

DRAFT 2

Good (morning/afternoon/evening)

Thank you for inviting me to take part in this event

(there may well have been an introduction given for Cindy, so I'd suggest removing the 'basics' about the MPA)

I've been an independent member of the MPA since it came into existence back in 2000, so I can affirm that one of our key priorities is to promote the involvement of London's communities in decisions about the way they are policed. This priority was recently given added leverage by the publication of the Policing and Crime Bill in 2008 which states that police authorities must have regard for the views of people in their area when they undertake their work.

MPA members are a key link between local communities across Londoners and the MPS, specifically in the specific boroughs we are associated with, and are therefore in the unique position of being able to raise community concerns directly with police officers.

I am linked to Hammersmith and Fulham, and in that capacity I attend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meetings, Community Police Engagement Group meetings – I will speak about them a bit more later – and other relevant borough strategic partnership meetings and local community engagement events. This ensures that policing issues in Hammersmith and Fulham which are of concern locally but may also demonstrate an emerging crime trend can be brought back to the MPA

and be discussed and acted on centrally either by the MPS or by other relevant partnership agencies.

The Authority has two core responsibilities when it comes to community engagement:

- We are responsible for ensuring that the MPS actively engages with Londoners

And

- We also have a responsibility to consult with Londoners ourselves, and for ensuring that there are effective methods in place to increase Londoners' awareness and understanding of policing issues, and that these methods enable Londoners to work collectively to shape and strengthen policing in London.

Before I go on to explain what I mean by this, because I recognise that policy statements like this whilst grand can mean very little, I want to explain why community engagement is important to the MPA.

We don't do community engagement because we have to, we don't do it because we believe that in and of itself it is crucial to policing in London. We believe meaningful consultation is crucial for us to get policing right for our communities and win the confidence of Londoners.

The importance of community engagement should not just be measured by the activities and actions that arise from it but also its secondary benefits – the unplanned for benefits – should be considered. I accept it may be difficult to quantify these secondary benefits, these softer

outcomes, but look at it like this, we know that every positive community engagement activity can result in the following:

- The target community feeling that they have been listened to;
- that they have had the opportunity to have their say; and
- know how their concerns will be taken forward as actions.

But it may also result in the following secondary benefits:

- An increase in confidence ratings;
- An increased likelihood to report a crime or incident;
- An increased likelihood to take up additional police community engagement opportunities; and finally
- Communities could be more likely to view the police as an organisation that is willing to listen and work with their community.

The MPS, like many organisations, is very good at re-labelling and repackaging age old ideas. The current term to describe much of what I have just highlighted is 'Citizen Focused Policing'. In their own words, Citizen Focused Policing is about improving the way the MPS understands, communicates with and engages with its communities, whether as direct users of services or as members of the wider public.

It is a way of working that puts the requirements of citizens at the heart of decision making and is integral to everything the MPS do. So, while not a new concept, a more targeted focus.

Despite these fine words, community engagement can so often be regarded as the more fluffy aspect of policing, the less important activity, which can be fudged, rushed through without thought and consideration, and is done simply for show.

But all of us here today know that community engagement is much more important and fundamental process than that. We know that when done well community engagement can reap positive benefits, both primary and secondary, and in the current policing climate the benefits have never been so significant and getting it right has never been so important.

A little while ago, the former MPS Commissioner Sir Ian Blair stated that the two biggest issues facing London and Londoners were the threats of another terrorist attack and serious youth violence. Having worked closely with the MPS on issues of serious youth violence, youth homicide and Operation Trident, I can say with assurance that it is only by gaining the confidence and trust of the communities directly affected that the Met and other agencies will be able to make a sustained and long term impact. Whilst we recognise that the causes of crime are complex and that deprivation and exclusion are key drivers, we also know that by taking time to build relationships with Londoners, the police can and are able to make communities safer - and just as importantly impact on the fear of crime.

The types of relationships the MPS must develop with Londoners, and which I believe they are getting increasingly better at doing, are those which have no specific purpose. We know that engaging with communities for intelligence and information purposes alone will not

build positive, open relationships. But we also know that relationships that are developed for no specific end purpose, simply establishing contact, engaging on a 'normal' every day level and earning mutual 'respect', will increase the likelihood that when the police do require information to solve crimes it will be forthcoming. This is ably demonstrated by the success of Operation Trident, established in 1998 in direct response to black community members wanting the police to do something that specifically targeted the criminals affecting them. The success of Operation Trident has been partly due to relationship building that officers have undertaken with the community in general, and consequently the willingness of members of the community to come forward has played a major part in helping to solve more murders.

We need to examine this success closely and consider how the learning can inform similar success in other key areas of the Met's work.

Having explained why we do what we do I'd now like to outline what programmes of community engagement the MPA is currently undertaking.

Our long term community engagement plans encompass a wide range of activities.

1. from consultation activities, such as the annual policing priorities consultation where we ask Londoners to identify the three key priorities that they feel that the MPS should be addressing at a regional level
2. to our engagement activities which are varied and cover both fixed activities and those that arise from priorities and arising concerns.

3. and finally to our communication mechanisms which include circulation of our monthly ezine 'MPA Direct', sent out to all key partners and community groups we engage with outlining our latest work plans and forthcoming issues.

The Authority funds Community Police Engagement Groups in every London borough. You may know of these groups by their previous appellations, Police Community Consultative Groups or Community Police Consultative Groups – we're all good at changing names aren't we?

CPEGs for short, fulfill our requirement to ensure that there are effective methods in place to increase Londoners awareness and understanding of policing issues, and that these mechanisms enable Londoners to work collectively to shape and strengthen policing in London.

These groups have existed in some shape or form long before the MPA came into existence. However, when we the Authority was set up supporting and financing the groups became our responsibility. Each CPEG is made up of a group of 20 – 25 volunteers, each of whom has links to a variety of other community/voluntary and statutory organisations in their borough. Policing and community safety concerns are collected from these groups and taken to bi-monthly or quarterly meetings with Borough Commanders and other senior Met staff. These meetings are an opportunity for Londoners to raise specific policing concerns, but also enable Borough Commanders to report directly to their communities on performance, ongoing operational tactics, upcoming initiatives or tactics that may impact on the borough, and, of course good news stories.

We know that CPEGs vary in terms of effectiveness and performance and over recent years our scrutiny and monitoring of these groups has become more rigorous. Our job now is to continue to ensure that they are fulfilling their Service Level Agreements and funding requirements, and that they are comprehensively exploring and responding to the policing needs of their communities.

The MPA also funds and supports the London Independent Custody Visitors Scheme. Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are members of the public appointed by the Authority to make sure that the welfare of people detained in police stations is maintained.

They call at police stations unannounced and write short reports about their visit. Their recommendations can require the police to make improvements for the welfare of detainees, and as such play a valuable role in maintaining public confidence in this important area of policing. Their reports, an objective, independent insight into the actual conditions in which detainees are held, are analyzed and any areas of concern are highlighted for action. This is a prime example of how Londoners can actively participate in an aspect of London policing.

Finally the MPA supports Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups across the Capital. Whilst the MPA recognises the usefulness of stop and search in the fight against crime, particularly at the moment targetted through Operation Blunt 2 at reducing the number of knives being carried as weapons, these measures remain controversial for many. We know that stop and search powers disproportionately impact on particular groups of Londoners, namely young people, and in particular

BME groups. In order to assess and review the use of stop and search across London, the Authority established Monitoring Groups, and facilitates a London wide Community Monitoring Network, to enable local people to hold their Borough Commanders to account. The work of these groups is reliant on the input and involvement of volunteers and is crucial to building and sustaining trust and confidence in the appropriate exercise of these powers.

These examples of our engagement activity are what we refer to as fixed general activities and are undertaken every year.

In addition to this we:

- undertake consultation with Londoners each year for the annual policing priorities process. Historically this consultation was managed by the MPS but last year the Authority assumed responsibility. We had a greatly improved take-up and we will be working to get even more responses in the future to ensure the views of Londoners really are reflected in the priorities. Some of the ideas that we are currently exploring are piggy-backing on borough fetes, road shows and borough community safety events. So in effect the age old idea that we should go to the public rather than expecting us to go to them!
- And one of the areas of our work that has grown and expanded in the last few years is the consultation and engagement that we undertake as part of our formal scrutinies. Whilst scrutiny of the MPS is the main focus of all our work, each year we undertake one or two in-depth scrutinies into particular areas of MPS practice and

policy. These are chosen for a number of reasons - either the MPS policy area is underperforming, there has been a change in crime trends which has resulted in a policy area having to be rethought, or the issue has become of increasing public concern.

- For example, you will know that when the Mayor Boris Johnson became Chair of the Authority last October, he announced that the MPA would carry out a review of Race and Faith issues within the MPS in relation to employment and asked me to lead this work. This inquiry is crucial to the work of the MPA and MPS. We recognize that we cannot win the confidence of London's diverse communities unless we are able to demonstrate that the MPS treats all its officers and staff with the respect and dignity they deserve and provides equal opportunities to everyone of them. The findings of the inquiry will be presented to the Authority this June.

In the last two years I have also been involved in two other scrutinies, both of which expanded our experience of consultation and engagement. In 2006/07 we undertook an in-depth consultation with Londoners on counter terrorism which enabled their voices to be heard and contribute to how the UK responds to the threat of counter-terrorism. Engaging directly with London communities enabled the Met to explain why counter-terrorist activities are carried out in the way they are, provided an opportunity for Londoners to have a better understanding of the Met's role at both a regional and national level, whilst also enabling the community to tell the police of their issues, considerations and tensions, thereby helping to inform the MPS operational decision-making process.

The MPA adopted a multi methodology approach, recognising that in order to ensure that a large number of Londoners had the opportunity to take part in the consultation process different types of events had to be organised. Over 1000 Londoners and 164 organisations took part in one of the following events:

- a pan-London conference
- Six pan-London public hearings
- 31 local consultations
- 3 focus groups with University students

The recommendations we made for the Met to improve their capability and respond with more understanding to the concerns of Londoners are now embedded in the MPS counter-terrorism practice.

Last June we concluded a nine month scrutiny into the needs of young people as victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crime and how these needs impact on their interactions with the MPS. The need for this scrutiny rose out of the increasing concerns about the spate of teenage homicides in 2007/2008 and an awareness that the MPS was revising its youth strategy, and that this provided a good opportunity for the Authority to inform its development and subsequent action plans.

Again we adopted a multi method approach, providing various opportunities for London's young people to take part in the consultation. We were determined to adopt a participative approach from the outset and therefore recruited 26 young Londoners, aged 12 – 20 years, from a range of socio and economic backgrounds to support, inform, and guide our work. They advised us which groups of young people to speak to,

met monthly to comment on progress, co ran the various consultation events and provided guidance and advice during the report writing stage. When the work was concluded a number of them also had the opportunity to speak to the media, featuring in TV and radio interviews and magazine articles!

Again over 1000 Londoners took part in the various activities, the majority of whom were young people. During the consultation process we heard from 14 expert witnesses in the field of youth crime; had 28 face to face interviews with adult stakeholders; held six focus groups with relevant hard to reach young people's groups; received information from 18 local consultations with young people organised by the MPA funded CPEGs; and conducted four large hearings with young people in different parts of the Capital and lastly ran an on line survey. This extensive work resulted in guidance and recommendations for both the MPS and other agencies and we are currently working with the Met to implement the policing recommendations.

I hope you will agree that the MPA is firmly committed to the Citizen Focused Policing agenda. We are aware that we may not always get it right. We are aware that there is still much more to do. And we are also aware that we can learn from the successes and even failures of other agencies. But we firmly believe that community engagement has to be a continual process. I know we will never be able to sit back and say we've 'done' community engagement so what's our next challenge? With London's continually growing and ever changing population, there will always be a new group of Londoners to engage with, listen to and learn from. There will always be a new crime trend that causes concern and requires action. There will always be another generation of young people

growing up who feel that they are the disproportionately impacted by policing.

We will remain constant in our commitment to community engagement, because it is only by continuing to listen and learn from Londoners that the Authority will be sure we have a police service that is ready to meet the needs of all the communities it exists to serve.

ENDS