
Special Notice 24/98

Friday 21 August 1998

Corporate Communication Strategy



■ Corporate Communication Strategy

(Deputy Commissioner)

Background

Communication is vital to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to meet the need for information, build understanding amongst our target audiences and harness support. This is widely recognised within the Service as being of benefit to the MPS, its staff and the people of London.

However, many of our communication activities exist in isolation and are not planned within a framework aimed at reinforcing key corporate messages in a co-ordinated and sustained approach. This highlights the need for a Corporate Communication Strategy that provides a focus and structure for our various communication activities and implementation plans. Such a strategy also provides a context for the important task of 'Communicating Our Values' as set out in Strand 3 of The London Beat.

Aim

An integrated Corporate Communication Strategy should seek to build support for, and understanding of the MPS by explaining and promoting its plans, activities and achievements.

In doing so, our aim is to:

- strengthen public confidence and trust;
- improve the public perception and satisfaction of the MPS; and
- reassure the public that the police are tackling crime ethically, effectively and professionally without increasing the fear of crime.

If we are successful this will improve our relationship with the people of London who will respect our integrity, appreciate our values, understand our strengths and limitations and acknowledge their active partnership in working for a safer London. At the same time our staff will be fully informed so that they are able to support this direction.

Strategic Communication Framework

Effective communication can help improve and enhance the overall performance, image and reputation of the MPS. A Corporate Communication Strategy must provide a framework which reflects key corporate activities and encompass:

- projecting the ethics and values of the MPS as set out in the Statement of Our Common Purpose and Values;
- preparing and implementing communication strategies which support and reinforce:
 - The MPS five year strategy - The London Beat;
 - The Annual Policing Plan; and
 - policy initiatives;
- providing communication support for portfolio responsibilities and other corporate and area issues and initiatives;
- providing the communication support to enable the MPS to conduct its operational activity effectively at corporate, headquarters, area and local level;
- maintaining and improving the relationship between the police and other interested groups through promoting a positive image of the role and work of the police;
- establishing a clear understanding of our aims, objectives, policies and activities at all levels across the MPS;
- integrating internal and external communication; and
- producing MPS communication material that is consistent in appearance in terms of style and content.

Corporate Communication Strategy – *continued*

Each of these will be delivered through proposed actions, detailed products and supporting materials for all individual media and public relations implementation plans which recognise the needs of differing audience targets.

Guiding principles

The development of individual implementation plans must reflect this Strategy and address a set of guiding principles covering objectives, audiences, key themes, media policy, corporate identity guidelines and performance measures. These are set out in the Annexes to this Special Notice.

Audiences

Within each broad audience there will be a large number of specific target audiences. We therefore need to assess each communication need individually and find the appropriate channel to meet this need. We need to adopt the same core message but with different emphases for different audiences.

Key themes

Our success in the future and our ability to police London into the twenty first century depends on us having the right people, doing the right things in the right way.

These three strands are at the heart of our MPS Corporate Strategy and highlight the importance of our staff to its successful implementation. They must be reflected as the key themes which will be incorporated into individual communication strategies as appropriate.

The tools for delivering the Strategy

There is a range of communication tools at our disposal to deliver the Corporate Communication Strategy through the implementation of individual media and public plans. Clearly defined and measurable objectives with specific aims, key messages and target audiences will be needed before selecting which particular tools to use.

To do this, research and monitoring is of paramount importance to establish the audience, their particular issues of importance, the most effective channels of communication for reaching these audiences and to measure the impact and effectiveness of our communication activity.

Underpinning all of our communication activity is the need to maintain the integrity of our image. A consistent corporate style must be adopted and its application in print, publicity and advertising controlled and managed in an informed way.

The tools at our disposal include:

■ **Media relations**

Our relationship with the media is crucial and encompasses three main areas:

- **Proactive** – actively promoting the policies, work and achievements of the MPS;
- **Reactive** – Responding quickly and accurately to media inquiries; and
- **Media training** – To give professional advice and training to officers dealing with the media and assist officers in handling the media at scenes.

Our commitment to openness in working with the media should be reaffirmed and communicated across the MPS.

■ **Public affairs**

We need to manage relationships with key individuals, organisations and groups, especially decision makers and influencers, keeping them informed of MPS initiatives through briefings and regular contact. It may also be necessary, on occasion, to devise lobbying programmes to influence policy development or decisions by other bodies.

Corporate Communication Strategy – *continued*

■ **Publicity and advertising**

Continue to support actively and promote issues through publications, internal communication activities, advertising, marketing, event launches and sponsorship opportunities.

■ **Internal communication**

Our staff are our most valuable asset. It is therefore vital that we keep them informed in a timely and appropriate manner. We must continue to develop effective means of communicating our strategic priorities to every member of the MPS.

■ **New technology**

Recent advances in technology need to be developed further to support our existing communications tools. In particular, the Internet for external communication and the Intranet for internal communication will be valuable assets.

Performance measures

A continuing process of information gathering and monitoring should support the implementation of the Strategy to measure its effectiveness.

Specific research programmes will be established to evaluate media coverage and advertising effectiveness.

Implementation

This Strategy will be implemented through the development of the Directorate of Public Affairs (DPA) annual action plans at a corporate, area and portfolio level. They will use the resources available to the DPA in its budget and form the basis for advice, guidance and influence by DPA staff in helping other MPS staff plan and develop their communication needs and activities.

This Corporate Communication Strategy was endorsed by Policy Board on Wednesday 24 June 1998.

John Stevens

Key themes

■ **The right people**

The MPS has a world class reputation for the quality and professionalism of its people and service.

● **Officer safety**

The profile of officer safety including policy training and the provision of equipment, has probably never been higher. The ability to deal effectively with conflict situations is a vital skill for any police officer.

The aim is to increase officers' ability to deal with violent or potentially violent conflict in safety, to increase public confidence in their effectiveness and in the appropriateness of their use of force.

● **Career opportunities**

We encourage and support professional development and expect all staff to strive for continuous improvement and to seek consistently high standards.

The MPS tenure policy will help our aim to have personnel with broad experience at all areas.

● **Recruitment**

We are maintaining our recruitment programme and plan to recruit 1650 constables in the 1998/99 financial year.

The MPS is committed to equal opportunities and ensures that all staff have the opportunity to develop and acquire relevant skills.

■ **The right things**

We must ensure that we are doing the right things effectively and efficiently.

● **Partnerships**

Working in partnership provides effective solutions and can have a positive effect on our relationships with communities and other organisations by increasing a sense of trust and understanding.

The MPS response to the Crime and Disorder Bill and our approach to community safety will provide opportunities to project our positive approach to partnership and consultation.

● **Performance**

We concentrate most of our efforts in three key areas, tackling crime, patrolling and responding to calls from the public.

We are continually striving to improve our performance and intend to increase crime detection and reduce crimes to make London a safer place.

Public satisfaction with policing in London remains high with 93% expressing satisfaction with response to 999 calls, the highest of any metropolitan force.

● **Working practices**

We are becoming more intelligence led rather than event driven, making greater use of targeting, technology, surveillance, informants and forensic science.

Corporate Communication Strategy – continued

The way in which murders are investigated within the MPS has undergone change as has the approach to the training of detective constables.

● **Technology**

The MPS uses Information Technology to support many operations on the beat, in police stations and in headquarters buildings, the focus being on helping police officers do their jobs. The next generation of technology for police radio and command and control (C3i) is also being developed.

Systems available for use by officers include OTIS, CRIMINT and GIS.

■ **The right way**

We are committed to policing in the right way.

● **Accountability**

The creation of a Mayor for London, a Greater London Authority and a directly elected Metropolitan Police Authority will increase our accountability and build even stronger partnerships with local authorities and the communities we serve.

● **Values and integrity**

All our people must be honest, fair, sensitive and deserving of public trust. The vast majority of MPS staff act with professionalism and integrity. While genuine error can be understood and often forgiven there is no place for deliberate unethical behaviour, dishonesty or corruption. We will deal with these speedily and without compromise to inspire public confidence in our investigation of complaints.

● **Best value**

To ensure that we continue to maintain and improve on our current levels of performance and to ensure that every penny is spent wisely we are adopting a strategic approach towards improving delivery of best value over the next three to five years.

Corporate Communication Strategy – *continued*

Annex B

Communication principles

In devising any strategy we need to bear in mind the environment in which we operate and should consider:

- why do we need to communicate?;
- what has been said so far?;
- what are the potential benefits?;
- what advantages/disadvantages do we start with?;
- who is our intended target audience and what is the current prevailing opinion within this audience?

In proposing any communication activity we need clear objectives which are SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely.

Audiences

Within each broad audience there will be a large number of specific target audiences. We therefore need to assess each communication need individually and find the appropriate channel to meet this need. We need to adopt the same core message but with different emphases for different audiences.

It is vital to segment each audience according to their needs/concerns:

- who are the key audiences?;
- what is the agenda of each audience?;
- what are the key concerns of each audience?;
- what does the MPS wish to achieve with each audience?;
- what response do we want from each audience?

Target audiences can include:

- staff;
- Londoners:
 - generally;
 - by area or location;
 - ethnic groups;
 - special interest groups;
- media:
 - print;
 - broadcast;
 - national;
 - regional;
 - local;
 - specialist;

Corporate Communication Strategy – *continued*

■ politicians:

- Members of Parliament;
- London councillors;

■ public affairs:

- business leaders;
- opinion formers;
- decision makers;
- community leaders;
- the Home Office;
- the Government Office for London;
- the Local Government Association;
- the Association for London Government;
- other police forces;
- the Association of Chief Police Officers/Police Federation/Superintendents Association;

■ Metropolitan Police Committee;

■ Shadow Metropolitan Police Authority;

■ visitors to London.

Performance measures

A continuing process of information gathering and monitoring should support the implementation of the Strategy to measure its effectiveness. Points to be considered include:

- how well did we get our message across?;
- did we achieve our objectives?;
- did we reach our target audience?;
- what tangible results can be seen for our efforts?;
- what resources did we use?;
- did we get best value from them?;
- could we have done it better?

Specific evaluation programmes are being established for media coverage and advertising effectiveness.

Media policy

The public has a huge interest in law and order issues and the media pays significant attention to matters that involve the police and crime. The MPS has a duty to let the media know things that should be in the public domain. However, there needs to be a balance between this, protecting the rights of a victim and ensuring the successful conclusion of an investigation.

The aim is to be both proactive and reactive when dealing with the media. By being proactive we intend to gain maximum media coverage and understanding of the MPS policies, actions and decisions. By being reactive we set out to put the MPS point of view to the media when asked to respond to a situation or issue in which we are involved or have an interest.

It is our policy to be open and honest in dealing with the media and respond to their enquiries within their deadlines as far as possible. We will tell the media things which:

- are in the best interests of the public to know about;
- help to show the public the way in which the police go about their work; and
- help to build public confidence in the police.

Categories of information

The information provided will be in one of the following categories:

- **For offer:** This is information we want the media to use.
- **If asked:** This is information we release if asked specifically about something.
- **Non-attributable:** This is information that we give to the media and which may be published, but the MPS is not quoted as the source.
- **Not for publication:** This is information that we give to the media and which they are not expected to publish, as it is for their guidance only.

Who speaks to the media?

The question of who speaks to the media often differs depending on the subject or issue but, as a general rule, the first point of contact between the media and the MPS is through the DPA Press Bureau or one of its area press offices. However, many journalists have direct contact with police stations and individual officers.

Whenever and wherever possible steps are taken to put the media in direct contact with the officer who is directly responsible for the item of interest. When this is not possible the DPA will seek to gather the facts and ensure that a suitable response is provided to the media within their deadlines.

Divisional press liaison officers have been developed with the aim of providing a better, more effective service to the local media. As well as meeting a local responsive need they are encouraged to take a proactive approach and develop positive relationships with the media serving their area.

Corporate identity guidelines

All internal and external communication should be presented in an effective, consistent and professional style. The logo is the primary visual means by which someone or something can be identified as part of the MPS. Wherever the logo appears it can be instantly recognised as the symbol of the attitude and the personality of the Service. The public know that they can seek assistance from a place or person bearing the logo. Its instant recognition helps to generate pride and confidence. It confers our ownership of the property or service which is branded with the logo.

The logo comprises two elements, the Coat of Arms and the words ‘Metropolitan Police’. These have been designed to fit together in two formats, portrait and landscape, which provide differing emphases on the Coat of Arms or the words.



Landscape



Portrait

The preferred version for general use is landscape, especially where it will be seen by external audiences.

The portrait version provides an alternative where, due to design limitations, the landscape version does not sit comfortably on the item to which it is being applied. The MPS stationery is an example. The use of this alternative version is strictly controlled and permission must be sought from DPA Public Relations Branch before proceeding.

Corporate slogan

The corporate slogan ‘Working for a Safer London’ has been introduced to form part of the landscape logo for use only in appropriate circumstances.



Working for a safer London

It has been designed in a handwriting style and its size, format and juxtaposition to the logo are also strictly controlled. The words cannot be amended in any way.

Guidance

To ensure that the corporate identity, the logo and slogan, is reproduced in a consistent style and within an agreed context the DPA is producing guideline documents which will be made available to all MPS branches with a direct responsibility for commissioning or designing materials. This will also cover the use of the MPS Armorial Bearings. Copies will also be made available to outside suppliers who need them. Advice on the appropriate use and application of logos and the slogan can be obtained from DPA 5 (Public Relations) on extn 62351.

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Annex E

The following is a list of contact points for the Directorate of Public affairs

Contact	Extn
Director	62691
Deputy Director	62675
Assistant Director, Internal Communication and Special Projects	62475
Internet	63537
Special Projects	63506
Crimestoppers	63509
Notices	63593
Assistant Director, News Branch	62206
Head of Press Bureau	62601
Headquarters/Special Operations Press Desk	64094
Policy Portfolios and Public Relations	64791
Area Press and Publicity Officers	
1 Area	49056
2 Area	44086
3 Area	24377
4 Area	61751
5 Area	35073