



Safer Neighbourhoods Communications and Marketing Strategy – June 2006

About this strategy

Effective communication is essential in meeting our corporate ambitions and values. Establishing simple and efficient channels of communication that allow the spread of information and feedback across the whole of the organisation, with Londoners and their communities, partners, opinion formers and stakeholders, is a challenge that this strategy seeks to answer.

This strategy supports the Metropolitan Police Service Corporate Communications Strategy in that it aims to:

- Strengthen public confidence, trust and reassurance through the communication of balanced and accurate messages;
- Improve public perception and satisfaction about the work of the MPS;
- Encourage changes in peoples behaviour and attitudes;
- Improve staff effectiveness, morale and performance.

Safer Neighbourhoods communication activity will wherever possible address and reflect the key findings and recommendations from the Safer London Panel research 'Communication Matters' that was carried out in January 2006. The research was commissioned by the MPA and MPS to capture people's experiences and perceptions of, and attitudes to, the provision of information and communication by the police. The report will guide communicators to deliver information how and when the public want to receive it enhancing community engagement, increasing understanding, confidence and reassurance and improving public perception and satisfaction of the work of the MPS.

Safer Neighbourhoods communications will reinforce key corporate messages in a co-ordinated and sustained way. Good, effective, engaging communication will help to understand the fears, concerns and aspirations of Londoners and MPS staff. Therefore, the objectives of this strategy will ensure that:

- Londoners are aware of how the MPS is detecting and preventing crime and working to improve quality of life;
- London is perceived and seen as a safe and desirable place to live, work, visit and do business in;
- All staff are aware of their responsibility for effective communication and how this impacts on service delivery and improvement;
- All MPS employees have the right information at the right time to do their job;
- Opinion formers and stakeholders have a greater understanding of the challenging environment in which we operate.

This Safer Neighbourhoods communications and marketing strategy will apply the principles of the MPS and will positively contribute to the ambition and vision to make London the safest major city in the world.

Effective communication in all senses is the essential ingredient to delivering increased reassurance and public confidence in the police. It is not an add-on.

The strategy itself continues to be a practical and pragmatic document about delivering important messages in the best and most user-friendly way. It will be important that the **tone of voice** throughout all our communication is supportive, positive, authoritative but perhaps most importantly realistic.

In line with the Corporate Communication Strategy and in support of the Communications Matters findings, the overriding principles of this strategy will:

- Put effective, **proactive**, citizen-focussed communication at the heart of everything that is done to promote SN outcomes;
- Make communication everyone's responsibility;
- Encourage open, honest, accountable, constructive, two-way dialogue to inform, influence, engage, listen to and consult with all internal and external customers;
- Ensure all information is communicated in an honest, professional, accurate, targeted and timely manner to both internal and external audiences;
- Ensure that information reaches target audiences in the most appropriate way, making special efforts to include traditionally "hard to reach" groups and those internal and external customers who have "special needs";
- Maintain a culture of communication (both politically and managerially) up, down and across the organisation as a fundamental part of good leadership;
- Ensure the MPS promotes a consistent corporate identity and image.

Background to the Safer Neighbourhoods programme

Since April 2004, the Safer Neighbourhoods programme has advanced across London in all 32 boroughs. As of April 2006 all 630 teams will be in place and will be brought up to strength by the end of the calendar year.

SN teams have already attracted much positive public, not to mention political, comment.

The full roll out gives a total workforce of 3,744 officers who will be supported by other parts of the MPS. The chief role of the SN team is to provide a local, engaging, visible, accessible and familiar police service that finds lasting partnership-based solutions to local problems. They also:

- Enhance public reassurance through high visibility
- Create stronger community and partner links by being more familiar
- Enhance accessibility for the public
- Focus on solving the problems of local communities (commonly visible anti-social behaviour)
- Enhance crime investigation, detection and intelligence gathering

Early caution to promote the programme, which was key to its introduction, has faded with the appointment of Sir Ian Blair as the new Commissioner of the Metropolis. The programme remains high on his personal agenda and it will help to change the face of service delivery in the Met in the coming years – certainly over the course of Sir Ian's commissionership.

Safer Neighbourhoods continues to embark on a sustained programme of proactive communication activity. Every possible publicity opportunity linked to the SN programme – whether local or corporate – will be taken and proactive communication should become the overriding consideration to communicators at all levels. The focus moving forward is to proactively publicise (both internally and externally) the successes of SN and the visible differences teams are making in their communities.

1. Corporate Branding

A SN logo has been produced by the Directorate of Public Affairs and should be used in accordance with brand guidelines. All SN communicators should be aware of the guidelines and fully endorse them. A full explanation of the new corporate brand guidelines (including specific use of the SN/MPS logos) can be found at the Corporate One Stop Shop on the intranet.

All SN communications – whether internal or external – should be accompanied by the SN and MPS logos, used in accordance with brand guidelines.

The brand guidelines make clear the relationship between the MPS and SN logos. They make clear how the two logos should be used on:

- MPS fleet
- MPS properties and facilities
- Merchandise (pens, pencils, key rings etc)
- Stationary (letterheads, compliments slips)
- PR materials (presentation slides, webpage templates, posters, leaflets, contact cards, display stands)

They also make clear how sponsor logos should be used on PR materials and how to deal with partner brands (such as CDRP logos). As an extension to these guidelines, the following has been accepted:

- If the issue to be communicated is primarily police-led or operationally a police issue, then MPS/SN branding should be used (i.e. on a flyer promoting a street roll call)
- If the issue to be communicated is partnership delivered, then any partnership branding may be used with (where appropriate) textual reference made to the use of Safer Neighbourhoods teams. If a local authority logo is used, then the MPS logo should be too, without the SN logo (i.e. a CDRP newsletter).

SN branding will assist each neighbourhood team to enhance their presence – and profile – in the community. An acutely political programme, the branding of Safer Neighbourhoods will visibly show Londoners how their money is being spent. It will also give corporate consistency and will foster support for the programme.

In order to assist local communicators and SN sergeants achieve the desired corporate consistency, a series of templates has been developed and is available on the Forms database on the intranet. These forms allow local staff and officers to create:

- Four page A5 and one or two page A4 newsletters
- A4 posters to publicise the contact details of local teams
- A4 posters to publicise local team activity.

On each of the templates corporate branding has been set for convenience and ease of use.

Merchandise to support local SN initiatives is available for teams to purchase from their marketing budget. Items can be personalised with the team's contact details making these items a key communication and engagement tool that provides easier access to team contact details.

Merchandise to support local SN initiatives has been purchased by the central SN communications team and distributed equally between all 32 boroughs. Pens, pencils, pads, balloons, stickers and carrier bags have been produced in sufficient quantities for each of the Step Change funded teams (currently 256).

The central SN communications team in collaboration with Events and Income Development Unit is actively pursuing sponsorship opportunities for the benefit of local communicators and SN teams.

2. Internal Communication

A positive leadership style is the key to delivering the SN programme both corporately and locally. The Commissioner consistently reinforces the corporate position of the SN programme, which places it at the heart of his plans for policing London.

Negative attitudes about a perceived return to local community or sector policing should be vigorously rejected. The initial success of the SN programme relies in part on all staff being made fully aware of the difference between previous regimes and the new SN concept.

The continuing objective internally is to ensure all staff are aware of the purpose and objectives of the SN programme. This will help to overcome cynicism, promote the benefits of growth, encourage applications to the SN teams and enable the two-way communication of corporate messages and the sharing of feedback, successes and good practice.

Senior managers have been appointed to drive-forward the SN agenda in each BOCU. Positive leadership style is the key to successful delivery of the SN programme locally, whether internally or externally, and should be adopted in every B/OCU across the organisation.

Effective communication is vital if we are to ensure that our workforce is properly informed about Safer Neighbourhoods. All internal communication should raise awareness, understanding and involvement among all staff about the programme and the overall aim should be to: **provide the right information, to the right people, at the right time.**

Internal key messages

1. Safer Neighbourhoods officers are ring-fenced to provide dedicated community-based policing through increased engagement, visibility, accessibility and familiarity.
2. Safer Neighbourhoods staff provide “added value” to staff in other units, teams or departments. Over time we anticipate higher police visibility leading to enhanced feelings of public safety, reduced crime and disorder, and hence a reduction in calls to police and partners. Increased confidence in policing will lead to an improved volume of intelligence that will drive improvements in other areas of crime investigations, including major crime.
3. Local officers and PCSOs work together **with** the community, identifying local priorities for tackling crime and disorder in the area.
4. Safer Neighbourhoods teams build confidence and public reassurance in London, so people feel safer in their neighbourhood.
5. National security depends on neighbourhood security. That is why Safer Neighbourhoods teams will gather intelligence to support Specialist Operations and Specialist Crime Directorate.
6. It is the aim of the entire MPS – not just officers and staff in SN teams - to promote public reassurance at all possible times.

Other internal key messages will arise in an ad-hoc fashion as the programme fully rolls out. Updated messages will be added to the Safer Neighbourhoods Intranet site.

Tools for delivery

- A corporate CD-Rom has been produced to reinforce the programme's key internal messages. As well as providing a basic understanding of SN the CD-Rom will seek to inform non-SN staff – particularly those undertaking roles in response teams, CID and BIUs – of the benefits of having SN teams in each borough. Delivery of the CD-Rom to all borough staff should be through a series of presentations chaired by a manager/senior manager. The SN SMT lead will be accountable for ensuring this process of communication is delivered to every member of staff within their borough. Training notes will be provided as a guide to managers.
- Borough-based communications staff (such as media relations officers, communications officers or BPLOs) are an important resource to the SN programme and as such will be supported by the SN team corporately. SN teams should rely on the internal communications support that locally-based communications staff can provide.
- A one-stop-shop for SN staff has been established as an online toolkit. The Safer Neighbourhoods Intranet site gives staff the ability to search for advice, suggestions and good practice about engagement and problem solving processes. SN teams are also required to submit monthly data via the site, together with areas of good practice. The site will also heavily promote strategic (corporate) messages that BOCUs should adopt in any of their local communications. Linked to the site will be the Safer Neighbourhoods forum, which allows SN staff across the borough to connect with each other and openly discuss relevant issues.
- A communications forum involving staff from BOCU press offices, the Directorate of Public Affairs, Safer Neighbourhoods Unit, Government Affairs Unit and Step Change Programme meet regularly to discuss forthcoming events, prioritise and identify cross-over in workloads and agree common themes and key messages. Use of other Met communication methods – such as The Job, Corporate and Good News on the intranet – will also be considered at these meetings.
- Regular forums of SN sergeants, BOCU SMT leads, BPLO/CAPROs and borough commanders allow for strategic, borough and neighbourhood-level best practice to be shared across London.
- The Job is a key way to communicate local good news and corporate-level information about the SN programme, as well as the intranet corporate and good news sections. Equally, it is recommended that borough intranet publishers consider establishing local SN pages on borough websites to internally promote their activities.
- Well-managed notice boards are a fundamental way in which to convey good news and messages locally. It is recommended that every SN team has access to a designated notice board in their BOCU HQ.
- Email newsletters and messages from BOCU commanders should include references to SN officers and their successes.
- The central SN communications team has established a Safer Neighbourhoods helpdesk, providing the organisation with a one-stop phone number for staff to call with SN-related enquiries.

Further actions at corporate, borough and ward level are contained in the associated Communications Action Plan, which breaks down the communication requirements at each level.

3. External Communication – General

All Londoners are now paying for SN following an increase in the policing element of the Council Tax in recent years. Experience shows that this issue – particularly in neighbourhoods where a SN team is yet to be fully staffed – causes some public disquiet. In turn, in some areas the SN programme can attract political attention. For this reason, all MPS staff should remember the non-political nature of the organisation, particularly when dealing with political parties during election periods. Secondly, care should be taken by BOCUs in the tone of voice in all borough-wide external communication.

BOCUs are encouraged to invest in local press and public relations handling and in particular should seek to employ local press and PR officers to assist with Safer Neighbourhoods (and other BOCU) work. Similarly, the SN programme team also encourages BOCUs to carefully consider the role of existing borough-based communications staff to ensure adequate proactive media and PR support is given to SN staff.

BOCUs should fully appreciate that promotion of SN is **not** simply about investing in local media relations. Whilst this is important to the programme, SN teams also require practical public relations assistance – such as producing newsletters, email updates, posters, leaflets or arranging open days. In 2005/06 every SN team received a local PR and marketing budget of £1.5k to pay for ad hoc local publicity materials. Though locally held by F&R managers, this budget will require quarterly spending returns to be completed and submitted to the SN central team to account to the GLA and MPA the use of the budget.

It is important that Safer Neighbourhoods is not seen as an add-on to normal borough police work. Therefore, BOCUs are not required to write a separate communication or media strategy to accommodate Safer Neighbourhoods in their area. Instead, existing strategies and plans should be reviewed and if necessary rewritten to include many of the points raised within this corporate strategy. Safer Neighbourhoods must be seen as integral to the normal delivery of communication across the BOCU and Service, not separate to it. However, aspects from this pan-London strategy should be borrowed freely and incorporated locally.

Tools for delivery

- The last British Crime Survey stated that, of all people who read a local newspaper, 44% formed their opinion of local policing issues from what was written. Local reporters and photographers are therefore influential in communicating SN successes widely in the community. Thus, the Service's newly revised media strategy provides SN sergeants with the ability to speak directly with the media about proactive policing issues in their neighbourhood. This reinforces the importance this strategy places on local media relations and handling. It is desirable that SN sergeants seek guidance from their local communications officers (BPLOs or CAPROs) so the exact parameters of the BOCU media strategy is understood at neighbourhoods level. Pan-London issues should be referred to BPLOs who will use existing arrangements to promote local SN stories to national, Sunday, specialist and ethnic minority media.
- Care needs to be taken when evaluating the outcomes of SN programme in boroughs – particularly via the media. Crime reduction alone is not the currency of effective Safer Neighbourhoods policing. Indeed, intelligence gathering, effective engagement, tackling visible anti-social behaviour and effective local communications with communities are all as important. Further, through the use of dedicated Safer Neighbourhoods analysts and researchers, it is desirable to use only corporately produced data about local SN team activity. Even then disclosure of data by way of percentage increases/decreases only

should be avoided. It is a feature of local SN activity that very small changes in crime level can give very large but misleading percentage changes.

- The central SN communications team, in consultation with the DPA, will be responsible for external corporate media relations and publicity campaigns aimed at Londoners.
- Regularly updated key messages about the Safer Neighbourhoods programme the SN central team will be added to the SN Intranet site and will be promoted internally on a monthly basis. BOCU communicators should ensure that these messages are used in their local publicity when communicating the SN programme.
- The central SN communications team will provide a series of communications toolkits and checklists to be made available to BOCU communications staff. This will aid communication activity locally and will ensure corporate consistency of key messages.
- Corporately branded newsletter and poster templates have been developed for use by SN teams and BOCU communications staff. These should be used wherever possible locally. The central SN communications team will work with DPA on set of comprehensive guidelines for sergeants and BOCU communicators on how to produce a newsletter. Advice will be given on both content and style to address key points highlighted in the Safer London Panel Communications Matters research and ensure corporate branding is adhered to.
- External webpages more effectively promoting the work of SN teams and providing a platform for local policing successes will be established. These will be post-code driven and will require BOCU-level and ward-based content to be regularly populated.
- Establish effective links with communications staff in partner agencies. Local authorities particularly have bigger marketing/PR budgets than BOCUs, so all opportunities to jointly promote CDRP/community safety are exploited.
- Use the public in the promotion of SN team successes. SN sergeants should identify key individuals who will talk-up the work of the SN team as a critical friend. This will be useful in dealing with the media in particular, but also possibly other community members who may be sceptical at first of team activity. MPA link members may be used in the promotion of local events and news stories about Safer Neighbourhoods.
- Devise an external events/PR calendar of events where SN can be promoted. PR materials should be produced to support these events and heighten the profile of local teams and the programme locally.

External key messages

1. Safer Neighbourhoods teams provide a local, engaging, visible, accessible and familiar police service that finds lasting partnership-based solutions to local problems.
2. Safer Neighbourhoods teams work with the community and partners to identify local problems, undertake positive street policing, and find lasting solutions. Officers and PCSOs in Safer Neighbourhoods teams are dedicated to working in the community. They are additional to other police units and are on-hand to work solely in the community to increase public reassurance and help make people feel safer within their neighbourhoods.
3. National security depends on neighbourhood security. That is why Safer Neighbourhoods teams will gather intelligence to support Specialist Operations and Specialist Crime Directorate.

4. Every neighbourhood in London has a dedicated team. These teams will be the fundamental building block of the MPS and a visible manifestation of a positive change in the way policing is delivered in London.
5. The SN programme has the backing of the GLA, the MPA and is being led from the very top of the MPS.

Further actions at corporate, borough and ward level are contained on the associated Communications Action Plan, which breaks down the communication requirements at each level.

4. Internal/External Communication – Key Opinion Formers

We will proactively market SN. It is therefore important to remain strategic and politically aware, keeping key opinion formers (KOFs) updated at every stage (i.e. members of the GLA, the MPA, Chief Executives, the Home Office and Government)

Whilst the **key messages** outlined above will remain true for KOFs, it will become increasingly important to provide these individuals with relevant and managed data supporting the rollout of the scheme. We will achieve such briefings through paper-based and online newsletters and also through face-to-face meetings at regular times.

The associated stakeholders document outlines the way in which we will liaise with key opinion formers both internally and externally. In broad terms, the SNP team will communicate with the following external audience categories:

- Category 1 – Home Office, MPA, GLA, Ministers
- Category 2 – Other police forces & those in the criminal justice system
- Category 4 – Media, hard to hear groups, minority groups
- Category 5 – staff unions, Pol Fed, ACPO, Supts Association and MPS change managers

The majority of the communication with the above categories will be via paper-based or electronic briefing materials although some face-to-face briefings may take place, particularly in category one.

BOCU commanders, their SMT leads or nominated officers will be required to communicate with the following external audience categories, providing regular, local updates about the delivery of the SNP in their borough/wards:

- Category 3 – local councillors, local authority managers, CDRPs, community groups, CPCGs
- Category 4 – hard to hear groups, minority groups, the media

In these areas, BOCUs will be required to establish their own mechanisms for regularly communicating with partners within these categories. What is vital is that positive communication – in whatever form it takes – happens soon after the establishment of SNTs on each ward.

Tools for delivery

- The central SN communications team will establish ways of communicating with particular stakeholder groups. Further, this team will set-up effective **communication partnerships** with external agencies that support the Safer Neighbourhoods programme. Professional ties with the Home Office, 10 Downing Street, the Office Deputy Prime Minister, GLA, GOL and Mayor's Office will strengthen close co-operation and greatly enhance the way the programme is discussed and used (internally and externally) in such influential organisations.

5. E-Communications

The central SN communications team will produce a strategy around the use of e-communications in enhancing and delivering community engagement and internal and external communication. It will also address the dissemination of information across the SN unit to improve communication and enhance the online resource of information, news and good practice available to all SN staff aiding them in carrying out their role and ability to communicate the key SN messages.

The SN e-communications strategy will be developed in conjunction with and support the overall MPS strategy on e-communications, to provide targets that progress e-communications both in the unit and the organisation as whole.

6. Evaluation

A process for measuring and evaluating all SN communication will be reviewed by the SN communications team in order to:

- Measure the impact and effectiveness of the various communication methods
- Ensure communication methods and content is addressing the key findings of the Communication Matters report, and is adhering to this strategy and corporate branding
- Use the evaluation to improve communication channels and achieve the aims and objectives of this strategy

Suggested methods to measure and evaluate are through feedback, focus groups, dip sampling, informal contacts, formal and informal surveys, the consultation processes, and monitoring communication.

The 2005 Spot the Difference publicity campaign was evaluated in 2006. The findings from this research will be used to take forward and improve the next SN publicity campaign in 06/07.