



## **COUNTER TERRORISM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT**

### **BACKGROUND**

GMPA is committed to improving public involvement in policing and community safety issues. The Authority is also proactive in communicating with the public.

One of GMPA's priorities (as highlighted in the GMPA strategic plan) is working together with partners to build safer communities. Through partnership working, GMPA is able to develop trust and confidence in the police with a wider audience.

The way particular issues are handled by the police and partner agencies can have a powerful impact on confidence and trust levels therefore it's crucial they are dealt with in way which is understood and supported by the people who are affected by those issues.

This project is based on one of those issues – Terrorism. Being in touch with communities and talking to them about counter terrorism issues helps agencies identify early signs and indications of any tensions, misunderstandings and mistrust which may exist between communities and the police/partner agencies.

Such tensions have the potential to lead, not just to an acceptance of certain ideologies linked to terrorism, but to other forms of hate crime and violent extremism so it's vital they are identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.

### **GMPA ACTION**

In 2008, a project was developed to engage communities on the issue of counter terrorism. GMPA's Community Engagement Team is delivering the project. It involves engagement, consultation and information/awareness-raising sessions with targeted sections of the community. The 18-month programme, which launched in October 2008, consists of:

- Two Greater Manchester-wide conferences designed to instigate an informed and sustained debate on counter terrorism highlighting key issues for the community.
- Involvement of young people in the production of an engagement and educational DVD resource.

- Delivering consultation and awareness-raising activities and events with sections of the community disproportionately affected by the impact and threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

These activities have been carefully planned with partner organisations and are being delivered wherever possible in collaboration with the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and GMP's Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Programme team. The project is being monitored by a working group of representatives. Specifically set up to oversee the co-ordination and delivery of the activities, this group has representatives from GMPA, GMP, the voluntary and community sectors and Strategic Independent Advisory Groups,

## **OUTCOMES**

The project has already raised the profile of GMPA amongst a number of communities within Greater Manchester. The final project report will make recommendations which will aim to improve the relationship and confidence between the community and police around counter terrorism issues and will lead to issues and concerns raised by the community throughout the project being addressed. The expected outcomes of the project also include:

- A DVD and educational resource. The events and activities completed to date have provided the opportunity for open discussion and debate to take place between communities and the Force and Authority.
- A variety of feedback will be received from Greater Manchester communities and it is expected that there will be ongoing engagement work identified through this project that will enable GMPA to be proactive and address new topics and issues brought up through this project.

During the period of the overall project, details of individuals across Greater Manchester who wish to take part in ongoing consultation and engagement on counter terrorism issues will be collated. This will result in a Greater Manchester panel of people who can be regularly accessed to monitor the impact of the project.