Police] help the towns. Are there any areas which can be identified for grants to help the rural areas?
- 5.4. Totally agree on LOCAL focus: here in our locality, both SPEEDING and non-observance of the new Highway Code rules around passing horses etc safely (distance and speed) are VERY HIGH priority matters for ourselves - again in our RURAL (non-Urban) locality.
- 5.5. Relevance? How many folk on this call ARE RURAL vs. Urban... as some of these non-rural comments / activities are irrelevant to us!

There are 271 civil parishes in Northamptonshire. It is fully parished, so every single resident in the county is represented by a parish or town council. Similarly, the Neighbourhood Policing applies across the county, divided into eight police sectors (see maps at www.northantscalc.com/plr). The PLR Annual Conference is a countywide event and there were PLRs there from the smallest hamlets to the largest towns and the fundamentals of the PLR Scheme (e.g. use of Neighbourhood Alerts,

who is the local police team, etc) are the same regardless of the size of the community. Recognising the very different needs of rural versus urban it might be possible in the future to have more focused meetings, or thematic meetings (e.g. a meeting with the Rural Crime Team to understand more about its work) and the PLR Steering Group will take that forward. We want to strike the right balance between “local” and “strategic”.

6. Grant Funding

- 6.1. Are there any grants available to help with replacing old CCTV cameras? In Rothwell our cameras are so old they're not fit for purpose and desperately need replacing.
- 6.2. I appreciate the presentation will be shared but could other info please be shared such as more details on the grants, additional info on alerts and so on?

There are various grant programmes available from time to time, and these could usefully be shared via a Neighbourhood Alert message, or perhaps in a regular (quarterly? bi-monthly?) PLR “Bulletin”.

7. Fraud & Cyber Crime

- 7.1. How can we support initiatives on cybercrime and fraud prevention events, and are the police increasing teams as this now takes a significant % increase of crime?

Northamptonshire Police is resourcing these growing areas, and it is a good example of the sort of information that can be disseminated through PLRs to parish and town councils and onwards to the community via the council's web site and/or social media channels (if information is supplied in a ready-to-use format).

8. Local Police Contacts

- 8.1. How do we find out who our local police officer is and how to make contact?
- 8.2. How can we find out the names of the PCs and PCSOs allocated to our areas?

There is information on the Neighbourhood Police Teams at www.northantscalc.com/plr, and there is also a “Find your area” tool at <https://www.northants.police.uk>, which provides the names of the local team officers and a form for getting in touch. Many of the Neighbourhood Police Teams are on Twitter (as a team and sometimes as individual officers).

9. Locally Identified Priorities (LIPs)

- 9.1. The [LIP] questionnaire has 21 questions. Only one asks about crime categories. There is no feedback to users. It is repetitive and not seen as linking to value.

Appendix A

Locally Identified Priorities (LIPs) are used to allocate police resources to issues of concern, so it is vital that process to identify LIPs is robust and inclusive. The PLRs can play a useful role in promoting LIP surveys in their communities, but the survey must be clear, relevant, and meaningful. There should be feedback on the results. The PLR Steering Group doesn't directly control LIP surveys, but the comments from the meeting will be fed into the relevant team.