

***The MPA and MPS community engagement commitment
(Working title) 2010 - 2013***

**SUGGESTED OPENING STATEMENT - MPS COMMISSIONER, SIR PAUL STEPHENSON AND
MPA CHAIR, KIT MALTHOUSE**

An effective police service knows what its public require of it. It listens to and responds to those issues which affect and concern the public the most.

We at the MPA and the MPS believe that community engagement is about giving Londoners a say in how they are policed. We know that effective community engagement supports public assurance in the police and also ensures that the police are focusing on the policing concerns that concern Londoners the most.

This *“MPA and MPS Community Engagement Commitment”* builds on the MPS Policing Pledge and plans outlined in the MPA business plan, MET Forward. It lets Londoners know what they can expect of the MPA and MPS in regards to consultation and engagement. It lists a number of commitments explaining how we will improve and develop consultation and engagement activities.

WHY ARE WE MAKING THIS COMMITMENT TO LONDONERS?

The “MPA and MPS Community Engagement Commitment” explains how the MPA and MPS will improve how it listens to and respond to the needs of Londoners.

This “Community Engagement Commitment” is:

- For Londoners, those who live, work and visit the Capital, so that they know what to expect of the MPA and MPS in regards to communication, consultation and engagement;
- For the MPS so that there is a consistent and effective way of carrying out consultation and engagement at a ward, borough and central level; and finally
- For the MPA so that the consultation and engagement work carried out by the Police Authority adds value to the work of the MPS and the MPA is able to monitor the consultation and engagement work of the MPS.

Londoners have a variety of needs and requirements. Whilst this “Community Engagement Commitment” is relevant to all Londoners, not all of London’s 7.5 million residents will want to be involved in police consultation and engagement activities. Some will only want to be kept informed of their local police’s priorities, others may want to get involved in consultation activities, such as borough or ward surveys and finally some may want to become actively engaged by joining their local Safer Neighbourhoods Panel or their borough Community Police Engagement Group. This document will highlight the different opportunities available to Londoners and how we plan to work in the future, so that Londoners who want to have a say know how to do so at a local, borough or London-wide level.

Finally, we recognise that often the people we involve and engage are not always the ones with the greatest needs. We know that some Londoners are more likely to be listened to than others and that we are not reaching those Londoners, for example young people that we most need to involve and engage for example young people. The traditional methods of focus groups and public meetings often used by the MPA and MPS do not always attract a wide range of Londoners. In planning our communication, consultation and engagement work we will explore new and creative ways of involving and engaging people.

THE MPA AND MPS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Our commitment is based on the following five key principles:

1. Londoners will have clear information on how they can get involved in consultation and engagement opportunities. We will also ensure that consultation and engagement opportunities occur at the earliest and most appropriate stage to ensure that Londoners feedback can be considered in the development of MPA and MPS policies;
2. All consultation and engagement methods used by the MPS and the MPA– for example, Safer Neighbourhoods Panels, Community Police Engagement Groups, focus groups, surveys etc – will involve a wide range of Londoners, in terms of age, race, sexuality, gender (including transgender), disability and faith;
3. Londoners who get involved in MPA and MPS consultation and engagement groups, for example Safer Neighbourhoods Panels or Community Police Engagement Groups will receive support from the MPA and MPS so that they are able to carry out their responsibilities effectively;
4. When planning consultation and engagement activities, either at a local, central or regional level, where possible we will ensure that our work is carried out with partners;
5. Information gathered during MPA and MPS consultation and engagement activities will be shared with Londoners, across the MPS and MPA and used to inform policing.
6. To show to Londoners the benefits of taking part in consultation and engagement activities, the MPA and MPS will regularly provide feedback on how consultation and engagement activities have resulted in changes to policing policies.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

When we speak about community engagement we are referring to communication, consultation and engagement. We know that the words consultation and engagement mean different things to different people, however, in short when the MPA and MPS speak about consultation and engagement with Londoners we mean *'listening to and responding to the needs of the public.'*

We also know that communicating with Londoners, in other words providing information to Londoners on what we are doing and why we are doing it informs public confidence. Research tells us that people who are well informed about local policing have more confidence in their local police. Therefore we recognise that communicating with Londoners, using a variety of methods and different media is a key part of the community engagement process.

Finally, this *"Community Engagement Commitment"* is not only about the formal consultation and engagement activities which the MPA and the MPS carry out or support, for example, surveys, Safer Neighbourhoods Panels and focus groups. We know that each and every contact between a member of the public and a police officer has an impact, in other words every encounter the public have with the police influences their opinion of the police service as a whole. We also know that public perceptions of the police are formed from this day to day contact and not simply influenced by formal MPA and MPS consultation and engagement activities. Therefore we will ensure that all our contact with Londoners - whether it is via informal day to day contact or through focus groups and other consultation methods - is consistent, useful and relevant to the needs of Londoners.

WHY IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPORTANT IN POLICING?

Consultation and engagement is key to the MPS Policing Pledge. The MPS Policing Pledge sets out the standards of service that Londoners can expect from it. A few of the main Pledge commitments refer directly to communication, consultation and engagement.

Consultation and engagement is also a Met Forward strand of work. Met Forward is the MPA's mission statement for London's police. It sets out how the MPA wants the MPS to develop and perform to improve services, provide better value for money and fight crime. How the MPA will improve its communication, consultation and engagement is outlined in the Met Connect section of Met Forward.

In developing the *"Community Engagement Commitment"* the MPA and MPS have ensured that the commitments outlined in this paper have linkages with both the MPS Policing Pledge and Met Forward.

Monitoring the consultation and engagement work of the MPS is an essential MPA requirement. Police Authorities have to ensure that police services are consulting and engaging with their communities. Police Authorities must also ensure that communities have a say in the police priority setting processes and that communities have a say in how policing is delivered in their areas.

Consultation and engagement is not just an MPA responsibility, it is also an important part of the work of the MPA. It is only by listening to Londoners that we will know what they require from us and we in turn can ensure the police are responding to the crime and anti-social behaviour concerns which concern Londoners the most.

Consultation and engagement is also key to the work of the MPS. Consultation and engagement between the public and the police:

- Strengthens community and police relations;
- Strengthens community cohesion;
- Reduces fear of crime and increases feelings of safety;
- Improves confidence in the police service;
- Builds trust;
- Ensures that the police are responding to those issues which affect and concern the public the most; and finally,
- Enables the public to understand the role of the police and policing complexities and demands.

WHAT DO WE ALREADY KNOW?

In developing the “*Community Engagement Commitment*” we looked at a range of national and regional research. Research highlighted:

- Consultation and engagement should not be done for its own sake and that it is only worth doing if it is a) done well and b) if it helps to make difference to policing. With our new commitment we will ensure that our consultation and engagement activities have a clear purpose and that we are able to demonstrate how the consultation and engagement activities will inform policing.
- That whilst we may plan consultation and engagement activities at a borough or ward level, Londoners do not always think in terms of borough or ward boundaries. Their policing concerns may be linked to their interest groups (for example Friends of the Earth), their communities or the faith groups they are part of or identify with.
- That our consultation and engagement expectations and requirements may differ from Londoners. For example, some Londoners may only be interested in being involved in activities that are local to them, whilst other may only be interested in taking part in London-wide events such as the MPA London Debate on terrorism. To ensure that Londoners can take part in consultation and engagement activities that are important to them we are committed to ensuring that a variety of consultation and engagement methods are made available to Londoners and that Londoners are aware how they can take part;
- Effective partnership working is supported by coordinating consultation and engagement activities at a local and if possible London wide level. However working together does not mean that all MPA and MPS activities will be carried out jointly with partners. It does mean that the MPA and MPS will share information and cooperate with partners where it is practical to do so. Where available, the MPA and

MPS will share information, on planned consultation and engagement activities in the year ahead with partners.

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THE MPA AND CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The MPA has a number of ways to communicate, consult and engage with individuals, groups and communities. These include:

- Community Police Engagement Groups;
- Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups;
- The annual policing priorities consultation;
- The MPA website which has approximately 272, 000 hits each month;
- The MPA monthly e-zine MPA Direct, which is sent out to key stakeholders;
- The annual Local Policing Summaries communication exercise;
- Specific consultations for the annual MPA scrutiny programme; and finally,
- Committee meetings, the majority of which are open to members of the public.

The Independent Custody Visitor programme, the Community Police Engagement Groups and the Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups are also examples of how the MPA actively engages Londoners to support its monitoring work of the MPS.

We know that we need to better publicise and explain the work carried out by MPA groups, (Community Police Engagement Groups, Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups and Independent Custody Visitors) so that Londoners who are interested in joining these groups know how to contact them and get involved in the work they do.

We recognise, however, that these opportunities, though wide-ranging do

not reach all Londoners and that we need to have additional and innovative ways to involve and engage Londoners, particularly young people, Black and Ethnic Minority communities, new and emerging communities; local businesses; victims and witnesses and faith groups.

We also need to ensure that our consultation and engagement activities are held at accessible locations and at times of the day which allow for a maximum attendance. Finally, we need to use a range of methods – focus groups; on line surveys; street briefings etc – so that Londoners who want to get involved are able to do so by choosing a method that is convenient to their needs and requirements.

THE MPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the last decade there has been a considerable transformation in the way the MPS has consulted and engaged with Londoners. This has included the introduction of Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, the creation of corporate Independent Advisory Groups to provide specialist advice, the establishment of 630 Safer Neighbourhoods panels allowing the MPS to consult at a localised level and the introduction of community liaison officers.

In addition to the examples listed above the MPS also:

- Has 173 youth panels either at a ward or multi ward level;
- Runs an annual on-line youth survey (In 2009 31,000 young people completed the survey);
- Carries out a quarterly Public Attitude Survey which involves 20,000 Londoners;
- Manages an extensive London wide youth engagement programme, which includes Kickz and the Met Youth Cadets; and finally,
- Undertakes targeted consultation and engagement activities to inform the work of Specialist Directorates.

The above are only a few examples of the numerous activities undertaken by the MPS at a ward, borough or London wide level.

In addition, research indicates that the MPS must enhance its current consultation and engagement further. In particular it needs to:

- Recognise that the public do not differentiate between Safer Neighbourhoods, Police Community Support Officers, and other police in their local areas and therefore how all officers communicate, consult and engage with Londoners has an impact on how the service is seen as a whole.
- Ensure that consultation and engagement does not become the sole domain of Safer Neighbourhoods. Consultation and engagement should be seen as the responsibility of all policing teams regardless of their role.
- Consultation and engagement is key to delivering a policing service that meets the needs of Londoners. Therefore effective communication, consultation and engagement will help to support the delivery of the MPS Policing Pledge and the confidence target.

WHAT YOU TOLD US?

To ensure our community engagement commitment meets with Londoners needs we looked at a range of research and asked Londoners what they want from the MPA and MPS in regards to consultation and engagement.

The following section of the “*Community Engagement Commitment*” is in three parts:

- What Londoners require of the MPA in regards to communication, consultation and engagement;
- What Londoners require of the MPS in regards to communication, consultation and engagement;
- What Londoners require of both organisations.

What you told us in regards to the MPA:

- The MPA must have a direct relationship with Londoners;
- Londoners need to better understand the role and responsibilities of the MPA;
- The MPA needs to make better use of Community Police Engagement Groups and ensure that they are working with other consultation and engagement groups in their wards and boroughs;
- More information should be provided about the roles of the various MPA consultation and engagement groups;
- MPA Members should support the consultation and engagement work of the MPA.

What you told us in regards to the MPS:

- The police can't be everywhere. Londoners are the eyes and ears of the police;
- The police should respond to those issues which affect and concern Londoners the most.
- Only by communicating and consulting with Londoners will the police be aware of what its communities require of it;
- Effective consultation and engagement increases police intelligence;
- Londoners need to better understand what they can expect of the MPS;
- Londoners need to have a better understanding of police powers and policing methods;
- Safer Neighbourhoods Panels should be kept better informed of central priorities and concerns;
- The MPS should explore how information from Safer Neighbourhoods Panel meetings can be shared with other policing teams and partners;
- The MPS needs to explain the rationale behind the policing operations they undertake in boroughs and across the Capital; and finally,
- The MPS should provide crime prevention and community safety advice.

What you told us in regards to the MPA and MPS:

- The MPS and MPA needs confident leadership in regards to consultation and engagement;
- The MPA and MPS must inform Londoners why a consultation and engagement activity is taking place;
- Londoners must be given opportunities to inform broader policy decisions and not just local ones;
- The MPS and MPA need to use a variety of mechanisms to publicise and inform Londoners about local and London wide priorities and concerns;
- The MPA and MPS must be open about what it can and cannot do;
- The MPA and MPS needs to consult and engage with a range of different individuals, groups and communities;
- Information on what works in regards to consultation and engagement should be shared widely within the MPS, with the MPA and local partners.
- Existing community engagement and consultation groups such as Safer Neighbourhoods Panels and Community Police Engagement Groups should be representative of their communities;
- Community engagement and consultation groups such as Safer Neighbourhoods Panels and Community Police Engagement Groups should be aware of the work being done by other consultation and engagement groups in their boroughs;
- The MPS and MPA needs to coordinate its consultation and engagement activities locally.

HOW WE WILL WORK DIFFERENTLY

Having listened to Londoners we must now demonstrate how we will use this information to work differently. We also asked you for your suggestions on what we could be doing and looked at a range of research to identify ways forward

Below we outline:

- How the MPA will now work differently;
- How the MPS will now work differently; and finally,
- How both organisations will now work differently?

How the MPA will work differently:

- Ensure information on upcoming public meetings of Community Police Engagement Groups is available on the MPA website and via other communication mechanisms used by the MPA;
- Look at the support and training needs of MPA funded groups and explore how good and promising practice from effective groups can be used to improve all groups;
- Ensure that MPA Members in their link members role are proactively communicating with and consulting with Londoners about policing in their boroughs;
- Use a range of communication methods to ensure Londoners are more aware of the role of the MPA not only in terms of its monitoring role but also in regards to its consultation and engagement work.

How the MPS will work differently:

- Improve our understanding of all of London's communities and use this information to improve our consultation and engagement work;
- Ensure information from Safer Neighbourhoods Panel meetings is shared with the wider communities they represent;
- Ensure information on local policing priorities is shared between MPS supported groups (Safer Neighbourhoods Panels, MPS Youth Panels and corporate and borough based Independent Advisory Groups) in order that there is a borough wide understanding of local policing concerns and activities taking place to address these;
- Ensure corporate consultation and engagement activities are coordinated centrally to avoid a duplication of consultation and engagement activities;
- Ensure that police intelligence and information held by individual Safer Neighbourhoods teams is shared with other Safer Neighbourhoods teams and local police teams in each borough and across boroughs;
- Provide relevant information to Londoners on policing powers/methods when planning consultation and engagement activities;
- Ensure that MPS communication materials have information on topical concerns, for example, policing powers in regards to public protests.

How both organisations will work differently?

We will:

- Identify MPA and MPS Community Engagement champions who will ensure the actions arising from the *“Community Engagement Commitment”* are delivered by the organisations;
- Ensure that when Londoners take part in MPA and MPS consultation and engagement activities they are told why the activity is taking place and how consultation and engagement has been used previously by the MPA and MPS to inform policy and service provision ;
- Use a variety of methods and media to provide feedback on what has been achieved as a result of Londoners involvement in consultation and engagement activities;
- Provide information on the MPA and MPS websites and via other communication mechanisms about the roles of the MPA and MPS consultation and engagement groups such as Community Police Engagement Groups and Safer Neighbourhoods Panels and how these support the work of the MPA and MPS;
- Ensure MPA and MPS consultation and engagement groups liaise with and work together where relevant in order to avoid duplication and provide a consistent response across boroughs:
- Assess and review the work of MPA and MPS consultation and engagement groups to ensure there is no duplication of efforts;
- Work towards ensuring all MPA and MPS consultation and engagement groups can support where possible the work of partners, such as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. We need to make sure that their expertise is used and reflected in the development of borough based crime and disorder reduction partnership plans;
- Make a commitment to only consult and engage with Londoners when there is an opportunity for Londoners to influence and change decisions and services;
- Work together to collate consultation and engagement examples of promising and/or good practice and ensure that this information is disseminated and used within the MPA and MPS;
- Involve a wide range of Londoners in terms of age, race, sexuality, gender (including transgender), disability and faith in all its consultation and engagement activities, including Safer Neighbourhood panels, MPS Youth Panels, Independent Advisory Groups and Key Individual Networks;
- Coordinate all MPA and MPS consultation and engagement locally as effective partnership working is crucial for community engagement;
- Encourage involvement by using consultation and engagement methods that are convenient for Londoners, including new media where possible and relevant.

HOW WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE MET OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITMENT?

This “*Community Engagement Commitment*” outlines how we want to improve our consultation and engagement work. How this will be done is can be found in two action plans which are available at www.mpa.gov.uk

The action plans outline how each of the issues listed in the commitment will be taken forward by the MPA and MPS. The MPA has a responsibility to consult and engage with Londoners and scrutinise the consultation and engagement work of the MPS. Therefore action plans will be monitored by the MPA Communities Equalities and People Committee and also by the **XXXXX at the MPS**.

We will know that this commitment has made a difference, when:

- A wide range of Londoners begin taking part in MPA and MPS consultation and engagement activities;
- Local consultation and engagement groups, such as Safer Neighbourhoods Panels and Community Police Engagement Groups are working together and sharing information;
- MPA and MPS consultation and engagement groups are more representative of the communities they represent;
- The MPA and MPS where possible work with partners on local and London wide consultation and engagement activities;
- Londoners are more likely to consider that the police are listening to, understand and are dealing with the issues affecting their communities; and finally,
- The MPA and MPS are able to consistently demonstrate how consultation and engagement has contributed to and made a difference to policing.

USEFUL LINKS

- For more information on **Met Cadets** please visit, http://www.met.police.uk/cadets/news_stories.html
- For more information on **Kickz** please visit, <http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/our-schemes/kickz/>
- For more information on the **MPS Policing Pledge** please visit, www.met.police.uk.
- For more information on **MET Forward** please visit, www.mpa.gov.uk.
- To find out how you can get involved in the work of the MPA funded **community police engagement groups** please visit, <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/partnerships/cpeg/>
- To find out how you can get involved in the work of your local **Safer Neighbourhoods Panel** please visit, <http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods/involved.htm>
- To find out how you can become an **Independent Visitor** please visit <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/partnerships/icv/>
- To learn more about the work of the **Specialist Crime Directorates** please visit, <http://www.met.police.uk/scd/index.htm>
- To learn more about the role of **MPA Members** please visit, <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/about/people/>
- To learn more about the work of the **MPA** please visit <http://www.mpa.gov.uk/about/>
- To find out more about crime in your area please visit <http://maps.met.police.uk/>