

**METROPOLITAN POLICE
AUTHORITY/
METROPOLITAN POLICE
SERVICE:
CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

Version 1

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1 INTRODUCTION (WHY CONSULT?)

'The aim of consultation is to make the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Metropolitan Police Service a responsive, community focused, policing provider through inclusive and accessible community consultation'

Both the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are keen to ensure that they provide a listening, responsive community-focused service. They face increasing pressures to consult with the public, and recognise the need to meet these requirements in an efficient, effective and co-ordinated manner. The requirement to undertake a Best Value Review of consultation has provided an appropriate opportunity for both the MPA and the MPS to undertake a systematic review of consultation processes and practices. Accordingly, the findings from the Review have informed this Consultation Strategy.

There are three main reasons for the Police Authority and Service to engage in community consultation, which can be summarised as statutory, mandatory and optional. The statutory requirement involves the necessity to adhere to legal requirements, the mandatory with compliance with official guidance and the optional follows the principles of 'good practice', fulfilling a moral obligation to consult whilst upholding the principles of 'policing by consent'.

This strategy is primarily aimed at providing guidance and models for consulting externally regarding service delivery. However it is recognised that the opinions of employees of both the MPS and MPA are vital in any decision making process. They should be consulted whenever possible and practicable as they are often able to provide valuable 'expert' information based on training and experience. The employees of the MPS were consulted widely regarding the outcomes of the Best Value Review of Consultation.

2 CONSULTATION DEFINITION (WHAT IS CONSULTATION?)

The overall aim of consultation is to listen, inform, exchange and respond appropriately. We must engage with the community we serve. Consultation is any process whereby the MPA/MPS enters into a dialogue with its communities in order to ensure that the service provided reflects expectations, is fair, open, accountable and builds public confidence.

In this context consultation means the planned and co-ordinated consultation with the public by the MPA and MPS in order to inform decisions and ensure 'policing by consent'. Consultation is specifically related to service delivery but does not include the day-to-day contact between a police officer and a member of the public in the course of the officer's duty. However, information from any such contact may be fed into the consultation process.

2.1 Best Value

'Best Value was created by legislation contained within the 1999 Local Government Act and places a duty on local authorities (including police authorities) to deliver services to clear standards of cost and quality by the most economic, efficient and effective means available.

In consulting with identified stakeholders the principles set out in this strategy will be used by future Best Value Review Teams in the MPS.

2.2 Consultation Principles

Consultation should be: -

- Helping to support and achieve the MPS Mission, Vision and Values.
- Related to decision making (specific to decisions that need to be made)
- Effective (competently carried out by trained personnel)
- Inclusive (all key target groups represented)
- Used in decision making process (results of consultation demonstrably used)
- Evaluated for effectiveness (measurement and feedback leading to improvement in consultation processes where appropriate).

In addition, consultation must adhere to the following the principles of Best Value, i.e.:

- ensure consultation processes can be monitored for best value,
- raise standard of consultation to a minimum level,

- enable effective prioritisation of objectives,
- enable planned consultation programme to be implemented,
- ensure those involved in consultation know what they are doing,
- establish clear record of what consultation is taking place with associated costs
- provide suitable training for those involved in consultation
- to agree and promote best practice for consultation.
- to ensure corporate and local consultation initiatives complement one another, avoiding duplication and consultee fatigue.

2.3 Strategy Objectives

1. All consultation must be:
 - Effectively coordinated through both the Metropolitan Police Authority and the Metropolitan Police Service.
 - Harmonised and integrated with the decision making process.
 - Able to take account of and embrace corporate/pan-London and borough/local issues.
2. Consultation must engage with and embrace the diverse needs of all communities being served in London.
3. The Metropolitan Police Authority and the Metropolitan Police Service must demonstrate how the results of the consultation process have been received and acted upon through effective action and feedback.
4. The consultation process should inform the public about policing rationale and constraints. It must involve listening to the needs of all the diverse communities of London and facilitating dialogue and negotiation.
5. The consultation process must follow the principles of 'Best Value'. Consultation must be efficient, effective and economical. It must have a defined requirement, a competitive process and participants must be selected in accordance with agreed criteria.
6. The consultation process should be subject to regular review stemming from effective evaluation and feedback.
7. The consultation process should be conducted with the cooperation of and, where appropriate, in partnership with both relevant authorities and the community and voluntary sector.
8. The Metropolitan Police Authority and Metropolitan Police Service will ensure leadership and commitment to the consultative process through the provision of relevant training at all appropriate levels.
9. The process must inform priorities and build capacity and mutual confidence with the communities being served.
10. The strategy should establish minimum standards for consultation whilst allowing for local flexibility to deal with local issues

2.4 Strategy Ownership

The strategy will be owned by and the responsibility of the MPA. The implementation will be the joint responsibility of the MPA and MPS.

3 THE SCOPE OF CONSULTATION

3.1 Who Should be Involved in Consultation?

The following groups have been identified as needing to be involved in consultation: residents, visitors, (including people passing through) employers and employees of London. In addition, specific groups within these criteria have been identified for particular inclusion, such as community representatives and identified partners.

Outside of these boundaries, there should be no restriction to consultation as long as the people consulted are representative and appropriate. For example, if the issue to be consulted on involves only a small local area, then it is the population of that area who should be consulted first and foremost. Likewise, if the issue is one that affects only a defined community, then it is that community that should be the prime target of consultation. The aim of effective consultation is to include all those who may be effected by the eventual decision or those who may have valuable input into the decision making process. However, it is important in many circumstances to engage with all people who may be affected by any particular decision. The process must be seen to be inclusive as well as representative.

Past consultation by the police service has often been accused of being exclusionary, only involving certain members or sections of the community. This type of consultation, as well as being ineffective, is damaging both to the reputation of the police service and to the quality of the service it delivers.

Arrangements must be identified to ensure that the consultation process reaches all members of the community, both pan-London and locally where appropriate. It is not for this strategy to be prescriptive in the types of methods that ought to be used, as these will vary depending on the type of issue to be discussed, the community or communities to be consulted and the part of London in which the consultation is to take place. The consultation methods available are many, varied and can be costly. A toolkit of these methods is included at Annex C of this document.

3.2 When Will Community Consultation be Invoked?

The consultation timetable must be identified and published. The timetable must ensure that consultation occurs appropriately within the overall planning cycle. There must be co-ordination between corporate and local planning enabling the consultation process to inform both the policing plan and the crime and disorder strategies equally and effectively. The process may be continuous, periodic or ad-hoc as required. However, the process must fit within the overall structure of effective co-ordination as defined in this strategy

There are many reasons to consult at both a central and local level. The most obviously identified are the corporate and local policing plans. However, consultation should be seen as an opportunity to incorporate all planning and decision making, on both a macro and micro level. In the past consultation has undoubtedly been repeated within the police service and mirrored by other agencies. This has caused duplication of effort and frustration on the part of those consulted who have been asked the same questions time and time again. The consultation timetable needs to be planned thoroughly, not just within the police service but outside with other key partners, such as those identified in the Crime and Disorder Act. An effective consultation strategy can be seen as the catalyst to not only 'joined-up working' but 'joined-up thinking' amongst the major public sector service providers.

ANNEX A – PROPOSED MODEL FOR CORPORATE AND LOCAL CONSULTATION

How Will Community Consultation be Facilitated and by Whom?

A new consultation structure is required to facilitate effective consultation between the people of London and the police.

This structure needs to be both flexible and dynamic, enabling the consultation process to satisfy the needs both of the public and of the police. Only then, will it inspire the confidence of the entire community and enable true 'policing by consent'.

The model proposed in this strategy is aimed at ensuring the 'free-flow' of information both from centre to local and local to centre, efficiently and effectively. It aims to:

- ensure the views of all members of the community of London are captured and as far as possible incorporated into the priorities of the police service;
- ensure the people of London are informed of the rationale behind policing priorities and decisions and have an opportunity to impact on these through continual dialogue;
- feed the decision making process through an integrated approach to consultation, using the foundations of local representation to enable the corporate structure of the police service to respond accordingly.

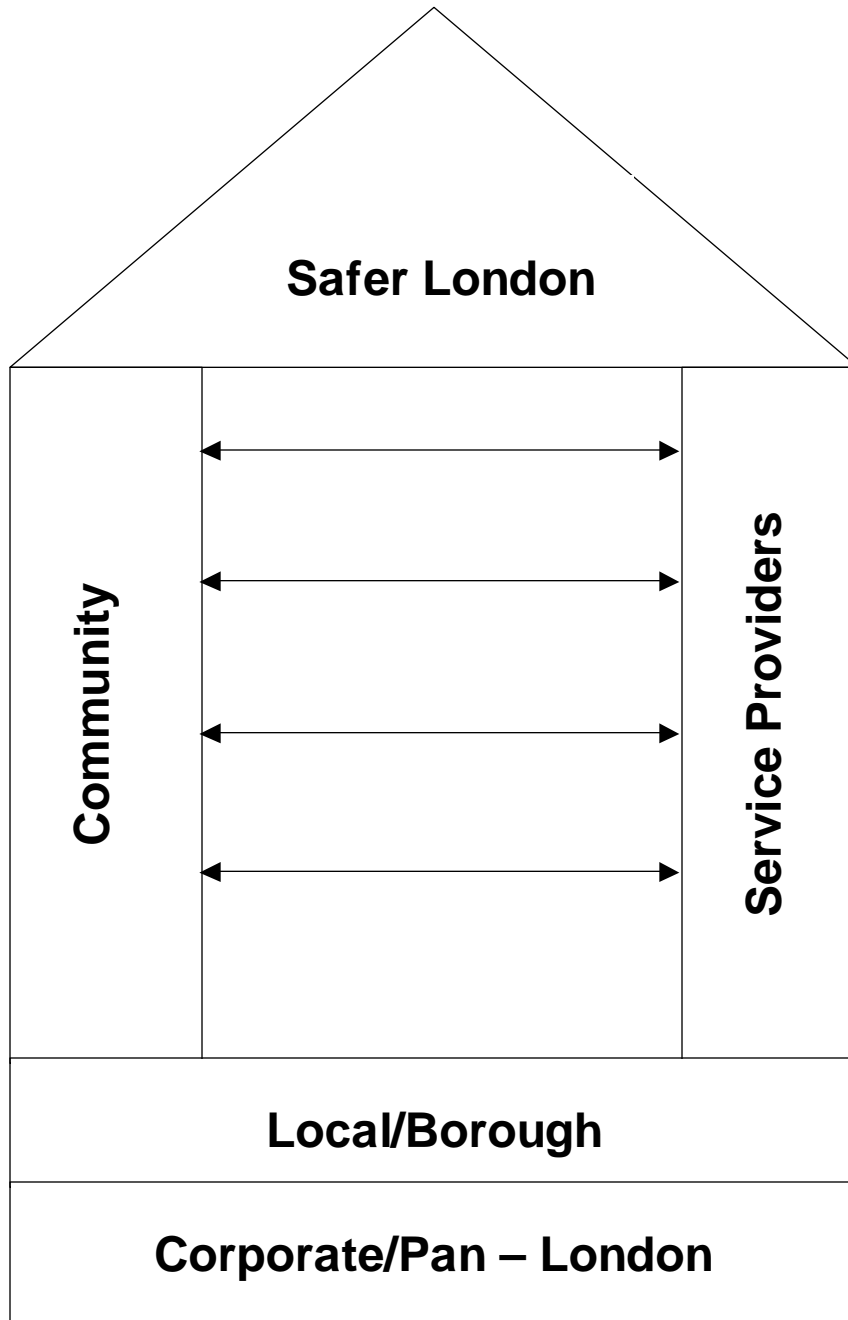
Although the basis of this process is ensuring that the bedrock of effective consultation is fed from the local level, it accepts that there is still a need to consult at a pan-London level where appropriate. This requirement is built into the proposed model ensuring a holistic approach to consultation.

The following illustration demonstrates the principles of the new approach to community consultation. The diagram shows how using the foundation of pan London and corporate structures such as the MPS, MPA, GLA and ALG to provide co-ordination, enables the community through service providers to reach the aspired goal of a safer capital: -

Figure.1 illustrates the relationship between local and corporate consultation.

Fig.1 - Relationship between Local and Corporate Consultation

BEST VALUE PILLARS OF CONSULTATION



Corporate Consultation

The key to a successful consultation process is effective leadership and co-ordination of that process. It is vital that effort is focused not disjointed, is co-opted not duplicated.

To this end it is proposed that posts in both the MPA and MPS are created to ensure the consultation process is co-ordinated at a corporate level. The post in the MPS would be best placed in the Corporate Development Group (CDG) enabling direct feed into the planning process. It is unclear at present where the MPA representative would be placed in the embryonic MPA management structure.

The responsibilities of both roles would include: -

- Co-ordinating overall consultation process, ensuring all consultative processes carried out at a local level were recorded, monitored and fed into the central planning process.
- Provide support for local consultation where required and appropriate.
- Provide effective mechanisms for feedback to all participants in the consultation process.
- Draw-up, monitor and maintain an effective consultation timetable that fits with the planning process for corporate, local and crime & disorder plans.
- Regular contact with and feedback from recognised Independent Advisory Groups.

The MPS consultation unit in CDG should be primarily responsible for the consultation required for the annual policing plan. This should include consulting the public corporately (the Public Attitude Survey or its replacement, focus groups, e-consultation utilising MPA and MPS web sites), the public locally (through Borough Liaison Officers (BLOs), Police Community Consultative Groups (PCCGs), Community Consultation Officers (CCOs) and local crime & disorder partnerships), business and other interested parties (through letters, questionnaires and one-to-one interviews) and MPS employees (through meetings, focus groups, seminars, Excellence Model feedback and the intranet). In addition, the MPA members will need to be consulted at all stages of the process.

The MPA consultation unit will be specifically responsible for the management of CCOs, dissemination of best practice and oversight of the PCCG function.

Specialist Function Consultation

Consultation in relation to specialist functions will primarily be related to the communities being served by those functions. This will be the responsibility of the appropriate Operational Command Unit (OCU) Commanders.

Local Consultation

The consultation process will be primarily based in the local environment. It is vital that the views and opinions of the local community are incorporated in any decision making process.

The future consultation process will be more professional, more representative, more inclusive and more accountable than ever before.

To ensure that this happens and to place community consultation on a professional footing it is proposed that a new human resource in the form of a '*Community Consultation Officer*' (CCO) is placed on every Borough or shared between Boroughs. This representative will be a full-time, consultation specialist employed by the MPA.

The key elements of the role will be: -

- To work with the BLO in support of the Borough Commanders responsibility for local consultation
- Co-ordination of the Police Community Consultative Groups (PCCGs)
- Liaising with key agencies such as the MPS and the Local Authority to ensure a full partnership approach to consultation at a local level.
- Ensuring all sectors of the community are given the opportunity to participate in community consultation
- Ensuring the various needs of the different diverse and 'hard to reach' groups on the Borough are catered for in any consultative process.
- Effectively feeding the results of the consultation process into the corporate centre of both MPA and MPS.
- Regular contact with and feedback from local Independent or Lay Advisory Groups.

Essential to the effectiveness of this role will be a means of measuring how successful the CCOs are at ensuring total community participation in the process.

A number of Key Performance indicators will be attached to this role in order to monitor how the local consultation process is both inclusive and effective. These indicators must firstly be qualitative and must measure the diversity and creativity of approach rather than the numbers of actual participants in the process. Secondly, they need to effectively record the participative nature of

consultation by recording what use is made of communities' views in decision making.

The role of PCCGs in local consultation is vital and will be one of the primary methods for facilitating the local consultation process. The role of PCCGs will be redefined to ensure they are fully representative of the community they serve. Much of the burden for this work will fall on the CCO, who will be tasked to ensure that the groups and the meetings they hold will be both representative and relevant.

Some of the recommendations for PCCGs are: -

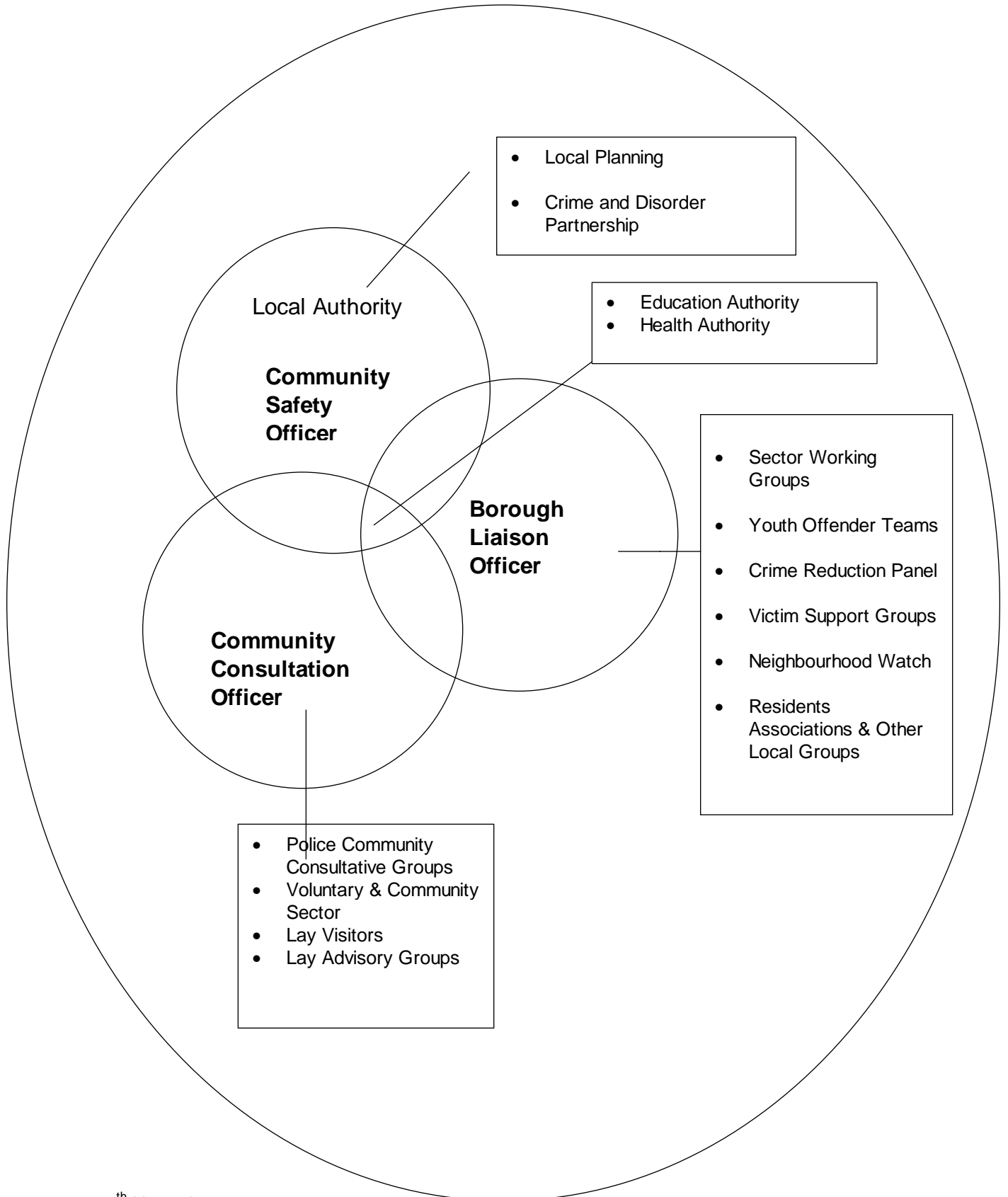
- PCCGs to be renamed
- PCCGs to be reconstituted to ensure membership is not exclusionary and is overtly available to all members of the local community
- Themed meetings, to ensure relevant community participation
- Inclusion of feedback, from both the police service and other representatives from the local Crime & Disorder partnership where appropriate.
- Undertaking of consultation work necessary to capture the views and feelings of the local community
- Bidding for challenge funding to promote local consultative schemes
- Measurement of performance on qualitative issues such as representation, diversity and effect on local policing priorities
- To provide the opportunity for discussions about specific policing issues and for resolving conflicts

It is essential that the local approach to consultation is a co-ordinated one that encompasses all the principles of partnership already initiated under the Crime & Disorder Act. The CCO will work alongside the Borough Liaison Officer from the local police borough and the Community Safety Officer from the local authority to ensure the approach is effective, efficient co-ordinated and avoids duplication. This tripartite approach (illustrated in figure 2) will utilise the considerable resources of all three organisations to produce effective policing priorities and policies for the whole of the local community.

A further key element in this approach will be the utilisation of the Voluntary and Community Sector to assist in the building of local capacity. The CCO will ensure full participation of this sector to build relationships locally.

Fig.2

MODEL OF LOCAL CONSULTATION



Best Practice & Outcomes

In order to ensure that best practice is circulated, findings are disseminated and appropriate actions based on the consultation are taken, the results of all consultation exercises should be passed to the MPA or MPS consultation units as appropriate. This should include a summary of the exercise, the consultees, the findings and any subsequent action plan. The units will be responsible for following up as appropriate. Where possible the cost of each exercise, including opportunity costs should be recorded.

Performance Management

It is imperative that for this model of consultation to work, effective performance measures need to be put in place, to monitor its effectiveness. These need to ensure performance in the following areas: -

- Participation
- Effective use of information (i.e. how often consultation effects decision making)
- Representation
- Inclusivity
- Feedback

Any future implementation plan must include performance indicators and targets that are qualitative to ensure all of the above.

ANNEX B – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

A suitable organisational structure for both the MPA and MPS management of consultation is vital. This structure is outlined below. The rationale for the groups and their relationship is explained at figure 3.

At the corporate level a Consultation Strategy Management Board (CSMB) should be established to:

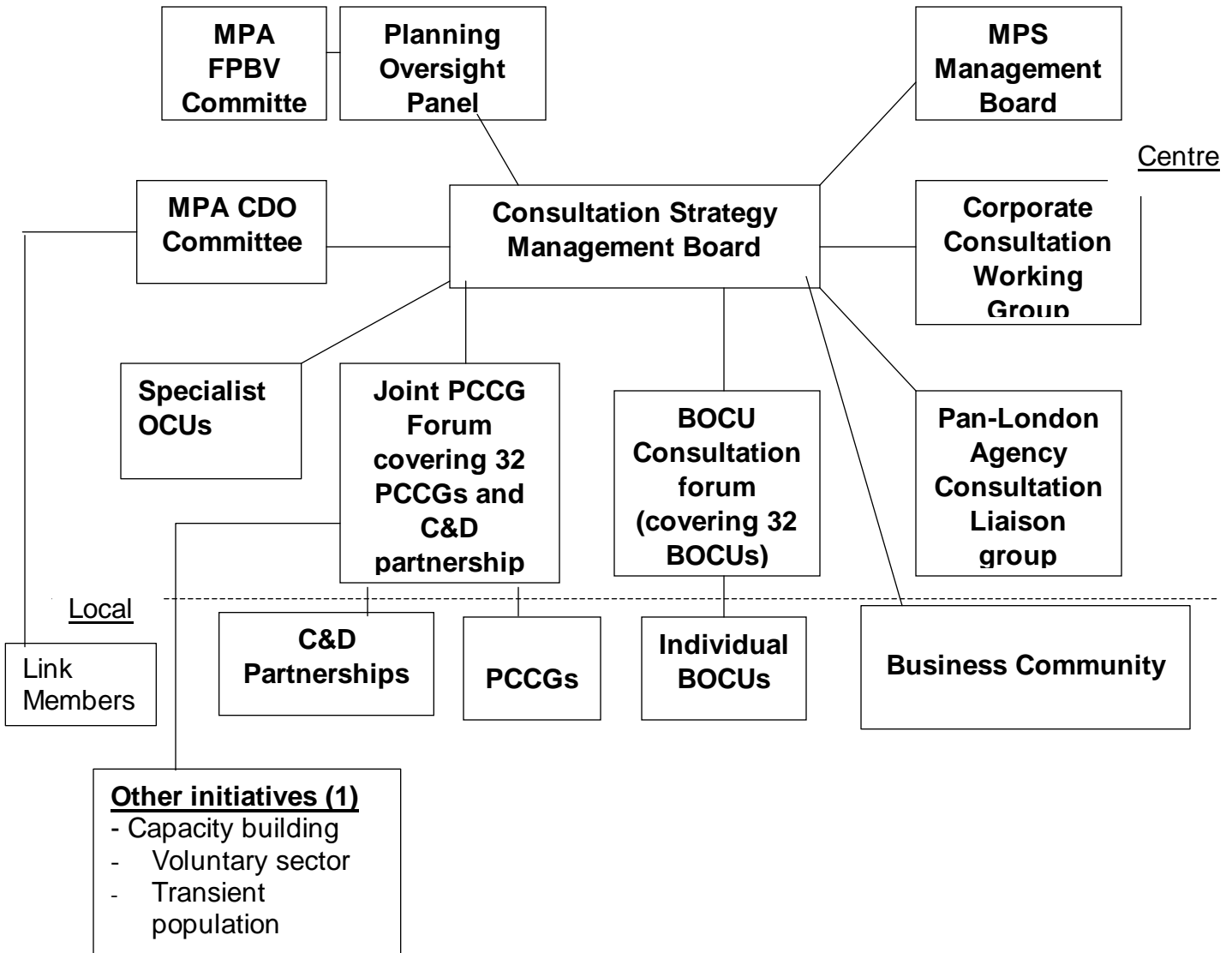
- oversee the implementation of the strategy;
- review the results of consultation before forwarding these to the Planning Oversight Panel;
- ensure best value is achieved from the various consultation initiatives.

The membership should comprise both MPA and MPS officers and be chaired by a member of the Consultation Diversity and Outreach (CDO) committee of the MPA. The Corporate Consultation Working Group would co-ordinate the central consultation initiatives and feed results to the CSMB.

A representative group comprising chairs of PCCGs and BOCU commanders will be set up to provide the necessary channel for information to and from local communities and to provide a helpful means of distributing advice and good practice.

A Pan London Agency Liaison Group should be established to co-ordinate consultation relating to policing and crime reduction across agencies to ensure; complimentary practice; minimal duplication and effective sharing of information.

Figure 3 - An Organisational Structure for the Management of a Consultation Strategy



ANNEX C - A TOOLKIT FOR EFFECTIVE CONSULTATION

There are a variety of methods of consultation that can be used to get feedback from the community on policing and levels of crime. The PCCG is one of the primary methods of facilitating local consultation. However, it is acknowledged that the PCCG and public meetings in general only reach a small proportion of the community and therefore the Borough Commander, supported by the CCO and BLO will also need to utilise other means that can be used to ensure a wider cross section of views.

Public Meetings/PCCGs

Advertised and accountable to the public. Public open meetings provide the community the opportunity to raise issues of concern on a regular basis with senior officers of the police service. They are a method through which the police authority can get a picture of the situation locally and they are a forum to be used to consult on specific issues e.g. operational or policy issues.

Surveys and Questionnaires

This provides a good method of seeking a quantitative response to questions. They have been used extensively by the British Crime Survey and provide a good way of producing comparative data on a year-by-year basis. They are expensive and can only be done on a yearly basis but the survey can be stratified to ensure that a wide range of people receive it. The response rate is often small to any survey type questionnaire. Surveys can be conducted jointly on a centralised basis by the police authority and the police service and follow ups can be done on a local basis using the Community Consultative Officer in areas of London that raise particular concerns.

Focus Groups

These are small groups (normally 9-12 people) made up of specific groups, e.g. single parents, Asian elders, young unemployed etc. This method gives you a snapshot of views from particular groups. They do not seek to be representative but rather give you a flavour of the types of views expressed by that group of people. They are a good method for reaching otherwise untargeted groups of people.

Meetings with groups

One of the best methods of consulting the community on their views of policing is through meeting groups directly in their own environments. Many groups may

not want to make their views known through public meetings for fear of recriminations or accessibility and by seeking the groups out, they may be more willing to provide their views. For example, the elderly may not be able to come to evening meetings or the deaf community may not be able to access public meetings so alternative arrangements can be made for them. The Consultative Officer will have a key role in arranging meetings with different groups locally and in ensuring that the feedback to both the police authority and the partnership is maintained.

Consultation with Young People

Youth consultation is an important element of any consultative arrangements, in a number of local authorities, youth councils have been set up and youth forums to discuss council services have been created. In some London Boroughs, PCCGs have also created their own youth forums to discuss policing with young people. Forums or surveys of young people are an essential tool for seeking the views of young people because young people are not only the perpetrators of crime but are also victims of crime. Work could also take place in partnership with other agencies to discuss crime and policing with offenders and ex offenders e.g. through the Youth Offender Teams (YOTs), or the probation service.

Strategic Level Consultation

Consultation on a local basis will serve a number of purposes under both crime and disorder and policing. There is however, also a need to undertake some strategic consultation on both the policing plan and the Best Value Performance Plan with a view to seeking the views of strategic partners (Chief Executives, Divisional Commanders, Chairs of Victim Support, Age Concern, REC, Community Safety Managers etc) on the contents of both the policing plan and the performance plan.

This can be undertaken locally and organised jointly by both the police authority, through the Community Consultative Officer and the Borough Liaison Officer or can be done more centrally, inviting the Deputy Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners to discuss centrally with strategic partners from across London the contents for the policing plan. Due to the size of London, it may be more practical that this is done on a local borough level.

Citizen's Panel/ Juries

In many areas of the country, citizen's panels have been developed which are used regularly to consult on particular issues. They are mainly used by local authorities but have been developed in some police authorities. The Panel is normally a group of about 2000 people regularly updated and used at regular

intervals throughout the year. They are expensive to run and to set up but provide a mechanism for regular consultations. The citizens' jury is a smaller sample of members of the public who are paid to spend several days on an issue. It can be used to discuss very complicated issues in depth but again is an expensive method and not necessary representative of the whole community.

Web Site Consultation

This is the most modern way of consulting interactively through the web. In many police authorities, members of the public have the ability to ask questions on the Internet relating to policing issues. This is also an easy way to getting responses to a survey. Whilst the Internet connection is still small across the country, more people are using the Internet and it provides a cheap way of getting information from the community. Web site consultation is also a good method of attracting the views of young people and in some areas, web sites specifically designed for young people have worked well in encouraging their views.

Action Planning Events

Community events are held to encourage members of the public to comment on particular issues. For example, this method has been used to discuss the reviews of police property in some police authorities. Open days also function to promote the work of the authority and to meet staff and members of the police authority. This is relatively inexpensive but costs do rise with more expensive community events.

Other Groups

There are a variety of other groups that can also be used for consultation purposes and these are listed in the matrix of consultation attached. This is not an exhaustive group and can be added to.

CONSULTATION MATRIX

Method	Purpose	Effectiveness	Cost
Businesses	Use of Business Watch and chamber of commerce to consult on policing issues through a forum or questionnaire.	Easy to contact, response varies.	Forum relatively cheap to set up but may cost more if questionnaire circulated to individual businesses.
Councillors	Through local surgeries can ascertain information on crime problems locally.	Easy to contact through the surgeries.	No cost involved.
DAT Teams	Can be used to consult with drug and alcohol abusers.	Accessible through the DAT co-ordinator.	Cost determined by the method to be adopted.
Domestic Violence Forums	To discuss the crime and policing effects on domestic violence with practitioners and victims.	Effective in bringing specialists together to discuss the issues.	Cost of administering the forum.
Drug and Alcohol Reference Group	As DAT team.	Access through DAT Coordinator.	Cost determined by method used.
Neighbourhood Watch Schemes	Use of the ringmaster system to send messages to residents.	Provides simple crime prevention advice, can also be used to publicise public meetings.	Small cost of administration.
Racial Equality Councils	To be used to consult on diversity issues and policing.	Not necessarily representing all diverse populations but a good starting point for this type of consultation.	Cheap method.

Sector Working Groups	Can be contacted through local sector Inspector and used for consultation on very local policing issues.	Contact through MPA Sector Inspectors.	Groups already in existence. Cost of consultation very limited.
Special Constabulary	To speak to local people about local policing issues.	Some advantage but there is a need to ensure that information is fed back to those that need to have the information.	Cheap and cost effective.
Staff Associations	Consultation with employees useful for quantitative information. Large scale surveys possible with this group.	Contact through secretaries of associations.	Expensive method unless surveys already going out to which you can attach some questions.
Pub Watches	Good source of consultation on alcohol abuse and crime.	Easy contact through the schemes.	Inexpensive.
Voluntary Sector	Various agencies can be used including the Voluntary Service Council, Victim Support, etc.	Easy to contact locally.	Cheap method
YOT Teams	Can be used to consult with young / disadvantaged people and offenders and ex-offenders.	Accessible through the YOT manager.	Cost determined by method to be adopted in contacting young people.