

Case study: Metropolitan Police

Consultations on policing priorities (2003-7)



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making consultation work

The Brief

A review of consultation processes by the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) indicated that there was room for improvement regarding the understanding of community issues and the feedback given to participants of consultations.

Dialogue by Design were asked to assist in the development of a more sophisticated approach to consultation that enabled a deeper understanding of the issues raised, prompted more informed contributions directly relevant to the policing context of London, and provided participants with feedback on how their contributions had been taken on board.

“The consultation was easy to follow and quite comprehensive. The question is really whether the police / MPA find the results clear and useful. The only comment to add is that it might benefit if there were a larger number of respondents, so it might be worth publicising the exercise more widely next year.”

- Participant feedback (public consultation 2006)

The Process

From 2003 to 2007, Dialogue by Design ran annual public consultations on policing priorities, inviting community groups, local government, other public sector organisations and individuals in London to participate.

While the process was adjusted year on year, its core structure was as follows:

- Phase 1: Participants were asked to identify up to 10 key policing issues
- Phase 2: The issues collected in phase 1 were grouped and displayed on the consultation website. Participants were invited to view the results to gain a better understanding of other people's concerns. Having obtained an overview of all issues gathered, participants were asked to prioritise them
- Phase 3: Phase 2 results were displayed on the consultation website. Participants were asked to evaluate the process

In addition, Metropolitan Police Borough Commanders and key managers were presented with the findings from the public consultations and asked what would be done in response to the issues raised.

The Outcome

The engagement process was an improvement in several regards:

- It encouraged participants to take notice of the views of other participants
- It fed the outcomes of the public consultation into an internal consultation, thereby making sure that Metropolitan Police staff took notice of what the public had said
- The outcomes of the internal consultation were summarised in a report which allowed participants to see how the issues raised had been taken into account
- The outcomes of the consultation informed the planning process of the policing priorities for the subsequent periods

This work also led to Dialogue by Design running workshops on designing and managing consultation and community engagement processes for the MPS.

“It is evident that a lot of work has been put into this exercise and views are being taken account of. I look forward to participating in future years consultation processes. Keep up the good work.”

- Participant feedback (public consultation 2005)