# Metropolitan Police Estate Engagement Strategy

# Engagement Strategy

## 1.1: Overall approach
The engagement strategy is built around four key elements:

- **Objective:** generate local support for changes in a particular borough to avoid one change in one borough undermining the implementation of the overall estate strategy for London

- **Strategy:** 'Engage' in four stages:
    1. **Test evidence** –  understand the local situation and previous views on the borough's Asset Management Plan (AMP)
    2. **Communicate** – face-to-face with key stakeholders and targeted media
    3. **Act** – Review feedback and make changes accordingly if appropriate
    4. **Evaluate success** -  through positive/negative media scores and changes in perception of the proposals amongst key stakeholders

- **Tactics:** Undertake an 'Engagement Challenge' prior to implementing a bespoke borough engagement plan comprising an evidence-based campaign, focusing on key influencers fit for purpose for each borough (more details below).

- **Timetable:** The timetable will be dictated by the implementation of the Estate Strategy and final    AMPs for each borough which are yet to be finalised.

The following 'holding' key message should be common to all boroughs. This should be supplemented in each borough with borough specific messages as and when the AMP is agreed. The key messages should be set in the context of perceptions of policing in that borough addressing concerns identified from the analysis of relevant data.

*'We are committed to improving policing in your borough by modernising the facilities we provide for your neighbourhood. To do this we may need to move some of the police functions in your area to improved and more central locations.  This will help us to respond to your needs in the most effective way we can.'*

The London-wide message needs to be delivered by the MPA only when the Estate Strategy has been updated and it is in a position to answer the questions that will inevitably be raised. The MPA needs to support the local plans by:

- A **Borough Focus programme** starting with the prioritised boroughs and delivering the following (a) Ensure that the stakeholder database is in place (b) MPA members, led by the link members to meet key stakeholders in the borough as a part of a visit (c) As part of this meet the key local media (d) Produce tailored briefings for the top 100 community leaders in the borough.
- **Monthly e-newsletters** to the top 100 opinion formers in each borough explaining the role of the MPA and highlighting relevant news
- **A monthly news story about the need to update the Met** and what is being done using examples of work underway and providing a wider context to local changes.
- It is important that the **MPA's strategy is properly communicated to the internal audiences within the MPA, MPS and wider GLA family**. As frontline staff are in constant contact with members of the public they will need to be advocates of the proposal and be able to articulate it properly. This will require a face-to-face briefing by senior officers to staff at the onset of the process, followed by regular briefings to keep staff in the loop.

## 1.2: Borough Engagement Plans

Each borough requires its own engagement plan – an example is given in the appendices - preceded by an Engagement Challenge.

This element will challenge any assumptions that all relevant people in each borough have been consulted and will double check the findings from the previous exercise.  Testing should consider parliamentary boundary changes and seek views from those involved in potential changes.

The plan is to review the level of support for the Estates proposal in a given borough and identify any likely problems or opposition to a) enable the MPA to make an informed decision about whether to proceed in a particular borough and/or b) inform the engagement plan before implementation begins. The subsequent borough engagement plan can then focus on addressing any possible misconceptions or issues with the proposals. The engagement challenge period will also establish more information about local circumstances and how the Estate Strategy fits into local views about policing.

Suitably skilled communicators with experience of campaigning communications should be deployed to undertake the engagement challenges and devise the plan for each borough. Local knowledge and a campaigning approach are key and there are common principles that should be adopted for each engagement challenge.

Engagement Challenge Principles: *Face-up*

**F**ace to face communication is key – supported by more generic materials for details

**A**ssume nothing – test all previous findings for that borough

**C**ampaigning methodology should be deployed with the objective of winning 'hearts and minds'

**E**ngage the borough in a dialogue about the Estate Strategy and do not broadcast

**U**nderstand local issues and perceptions

**P**lan to adjust your methodology to react to emerging issues

## Engagement Challenge Journey

**1 Start with community leaders:** The Borough Commander is key to this phase and will be able to advise on those whose views count in their borough. At a minimum level this will include the Leader of Council (or lead member for policing issues), MP and MPA link member. Using a simple summary of plans and timescale for the borough to test their understanding and views. This will quickly establish whether the borough position is well understood and enable officers to establish the next steps required including ascertaining key community groups for wider testing. This could be very effectively and efficiently achieved by a borough scrutiny committee if time allowed. If there is not sufficient time direct contact is the best approach. A record of views should be made and submitted to MPA/MPS.

**2 Wider borough testing:** test the proposals with local interest groups identified above, ward panels of wards comprising imminent disposals using advocates including uniformed officers and Safer Neighbourhood Teams. In some boroughs where there are complex and controversial proposals (usually those relating to iconic disposals) it is advised that MPA/MPS undertake a robust piece of research to test how the proposals are likely to be received by a demographically robust sample of the borough population. This will give robust evidence to test whether a particularly vocal but limited element is actually representative of wider views.

The process is illustrated by the chart on the following page.

**3 Consider findings** and make decision. This could mean there is a green light to go ahead with changes and implement the borough engagement plan to support that implementation or those local concerns are so significant that proposals may need to be modified.
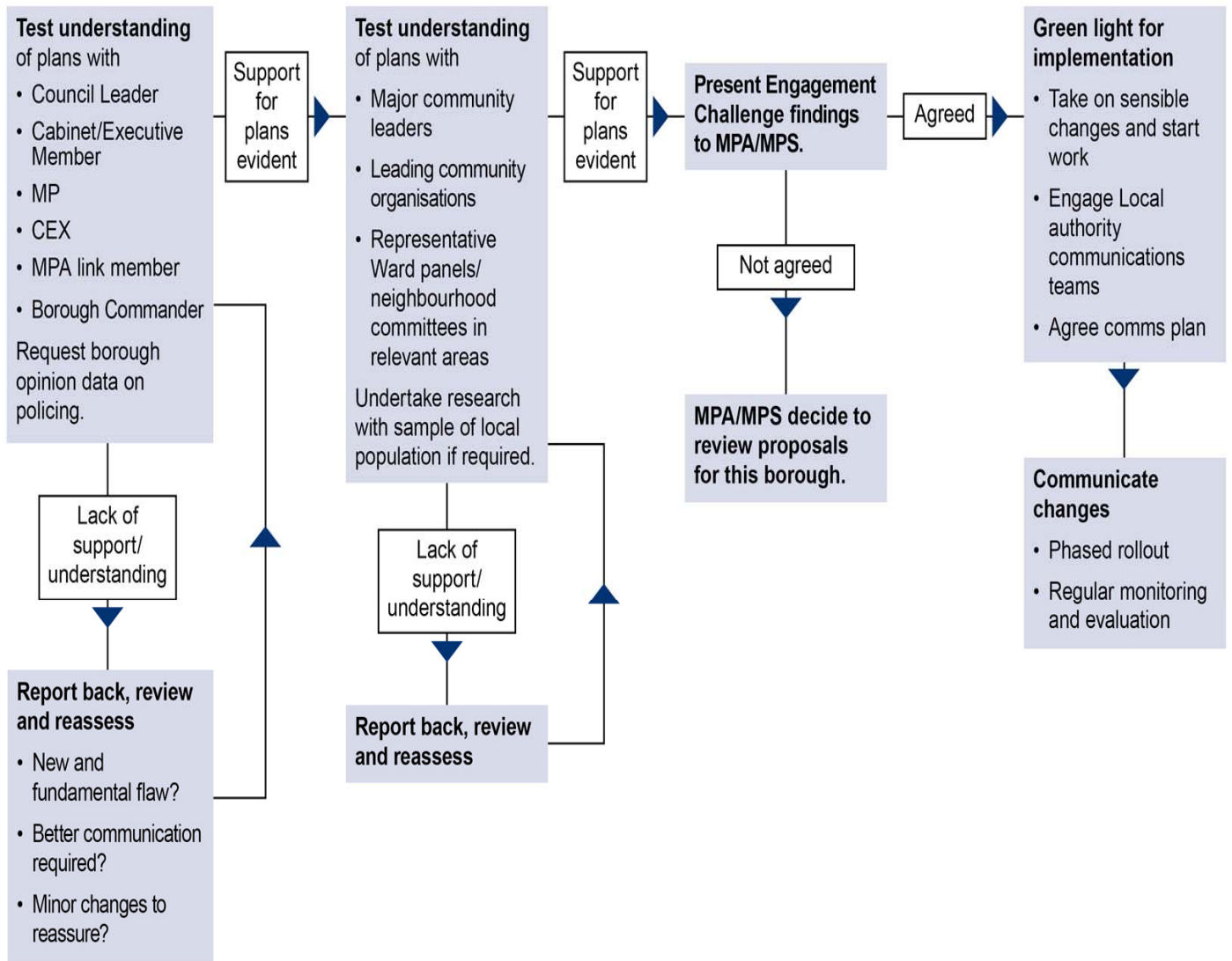The process is illustrated by the chart on the following page.

## Skills required

The MPA will have to consider the skills required to implement this programme. This could be achieved by recruiting an individual, seconding a person from the MPA or local authorities, partnering with London Councils or contracting with a specialist company. The core skills that an individual or organisation would require include:

- **Understanding of the politics** and government of London, and the relationship with the police
- **Understanding of community engagement** techniques including the use of consultation methods
- **Ability to deploy communication techniques** including media, marketing and internal communications
- **Credibility to engage with decision makers** across London including heads of

communication, chief officers and community leaders.

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## Summary Engagement Challenge

**Test understanding**
of plans with

- Council Leader
- Cabinet/Executive Member
- MP
- CEX
- MPA link member
- Borough Commander

Request borough opinion data on policing.

Support for plans evident

**Test understanding**
of plans with

- Major community leaders
- Leading community organisations
- Representative Ward panels/ neighbourhood committees in relevant areas

Undertake research with sample of local population if required.

Support for plans evident

**Present Engagement Challenge findings to MPA/MPS.**

Agreed

**Green light for implementation**

- Take on sensible changes and start work
- Engage Local authority communications teams
- Agree comms plan

Not agreed

**MPA/MPS decide to review proposals for this borough.**

Lack of support/ understanding

**Report back, review and reassess**

- New and fundamental flaw?
- Better communication required?
- Minor changes to reassure?

Lack of support/ understanding

**Report back, review and reassess**

**Communicate changes**

- Phased rollout
- Regular monitoring and evaluation

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# Appendix

## 1. Draft borough engagement plan

| Campaign (Title) | Estate modernisation in London Borough of Nonsuch |
|---|---|
| **Research** | This section will summarise research findings about the perceptions of local people and community leaders in the borough about the police use of its estate and its impact on their accessibility and availability. It will summarise any research findings about the drivers of those perceptions and place them within the national context.<br><br>Particular attention should be paid to drivers of satisfaction with the availability and accessibility of the local police service.<br><br>To inform the communications plan an understanding of local media habits is essential. |
| **Objective** | This section states the overall objective, for example:<br><br>'To increase the proportion of residents who are informed and satisfied about the plans to update the management of the police estate in x borough.' |

| | |
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| **Target Audience**<br><br>This will have been identified in the stress test stage | Primary: All borough residents.<br>Secondary: key segmented audiences. |
| **Key Partners**<br><br>Who you will need to work with to deliver this plan | e.g. Local authority communications team |

| Strategy | Take an audience-led approach to raise awareness of the benefits of the changing use of police buildings by reassuring the public that changes to the buildings used by the police are in the interests of preventing crime and detecting criminals. |
|---|---|
| Key message(s) | Overarching:<br> ***'We are committed to improving policing in your borough by modernising the facilities we provide for your neighbourhood. To do this we may need to move some of the police functions in your area to improved and more central locations.  This will help us to respond to your needs in the most effective way we can.'***<br>Local (2 maximum): 'Your local police service is accessible and available to you 24/7 in the following ways: insert detail |

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| **Implementation** | This section will set out a range of tactics to achieve the aim described. There should be three distinct phases and a mix of public relations and marketing with a focus on uniformed officers and Safer Neighbourhood Team as message givers:<br>**Setting out how policing works in the borough**<br>Engage local authority in joint campaign e.g. Safer Borough campaign which explains how policing in the borough works<br>Raise profile in local media through targeted media relations<br>Consider a joint 'Safer Borough' publication which is distributed with the borough newsletter/magazine<br>**Showing and explaining details of the Estate changes for the borough in the wider context**<br>**Direct:**<br>Face-to-face engagement with community leaders and organisations.<br>Speak to existing groups – e.g. neighbourhood forums, pensioners groups etc.<br>**Borough-wide:**<br>Supported by borough-wide communications e.g. borough newsletter/ magazine, local media relations, exhibitions at key sites (for major changes)<br>**Communication during implementation:**<br>Materials used on new and replaced buildings highlighting benefits for local people in terms of improved access and accessibility<br><br>**Open days** celebrating new facilities<br><br>**Local media**: For the local media, there should be a face-to-face briefing at the onset of the project with key local editors to explain the project and benefits. From then on there should be a monthly news story containing progress reports. |
| **Start date and duration** | To be identified by each borough |
| **Resources**<br>i.e. who will deliver this campaign and what budget is required for implementation | To be identified by each borough |
| **Evaluation**<br>i.e. what are the success measures that will confirm that you have achieved your objective | Research will establish the benchmark and post implementation measures for local resident awareness and satisfaction with the plans to update the management of the police estate.<br>**Awareness of plans**<br>• Current: xx%<br>• Target: xx%<br><br>**Satisfaction with plans** (i.e. % of people who agree that the plans will help improve policing in this borough)<br><br>• Current: xx%<br>• Target: xx% |