Policing for the People

Interim report of the Police Reform Taskforce
The Police Reform Taskforce

David Cameron has made police reform a priority for the Conservative Party. On becoming Leader of the Party he appointed Nick Herbert as Shadow Minister for Police Reform with a brief to lead a Taskforce on the issue. This interim report of the Taskforce builds on the direction set out in two keynote speeches by David Cameron and sets out proposals for further consultation.

The report is not a statement of Party policy, which will be agreed in due course. We make no specific spending pledges at this stage. Instead we make the case that money could be spent much better. Central to the report is the notion, endorsed by the Treasury, that very substantial resources could be released from reforms to the way the police work.

The Taskforce has no formal membership. Our report is the product of hundreds of discussions and meetings over the course of the last year with police officers of all ranks, including field visits to various forces, as well as all those with an interest and expertise in policing – officials, think tanks, academics, police authorities, and above all the public. We have also been informed by a large volume of letters and e-mails, especially from serving officers.

We now want to consult widely on these ideas. We have set up a dedicated website, www.policereform.com, so that we can receive views from all concerned – police officers, experts and the public. Over the course of the next few weeks we will be holding specialist seminars on the key areas identified for reform in the report. We will be visiting more police forces and talking to as many officers of all ranks as possible.

In 2005, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair, called for a national debate on the police, asking “What kind of police service do we want…? Nowhere is there a thorough-going, objective debate about policing as a whole”.

This report aims to generate a real debate on the future of Britain’s police – one which we hope that the police and the public will join.

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1 Speech to the Dalston Youth Project, Hackney, 16 January 2006 and Lecture to the Police Foundation, 10 July 2006.
2 Dimbleby Lecture, 16 November 2005.
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3 www.nickherbert.com  
4 www.reform.co.uk  
5 www.hedra.co.uk  
6 www.taxpayersalliance.com
We would like to record our thanks to Ben Wallace MP, Barry Loveday, Gordon Wasserman and Alex Chalk, all of whom provided valuable comment and input into this report. We would also like to thank the chief officers who allowed us to visit their forces and the many officers of all ranks who took the time and trouble to brief us.
Foreword

The central premise of this report is that, in spite of record spending on law and order, crime remains far too high. A more effective criminal justice system and social action will be important components of a new approach to fighting crime. But the police are a vital link in the chain of justice, consuming two-thirds of law and order spending. Their performance over the next decade will be essential in improving the quality of life of millions of citizens.

The Government’s approach to the police has been a familiar one: higher public spending combined with an ever tighter central grip. Like other public services, the police are bedevilled with national targets, interference and the bureaucracy created by central intervention. The result has been that even as resources for the police have reached record levels, officers feel unable to deliver the service they and the public want – and the gulf between the police and public is growing.

The hundreds of meetings we have had with police officers over the past months have reinforced our belief that the service is full of officers with a real commitment to delivering effective policing for the public. Nevertheless, neither politicians nor the police can afford to ignore an undercurrent of public dissatisfaction about the level of policing which they are receiving. Focus groups which we conducted for the Taskforce indicated sympathy for the difficulty of the task which the police face. A general feeling, expressed by one participant, was that “their hands are totally tied – by red tape and political correctness”. But there were also harsh words, reflecting an alienation from the service: “Your local bobby used to be known by everyone. He was an authority on the area and a friend. They are now obsolete”. A familiar grievance was that the police appeared to pursue motorists with particular zeal: “You get pulled over for a driving offence and get treated like a complete criminal”.

This qualitative research is supported by quantitative evidence that trust in the police has declined and attitudes towards them are negatively related to personal experiences of the service. The most recent survey, conducted by ICM for the TaxPayers’ Alliance, found that while the overwhelming majority of the public respects the police, less than a quarter think that policing in their area has improved, and less than half think that increases in council tax to pay for improvements to local policing in the last ten years have been good value for money. Large majorities of the public agree that the police spend too much time in police stations and not enough time on the beat; their hands are tied by red tape and political correctness, and they prefer to focus on easy targets like speeding motorists rather than deal with antisocial behaviour and local crime.

The closure of police stations is emblematic of the withdrawal of the police from the public. On paper, police officer numbers have increased – the police workforce has grown by almost 25 per

7 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, prepared on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
cent in the last five years. In practice, the public simply do not see it. ICM’s survey found that most people think that there are fewer police on the beat than there used to be, and that nearly three quarters of the public know none of the police officers in their neighbourhood. As we demonstrate, vast amounts of police time are spent tied up in stations; the police spend more time on paperwork than on patrol, and less than a tenth of England and Wales’ police officers are dedicated to neighbourhood policing. If the amount of time a police officer spends on the beat could be increased from one fifth to two fifths, this would effectively double the police presence on the streets of England and Wales without recruiting a single additional officer.

For decades, an expert wisdom prevailed that high crime was inevitable and that policing could do little to prevent it. There was no point in putting police officers on the streets, the argument ran, because it would do little to reduce crime. Today such fatalism, which was never accepted by the public, has been debunked. When more police were put on the streets of central London after 7/7, crime fell. The success of New York City’s reductions in crime in the 1990s – recently described by one leading academic as “by far the biggest crime prevention achievement in the recorded history of metropolitan policing” – demonstrates that good policing, which accounted for half of the 75 per cent reduction in crime in a decade, can make our streets safer.

The lessons of New York are important ones. Better police performance was achieved by a combination of factors: a significant increase in police numbers on the streets, robust community policing, and powerful reforms which enhanced the accountability of managers. The changes were driven by an elected Mayor who was accountable to the people, and an inspirational police chief who innovated and led his force.

Today the British police face the twin challenges of rebuilding community policing to tackle low level crime and antisocial behaviour, while at the same time strengthening the fight against serious crime and terrorism. To meet these challenges it will be vital to ensure that the police are properly resourced in the future. But they have never had so much money, so many officers or such access to technology. Furthermore, the growth of spending on public services is now slowing; indeed the Home Office budget is to be frozen from next year. The police face a new imperative to deliver value for money.

The Government seems incapable of providing the strategic leadership which is needed to ensure that the police can meet today’s challenges. Since the collapse of its ill-judged proposal to merge forces, the Home Office has been at sea on police reform, promising a new vision of policing but instead delivering a weak and banal two-page statement of ‘values’. It has cut back initiatives which would have had the most direct impact on providing a better service to the public, such as neighbourhood policing and the promised 101 non-emergency number. It has provided little impetus on programmes such as sharing services, the development of police

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8 Ibid.
information technology or workforce modernisation – all crucial to delivering value for money in policing. Its taskforce to reduce police bureaucracy has no director.

While in these critical areas the Home Office delivers too little, it interferes excessively in local management of the police, its central targets distorting professional priorities and damaging morale. Crude targets to drive up detection rates have resulted in a leap in Penalty Notices for Disorder, which allow offenders, including serial shoplifters, to escape without a criminal record, yet which are recorded as offences brought to ‘justice’. Ironically, the year which has seen the establishment of a new National Policing Board with the Home Secretary at its helm has also seen an increasingly incoherent strategy. A new approach to redefine central government’s role in policing is essential.

We conclude that four key reforms are needed:

• The structure of the police must enable them to fight serious crime while enhancing and sustaining community policing. This means either the existing 43 forces co-operating much more effectively, or a new national force taking responsibility for serious crime while much more localised forces focus on volume crime in their areas.

• The complexity and demands of modern policing mean that the workforce must be reformed to ensure that it is flexible, well trained and highly motivated, with a diverse range of skills and expertise. A key goal should be to enhance the ability of police chiefs to manage their workforces.

• The police’s hands must be untied to give them the discretion they need and to release officers for front-line duties. Forms and processes which do not help the police to deliver a better service to the public should be eliminated. Central direction and targets should be replaced by locally accountable leadership and priority setting. Civilian staff or the private sector should be employed to do jobs which sworn officers do not need to do, and the police ‘family’ should be extended.

• The police must be made properly accountable for their performance as well as their conduct, and their performance management framework must only reward activity that delivers a better service, not activity which keeps officers busy and ticks boxes. The quid pro quo for reducing central intervention is strongly enhanced local accountability, with a new emphasis on more effective partnerships and the empowerment of communities to ensure their own safety.

Many of the proposals we set out are challenging. But we are convinced that they offer a better future for both police officers and the public:

• The police will be released to do the job they want to do, consistent with the Conservative
Party’s key theme of trusting professionals. Central interference will be minimised, professional discretion will be restored, and committed officers will be rewarded for their success.

• The public will benefit from localised policing which is more responsive to their concerns, giving them a real voice and control to ensure the safety of their communities. Police officers will be returned to the streets where the public want to see them.

The founder of modern policing, Sir Robert Peel, famously said: “The police are the public and the public are the police”. Police forces grew out of the localities. Restoring the accountability of the police to local communities will not only improve the fight against volume crime; it will be an important counterbalance to the areas where more effective national co-ordination of policing will be required, notably in relation to the development of technology and the fight against serious crime. The empowerment of local communities in the fight against crime will be a substantial element of the renewal of civic life and the democratic process. Above all, it will be an essential step towards rebuilding the bridge between the police and the public – and delivering lasting reductions in crime.

NICK HERBERT MP
Shadow Minister for Police Reform
April 2007
Chapter 1 - Crime is too high

Crime is high by international and historical standards. The Government’s claims to have reduced crime are not borne out by reality. Substantially increased spending on the police has not been matched by corresponding reductions in crime, indicating that productivity has fallen and the public have received poor value for money. The fight against crime is a challenge for the whole criminal justice system and for society as a whole. But effective policing has a vital role to play.

Crime today is almost ten times its level per 100,000 of the population than in 1950. People in England and Wales are the most likely to be victims of crime of any developed country, except only for Australia. The UK is the most burgled country in the European Union, with the highest levels of assault crime.

The Government claims that crime measured by the British Crime Survey has fallen, yet the British Crime Survey massively underestimates crime. It covers only half of recorded crime and ignores murder, rape, fraud, crimes against under-16s, commercial crime including shoplifting, and crime where there is no direct victim such as drugs dealing. Estimates suggest the true figure of crime in England and Wales is roughly three times the level indicated by the British Crime Survey.

Since 1997-98 total recorded crime has increased from 4.5 million to over 5.5 million crimes a year, an increase of approximately 22 per cent. The Government claims that changes in the way crime is recorded have caused this, but steep increases in crimes such as robbery and violence against the person cannot be explained by changes in the counting rules.

Britain now spends more on law and order as a proportion of GDP than any other OECD country, nearly two-thirds of which goes to the police, costing each household in England and Wales £550 a year.

Despite this, less than a quarter of recorded crimes are detected and receive a sanction, meaning that over 4.3 million crimes are not brought to justice. Increasing levels of funding have not led to corresponding increases in arrests and detections, nor, more importantly, to a corresponding fall in crime. On any available measure, police productivity has fallen, meaning that taxpayers have not received value for money.

The sheer scale of crime should not lead to the fatalistic conclusion that it is an intractable problem. Half of all crime is committed by just 100,000 criminals. That is less than the total number of police officers (140,000). 8 per cent of crime is committed by 5,000 criminals, an
average of 116 criminals per police force.

The police cannot fight crime alone. The courts, prison, and parole systems must all work effectively together with the police to tackle crime. Action by wider society to tackle the causes of crime is also essential, but the role of the police is vital.

Chapter 2 - Where are the police?

As police stations have closed and foot patrol has given way to modern policing methods, the police have become increasingly alienated from the public. The way to rebuild public confidence and tackle crime is to have police officers on the streets. But the re-introduction of community policing has been inadequate. Record numbers of officers have not been reflected in officers on the beat, and key Government programmes such as promised Police Community Support Officers and the national non-emergency number have been scaled back.

Policing can be a difficult and dangerous job. Ten British police officers have died as a result of attacks since the beginning of the new millennium alone. We must never take for granted the sacrifices the police make to protect us, and uphold law and order.

The police are still respected, but only 50 per cent of the public think the police in their area do an excellent or good job. Satisfaction is lower amongst victims of crime than the general public. Trust in the police is lower than trust in doctors, teachers, judges or the NHS. A new survey has shown that less than a quarter of the public think that policing in their area has improved, less than half think that increases in council tax to pay for improvements to local policing in the last ten years have been good value for money, and nearly three-quarters do not know any of the police officers in their neighbourhood.

Over the past 14 years, 880 police stations have closed. Today only one police station in eight is open 24 hours a day, and nearly half of all forces do not have a single station open around the clock. These station closures have coincided with the police moving from foot patrols into panda cars as they have prioritised fast response times to 999 calls.

The Government has shelved the 101 national non-emergency number. The public’s perception of a lack of police visibility and responsiveness has been exacerbated by what is widely seen as a stark contrast between forces’ commitment to enforcing motoring offences and other low level crime. The police and the public have never been more remote from each other.

Police officer numbers have reached record levels, at around 140,000 full-time equivalent officers in England and Wales. Yet this remains low by international standards. In England and Wales there are 264 officers per 100,000 of the population, but the figure is 387 in France, 457 in New York, and 467 in Chicago.
There was a received wisdom in the Home Office and academia that police action could not cut crime. However, evidence from home and abroad has convincingly demonstrated that this fatalistic perspective is wrong.

An increased police presence on the streets cuts crime. A study of the aftermath of 7/7, when increased police numbers on the streets in six London boroughs led to falls in crime, suggests that a 10 per cent increase in police deployment reduces the crime rate by approximately 3 per cent.

Following the election of Mayor Rudy Giuliani and the appointment of Commissioner William J Bratton, New York City experienced a drop in crime of 75 per cent from peak rates in the 1990s, almost twice the national average. Three key factors accounted for the success: an increase in police officers on the streets, robust community policing and management accountability.

A huge majority of the public – 83 per cent – supports a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to all crime, with highly visible policing on the streets, bearing down heavily on things like antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

The Government’s vague pledge of a dedicated neighbourhood policing team in every area by 2008 is not being met. Only the Metropolitan Police now have “Safer Neighbourhood Teams” of one sergeant, two constables and three PCSOs in every ward. Nationally, less than 10 per cent of police officers in England and Wales are dedicated to neighbourhood policing.

The Government will now provide 8,000 fewer PCSOs than it promised in its election manifesto. Figures published in January 2007 showed that for the first time since 2000 police numbers fell by 173 from March to September 2006.

The latest Home Office figures have revealed that only 14 per cent of all police officer time is spent on patrol and that only one in 58 police officers is patrolling the streets at any given time.

Our case study in Basingstoke showed that on one day this town of nearly 150,000 people had effective response cover of just one sergeant and four officers.

**Chapter 3 - Today’s challenges**

The core roles of the police are to prevent crime and bring criminals to justice. They are not social workers – other agencies must play a more effective part in the fight against crime. The police currently face five key challenges: terrorism, serious and organised crime, establishing community policing, strengthening local accountability, and delivering improved value for money. The police face several obstacles to meeting these challenges, including excessive bureaucracy and central intervention, an inflexible workforce, and
inefficient procedures.

The central mission of the police must remain the prevention of crime and the bringing to justice of law-breakers. The spiralling of crime should not require the police to widen their mission. The criminal justice system as a whole and the police’s local partners must also work effectively to reduce crime.

While police numbers have increased over time they have not matched rapidly rising crime rates. The police now face around 40 crimes per officer, four times the number in the 1960s and twenty times the number in the 1920s. In addition, the sheer volume of antisocial behaviour presents a significant challenge.

Against this background the police face five key contemporary challenges:

1. **The terrorist threat.** This threat is serious, is growing and will be a long-term issue. The police will play a vital part in the fight against terrorism alongside the security agencies.

2. **The protective services gap.** The police must do more to fight serious crime which crosses national and police force borders. SOCA has an important role but is focused on the higher end threat. Many forces lack the capability to tackle serious crime effectively.

3. **Community policing must be developed and sustained.** It is essential that community policing is protected from changing fashions and inconsistent financing. Community policing is what the public want the police to do. The key to anchoring it will lie in developing local accountability.

4. **Increasing accountability.** We live in the age of accountability and an increasingly consumerist society rightly expects the services that they pay for to be responsive to them. The police are currently accountable for their conduct but not to local people for their performance or for their selection of priorities. The police must be made more accountable to local communities.

5. **Delivering value for money.** As the era of big spending rises comes to an end, the police face the challenge of delivering better value for money in order to provide an acceptable service to the public.

The obstacles to meeting these challenges include excessive bureaucracy and central intervention, an inflexible workforce, inefficient processes and political correctness.
Four key reforms are needed:

1. The structure of the police must enable them to provide excellent protective services while enhancing and sustaining community policing.

2. The police workforce must be reformed to ensure that it is flexible, well trained and highly motivated, with a diverse range of skills and expertise, and that forces provide value for money.

3. The police’s hands must be untied to give them the discretion they need. Forms and process which do not help the police to deliver a better service to the public should be eliminated. Central direction and targets should be replaced by locally accountable leadership and priority setting.

4. The police need to be made properly accountable for their performance as well as their conduct, and their performance management framework must only reward activity that delivers a better service, not activity which keeps officers busy and ticks boxes.

Chapter 4 - Forces for the future

The structure of the police must allow them both to fight serious crime and develop community policing. Neither a national police force, regional forces or the status quo are viable models of policing for the future. Two models based on the current 43 forces are viable: locally accountable forces matched with effective leadership from the centre to ensure collaboration, or locally accountable forces operating alongside a national Serious Crime Force – which could allow the creation of smaller local forces in the future.

A proper public debate is needed about the right structure of police forces to meet the new challenges. To begin this debate we have identified five key models for police organisation in England and Wales, the first three of which we do not believe are viable:

1. The current structure of 43 forces, increasingly directed from the centre, is no longer a viable option. Forces are making inadequate progress in collaborating to deliver efficiencies and effective protective services. Although community policing is developing, the current structure does not do enough to protect it from competing demands, and formal local accountability is weak. It is essential that there is more central strategic leadership in certain areas, such as the use of ICT. However, this is currently lacking.

2. Regional strategic forces were favoured by the Government in the recent amalgamations debate. While this model aimed to increase the capabilities of forces to provide protective services it is too far removed from the public, ultimately leading to a centralised force and a
loss of local accountability.

3 A national force would have the same weaknesses as regional forces, potentially delivering protective services effectively, but at the expense of community policing.

But two models are viable:

4 Approximately 43 forces with stronger local accountability matched with effective leadership from the centre to drive collaboration, ensuring both the development of community policing and an enhanced ability to deal with serious crime.

5 Approximately 43 forces with stronger local accountability, focusing principally on level 1 crime, with a new Serious Crime Force (SCF), answering to the Home Secretary, assuming responsibilities for most of the protective services currently delivered by the 43 forces, in particular serious and organised crime and major crime.

Where an area such as a town or county has a strong geographical and community identity, aligned with local government boundaries, there may be a demand to create a smaller force for that area. The clear alignment of force and local authority areas would enable more visible, accountable and powerful partnerships to be created in the fight against volume crime. Such a change would be made possible by creation of the SCF, since the remaining administrative functions of forces could be devolved to smaller units. We will consult on whether an evolutionary path towards some smaller forces is practical and desirable. If it is, we will consider a procedure to allow the public the ability to apply for the creation of a smaller force in their area. The change could be triggered by local authority application. The Home Secretary would then approve the proposal, after consulting with the new Inspectorate (see below), and finally it would be approved by the public in a referendum. The minimum size of a force would be one BCU. Larger cities would continue to need a city-wide force entity.

Chapter 5 - A professional workforce

If the police are to meet today’s challenges they will require a workforce that is flexible, highly skilled, well motivated, fairly paid and representative of the population it serves. Workforce reform, a new focus on training and leadership, easier entry for talented individuals, and greater flexibility for police managers will form a key part of the new police agenda.

The Treasury estimates that £250 million could be saved through better overtime and sick pay management. Flexibility may be increased by reducing overtime payments and paying officers a higher basic salary in return, although any changes to overtime must be evaluated in terms of
operational effectiveness and recruitment and retention, as well as efficiency.

Pay should reflect skills as well as seniority. A new position of “senior constable” could be introduced. Fixed-term employment contracts, which already exist in ACPO ranks, should be introduced for BCU commanders. This would allow for a periodic two-way review of performance, and make it easy to remove an underperforming commander and reward one who is doing well. The police pension scheme should allow people to leave and join the force at the right time.

After initial training, satisfaction levels among the federated ranks for the training they receive are low. This situation must improve and while chief officers should continue to be allowed discretion over training, minimum national standards should be set and training courses of a sufficient standard need to be available. In addition, the current promotion examination is not a relevant test of an officer’s ability and should be replaced.

A senior staff college similar to those in the Armed Forces should form a part of the career development structure and assess the capability of officers to match force and service needs. When officers reach ACPO rank they should join a national cadre of senior officers who can be deployed across forces and responsibilities.

The complexity and demands of modern policing have created a greater need for graduate recruits to the police. However, studies show that only 10-16 per cent of police recruits are graduates. The High Potential Development Scheme is currently under review but its replacement must ensure that more graduates are recruited. There is also a strong case for encouraging talented managers and professionals from outside the police force to enter at a rank above constable.

The increasing variety of skills which modern policing requires has led ACPO to argue that the model of the omnicompetent constable is no longer sustainable. The old-fashioned model of the omni-competent officer should give way, through workforce modernisation and extending the police family, to forces consisting of teams with diverse specialist skills.

The police need to be well motivated, but the current outdated pay structure does not reflect this as pay is linked to seniority. The system for determining police pay is currently under review. Any new arrangements must improve flexibility and encourage officers to develop their careers by rewarding skills and performance. Similarly, high performing teams could be rewarded for their performance.

While the vast majority of police officers are well motivated professionals working to high standards, it is too difficult to remove bad, unmotivated, and even corrupt police officers. It is essential that the mechanism for disciplining officers is proportionate, timely, transparent, fair
and cost-effective. Recent changes have simplified the process of removing bad officers. If, after these changes have bedded in, the mechanism still does not achieve these goals, further reform will be necessary.

Arrangements for police pay should continue to acknowledge their special status but nevertheless be affordable. More than 8,000 officers are being paid a full-time salary while on restricted duties. The wage bill of these officers, who account for almost 6 per cent of the total police workforce, is £243 million a year. Sick pay and restricted duties must be better managed. Similarly, injury pensions must be fair and proportionate.

While approximately 8.7 per cent of the population is non-white, only 3.7 per cent of police officers are from BME groups, although this is a significant improvement on 2.9 per cent in 2003. The police should continue to use positive action to recruit BME officers. Positive discrimination or affirmative action would be counter-productive.

Chapter 6 - Untying the police’s hands

The public want the police to be crime-fighters, not form-writers. Yet, in spite of repeated Government promises to tackle excessive bureaucracy, police officers spend more time on paperwork than on patrol. This could be remedied by reducing paperwork, employing technology and modernising workforces to improve efficiency. Reducing central intervention and extending the police “family” will also help to free the police. “Summary justice” must not be an alternative to reducing police bureaucracy. Too often it is leading to soft justice.

Part 1: Reducing the burden of bureaucracy

A Home Office study admits that on average officers spend almost as much of their shift in the police station as they do out of it and less than a fifth of their time on the beat. The Home Office’s own figures show that only 1 per cent of police time is spent on proactively reducing crime.

The police spend more time on paperwork than on patrol. Just 14 per cent of all police officers’ time is spent on patrol – a definition which “includes officers on foot/car/beat patrol, CID and traffic officers” – compared with 19.3 per cent of their time on paperwork. Even patrol officers spend nearly as much time on paperwork as on patrol.

The public want the police to be crime-fighters, not form-writers. The recruitment of additional police officers and a public commitment to develop neighbourhood policing will have little impact until the major bureaucratic obstacles to police officer efficiency are addressed. If the amount of time a police officer spends on the beat could be increased from one-fifth to two-fifths, this would effectively double the police presence on the streets of England and Wales.
There is no evidence to support the Government’s claim that it is freeing up police officers or has made nearly 9,000 forms obsolete – it cannot even list the forms.

Recording every stop takes seven minutes and is an unnecessary impediment both to police efficiency and their interaction with the public. The “stop and account” form should be scrapped – although a form for “stop and search” should be retained as this is an intrusive power.

One of the biggest barriers to police efficiency is that IT systems within the police are not joined up. This means that officers frequently have to key in the same details on multiple databases. The personal details of a charged person can be recorded as many as 17 times onto different forms in a police custody and case file process. This is clearly an unnecessary use of officer time and increases the risk of errors being made. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the IT systems of the police, courts and CPS cannot communicate with each other.

Mobile working has huge potential benefits for the police, but there is no national strategy to develop it. While most forces are undertaking some sort of mobile data trials, only one force has fully rolled out mobile working technology to all response officers.

“Statutory charging”, under which the CPS must formally approve all charges, causes delay and places an extra burden on the police. Charging discretion should be returned to the police for a wider range of minor offences.

Workforce modernisation pilots show that efficiency gains of up to 20 per cent are possible by using civilian staff to release sworn officers from unnecessary paperwork. The programme is receiving only weak support from many chief constables and the Government, and it needs to be driven forward.

A review of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act should include consideration of new provisions, subject to appropriate safeguards, to allow the detention clock to be stopped and permit post-charge interviews.

The use of police cells to detain people with mental illnesses places pressure on both the police and suspects themselves and requires fundamental review.

Part 2: Reducing the burden of central intervention
Over the past decade police forces have been subject to increasing central intervention. The Government has introduced an array of new central targets, a central standards unit, an excessive and bureaucratic performance framework that tries to micromanage forces, and a National Policing Plan. Prior to this, forces were already subject to inspections from HMIC and the Audit Commission, and received guidance from ACPO and direction from the Home Office.
This increased central intervention leads to confusion and unnecessary workload for the police. Excessive reporting requirements impose considerable cost. The annual cost of non-incident related police paperwork in England and Wales has been estimated at around £625 million. The President of ACPO has said that policing has “got horribly bureaucratic, formulaic and Byzantine”.

Paradoxically, while the Home Office has increasingly tried to micromanage the police from the centre, it has shown weak leadership in other areas of policing where the centre has a role in driving through reforms and improving collaboration. There are huge potential savings to be gained from ensuring IT compatibility, joint procurement and sharing backroom functions such as fleet management, uniforms, and administrative work.

There needs to be a fundamental reorientation of policing. National government should set key standards and the Home Secretary’s powers of intervention should be reserved for failures or when there is a national leadership requirement – for instance, in driving the shared services agenda, procurement and national workforce issues. Force priorities should, as far as possible, be set locally. Police chiefs should be given the freedom to manage their forces but be held accountable for their performance to the local community. An independent national body should publish data and monitor performance.

**Part 3: Setting the police free**

The Government’s use of “summary justice” is frequently resulting in soft justice, with fixed Penalty Notices for Disorder of only £80. The move is helping the police to boost detection rates - one in nine offences brought to justice is now a Penalty Notice for Disorder. However, as a result of this, the proportion of offences brought to justice through a conviction in the courts has fallen from just under 70 per cent in 2004 to 53 per cent in 2006.

As well as central targets, political correctness and heavy-handed interpretation of health and safety legislation also impinge upon police discretion. This undermines the morale and effectiveness of the police. A common-sense approach to policy-making should allow discretion to be returned to individual officers. As far as possible police officers should be able to exercise their professional judgement in a framework of accountability.

In order to set the police free, the police “family” should be extended with a new cadre of part-time paid police reservists joining Police Community Support Officers, whose role should be re-evaluated. Greater use should be made of wardens, which would allow local partners to do more to help the police. Volunteers should be used to help man police stations.

The private sector could also be used more to release the police from tasks which they need not do. Commercial security firms could be contracted to manage crime-scene guarding or cordon duties, provide mobile “street-to-suite” capabilities, pursue people who jump bail, monitor “at
Chapter 7 - Accountable policing

The police should be locally accountable to the public, through the direct election of police commissioners to replace police authorities and through a “right to policing” for local communities. Elected commissioners would work with local partners to deliver, joined-up justice. At the national level standards should be ensured by a strong independent inspectorate and a streamlined set of national indicators to measure what matters.

Surveys show that the public want the police to be more accountable locally, but the Government’s measures, such as the “community call to action”, are gimmicks. A recent survey has found that 94 per cent of people could not name the chairman of their police authority.

The police should be made more accountable to local communities at every level: in neighbourhoods, at the local command level, and at the strategic force level.

Local communities should be given a “right to policing”, with access to their local police through regular beat meetings involving councillors, and to detailed information of crime levels in their area. Communities should also be given control of community safety budgets, so that they could hire a police officer, PCSO or warden who would have a non-abstraction agreement, clean graffiti or purchase specific equipment.

The process of devolving power, budgetary control and responsibility to BCU commanders should continue, but ultimately they will continue to possess only tactical, not strategic decision-making powers and answer to chief constables. Direct accountability can only work at force level, where strategic and resource decisions are made.

At force level, directly elected police commissioners should replace police authorities. The role of the Home Secretary over local policing would be substantially reduced and refocused onto the areas of national policing and security. There would be a direct and transparent funding arrangement between voters and elected commissioners so that the public can judge the effectiveness of the policing they pay for.

Chief constables would retain “operational responsibility” for day-to-day policing in line with reforms to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. However, commissioners would appoint and dismiss chief constables. They would set their own targets for the force, make their own policing plans, and, crucially, control their own budgets.

There will need to be clear procedures for any corruption investigations to be conducted by outside police forces. In addition, a power of recall – forcing a new election – could, for
example, be triggered by an adverse report from a new independent inspectorate.

In London the Metropolitan Police Authority would be abolished. If the Metropolitan Police retains its national policing functions the Commissioner would continue to be appointed by the Home Secretary, although in consultation with the Mayor. If a Serious Crime Force were introduced the Mayor could appoint the Commissioner. Whoever the Met’s chief answers to, there is a case for strengthening the accountability arrangements of the Borough Commanders to their local communities.

Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships are invisible to the public and bureaucratic. More effective, far more visible and accountable local community safety partnerships are needed. They should be co-ordinated by, and answer to, the local elected commissioner – not to regional government offices. They should have their own budgets and they should be able to devolve spending to the most local level. They should produce a single local community safety plan which has buy-in from all stakeholders. There should also be active involvement of senior councillors from all local government tiers.

We will want to consider how the new elected Commissioners can play a wider role in the criminal justice system. We will consult on how elected commissiones could work with Local Criminal Justice Boards, and others, in order to join up the delivery of justice at a local level. It is essential that judicial independence and that of the CPS is not undermined, but, by working with Local Criminal Justice Boards, elected police commissioners could provide a holistic approach to crime reduction.

Central targets for the police are manipulated and assessment of the police is bureaucratic and complicated. Targets should be set locally, not nationally, and police performance assessed on three simple factors:

1. Crime reduction – measured by overall crime and supported by a weighted detection rate, though this will be given less importance than crime levels. Crime reduction will be the prime measure.

2. How safe the general public feels – measured by robust and independently conducted attitudinal surveys.

3. How satisfied victims and witnesses are when they come into contact with the police – also measured by attitudinal surveys.

The Home Office has manipulated crime figures and forfeited public trust. Performance assessments, crime figures and the British Crime Survey should be conducted completely independently of the Home Office.
Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary is too close to the Government and police forces. There needs to be a more independent and rigorous inspectorate that will serve as a champion of the people rather than the police. It should report to Parliament rather than the Home Office and inspectors should be appointed by Parliament, not the Home Secretary. It should become in part an economic regulator, ensuring value for money as well as monitoring standards.
Chapter 1: Crime is too high

Crime is high by international and historical standards. The Government’s claims to have reduced crime are not borne out by reality. Substantially increased spending on the police has not been matched by corresponding reductions in crime, indicating that productivity has fallen and the public have received poor value for money. The fight against crime is a challenge for the whole criminal justice system and for society as a whole. But effective policing has a vital role to play.

Crime is historically high

Crime in England and Wales is too high. Historically, it is almost ten times higher per 100,000 of the population than in 1950. Before the 1960s England and Wales had a reputation as a low crime country and until 1964 crime did not pass the million mark. However, from the 1960s crime rose steadily and sharply until, according to the British Crime Survey (BCS), it peaked in the 1990s. Using recorded crime per 100,000 of the population as a measure, crime in England and Wales has risen from 1,053 recorded crimes per 100,000 in 1950 to 10,475 per 100,000 in 2005-06.\(^{10}\) These high levels of crime come at a great cost: the Home Office estimates that crime against individuals and households accounts for over £36 billion of “harms”, and this is not counting crimes against businesses and fraud.\(^{11}\)

Crime figures also fail to take account of the growth in antisocial behaviour, which is now a major concern for many people. The Home Office has estimated that there are 13.5 million reports of antisocial behaviour per year – or one report every two seconds.\(^{12}\) A poll presented to the Citizens’ Summit at Downing Street in March 2007 showed that 60 per cent of people have worried about disrespectful behaviour in the previous few weeks.\(^{13}\)

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13 Ben Page, Public service policy review: Debating the issues (Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, Presentation to citizens summit, March 2007).
Figure 1.1: Crime trends over time


Notes on table:
1 1997-98 - change from calendar year to financial year.
2 1998-99 - the number of crimes recorded in that financial year using the expanded offence coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.
3 2002-03 - the National Crime Recording Standard came into effect. Numbers of recorded crimes were affected by changes in reporting and recording. In 2002-03 this was estimated to be 10 per cent for total recorded crime. This impact will vary for different types of offences.
Figure 1.1 shows that recoded crime in England and Wales has risen dramatically since 1950, and has continued to rise over the last decade. Since 1997-98 total recorded crime has increased from 4.5 million to over 5.5 million, an increase of approximately 22 per cent.\textsuperscript{14}

As recorded crime has increased, the percentage of crimes solved has fallen. Currently less than a quarter of recorded crimes are brought to justice. Of the 5.56 million crimes recorded in 2005-06, the number of sanction detections was 1.32 million (23.8 per cent). This leaves a “justice gap” – crimes not brought to justice – of 4.32 million crimes (76.6 per cent).\textsuperscript{15} And this is on a loose definition of what “justice” means: a shoplifter who is given an £80 fine, which might not even be paid, for stealing goods worth up to £200, is counted by the Government as an offender brought to justice.

The Prime Minister himself has highlighted how detection rates have fallen over time: “Over the past 50 years, the detection rate almost halved. 47 per cent of all crimes were detected in 1951 but only 26 per cent in 2004-5”.\textsuperscript{16} In Scotland the clear-up rate is 46 per cent,\textsuperscript{17} and although Scottish clear-up rates are calculated in a slightly different way to sanction detection rates, the discrepancy with England and Wales cannot be ignored. Further, as Figure 1.2 shows, of the few crimes that are detected, many do not even lead to an arrest, and of the arrests that are made, not all are proceeded with.

\textbf{Figure 1.2: Attrition in the criminal process}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{figures/figure1.2.png}
\end{center}


\textsuperscript{14} Home Office, Crime in England and Wales 2005/06, July 2006. Total recorded crime in 1997/98 was 4,545,337 and total recorded crime in 2005/06 was 5,556,513.
\textsuperscript{15} PA Consulting Group, Diary of a Police Officer (Home Office Police Research Series Paper 149, 2001).
\textsuperscript{16} “Our Nation’s Future”, speech by Tony Blair, 23 June 2006.
\textsuperscript{17} http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/08/30140700/9. Clear-up rates in Scotland are calculated differently to detection rates, though they are comparable to the overall detection rate in England and Wales which also includes non-sanction detections. In 2005/06 the overall detection rate for England and Wales was 27 per cent.
The Government’s record

Despite these historically high levels of crime, the Government puts a positive spin on their record on law and order. It claims that since 1995 BCS crime has dropped by 44 per cent and that domestic burglary and vehicle crime have fallen by 59 per cent and 60 per cent respectively.\(^\text{18}\) It also claims that in 2006 it met its target of bringing 1.25 million offences to justice, and that changes in the way crime is recorded in 1998-99 and 2002-2003 account for much of the rise in recorded crime.

However, an independent analysis of the Government’s record on law and order, published in January this year by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS) at King’s College London, pointed out that while on “the face of it, Labour’s record on crime is very good … [on] closer inspection, the various successes in reducing crime are not as impressive as they at first appear.”\(^\text{19}\) The Government achieved its targets of reducing vehicle crime, domestic robbery, and overall crime measured by the BCS. However, these targets were relatively straightforward to achieve, “being set on the basis of existing trends continuing regardless of Government action.”\(^\text{20}\) This claim is supported by a leaked draft of the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit’s Crime, Justice and Cohesion Policy Review, which revealed that the Government estimated that 80 per cent of the recent decrease in crime was due to economic factors.\(^\text{21}\) This slide was removed from the final version of the review.

The CCJS also pointed out that the Government’s claim to have closed the “justice gap” has been made at a time when the proportion of offences brought to justice by a successful conviction has been reduced from just under 70 per cent in 2003 to 53 per cent in 2006. This has been accompanied by a huge rise in Penalty Notices for Disorder, cautions, and official warnings for cannabis, which the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit admits have been responsible for the rise in offences brought to justice since 2004.\(^\text{22}\) In addition the Government’s targets for reducing re-offending “have all been modified, missed or dropped” and, due to shifting Government definitions of antisocial behaviour, it is “impossible to offer any firm conclusions of the success of the Government in this area.”\(^\text{23}\)

The Government’s claims are further undermined by the fact that the BCS massively underestimates crime in England and Wales. It covers only half of recorded crime and ignores murder, rape, fraud, crimes against under-16s, commercial crime including shoplifting, and crime where there is no direct victim (e.g. drugs dealing). The think tank Civitas has attempted to augment the BCS estimate of crime, 10.8 million for 2004-05, with estimates for crimes

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{22}\) Ibid. pp.16, 19.
against under 16s, commercial victims, and retailers and manufacturers. Their conclusion, based on calculations verified by the Home Office, was that on the most cautious of assumptions the true figure for crime in England and Wales in 2004-05 was 32.7 million offences – over three times the level suggested by the BCS.²⁴ This scale of magnitude makes it very hard to accept that the BCS provides a complete picture of crime, yet the Government routinely relies on it to promote claims of success in cutting offending.

The Government justifies its aversion to citing levels of recorded crime by noting the changes to the rules for counting recorded crime in 1998-99 and 2002-03, which have affected direct comparisons between recorded crime levels in different years. Changes in 1998-99 meant that new categories of crime such as common assault were included in overall crime statistics for the first time. In 2002-03 the National Crime Recording Standard, which aims to promote greater consistency between police forces and to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording, was introduced. This means that the police record crimes based on victims’ perceptions rather than their own judgements. Other changes have meant that a crime is recorded for each victim rather than each offender. For example, if three men are injured in a fight this is now recorded as three crimes rather than one.

The Home Office estimates that the National Crime Recording Standard only inflates overall recorded crime by 10 per cent²⁵ while many crimes have increased by more than this since 1998-99. For example, sexual offences have gone up from 36,174 in 1998-99 to 62,081 in 2005-06, an increase of 71.6 per cent; over the same period robbery has gone from 66,835 to 98,204, a rise of 47 per cent. Violence against the person has more than doubled from 502,788 in 1998-99 to 1,059,913 in 2005-06. This is in part due a new definition of violent crime which includes common assault and “significantly increased the number of violent crimes reported in the crime statistics.”²⁶ But the Home Office’s estimate for the impact of the National Crime Recording Standard on violence against the person is an increase of only 23 per cent, well below the actual increase of 111 per cent.²⁷ Also, measures of more serious violent offences, which exclude common assault, have gone up from 24,259 in 1997-98 to 40,330 in 2005-06, an increase of 66 per cent. There have been changes in the way crime is counted – but the fact remains that recorded crime has risen under this Government, and violent crime has increased in particular.

International comparisons

A further embarrassment for the Government is that England and Wales continue to have high levels of crime by international standards. The European Crime and Safety Survey has named the UK a “high crime” country and shown that victimisation rates are higher in the UK than in

²⁶ Review carried out for the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Crime Statistics: an independent review, November 2006, p.17. This review recommended that “the Home Office redefine violent crime in crime statistics to only include those crimes which actually cause physical injury or where the threat to inflict such injury is likely to frighten a reasonable person.”
any of the 17 other European Union countries in the survey apart from Ireland. The survey also showed that the UK is the most burgled country in the Union, with the highest levels of assault crime.\(^{28}\) Citizens in the UK suffer the highest victimisation rates of vehicle-related crime, and only Ireland has higher levels of personal theft.\(^{29}\) As overall victimisation rates are higher in England and Wales than in Scotland or Northern Ireland, the survey flatters England and Wales by comparing the UK as a whole to other nations. In almost every category of crime analysed, victimisation rates are higher in England and Wales than they are in Scotland or Northern Ireland, with overall victimisation rates in England and Wales of 21.8 per cent compared with 13.3 per cent in Scotland and 20.3 per cent in Northern Ireland.\(^{30}\) A separate survey found that England and Wales have the fourth highest rate of recorded crime out of 39 European countries – twice the European average.\(^{31}\)

The Home Office’s own figures also show that recorded crime is high in England and Wales when compared to the rest of Europe. Compared to other EU 15 countries, England and Wales have the highest crime per head of population except for Sweden.

**Figure 1.3: Crimes per 1,000 of population in Europe**

![Figure 1.3: Crimes per 1,000 of population in Europe](image)


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\(^{29}\) Ibid. pp.26,41.

\(^{30}\) Ibid. p.19.

Crime in England and Wales is not only high compared with other European countries; it is also high when compared with other industrial countries around the world. According to the 2000 International Crime Victim Survey (ICVS), the latest version of the most comprehensive international crime survey which compares crime across 17 industrialised countries, the risk of being a victim of crime is higher in England and Wales than anywhere else apart from Australia. When risk is weighted by the seriousness of a crime, England and Wales top the league.32

Figure 1.4:


Car owners are more likely to have their car stolen in England and Wales than in any other country and only in Poland is a car owner more at risk of having something stolen from their car.33 People in England and Wales have the second highest risk of burglary and the joint second highest risk of robbery.34 We are more at risk from these crimes than the USA, Scotland or Northern Ireland. While the ICVS has many of the limitations of the BCS, such as only measuring household crime and ignoring commercial crime and homicide, it remains the most robust international crime survey and clearly shows England and Wales to be high crime countries.

34 Ibid. pp. 29, 33.
Local variations

There are huge geographical variations in levels of crime. Research by the think tank Reform shows that Nottingham, the highest crime urban area, records over five times the number of selected crimes per 1,000 of the population as Colchester, the safest urban area. Nottingham’s crime rate of 105 crimes per 1,000 population can be contrasted with the much better performance of towns of a similar size (approximately 275,000 people) in other parts of the country, such as Stockport (49 per 1,000) or Newcastle (45 per 1,000). Not only do crime rates vary between urban centres, but, as the Audit Commission’s recent analysis of crime at a local level suggests, crime rates can vary dramatically within council wards in the same city. One possible explanation for this variation, that effective policing has a significant impact on crime levels, is reinforced by the wide variation in force effectiveness. Detection rates for burglary in England and Wales range from 8 per cent to 50 per cent, and rates for robbery range from 15 per cent to 68 per cent.

Falling productivity

Historically and internationally high levels of crime in England and Wales have persisted in spite of high levels of spending on the criminal justice system as a whole and on the police in particular. The Government increased spending on law and order by an average of 5 per cent in real terms each year between 1997 and 2005. Only health and transport have had higher increases. As Figure 1.6 shows, numbers of police officers and police staff have increased, and over 8,000 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have been recruited. We now spend more on law and order as a proportion of GDP, 2.5 per cent, than any other OECD country. The majority of law and order spending (61 per cent in 2004-05, according to an independent study) goes to the police who now have a total budget of over £12 billion, costing each household in England and Wales £550 a year. There was a 21 per cent real terms increase in police spending from 1998-99 to 2004-05, and the salaried workforce has grown by nearly a quarter since 2000.
Figure 1.5 Criminal justice spending

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2004-2005 spending in £billions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Aid</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown Courts</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Injuries Compensation</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: rounding means that there may be discrepancies between the percentages in the chart and the figures in the table.

Figure 1.6 Trends in police service strength

**Number of Police Officers**

![Graph showing the trend in the number of police officers from 1977 to 2004.]

**Number of PCSOs**

![Graph showing the trend in the number of PCSOs from 2003 to 2006.]

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36 Policing for the People
Figure 1.6 Trends in police service strength

**Number of Special Constables**

**Number of Police Staff**

Crime is too high
If the substantial increase in resources provided for the police over the past ten years has not delivered a corresponding increase in outputs, then productivity has fallen and the taxpayer has received poor value for money. Measuring productivity in the police is not straightforward, since their primary goal – the prevention and reduction of crime – is influenced by many factors external to their own performance. We discuss how police performance should be measured in Chapter 7.

Nevertheless, attempts have been made to measure police productivity, not least by the Government. In 2003 the ONS suggested that a weighted measure of crimes successfully investigated by the police should be used to establish their productivity. In 2005 the Government’s Atkinson Review recommended a wide range of performance data to assess productivity, including the Police Performance and Assessment Framework and Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. The Government has proposed a complicated method of measuring police productivity including progress in meeting Key Performance Indicators, re-offending rates, judgements about inputs required to achieve particular outputs and outside research on police effectiveness.

In 2003 the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, using detection rates as a measure of police productivity, argued that as police numbers increased from 1997 productivity fell. Another possible measure of police productivity is the number of arrests made. Figures 1.7 and 1.8 show that as police funding has increased, arrest rates and detection rates have remained stable.
Figure 1.7

Arrest rate and total police spending 1999/00 – 2004/05


Figure 1.8

Detection rates and policing 1997/98 – 2005/06

While arrest and detection rates have been static, implying a decline in police productivity, it has been argued that crime as measured by the BCS fell by a third over the same period, which would suggest a better productivity performance. However, as the think tank Reform has pointed out, rising resources did not appear to affect existing trends in crime rates as measured by the BCS— which in any case, as we point out above, considerably underestimates crime. As noted above, there was a 21 per cent real terms increase in police spending from 1998-99 to 2004-05, and the salaried workforce has grown by nearly a quarter since 2000. Over the same period recorded crime increased by 26 per cent.

A draft of the National Policing Board’s Vision for the Police Service, claims the “police have responded to investment by delivering successes”. Yet on any of the available measures, the scale of increased resources in the last decade has failed to deliver corresponding improvements in police performance. The unavoidable conclusion is that police productivity has declined. Additional spending on the police has failed to deliver value for money. As David Cameron has said:

“The police have been well resourced in recent years. Spending on the police has increased under governments of both parties .... The Conservative Party has always valued and supported the police. But there cannot be a blank cheque. More resources must be matched by better performance. The public expects value for money.”

One reason why increased resources have not delivered corresponding improvements in policing is that they have been directed at a service that has remained unreformed in essential areas. The need for coherent reform across the criminal justice system has been recognised by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, which has observed that “in the US, rapid crime reduction has been achieved through powerful and coherent reforms, including sentencing reform, improvement to the criminal justice system, a rapid spread of intelligence-led policing and far greater police accountability.”

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46 Reform, UK Growth and opportunity: the need for a fundamental reassessment (Submission to the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review), March 2007.
48 ibid.
49 Speech to the Dalston Youth Project, Hackney, 16 January 2006.
The chain of justice

As the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit notes, reforms must not be confined to the police: “a truly high performing criminal justice system would require hard choices around reform” of each element of the criminal justice system – prevention, policing, courts, correctional services and rehabilitation.\(^{51}\) This cannot mean choosing reform of a particular element or elements, because successful action to reduce crime obviously requires all to function properly. More efficient courts are needed because the speed with which justice is delivered is slowing; a properly functioning penal system is needed because prisons are full, and reconviction rates are rising. These issues will be the subject of other Conservative Party policy proposals. The police cannot fight crime alone. But they are a vital link in the chain of justice, and their performance will be essential if crime is to be driven down.

If the criminal justice system is vital to the fight against crime, so too is effective local partnership. The fight against crime is a shared responsibility which goes beyond the criminal justice system. Families, businesses, schools and communities all have a major part to play.\(^{52}\) 70

\(^{52}\) See David Cameron’s lecture to the Police Foundation, 10 July 2006.
per cent of young offenders “come from lone-parent families and levels of all antisocial behaviour and delinquency are higher in children from separated families than in those from intact families.”53 Declining social mobility adds to the problem. As David Davis has said, “a youngster born into the bottom quarter of society half a century ago was more likely to work their way up to a higher economic class than those making their way today.”54

The Conservative Party’s Social Justice Policy Group is looking at the range a factors, including economic dependency, family breakdown, drug addiction, educational failure and indebtedness, that have caused the breakdown of society in Britain.55 A strong society is essential to the wider fight against crime. The Home Office’s own action plan acknowledges this and admits that declining community ties have fuelled the rise in antisocial behaviour:

“Locally there has been a weakening of community and family ties and in respect for authority, leading to the rise in antisocial behaviour and a growth in the perception of crime. This plays a role in undermining local communities and increases the demands on those charged with keeping communities safe.”56

Serious, long-term action to address the drivers of crime will form an important part of the modern Conservative approach to building safer communities.

**Something can be done**

The sheer scale of crime should not lead to the fatalistic conclusion that it is an intractable problem. According to the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, half of all BCS crime – or 6 million offences a year – is committed by just 100,000 criminals. That is less than the total number of police officers (140,000). 8 per cent of crime – 1 million offences a year – is committed by 5,000 criminals, an average of 116 criminals per police force.

Yet for too long there was a received wisdom that nothing much could be done about rising crime at all. Michael Howard has observed that this “view certainly held sway in the corridors of power in England”. He recalls:

“When I was first appointed as Home Secretary in May 1993, I was given a presentation by officials in the Home Office. They produced a graph on which was depicted the crime figures for England and Wales for the previous 50 years. ‘Crime,’ they told me, ‘has been rising at an annual trend rate of 5 per cent. It will continue to rise at an annual trend rate of 5 per cent. The

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56 Home Office, From Improvement to Transformation: An Action Plan to reform the Home Office so it meets public expectations and delivers its core purpose of protecting the public, July 2006.
first thing, Home Secretary, you must understand, is that there is nothing you can do about it. Your job is to manage public expectations in the face of this inevitable and inexorable increase.’ I did not take this advice.”

Under Howard’s tenure, recorded crime fell for the first time in over 30 years, by 18 per cent. We start from the position that crime remains too high, and that the public is entitled to a better deal. As David Cameron has said:

“There are commentators who tell us that high crime levels are with us to stay, that they are inevitable in a free and prosperous society, and that public concern about crime is overblown. I profoundly disagree. There is nothing inevitable about high crime. It is our responsibility both to recognise that fact, and to do something about it. It is our responsibility because of the terrible impact that crime has on people’s lives and communities, and because it is the poorest in society who are affected most.”

Chapter 1 - key findings

CRIME IS UNACCEPTABLY HIGH

We have the highest rate of crime of any EU 15 country, with the exception of Sweden. The UK is the most burgled country in the Union, with the highest levels of assault crime. People in England and Wales are the most likely to be victims of crime of any developed country, except only for Australia.

The Government’s record on law and order has been poor. Crime today is almost ten times its level per 100,000 of the population than in 1950. The Government claims that crime measured by the BCS has fallen, yet the BCS massively underestimates crime. It covers only half of recorded crime and studies suggest the true figure of crime in England and Wales is roughly three times the BCS estimate.

Since 1997-98 total recorded crime has increased from 4.5 million to over 5.5 million, an increase of approximately 22 per cent. The Government claims that changes in the way crime is recorded account for much of this increase. However, changes in recording practices cannot account for many of the increases in certain crimes. There have been changes in the way crime is counted – but the fact remains that recorded crime has risen under this Government.

57 Crime and Punishment - Retribution or Rehabilitation, Lecture to the Bar Council of Ireland, 2005
58 Lecture to the Police Foundation, 10 July 2006.
POLICE PRODUCTIVITY HAS FALLEN

While it is difficult to measure police productivity, on any measure it has fallen. Britain now spends more on law and order as a proportion of GDP than any other OECD country, nearly two-thirds of which goes to the police, costing each household in England and Wales £550 a year.

Large increases in funding and staff have coincided with stable arrest and detection rates and crime in England and Wales remains high historically and internationally. On any available measure, police productivity has fallen, meaning that tax payers have not received value for money.

THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME GOES BEYOND THE POLICE – BUT THEIR ROLE IS VITAL

An effective criminal justice system is essential to the fight against crime. The courts, prison, and parole systems must all work effectively together. Action by wider society to tackle the causes of crime is also essential, but nevertheless the role of the police is vital.
Chapter 2: Where are the police?

As police stations have closed and foot patrol has given way to modern policing methods, the police have become increasingly alienated from the public. The way to rebuild public confidence and tackle crime is to have police officers on the streets. But the reintroduction of community policing has been inadequate. Record numbers of police have not been reflected in officers on the beat, and key Government programmes such as promised Police Community Support Officers and the national non-emergency number have been scaled back.

Trust in the police

Policing can be a difficult and dangerous job. The “thin blue line” standing between the public and those who would harm us is maintained because men and women are willing to swear their oath to “cause the peace to be kept and preserved and prevent all offences against people and property”. We should never forget that officers are injured in the course of duty and some lose their lives. Ten British police officers have died as a result of attacks since the beginning of the new millennium alone.59 The hundreds of meetings we have had with police officers over the past months have reinforced our belief that the service is full of officers with a real commitment to delivering effective policing for the public.

Several traditions of policing in England and Wales mark it out from other police forces around the world. In this country all officers’ powers are personal and derived from the Crown. Constables use their powers at their own discretion, unlike in most countries where the police’s power exists within the state and officers are servants of the state. As Sir Robert Mark, the former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police said, this makes the British police “the most acceptable police in the world.”60

That the British police are one of the few forces around the world which is not routinely armed is another testament to the fact that they police by consent. It is also important to note how much police conduct has improved over the years. In the late 1960s to the mid-1970s a series of corruption scandals threatened the reputation of policing. In 1969 the CID at Scotland Yard was investigated after The Times obtained tapes of detectives and criminals discussing the details of covering up crimes, planting evidence and perjury. This was followed by scandals involving the fabrication of evidence by the Drug Squad and corruption by the Obscene Publications Squad. As one commentator puts it, what was most shocking about these scandals was the “revelation of the systematic, institutionalised, and widespread network of corruption, the so called ‘firm within a firm’.”61 Today’s police forces look markedly different. This transformation has been brought about by a combination of legislation, such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act

60 Dimbleby Lecture, 6 November, 1973.
At the end of his Dimbleby Lecture in 1973, the former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Robert Mark, cautioned that Britain’s unique style of policing could not be taken for granted:

“If we in Great Britain are to continue to police by consent … we must avoid a drift to alienation of police and people. Our system of justice must be respected by the people for being effective without being unjust, and maintained by a police force that is efficient without being repressive.”

Figure 2.1 ICM poll results

How people rate their local police

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From your own experience, would you say that the performance of the police in your local area has improved, got worse or stayed about the same?

- Improved
  - a lot 8%
  - a little 14%

- Stayed the same
  - 57%

- Got worse
  - a lot 9%
  - a little 6%

Do you think that increases in council tax to pay for improvements to your local policing in the last ten years have been good value for money?

- Poor Value for money
  - very poor 14%
  - poor 35%

- Good Value for money
  - very good 7%
  - fairly good 38%

The police prefer to focus on easy targets like speeding motorists rather than deal with antisocial behaviour and local crime.

- Agree
  - a lot 45%
  - a little 20%
  - 1%

- Neither agree nor disagree
  - a lot 16%
  - a little 17%
Police forces don’t have enough money which makes it hard for them to do their job

The police spend too much time in police stations and not enough time on the beat

The police’s hands are tied by red tape and political correctness
Today, there are different reasons for fearing that the police and public are becoming alienated from each other. According to the latest survey, less than a quarter of the public think that policing in their area has improved, and less than half think that increases in council tax to pay for improvements to local policing have delivered good value for money. Large majorities of the public agree that the police spend too much time in police stations and not enough time on the beat; their hands are tied by red tape and political correctness, and they prefer to focus on easy targets like speeding motorists rather than dealing with antisocial behaviour and local crime. Perhaps the most sobering finding is that nearly three-quarters of the public – 73 per cent – do not know any of the police officers in their neighbourhood and a further 13 per cent don’t know many.

It should be noted that ICM’s survey also shows that the respect for the police remains high, with 62 per cent of the public saying that they respect the police a lot and 24 per cent saying they respect them a little. Trust in the police and the legal system is also much higher than in, for instance, politicians – but it is lower than in doctors, teachers, judges or the NHS, and it appears to be falling. An IPPR report in 2004 noted:

“More worryingly, trust in the police has declined in recent years, across all age groups and for men and women – and in a way which has not been paralleled for most other professions. The proportion of people expressing confidence in the police has fallen from just over 90 per cent in 1982 to around 75 per cent in 2001-2. The proportion saying that their local police do a very good job has fallen from 43 per cent in 1982 to 14 per cent in 2001-2.”

63 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.


Figure 2.2: Trust in organisations

Source: ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance

In the most recent British Crime Survey only 50 per cent of respondents thought the police in their area did an excellent or good job.\(^66\) Although this is a slight improvement on previous years,\(^67\) a 50 per cent satisfaction rating is a poor performance for any institution. According to the BCS, the number of victims very or fairly satisfied with the police response to their experience fell from 68 per cent in 1994 to 58 per cent in 2003-04.\(^68\)

Significantly, attitudes towards the police are negatively related to personal experiences of the service (both locally and in general). Satisfaction surveys show that 89 per cent of people are satisfied with their initial contact with the police, but that only 58 per cent are satisfied with follow-up contact.\(^69\) The local police were more likely to be rated as doing an excellent or good job by people who had no contact with them over the previous year (51 per cent) than by those who had been in contact with them over the same period (45 per cent). Among people who were stopped on foot, ratings of the local police were particularly low, at 37 per cent.\(^70\) Additionally, people who had been a victim of crime in the last 12 months were less likely to rate their local police as doing an excellent or good job than non-victims (41 per cent compared with 52 per cent).\(^71\)

The need for the police to be connected to the public has never been greater. While technological improvements have led to falls in acquisitive crime such as thefts from property

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\(^71\) Ibid.
and vehicles, violent crime and antisocial behaviour have increased. The International Crime Victimisation Survey report noted that, compared to our peer group countries, car-related crime makes up proportionately less of total crime in England and Wales, while contact crime accounts for more.\textsuperscript{72} Dealing with antisocial behaviour requires the police to engage closely with communities and provide a visible presence to deter or tackle the problem. Yet the story of policing across the last quarter of a century has been the retreat of the police from the public.

Over the past 14 years, 880 police stations have closed. There were 2,729 police stations in 1990 compared with 2,099 in 2000 – so over a quarter closed in just a decade.\textsuperscript{73} Today only one police station in eight is open 24 hours a day and 18 of the 43 forces – nearly half – do not have a single station open around the clock.\textsuperscript{74} Wiltshire Constabulary has announced that 30 contact points – such as small booths in high streets and shopping centres – will replace eight inquiry offices which are to be closed, leaving only four of its police stations open to the public. The Police Federation has described the changes as a “false economy”, pointing out that the contact points will only be open for a “couple of hours a day”, whereas the inquiry offices were open for 12 hours.\textsuperscript{75}

The police are right to seek innovative ways to increase their visibility, such as setting up temporary contact points in supermarket car parks, and stations have often been closed for economic reasons when the number of visitors to them cannot justify their cost.\textsuperscript{76} But the consequence of closures, and particularly the existence of police stations which are not open to the public, has been to send a powerfully negative signal to local communities. Whether or not people use police stations, they are, as the Audit Commission noted, “a visible form of reassurance to the public”, ranking second only to the sight of the “bobby on the beat” as a symbol of order.\textsuperscript{77}

Similarly, in most parts of London the police now only send an officer to attend a burglary if the burglar is still in the house. Otherwise a civilian investigator will attend at a later date. The police are right to seek ways to release sworn officers for frontline duties, and the Metropolitan Police argue that a better response has led to an increase in detections.\textsuperscript{78} The danger is that the change may also suggest to the public that officers have no interest in the crime.\textsuperscript{79} As one commentator put it, “unlike American police departments that have outsourced paperwork to

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. p.41.
\textsuperscript{73} Ben Rogers, with Tom Houston, Re-inventing the police station Police–public relations, reassurance and the future of the Police Estate (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2004).
\textsuperscript{74} “One police station in eight is open all hours”, Daily Telegraph 9 January 2007.
\textsuperscript{75} “Force will keep open just four of its police stations to save cash”, The Times, 10 February 2007.
\textsuperscript{76} An Audit Commission report found that the vast majority of crimes are reported over the phone with less than 10 per cent of visitors to a station reporting a crime. Also closing stations and contracting opening hours can release officers more patrol. Audit Commission Briefing, Action Stations: Improving the Management of the Police Estate, March 1999, p.4.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Gary Pugh, Director of Forensic Services and Commander Mark Simmons, Metropolitan Police, Letter to The Times, 16 February 2007.
\textsuperscript{79} “If a burglar has gone the police won’t come. OK?”, The Times, 9 February 2007.
civilians to free up more cops for the streets, British forces have outsourced actual policing to civilian ‘Community Support Officers’.\(^{80}\) There is real potential to increase the use of civilian staff and private firms to improve efficiency, as we argue in Chapter 5, and PCSOs also have a role to play. But part of the purpose of these reforms is also to ensure that police officers are free to maintain contact with the public.

Station closures have meant that police officers have to travel greater distances when taking suspects to fewer custody centres, resulting in longer absences from front-line duties. They have also coincided with the police moving from foot patrols into panda cars as they have prioritised fast response times to 999 calls. Patrolling in cars means that the police can cover a larger area and respond to emergencies faster. But the transfer to vehicle patrol meant that the police lost contact with the public and became far less visible to them. Police officers and PCSOs usually patrol in pairs and frequently talk to each other rather than engage with the public. In many forces, officers are required to eat their meals in stations; the quintessentially American image of a police officer stopping in a local restaurant for a hamburger or a coffee and doughnut and staying for a chat is rarely seen in this country. Officers on foot patrol can only travel a certain distance from their station if they are to be able to return for lunch. Alternatively, they will radio for a police car to pick them and take them back to the station. Once they have had their lunch they will then wait for another car to take them back to their beat. Driving officers on foot patrol to, and from, their beats at lunchtime is not an effective use of time for officers.

The “modernisation” of policing contributed to the decline of patrolling. The Los Angeles Police Chief and former Commissioner of the New York City Police, William J. Bratton,\(^{81}\) has termed the 1970s the “Professional Era” of policing, when “by focusing on process and not results, police were going to finally be able successfully to control crime using modern technology, rapid response and better management systems”. The result in practice, however, was that “the police had less time to interact in a positive way with members of the community”.\(^{82}\)

A frequent public complaint is that the police are unable to deal satisfactorily with calls. A Police Federation report observed:

> “By their own admission, 24/7 officers are not delivering the quality of policing to citizens the officers consider they deserve. The delays in answering calls and the re-grading of incidents are considered to be unacceptable.”\(^{83}\)

In its election manifesto Labour pledged to deliver a single non-emergency national number nationally. The 101 hotline has the potential to transform the way local services are provided to

81 For William J. Bratton’s biography see http://www.lapdonline.org/lapd_command_staff/comm_bio_view/7574.
the public. It would allow better co-operation between the police and other local providers to deal with quality of life issues such as fly-tipping and abandoned cars. Although five Wave 1 areas have successfully been launched, the Government has now indefinitely postponed any further roll out.

**Box 2.1 101 hotline**

In 2005 Labour gave a manifesto commitment to introduce a single national non-emergency number (SNEN) across the country. However after launching five “Wave 1” areas (Hampshire, Northumbria, Leicester, South Wales and South Yorkshire) the Home Office has indefinitely delayed the scheme, with no formal plans to extend the coverage of the number beyond the original five small areas. The manifesto commitment promised full geographic coverage of the 101 number across the UK by 2008. To date only 10 per cent of the UK is covered and no further partnerships are currently being funded.

By contrast, SNENs exist in many major international cities, including New York, Chicago and Paris. London was due to be a key part of the next stage of the programme. One of the most high profile SNENs is 311 in Chicago which we visited. The 311 centre acts as a switchboard for every city service in contrast to the more limited scope of the 101 number, which focuses on “quality of life” issues including graffiti, fly-tipping, abandoned cars and antisocial behavior.

The 101 number can easily be remembered by the public. The experience of the areas where 101 is now live as a service has been very positive – it has encouraged the police and local authorities to work together to tackle quality of life issues and reduced duplication of effort. A recent survey in Hampshire showed that 91 per cent of callers to the 101 number were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the service.

Wave 1 areas have reported a surge in demand in 101 calls, in some cases up to 20,000 per month, from the release of latent or suppressed demand. Yet there is also recent evidence of a leveling out of the number of 999 calls (which traditionally continue to rise), which mirrors the experience of Chicago and New York. Based on this evidence, a future 101 service has the potential to ease pressure on the police by diverting calls that do not require police action away from 999, whilst at the same time improving citizens’ access to non-emergency services.

Joining up the police and local government to provide more services would reduce duplication and enable the police to be freed to carry out their core functions. This would enable local authorities to focus on issues which fall under their remit, such as...
graffiti and abandoned cars, with a corresponding reduction in the numbers of calls to the police about such incidents via the 999 service – which was designed for emergencies only. An expanded 101 service, with a scope similar to that of Chicago or New York's “311” service, could help untie the hands of the police by improving citizens access to non-emergency services through an alternative to 999, while at the same time increasing confidence in their police service and local authority.


When a crime is reported it is not enough for the police simply to issue a crime number. The telephone should be answered; an officer should turn up; action should be taken, and finally the victim should be informed of the outcome. As the Chief Constable of Essex, Roger Baker, has said:

“People don’t just contact the police for a chat, they are looking for us to take some action and help them. That is why I believe in face to face contact. I believe in getting the first point of contact right, I believe in police stations being accessible and I believe in providing feedback throughout.”

Mr Baker began his appointment as Chief Constable in 2005 by demanding that his force make at least 600 arrests in his first week in charge, issuing what he described as “his own personal message to criminals in Essex: ‘If you are planning on committing crime in Essex, bring a toothbrush because you won’t be going home’.” His stance is striking not just for its blunt language but also because it is untypical. In 2006 a Bournemouth police constable outraged local traders when he wrote and asked them not to call the police over shoplifting crimes involving goods valued at less than £75. He said that responding to such calls could “extract” two or more officers from the beat for up to three hours. Dorset Police later said that this was not force policy and apologised. But the letter gained attention in part because it appeared to be symptomatic of a national malaise.

The public’s perception of a lack of police visibility and responsiveness has been exacerbated by what is widely seen as a stark contrast between forces’ commitment to enforcing motoring offences and other low level crime. In short, the “police and the public have never been more remote from each other.”

84 Essex police website http://www.essex.police.uk/about/a_co_02.php.
85 Ibid.
Police on our streets

Police officer numbers have reached record levels, at around 140,000 full-time equivalent officers in England and Wales. This has coincided with the creation of over 8,000 PCSOs, though there has also been a sharp decline in the number of Special Constables. Yet numbers remain low by international standards. There were 264 police officers in England and Wales per 100,000 of the population in 2003. This compares to 306 in both Scotland and Ireland, 387 in France and 429 in Northern Ireland. In Europe, Denmark, Finland and Sweden have fewer than 200 police officers per 100,000 and Cyprus, Georgia and Russia have more than 500. The European average is 357. In New York there are approximately 457 police officers per 100,000 of the population and in Chicago there are 467.

In the 1970s and 1980s a view pervaded academia and the Home Office that foot patrol had little value. A Home Office report in 1980 concluded:

“Given burglary rates and evenly distributed patrol coverage, a patrolling policeman in London could expect to pass within 100 yards of a burglary in progress, roughly once every eight years but not necessarily catch the burglar or even realise that the crime was taking place.”

There are several flaws in this analysis. First, one of the authors later acknowledged that “in deriving this estimate [they] made some questionable assumptions particularly that patrols were robotic (or literally random) in their patrolling tactics”. However, he nevertheless maintained that “even allowing for a rather more intelligent approach to the job, it was clear that routine patrols could pose only a small risk of arrest to most offenders.”

But this logic misunderstands the many purposes of foot patrol, which extends far beyond catching burglars. As will be argued below, officers, by their very presence or even the suggestion of their presence, deter crime. The act of visible foot patrol itself both reduces crime and reassures the public. Second, by patrolling the same beats officers build relations with the community and develop in depth intelligence of their area and the local criminals who operate there. This intelligence allows officers to target patrols far more effectively. A later Home Office study accepted these points but still argued that these approaches would be of limited application “and even if systematically applied may not substantially alter overall levels of crime.”

Written in 1984, the study argued that a lack of police effectiveness coupled with financial constraints had led some American police departments to reduce manpower in the late 1970s.

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89 In New York there are 37,038 officers serving a population of 8.1 million, in Chicago approximately 13,600 officers cover a population of 2.9 million.
90 Ronald V. Clarke and Mike Hough (eds) The Effectiveness of Policing (Aldershot: Gower, 1980).
The New York Police Department reduced its workforce by a fifth and one result “was that recorded crimes continued to rise – but no faster than before – and arrests for serious crimes actually rose” although arrests for minor crimes and morale fell. The thesis reflected the prevailing view amongst academics that the police could do little to prevent crime. One leading expert in the United States opened a book on policing with a chapter entitled “The Myth of the Police”, even arguing: “The police do not prevent crime. Experts know it, the police know it but the public does not know it.” It was some time before the Home Office could be detached from its corporate thesis that police officer numbers on the streets made little difference to levels of crime. Subsequent evidence, from home and abroad, has convincingly demonstrated that this fatalistic perspective is wrong. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre the Metropolitan Police transferred large numbers of officers into central London for security reasons. Later that year Ian Blair, then Deputy Commissioner of the Met, gave the following account on how this impacted on crime levels:

“Like everyone else, Londoners were stunned by the events of 11 September. On 11 and 12 September, crime fell markedly. By the evening of 11 September, however, the Metropolitan Police began to transfer hundreds of officers – at its height 1,500 – from outer London to the city centre. On 13 September, street crime began to rise in the outer boroughs and go down in the centre. By Christmas, the rise in street crime everywhere except central Westminster had become almost vertical, with nearly 7,000 robberies and snatch thefts in January this year, an increase of almost 54 per cent on the same month in 2001.”

The redeployment of police officers in London after the July bombings had a similar effect. A study of the aftermath of 7/7 found that in the six months after the attacks, increased police deployment in six London boroughs led to crime falling significantly. The evidence suggested “a 10 per cent increase in police deployment reduces the crime rate by approximately 3 per cent.” Similarly, when President George W Bush visited London in 2003 there was a significant temporary rise in crime in the boroughs of outer London from which officers had been taken to provide security for visit. Frequent anecdotal evidence, such as the empty police car parked on a petrol station forecourt which dramatically reduced shoplifting, further illustrates this point.

The triumph of Giuliani and Bratton in New York City

Perhaps the most compelling evidence that effective policing – not just increasing police numbers alone – can cut crime comes from New York City. Like London, NYC is a huge metropolis. With a population of 8 million, it is by far the largest city in the US, larger than the next two, Los Angeles and Chicago, combined.

93 Ibid. p.20.
In the 1980s, after its police department’s workforce had been cut by a fifth, New York was plagued by street crime and public areas of the city such as Washington Square Park and Bryant Park became no-go areas for ordinary citizens. In 1994 Rudolph Giuliani was elected Mayor on a promise that he would deal with crime. He appointed as his commissioner of police William Bratton who had, as chief of New York’s transport police, applied “broken windows” policing to the subway and restored security to it.

Under Bratton, the New York police department started to focus on restoring control over communities to law-abiding local people. This involved a more confident and assertive policing style, many more officers out on the streets and rigorous management reforms. Twice weekly “Compstat” (computer statistics) meetings allowed top management and local precinct commanders to review up to the minute crime data and be cross-examined on their performance. They were accountable to the police chief who was himself accountable to the mayor, who was of course accountable to the electorate. If precinct commanders or Bratton did not cut crime they would lose their jobs. If Giuliani did not cut crime he would lose the next election. The entire department was held to account for its performance in cutting crime and, unlike earlier practice, it was expected to cut crime. Bratton decentralised authority and gave local precinct commanders the freedom to cut crime in their areas. In his words:

“We pushed responsibility and accountability down, but not to the new, inexperienced beat cop, as the previous administration had done, but rather to the precinct commander level, so that we really had 76 miniature police departments.”

By decentralising and cutting away bureaucracy and hierarchical structures, Bratton enabled his local commanders to be more effective. At the same time the “Compstat” meetings were used to monitor the performance of local commanders and hold them to account. Indeed many local commanders were demoted or sacked; within a few months Bratton had replaced almost a third of the precinct commanders.

Bratton and Giuliani embraced community policing and focused on putting as many police on the streets as possible. In 1993 the uniformed headcount of the New York police department (NYPD) was 28,700. By 1994 this number had risen to 30,500 and by 2000 NYPD had over 40,000 officers. To understand the scale of the increase, New York added over 13,600 police employees (9,000 of them sworn officers) in the 1990s, a larger number than the total employees in eight of the other nine biggest US city police departments in 1990, and almost equal to Chicago’s total of over 14,900. In a decade, New York City added the equivalent of the third largest police force in the United States.

100 Steven Malanga, “Yes Giuliani is a conservative”, City Journal, (Winter 2007).
These extra officers were then deployed to tackle quality of life issues such as drinking in public, aggressive begging and graffiti as well as serious crime. As Giuliani explained, “murder and graffiti are two vastly different crimes …. But they are part of the same continuum, and a climate that tolerates one is more likely to tolerate the other.”

As Box 2.3 shows, robust policing of seemingly trivial crimes has a positive effect on the levels of more serious crime.

The results were dramatic. New York City experienced a drop in crime of 75 per cent from peak rates in the 1990s, almost twice the national average. The crime figures produced by the police department have been verified by an independent statistical study by the United States Department of Justice. The study confirmed that homicide fell by 71.8 per cent, from 2,245 in 1990 to 633 in 1998 – its lowest level since 1965; rape fell by 45.7 per cent, from 2,818 in 1993 to 1,530 in 2001 – its lowest since 1965; robbery fell by 70 per cent, from 100,280 in 1993 to 1,530 in 2001 – its lowest since 1966; and burglary fell by 76.3 per cent, from 127,148 in 1988 to 30,102 in 2002 – its lowest level since records began. New York also experienced equally sharp drops in theft, vehicle theft, violent crime, aggravated assault and property crime. As Professor Franklin E. Zimring has observed, “the three main changes in New York City policing were interdependent and interrelated.” He concludes that the “combination of more cops, more aggressive policing, and management reforms” probably accounted for as much as 35 per cent of the decrease – half the total – and states that, if this is the case, it would be “by far the biggest crime prevention achievement in the recorded history of metropolitan policing”.

The size of New York City and London’s police forces are not directly comparable, since the Metropolitan Police has responsibilities for serious crime and some national functions, whereas these fall to the FBI in New York. Nevertheless, comparison of the experience of New York City and London, a city of comparable size, in the 1990s is an instructive one.

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102 Steven Malanga, “Yes Giuliani is a conservative”, City Journal, (Winter 2007).
Figure 2.3 New York and London compared

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>New York</th>
<th>London</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>8.1 million</td>
<td>7.5 million</td>
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<td>Between 1992 and 2000 police numbers rose by 42 per cent.</td>
<td>Over the same period police numbers fell by 10 per cent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In 2002 there was one police officer for every 7 recorded crimes.</td>
<td>In 2002 there was one police officer for every 41 recorded crimes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Crime rates</strong></td>
<td>Between 1992 and 2000 crime fell by 54 per cent.</td>
<td>Over the same period crime rose by 12 per cent.</td>
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Box 2.2 Were the police responsible for falls in crime in New York City?

Some commentators have argued that the drop in crime in New York had nothing to do with policing methods. Perhaps the most famous of these arguments comes from the economist Steven Levitt in his book Freakonomics. Levitt argues that demographics were the biggest factor in New York’s fall in crime, particularly the impact of legalised abortion in America. He claims that unwanted children who were legally aborted after the Supreme Court decision in Roe v Wade would have been more likely to have grown up to become criminals if they had not been aborted, and that since 1985 all states with high abortion rates (of which New York was one) experienced a sharp drop in crime.

This might be a seductive argument, but it is seriously flawed. Levitt assumes that the social class criminals are most likely to come from is the social class most likely to have abortions. However, as former New York Post journalist Jonathan Foreman has pointed out, “in the United States the lower down the social and economic scale you are the less likely you are to abort a foetus and vice-versa.”
The abortion theory has also been comprehensively rebutted by Franklin E. Zimring, Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley. Zimring observes: “How a policy that did not decrease the birth rate of any identifiable risk group of babies could nonetheless reduce a homicide rate by almost 2 per 100,000 in the US (half the total decline) would be on par with the miracle of the loaves and the fishes”. He adds:

“The 1990s crime decline in New York City was twice as large as the national drop and stands as one of the most remarkable stories of urban crime in the United States. While many factors contributed to the 70 per cent drop in New York, changes in policing probably accounted for between a quarter and half of it. Far from being one more urban legend about crime, the police changes were an important part of the city’s singular achievement”.

William Bratton went on to be chief of police in Los Angeles and has delivered similar results using the same methods. In his first two years in charge overall crime fell 13 per cent, homicides fell 20 per cent, and response times decreased by 22 per cent. As Bratton himself has written, crime in New York “did not drop due to changing socio-demographic trends” or “changes in the economy”. In January 1994, “all the young kids in the city did not suddenly become old. All criminals did not suddenly march into jail.” The drop in crime in New York was “so precipitous over such a short period of time that the traditional causes of crime … just don’t apply.” What drove down crime in New York was more police, more effective policing, and greater accountability – and the leadership that delivered all three.


Evidence that good policing can deliver reductions in crime is not limited to the USA. In Middlesbrough Ray Mallon, a former police superintendent, was elected independent Mayor in June 2002. As a head of crime strategy for the Hartlepool division of Cleveland Constabulary, Mallon had cut crime by 35 per cent within 28 months. Prior to Mallon’s appointment in 1994, crime had been rising steadily. Between 1980 and 1992 the crime figures for Cleveland county (including Hartlepool) more than doubled. Mallon committed the police force to pay attention to, rather than ignore, antisocial behaviour and “nuisance crime”. As a result, between 1994 and 1996, total reported crimes fell by 27 per cent. Thefts of vehicles fell by 56 per cent. Domestic burglaries fell by 31 per cent. When Mallon was made Detective Superintendent of
Middlesbrough in 1996 he pledged to resign if he failed to slash the crime rate by 20 per cent within 18 months. Crime fell by 20 per cent in just nine months.

As Mayor of Middlesbrough, Mallon urged the police to “get out of their vans and start confronting people.” His “Raising Hope” initiative introduced street wardens, CCTV, primary action forces in relation to litter, and alley gates. He also ensured that crime figures were collected centrally and scrutinised so that the police could be held to account.105 He held the different agencies accountable for their performance, and chaired weekly meetings in which problems reported by the public were combined with police intelligence and used to identity trouble spots. In the year following his election overall crime in Middlesbrough fell by around 16 per cent and burglaries nearly halved.

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**Box 2.3 Broken Windows**

James Wilson and George Kelling pioneered the theory of “broken windows” policing. Its premise was that if one window on a building was broken the others would soon be broken too because it would send a signal to people that no one cares. As Kelling has written:

“When no-one cares, more windows get broken and damage spreads, Likewise, ignoring disorder – youths intimidating adults, for example – also sends the message that no one cares. Youths are emboldened; their drinking becomes commonplace. Prostitutes and drug dealers “hang out.” Such locations become susceptible to minor criminality, such as vandalism. Intimidation escalates. Mugging and robbery follow.”

The theory was put into practice by William Bratton on the New York subway system. By focusing policing on low level crimes such as fare dodging and quality of life issues such as cleaning graffiti, the transit police sent the signal that disorder and criminality would not be tolerated. People who commit serious crimes often commit less serious ones too. One in seven of the people transit police in New York arrested for fare dodging had an outstanding warrant for a previous crime and one in 20 were carrying a weapon. By cracking down on minor offences and quality of life issues Bratton was able to restore order to the New York subway and reclaim it for the general public.


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The uncertain return of community policing

The return of community policing which began in cities such as New York and Chicago signalled a decisive break from the 1970s’ fashion. In the words of George Kelling, “no more riding around in cars waiting for something to happen, or sending a car after something happened.” While emergency response is crucial, basing a force’s whole strategy on it does not make sense. As an Institute for Economic Affairs study noted: “[i]t means officers have already lost the battle; all they are doing is picking up the pieces after the crime has happened.”106 Community policing involves administrative decentralisation, community engagement, and problem solving proactive policing. Officers police their beats on foot, preventing crime, building links with the community and acquiring intelligence. This not only reassures and empowers the public, it prevents crimes – or ensures that when they are committed, the police are better placed to deal with them. As Kelling put it:

“Community policing, as it is developing in New York City and elsewhere, is not just about putting more cops on the beat, nor is it merely a new set of tactics. Rather, it is a serious attempt to make the organisation’s structure and managerial processes responsive to the daily realities of police work. Most importantly, community policing is designed to improve the accountability of police departments by linking them, at all levels, far more closely with local neighbourhoods. This new accountability is the key not only to preventing police brutality, but also to ensuring that police do a more effective job of protecting the community from crime and disorder.”107

Box 2.4 Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPs)

Since 1993 the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) has delivered significant cuts in crime along with improved relations with previously hostile communities. CAPS, which senior officers describe as a “philosophy of policing” for the whole force, is an ongoing effort to bring communities, police, and other city agencies together to prevent crimes rather than react to crimes after they happen.

Eight or nine beat officers are assigned to each of Chicago’s 279 police beats. The officers patrol the same beat for over a year, allowing them to get to know community members, residents, and business owners and to become familiar with community attitudes and trends. Beat Community Meetings are held regularly to allow community members to get to know their respective officers and learn to be comfortable in approaching them for help when needed.

The Chicago Police Department website says: “With CAPS, police officers continue to

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enforce the law and respond rapidly to serious crimes and life-threatening emergencies. But CAPS recognises that the police alone cannot solve the City’s crime problems. It takes a combined effort of police, community, and City government working together.” CAPS is supported by Chicago’s 311 hotline, a single non-emergency number for all of the city’s departments which allows departments to work together to tackle quality of life and environmental issues that contribute to crime.

According to CAPS at 5: a report on the progress of community policing in Chicago, five years after CAPS was introduced violent crime had fallen 19 per cent, burglaries were down by 17 per cent and there were 39,000 fewer victims of serious crime. On a visit to Chicago we saw the effectiveness both of CAPS and the 311 number. We attended a monthly beat meeting at which about a dozen police officers were present. Half of the officers were black and half were female. Members of the public at the meeting engaged with the police and discussed how to tackle particular problems which their community was facing, while the officers reported on progress and what action they had taken to address issues of concern raised at the previous meetings. The local Alderman (city councillor) was also present. One resident told the local officers that they were doing “a phenomenal job”.


Figure 2.4 What people want the police to do

Box 2.5 Public support for ‘zero tolerance’ policing

In July 2003, ICM asked the question: “Some people have suggested that the police should adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to all crime, with highly visible policing on the streets, bearing down heavily on things like antisocial behaviour and vandalism. Do you think this is a good or bad idea?”

Overall a huge majority – 83 per cent – thought this to be a good idea. 52 per cent thought it is very good against just 9 per cent who thought it a bad idea. Only 6 per cent said that it would make no difference or did not feel strongly either way.

Older voters were the keenest on zero tolerance. However younger voters were only marginally less keen – a huge majority of 18-24 year olds still support it (77 per cent v 13 per cent). The idea was especially popular with women (87 per cent thought it a good idea against 80 per cent of men). The strongest support for zero tolerance came from the C2 and DE classes.

Support for zero tolerance was also strong across all three main political parties. Conservative voters were most in favour (87 per cent for and only 6 per cent against) although they were followed closely by Labour supporters (85 per cent for and 9 per cent against). A majority of Liberal Democrat identifiers also supported zero tolerance (66 per cent).

Source: Reform, www.reform.co.uk.

As Figure 2.4 shows, whenever the public are asked what they want the police to do more of, their answer is clear: more police patrolling the streets, reassuring communities and proactively preventing crime. However, according to the Home Office, only 1 per cent of police time is spent on proactively reducing crime. A recent ICM survey showed that 73 per cent of the public think that the police do not spend enough time out on the beat. As the Police Foundation has said: “The British public want to see a better quality of community-style policing like that epitomised by PC George Dixon in the classic TV serial “Dixon of Dock Green”.” As Box 2.5 shows, public support for “zero tolerance” policing is remarkably strong. Not only is this what the public wants, it is the right form of policing for today’s crime, notably antisocial behaviour. Community policing and engagement are essential in dealing with home grown terrorism, and provide ground level intelligence which contributes to the fight against organised crime. As Sir Ian Blair has said:

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109 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
“It will be these Safer Neighbourhoods Teams officers who will be the eyes and ears of the Met, it will be one of these officers who will be given the first piece of information about a suspicious purchase of peroxide, or telephones, or information about a lock-up garage or a flat with many comings and goings.”

Yet police and politicians have only belatedly awoken to the need to restore policing in our communities. In its 2004 White Paper the Government stated:

“As a starting point, we need revitalised neighbourhood policing for today’s world. Our clear view is that increasing public trust and confidence in policing - while important in its own right - will also be a real benefit for the police service itself. It will help make policing more effective.”

In 2005 the Government made the commitment that by 2008:

“every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing teams – led by police officers but involving special constables, community support officers, volunteers, neighbourhood wardens and others too”

The Government also promised the public that they would know who their local police officers are and how to contact them, and “have a real say in local policing issues and setting local priorities”. The following year the Government made the pledge that:

“by April 2007, every community in England and Wales will see increased patrolling, better local information and a greater focus on confidence and reassurance.”

But the commitments were deliberately vague. The local “areas” or “neighbourhoods” are not defined. Most forces now embrace the concept of neighbourhood policing – but they have resourced it and driven forward programmes to varying degrees. Over the past 18 months, and ahead of schedule, the Metropolitan Police, influenced by CAPS in Chicago, and with funding provided by Londoners through an increase in the police precept, has rolled out “safer neighbourhood teams” in all 630 of London’s local authority wards. These teams consist of six officers – one sergeant, two constables and three PCSOs – amounting to over 3,500 uniformed officers, more than 10 per cent of the Met’s operational staff. The force explains:

“Their aim is to listen and talk … and find out what affects … daily life and feelings of security. These might be issues such as anti-social behaviour, graffiti, noisy

113 Home Office, Neighbourhood Policing, your police; your community; our commitment, March 2005, p.2.
115 Sir Ian Blair, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, speech at the Urban Age Summit in Berlin, 11 November 2006.
neighbourhoods, yobs or vandalism. Then, they work in partnership with … other agencies to find a lasting solution.”¹¹⁶

The rollout of neighbourhood policing in the Met has coincided with improved public satisfaction levels. In 2006 the proportion of Londoners saying that they had confidence in the police and believed that the Met was doing a good or excellent job increased by 11 per cent.¹¹⁷ Like the Met, all forces have relied heavily on the recruitment of PCSOs to develop neighbourhood policing. But in November the Government reneged on its manifesto pledge to recruit 24,000 PCSOs by 2008, reducing the target to 16,000. The Government claimed that the police had sought flexibility, but £70 million of funding was removed at the same time. As the President of ACPO, Ken Jones, commented: “Being given the flexibility to manage decline is not a position we have sought.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods.
¹¹⁸ Letter from Ken Jones to all chief constables and commissioners, November 2006.
Figure 2.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by ACPO region and force</th>
<th>Current number of PCSOs</th>
<th>Labour Manifesto recruitment target</th>
<th>New recruitment target</th>
<th>Net loss of PCSOs</th>
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### Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by ACPO region and force

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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Current number of PCSOs</th>
<th>Labour Manifesto recruitment target</th>
<th>New recruitment target</th>
<th>Net loss of PCSOs</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>1,177</td>
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The Met’s major commitment to community policing is not being replicated on anything like the same scale in other forces. The cuts in promised PCSOs fell disproportionately on forces outside of London. While the Met has been able to introduce dedicated safer neighbourhood teams which are additional to response teams, many other forces rely on officers performing a joint role as response and neighbourhood officers. The latest figures from ACPO show that less 10 per cent of police officers in England and Wales are dedicated to neighbourhood policing. A report by the Police Federation has already highlighted the tensions between community and response policing when both are competing for limited resources.119 Tightening resources have also led to a small but unexpected drop in police numbers in England and Wales in the latest figures; the total number of officers fell by 173 from March to September 2006.120

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### Figure 2.6
Numbers of Neighbourhood Police Officers by Force

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Sergeants dedicated to neighbourhood policing</th>
<th>Hybrid police sergeants</th>
<th>Constables dedicated to neighbourhood policing</th>
<th>Hybrid police constables</th>
<th>Total number of police officers</th>
<th>Percentage of officers focused on neighbourhood policing</th>
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<td>Avon &amp; Somerset</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Sergeants dedicated to neighbourhood policing</td>
<td>Constables dedicated to neighbourhood policing</td>
<td>Hybrid police sergeants</td>
<td>Hybrid police constables</td>
<td>Total number of police officers</td>
<td>Percentage of officers focused on neighbourhood policing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>13.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>187</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Wiltshire</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,214</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,350</strong></td>
<td><strong>254</strong></td>
<td><strong>685</strong></td>
<td><strong>138,647</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes on table 2.6
1. This table contains full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding, there may be an apparent discrepancy between overall totals and the totals the constituent items.

2. Figures of total police strength omit staff on career breaks. They are accurate as of September 2006. Figures of dedicated neighbourhood police officers are accurate as of December 2006. However, since police numbers are stable the September figures are extremely close to the December figures, making a comparison appropriate.

3. Dedicated sergeants and constables have an abstraction policy which is monitored to ensure that the majority of their time is dedicated to their neighbourhood policing area and responsibilities.

4. Hybrid sergeants and constables combine a neighbourhood policing and response role, but devote the majority of their time to policing a defined neighbourhood and addressing neighbourhood priorities. There is no or minimal response coverage in their area by other officers and teams.

5. The “percentage of officers focused on neighbourhood policing” is the total number of constables and sergeants dedicated to neighbourhood policing and the total number of hybrid constables and sergeants as a percentage of the total number of police officers minus staff on career breaks and maternity/paternity leave.

6. The majority of staff who patrol on foot are attached to neighbourhood policing teams. However, the majority of forces deploy extra officers on patrol in town centres at weekends and when there are planned events such as football matches.

Sources:
In February 2007 we visited Basingstoke, a town of approximately 150,000 people, to look at police numbers available for reactive policing duty. On the day of our visit, a typical day, we found that that there were just two sergeants and nine constables on duty. According the National Intelligence Model, the minimum staffing numbers for Basingstoke to meet 999 calls (i.e. not including proactive policing) should be two sergeants and twelve constables. Officers told us that Basingstoke used regularly to have more officers. In 1997 they usually had three sergeants and 16 constables.

However, of those officers available, one of the sergeants and one of the officers were attending the magistrates’ court in the morning, while one officer had to attend the magistrates’ court in the morning and crown court in the afternoon, and another had to attend the magistrates’ court all day. Hence, when those in court all day were subtracted, there was just one sergeant and six officers, two of whom were in court for the whole morning, and one of whom was attached to the Roads Policing Unit and therefore should not be responding to 999 calls. If there had been an incident in the morning, there would actually have been just one sergeant and four officers covering a town of nearly 150,000 people.

In addition to the officers above, there were seven PCSOs, plus a further five constables in a Neighbourhood Policing Team. PCSOs could answer radios in an emergency, but are meant to focus on antisocial behaviour problems in the town centre. Neighbourhood Policing Teams occasionally attend emergencies but this is not their primary remit. There is a Dog Handling Unit (one constable and a police dog), although it would not necessarily cover Basingstoke. The Probationer Development Unit may attend an emergency, but this is subject to a risk assessment as they are training new officers. A second targeted patrol team came on at 1500 hrs (comprising one sergeant and seven constables).

Basingstoke police acknowledge that in the event of a major incident it would be “all hands on deck”, and that officers in, for example, the traffic, dogs and CID sections (not included in the figures above since they are not “response” officers) would help out. Nevertheless, this gives a realistic insight into the actual numbers of response officers policing our towns on a daily basis.

**Case study: Number of officers available for reactive policing during one weekday daytime in Basingstoke**

*The Seven Day Duty Sheet for Thursday 1 February 2007 showed the following officers were available:*

- 1 Sergeant 0700-1700
- 1 Sergeant 0700-1700 (Magistrates Court am)
The findings of our Basingstoke case study echo a report by the Police Federation into response policing teams. The report summarised the outcome of two phases of focus groups and interviews with constables, sergeants and inspectors from ten forces in England and Wales. It found that there are regularly only 50 per cent of staff available at the start of a shift and after on-shift redeployments this figure falls even lower. At times many towns covered by the study had only three constables available to deal with emergency calls. The report blames high redeployment rates on inefficient bureaucracy dealing with arrests, Government and CPS intervention, and ill thought-out central targets.

As the Police Foundation observes, “there are more police officers now than ever before, spending more money than ever before, wielding more power than ever before.” But this does not appear to tally with experience on the ground. The following account from a former assistant inspector of constabulary illustrates the point:

“In the week before Christmas 2006, I became aware of how bad things had become during a visit to London with a now retired ACPO colleague. We strolled along Oxford Street to Oxford Circus before turning down Regent Street and, by way of Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square, walked on to Whitehall for an appointment at the House of Commons.

At a time of so-called heightened security, in a target rich environment at the heart of the political and commercial capital, we did not see a single police officer apart from three armed PCs behind Downing Street’s locked gates.”

The author did see PCSOs on patrol, but where were the police officers? Much of the problem appears to be caused by bureaucracy. The latest Home Office figures have revealed that police officers spend more time on paperwork than on patrol. Just 14 per cent of all police officers’ time is spent on patrol – a definition which “includes officers on foot/car/beat patrol, CID and

123 David Gilbertson, “Personal View – This is the end”, Police Review, 16 February, 2007.
traffic officers” – compared with 19.3 per cent of their time on paperwork. The Sunday Telegraph claimed that:

“Of the 81,877 officers who patrol, including detectives and traffic police and neighbourhood watch teams, only just over 17,000 will be on duty for an average eight-hour shift, when shift patterns, holidays and sick leave are taken into account. [The] figures … show that officers spend only 14 per cent of their time actually on patrol, so that 2,400 are out and about at any given time”.

This means that just 1 in 58 of a record number of police officers is patrolling the streets at any given time. Jan Berry, Chairman of the Police Federation, commented:

“People hear about a record 143,000 officers and it sounds a lot, but the reality, as these new figures show, is quite different. The government obsession with targets and data collection, as well as the failure to provide an effective system to share information, has resulted in officers spending less time on the beat and this can only be at the expense of the public.”

In Chapter 6 we show why police officers are able to spend so little of their time providing the service the public want – and identify how to return them to the front line.

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124 House of Commons Written Answer, Hansard, 6 March 2007, Column 1930W. The detailed figures are set out in Figure 6.1 below.
125 “Just one in 58 police is patrolling the streets”, Sunday Telegraph, 18 March 2007.
126 Ibid.
MORE EFFECTIVE POLICING CAN BEAT CRIME

There was a received wisdom in the Home Office and academia that police action could not cut crime. However, evidence from home and abroad has convincingly demonstrated that this fatalistic perspective was wrong.

A study into the six months after 7/7, where more police were in the streets of central London boroughs, suggested that increasing the numbers of police on the streets by 10 per cent reduces crime by 3 per cent.

In the 1990s New York achieved a dramatic drop in crime – twice as large as in other US cities – through increasing police officers on the streets, robust community policing and greater management accountability. This formula has also worked in England. In Middlesbrough Mayor Ray Mallon has also been able to cut crime sharply by using community policing and holding the police to account.

A huge majority of the public – 83 per cent – supports a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to all crime, with highly visible policing on the streets, bearing down heavily on things like antisocial behaviour and vandalism.

THE POLICE ARE NOT ON THE STREETS

Police officer numbers have reached record levels, at around 140,000 full time equivalent officers in England and Wales. Yet this remains low by international comparisons.

The Government’s vague pledges to deliver neighbourhood policing are not being met. Nationally, less than 10 per cent of police officers in England and Wales are dedicated to neighbourhood policing and the Government will now provide 8,000 fewer PCSOs than it promised in its election manifesto.

The latest Home Office figures have revealed that only 14 per cent of all police officers’ time is spent on patrol. Just 1 in 58 police officers are patrolling the streets at any given time.
Chapter 3: Today’s challenges

The core roles of the police are to prevent crime and bring criminals to justice. They are not social workers – other agencies must play a more effective part in the fight against crime. The police currently face five key challenges: terrorism, serious and organised crime, establishing community policing, strengthening local accountability, and delivering improved value for money. The police face several obstacles to meeting these challenges, including excessive bureaucracy and central intervention, an inflexible workforce, and inefficient procedures.

What type of police force do we want?

In his Dimbleby Lecture, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair, commented that there have been widely differing modern political definitions of what the police service is for:

“In 1993, the white paper on police reform, issued by the then Conservative Government, stated, in entirely unequivocal terms, that ‘the main job of the police is to catch criminals’. In contrast, the overarching purpose of the police service, issued by the incoming Labour Government in 1997, was: ‘to build a safe, just and tolerant society, in which the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families and communities are properly balanced, and the protection and security of the public are maintained.’”

If the first definition was too narrow, omitting the role of the police in preventing crime, the second is absurdly wide, appearing to reflect a governmental ambition. A proper definition of the police’s role should fall somewhere between the two. History provides the answer. Sir Robert Peel’s first principle of policing stated: “The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.” Similarly Sir Richard Mayne, one of the two Metropolitan Police Commissioners appointed by Peel, said that the primary objectives of the police were to be “the prevention of crime and the preservation of public tranquillity.” A more recent statement of the police’s purpose, set out by ACPO some fifteen years ago, seems apt today:

“The purpose of the Police Service is to uphold the law fairly and firmly; to prevent crime; to pursue and bring to justice those who break the law; to keep the Queen’s Peace; and to protect, help and reassure the community.”

Sir Ian’s central question – what kind of police service do we want – was partly prompted by his concern that “the police face a widening mission.” The public were looking to the service “for answers to the degradation of communal life - for answers to the neighbours from hell, the

127 Dimbleby Lecture, 16 November 2005.
smashed bus stop, the lift shaft littered with needles and condoms, the open drugs market, the angry, the aggressive and the obviously disturbed.” As John Graham, the Director of the Police Foundation has observed:

“Where once there was a rich supply of authority figures in different walks of life – park keepers, bus conductors, shop keepers, school teachers – there is now an authority vacuum into which the police service has increasingly been sucked. When in doubt, call on the police, not a neighbour or a parent. Successive governments have responded to public demands for greater security and protection by expanding police powers, increasing expenditure and raising police numbers to record levels. But none of these remotely match the increasing demands placed on the police, who are being pulled in so many different directions at once. Their ‘can do’ mentality is at once their greatest asset and their greatest liability. Faced with spiralling expectations, they valiantly attempt to deliver on all fronts, from combating trans-national organised crime and terrorism one day to tackling antisocial behaviour and low level disorder in deprived neighbourhoods the next – spreading themselves increasingly thinly as they do so. Is it any wonder that sanction detection rates have consistently fallen as the public demand increasingly more from an over-stretched police service fighting to fill the gaps left by others?”

While police numbers have increased over time they have not matched rapidly rising crime rates. The police now face around 40 crimes per officer, four times the number in the 1960s and twenty times the number in the 1920s. In addition, the sheer volume of antisocial behaviour presents a significant challenge. As was noted in Chapter 1, the Home Office estimated that there are 13.5 million reports of antisocial behaviour per year – or one report every two seconds.
Figure 3.1 Recorded crimes per police officer over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Recorded crime (thousands)</th>
<th>Police officers (thousands)</th>
<th>Recorded crimes per police officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1,646</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2,964</td>
<td>120</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1991</td>
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<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>5,525</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>5,557</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The police have a central role in tackling volume crime; but they should not be expected to carry it out alone. The principle of local partnership has been accepted at least since the passing of the Crime & Disorder Act 1988, which gave every local authority in the country the responsibility to formulate a strategy to reduce crime and disorder in their area, and requires them to work with the police, probation service and health authorities. The central mission of the police must remain the prevention of crime and the bringing to justice of law-breakers. They cannot and should not become social workers; nor should they assume responsibility for action to deal with problems that are properly the responsibility of their local partners. The spiralling of crime should not require the police to widen their mission. It requires more effective performance from the criminal justice system as a whole and their local partners, as well as from the police. The problem with local partnership is addressed in Chapter 7 below.

While Peel’s principles remain true, no-one would deny that the 21st century imposes significant demands on policing, some of them new, others on a new scale. Today the police face five fundamental challenges: a new terrorist threat; the need to tackle serious crime; delivering effective community policing; meeting the public demand for greater accountability, and delivering value for money.
Box 3.1 National Intelligence Model crime definitions

Level 1: Local issues – usually crime, criminals, antisocial behaviour and a concomitant need for reassurance – that can be managed within a Basic Command Unit (BCU).

Level 2: These are cross-border issues; usually the actions of organised criminality, major incidents and events affecting more than one BCU and potentially across boundaries into neighbouring forces. This can also include issues of wider public disquiet, not withstanding that the original incident might otherwise be categorised as level 1.

Level 3: Serious and organised crime, terrorism or other extremist activity operating on a national or international level. This can also include major incidents, events and other issues of widespread national concern, often with national media coverage, that can seriously undermine confidence on a wider scale.

Protective Services: Seven specific types of crime – counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, public order, major crime, critical incidents, roads policing and civil contingencies. In theory these can occur at any of the three levels though they are most often level 2 and 3 crimes. Therefore although the “level 2 gap” and the “protective services gap” are often used as synonyms, they are in fact slightly different.

The challenges facing policing

1. The terrorist threat. For some of Britain’s police forces, notably but by no means exclusively the Metropolitan Police, the current terrorist threat is perhaps the most pressing challenge facing them. Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, the Director General of MI5, has said that the “Al-Qaida threat to the UK … is serious, is growing and will, I believe, be with us for a generation.”132 The police have recently set up three regional hubs to strengthen counter terrorism and ACPO has appointed a Terrorism Programme Director who will “co-ordinate work across the service to build capacity and capability to counter terrorism and play a major role in the creation of Counter Terrorism Units and Regional Intelligence Cells”.133 The issue of the terrorist threat is being dealt with by our National & International Security Policy Group134 and will not be discussed in detail in this report. However, all our proposals for police reform must be considered in light of the need for the police to be structured to deal effectively with terrorism.

2. The need to tackle serious crime. The HMIC report Closing the Gap, though flawed, did correctly identify a gap in the ability of the police to provide protective services. The report said that “less than 6 per cent of the over 1,500 organised crime groups active at a force and regional level are actually targeted annually by the police”. The report went on to note:

“[A contrast in] the police service’s success in dealing with level 1 issues and the creation of a national body capable of dealing with level 3 with its ad hoc approach to dealing with the challenges of level 2 – only two forces were awarded a grading of ‘excellent’ within HMIC’s Baseline Assessment … the scale of the challenge [has] been brought into focus by:

• Our growing appreciation of the threat posed by local and regional organised crime groups;
• The increasing challenges (particularly confronting smaller forces) of dealing with major enquiries, including the provision of specialist services;
• The threat from terrorism; and
• Questions about the service’s ability to come together at the regional and national level to deliver key projects and initiatives such as the National Intelligence Model (NIM), that whilst a success at BCU level is not yet as robust as it needs to be at level 2.”135

There is insufficient co-operation between forces to tackle cross-border (level 2) crime. Only the Met and Greater Manchester Police were deemed to be satisfactory in each of the seven protective services. Furthermore, the Bichard report into the Soham murders highlighted poor co-ordination between police forces in tackling cross-border crime. The Association of Police Authorities accepts “unequivocally that there is a gap in the capacity and capability of the

133 ACPO news release, 7 December 2007.
service to tackle adequately level two criminality and deal with the threats posed by terrorism.” This diagnosis is also accepted by ACPO.

When these limitations are considered alongside the growing sophistication and co-ordination of organised crime, which has many harmful consequences, the scale of the problem becomes apparent. At its simplest organised crime involves direct theft from the public and government which leads to higher taxes in order to recoup losses. Organised crime also harms individuals directly and indirectly. Drug addicts, smuggled immigrants, and the purchasers of counterfeit goods all suffer at its hands.

In addition there is evidence, particularly in Northern Ireland, that organised crime is linked to terrorism and helps to fund it. Finally, the communities in which organised crime operates from are often blighted with fear of violence and antisocial behaviour. Drugs supplied by organised crime further exacerbate antisocial behaviour and acquisitive crime like shoplifting as addicts steal to support their habit. Home Office statistics highlight the extent of the problem:

- Global profits from people smuggling are estimated to be $10 billion annually.
- Every £1 spent on heroin is estimated to generate about £4 of economic and social cost.
- There are around 400 major crime bosses in the UK with an amassed criminal wealth of approximately £440 million.
- So called “dirty money” or assets derived from crime represent around 2 per cent of the UK’s GDP, or £18 billion – up to half of which is derived from illegal drug transactions.
- The economic and social costs of organised crime are estimated to be at least £20-£40 billion per year.
- The abuse of Class A drugs is estimated to cost £13 billion a year.
- Indirect tax fraud (e.g. evading the customs duties on cigarettes and alcohol) is estimated to cost £7 billion annually.
- Intellectual property theft (e.g. the pirating of DVDs and CDs) is estimated to cost £9 billion annually.
- Organised immigration crime is estimated to cost £3 billion.
- It is thought that fraud against big business is “extremely large”.

Tackling serious crime cannot be left to the new Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) which was created to deal with level 3 crime. With a budget for 2006-07 of £416 million resource funding and £41 million in capital provision, SOCA has the resources of only a medium-sized police force and a smaller budget than Greater Manchester Police. Given its international focus and broad remit of “harm reduction”, the Agency could not plug the protective services gap for England and Wales without a steep increase in resources and a reformed remit. Indeed, it is arguable that SOCA has exacerbated the level 2 gap by pulling police officers into an Agency which focuses on international crime.

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There are also issues over SOCA’s accountability. The Agency has stressed that it should not be judged on crude measures such as the amount of drugs they seize; but the question then is how SOCA’s effectiveness is to be judged at all. A recent Channel Four news report suggested that SOCA is already struggling with its current workload. The report said that the Agency was riddled with bureaucracy and had only taken up a fraction of the drugs cases referred to it. As SOCA approaches the end of its first year, Parliament will have to scrutinise its progress carefully; but the wider issue remains that in its current form SOCA is clearly not a solution to the protective services gap.

Box 3.2 Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)

The Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by, but operationally independent from, the Home Office. It is an amalgamation of the National Crime Squad (NCS) (which itself was an amalgamation of regional crime squads), the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS), the drug trafficking and criminal finance parts of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the part of UK Immigration dealing with organised immigration crime (UKIS).

SOCA became operational in April 2006. It has a budget of over £400 million and approximately 4,000 staff. Its remit is to “reduce the harm” caused by serious and organised crime. SOCA is led by a Board with a majority of non-executive members which is responsible for ensuring that SOCA discharges its statutory responsibilities and meets the priorities set by the Home Secretary. The Board is chaired by Sir Stephen Lander, former Director General of MI5. SOCA’s Director General is Bill Hughes, previously head of the National Crime Squad. Both the Chairman and the Director General are appointed by the Home Secretary.

SOCA’s Board has determined five generic priorities to guide SOCA’s business, as follows:

1. To build knowledge and understanding of serious organised crime, the harm it causes, and of the effectiveness of different responses.
2. To increase the amount of criminal assets recovered and increase the proportion of cases in which the proceeds of crime are pursued.
3. To increase the risk to serious organised criminals operating in the UK, through proven investigation capabilities and in new ways.
4. To collaborate with partners in the UK and internationally to maximise efforts to reduce harm.
5. To provide agreed levels of high quality support to SOCA’s operational partners and, as appropriate, seek their support in return.

138 “SOCA’s ‘major problems’”, Channel Four evening news, Channel Four, broadcasted 23 January 2007.
The Director General is able to designate SOCA officers as having the powers of a police constable, a customs officer, or an immigration officer.

Some have described SOCA as the “British FBI”, but there are in fact few similarities. Unlike the FBI, SOCA is not responsible for counter terrorism; nor are its agents routinely armed. The completely different federal policing structure in the United States also makes comparisons between the FBI and SOCA questionable. The bulk of policing in the UK is still done by police forces. SOCA is an intelligence agency with the goal of "reducing harm", not specifically the arrest and conviction of offenders.

Ken Jones, the President of ACPO, has made clear that SOCA is not a UK FBI. Instead he has argued it “will be a bespoke UK solution to our organised crime problem, which combines national expertise and law enforcement networks”.

**Sources:** SOCA website, www.soca.gov.uk; “ACPO: SOCA is not a British FBI”, Politics.co.uk, 3 April, 2006.

3. **Developing and sustaining community policing.** At the other end of the spectrum there has been a growth in antisocial behaviour and low-level criminality that blights people’s lives. Yet, as was noted in Chapter 2, while the public clearly want to see more police on the beat, the development of community policing has been slow and has been undermined by the Government’s recent cuts in promised PCSO numbers and funding. Forces face competing demands to deal with more serious crime and improve response policing, and when resources are tight, the danger is that community policing will fail to develop to anything like the extent which the public is seeking.

It is essential that community policing is protected from changing fashions and inconsistent financing. The key to anchoring it will lie in developing local accountability. The public wants community policing, and if the public is given a greater say on how it is policed it is unlikely that community policing will be neglected. The recent experience of London is that local political commitment – in this case from the Mayor – can help to drive a more intensive level of community policing. It is true that Londoners have paid significantly more for additional police officers in the capital – but Londoners can choose whether to re-elect their Mayor or not.

4. **The need for greater local accountability.** We live in the age of accountability. An increasingly consumerist society rightly expects the services that they pay for to be responsive to them. In addition to the very large number of emergency calls to which the police must respond (over 10 million in 2004), the experience of the 101 number pilots (see Chapter 2) indicates that there is substantial latent demand for a better response to non-emergencies. Much of the political focus on police accountability in the past fifty years has concentrated on statutory accountability
to build public confidence in police conduct. Legislation such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 has sought to protect suspects by placing checks on police procedures. Similarly the Independent Police Complaints Commission, created in 2004, was introduced to enhance confidence in the police as an institution. Today’s demand is that the police should be more answerable to their communities. This raises important issues of the balance between national and local accountability of the police, and the extent to which the police can and should be free from political control. We examine these issues in Chapter 7.

5. The need to provide value for money. After a period of rapid growth, allowing the workforce to expand, the Home Office budget is to be frozen. A 3.6 per cent increase in the police budget for 2007-08 is likely to be followed by rises of no more than 2.7 per cent until 2010-11. In the words of the Treasury, “resources will be tighter than over the period of expansion since 2001 (average annual real funding growth of 5.5 per cent and a 20 per cent workforce increase)”\(^{139}\). The police have reacted with concern. Tim Brain, Chief Constable of Gloucestershire and the ACPO spokesman on finance, responded:

“The Home Office spending levels are for the whole department, not just the police. The police settlement, competing with prisons and immigration might turn out to be much lower, possibly 2 per cent. That would be suicidally low.”\(^{140}\)

ACPO and the APA claim that police costs generally run in front of head-line inflation and that the police service needs 5 per cent annually just to stand still. They have estimated that by 2010-11 the police could be facing a funding gap of as much as £966 million, 8 per cent of the current police expenditure in England and Wales.\(^{141}\)

**Figure 3.2 The police funding gap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>“Optimistic” Gap in £m</th>
<th>“Realistic” Gap in £m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>966</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** ACPO/APA, Sustainable Policing, November 2006.

Financial difficulties are already affecting the service that police forces throughout England and Wales are able to deliver. Durham Constabulary is set to cut 100 police officers to deal with a £3

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\(^{139}\) HM Treasury, Delivering a step change in police productivity, October 2006.

\(^{140}\) Police Professional, November 16 2006.

In January Police Review reported that “West Mercia Constabulary is experiencing a funding gap of £1 million and is relying on reserves to keep its service at the current standard.” The article also noted that Surrey has described its budget for 2007-08 as “insufficient” and are looking to replace officers with more support staff. Other forces are reporting difficulties. Sussex predicts it will have a budget deficit of £6 million and will have to make cutbacks, while the Deputy Chairman of Thames Valley Police Federation says its force has a deficit of £7 million. Norfolk faces a funding gap of £1 million in coming years and is looking at slowing down the roll out of neighbourhood policing, increasing council tax, or cutting officer numbers as potential solutions. The Chief Constable of North Wales has said that his force made £2 million cutbacks last year, with further cuts of about £3 million expected this year. These cutbacks will involve losing 120 civilian posts. The Clerk of the North Wales Police Authority has said that “more than 50 people are going as part of a voluntary redundancy scheme and the force is looking at people being made compulsorily redundant.”

As already noted, figures published in January 2007 showed that for the first time since 2000 police numbers fell by 173 from March to September 2006. Rick Naylor, the President of Police Superintendents’ Association, said:

“This is a trend we will see continue because of the financial position for forces is very serious. The only way they can balance the books is lose staff.”

Jan Berry, Chairman of the Police Federation, has said that the Federation is “absolutely certain that there will be fewer police officers in the future than now” and has warned that fewer officers and resources will mean that 999 calls will take longer to answer.

These settlements will certainly put pressure on the police. They will have to expand their capabilities in protective services, deliver community policing and respond to the terrorist threat with resources that are in effect declining given that their budget will increase more slowly than their costs. The Treasury has said that cashable efficiencies in the police will need to be at least double the current level to offset “pressures” in the funding settlement. Gordon Brown’s “go-stop” financing, in which rapid rises in spending are followed with sudden slow-down, can

142 “Police funding crisis ‘will put public at risk’”, The Observer, 14 January 2007.
144 Ibid.
149 HM Treasury, Delivering a step change in police productivity, October 2006.
legitimately be criticised. Nevertheless, in common with any public service, the police must provide value for money. The Treasury correctly identifies the need for “a step change in productivity to deliver the performance needed … a significant change in police culture, and a transformation in the information, skills and incentives in the service.” It says that:

- “The way that police forces manage both budgets and people remains short of best current practice in both private and public sectors”. Even though “the police workforce consumes 80 per cent of police resources, the service has no means of recording what people actually do, and then costing this activity and linking it to outputs and productivity.”

- “Substantial gains [could] be released from better workforce mix, £250m from better overtime and sickness management, and [there is]10-20 per cent improvement potential across processes from investigation and custody to call handling, training and HR.”

- Such improvements will require changes in “culture and leadership as much as management systems”.

The challenge for police leaders will be to deliver such leadership and efficiency gains. The one thing which the public will not wish to see is cuts in front-line officers.

**Obstacles to effective policing**

The police have never been better equipped to rise to these challenges. In spite of the slow-down in the rate of growth of spending, it remains the case that they have record resources and numbers of officers. While the Home Office fairly states that “the pace of societal and technological change presents a continually evolving set of challenges for the Police Service in delivering their priorities”, technological change benefits the police; indeed, today’s forces are able to make use of technology of which their predecessors could never have dreamt, including the growth of CCTV, the national DNA database and the increasing use of powerful computerised systems – for example, Automatic Number Plate Recognition and intelligence mapping.

But they also face obstacles. The uptake of technology has been severely hampered by the lack of a coherent central strategy to direct investment in it. The police’s hands are tied by excessive bureaucracy, inefficient processes and excessive political correctness. They are subject to growing central intervention from a Home Office determined to lever up standards from the centre. These factors have led to a steady erosion of discretion in the police service which has undermined its ability to do its job and sapped morale. The police have also had to contend with changing fashion. Initiatives and reforms come and go and the police, like other public services, spend almost as much time managing change as they do actually performing their core tasks. It

is right to demand efficiency from the police, but government must also learn to set a sustainable framework in which central interference and disruptive change is minimised. The police should be set clear objectives, as far as possible locally, and then be held to account for their performance in meeting them.

**A new vision for policing**

The police are being pulled in two directions. On the one hand, they are being pulled downwards as they try to re-engage with local communities, proactively reduce crime and reassure the public. On the other hand, they are being pulled upwards to meet the increasing need to co-ordinate their actions and tackle high level serious and organised criminality. The public simultaneously expect the police to respond to 999 emergency calls quickly, protect them from serious crime, spend more time on the streets, solve more crime, make more arrests and be more responsive to their needs.

To retain the respect and trust of the community that is essential if a police force is to be effective, the police must be able to respond to all these demands. Like any other public service, the police also need to deliver value for money, and be accountable to the public for their performance.

To achieve these goals, four key reforms are needed:

- The structure of the police must enable them to provide excellent protective services while enhancing and sustaining community policing. The options for reforming the structure of the police are explored in Chapter 4.

- The police workforce must be reformed to ensure that it is flexible, well trained and highly motivated, has a diverse range of skills and expertise, and provides value for money. Chapter 5 discusses the specific reforms that will be needed to bring about such a professional workforce.

- The police’s hands must be untied to give them the discretion and freedom they need to work effectively. Forms and processes which do not help the police to deliver a better service to the public should be removed. Central direction and targets should be replaced by local leadership and priority setting. Chapter 6 discusses the restrictions placed on the police, the Government’s record, and what steps are needed to set the police free.
• The police need to be made properly accountable for their performance as well as their conduct, and their performance management framework must only reward activity that delivers a better service, not activity which ticks boxes. These issues are discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 3 - key findings

The central mission of the police must remain the prevention of crime and the bringing to justice of law-breakers. The spiralling of crime should not require the police to widen their mission – they are not social workers. The criminal justice system as a whole and the police’s local partners must play their part more effectively.

THE POLICE FACE FIVE KEY CHALLENGES …

1. The terrorist threat. This threat is serious, is growing and will be a long term issue. The police will play a vital part of the fight against terrorism alongside the security agencies.

2. The protective services gap. The police must do more to fight serious crime which crosses national and police force borders. SOCA has an important role but is focused on the higher end threat. Many forces lack the capability to tackle serious crime effectively.

3. Community policing must be developed and sustained. It is essential that community policing is protected from changing fashions and inconsistent financing. Community policing is what the public want the police to do. The key to anchoring it will be in developing local accountability.

4. Increasing accountability. We live in the age of accountability and an increasingly consumerist society rightly expects the services that they pay for to be responsive to them. The police are currently accountable for their conduct but not to local people for their performance or for their selection of priorities. The police must be made more accountable to local communities.

5. Delivering value for money. As the era of big spending rises comes to an end the police face the challenge of delivering better value for money in order to provide an acceptable service to the public.

… BUT THEY ALSO FACE MAJOR OBSTACLES

The police will face several obstacles as they attempt to meet these challenges. These
include excessive bureaucracy and central intervention, an inflexible workforce, inefficient processes and political correctness.

To meet these challenges four key reforms are needed concerning the structure, workforce, obstacles to performance, and accountability mechanisms of the police.
Chapter 4: Forces for the future

The structure of the police must allow them both to fight serious crime and develop community policing. Neither a national police force, regional forces or the status quo are viable models for policing in the future. Two models based on the current 43 forces are viable: locally accountable forces matched with effective leadership from the centre to ensure collaboration, or locally accountable forces operating alongside a national Serious Crime Force – which could allow the creation of smaller local forces in the future.

Structuring the police in England and Wales

As Chapter 3 argued the police must be structured in a way that allows them both to respond to their local communities and to tackle crimes which cross force boundaries. They must be able to co-ordinate their efforts across wide geographical areas and to mobilise large amounts of manpower to deal with serious and organised crime, civil contingencies, critical incidents and terrorist threats. At the same time the structure of the police service must enable it to deliver community policing, target low level criminal behaviour and be responsive to local people.

Currently the police in England and Wales are divided into 43 autonomous forces, but this is not how they were created. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries police power was seen as the responsibility of local government. The Home Office attempted to bring borough police forces under its control in the 1850s but the move was resisted. Apart from periods of central direction during the world wars the police remained largely locally controlled until the Police Act 1964. The Act followed a Royal Commission of the Police chaired by Henry Willink which reported in 1962. The Commission argued that, while no single national force should be formed, the police should be brought under tighter central control in response to growing local corruption. It also contended, on efficiency grounds, that the optimum size of a force was over 500 officers, and that there was a case for major conurbations each having a single force. The Government accepted these points and the 1964 Act “enabled the Home Secretary of the day to cut 117 forces outside London down to 49. The Local Government Act of 1972 reduced that to today’s 41, plus the City of London Police and the Met.”

The Government’s recent attempt to create regional forces was flawed partly because it failed to take a holistic view of the structure of policing necessary to equip forces to meet contemporary challenges. It focused on protective services but failed to consider properly the potential impact of large regional forces on local policing and accountability. It also attempted to steamroll through a new structure with insufficient public or Parliamentary consultation and without addressing the financial consequences of change.

A proper public debate is needed about the right structure of today’s forces to meet the new challenges. To begin this debate we have identified five key models for police organisation in England and Wales, the first three of which we do not believe are viable:

1. The current structure of 43 forces, increasingly directed from the centre. We do not believe that this, the status quo, is a viable option. Forces are making inadequate progress in collaborating to deliver efficiencies and effective protective services. Although community policing is developing, the current structure does not do enough to protect the police from conflicting demands, and formal local accountability is weak.

2. Regional strategic forces were favoured by the Government in the recent amalgamations debate. While this model aimed to increase the capabilities of forces to provide protective services it is too removed from the public, ultimately leading to a centralised force and a loss of local accountability.

3. A national force would have the same strengths and weaknesses as regional forces, delivering protective services effectively but neglecting community policing.

Two models are clearly viable:

4. Approximately 43 forces with stronger local accountability matched with effective leadership from the centre to drive collaboration, ensuring both the development of community policing and an enhanced ability to deal with serious crime.

5. Approximately 43 forces with stronger local accountability, focusing principally on level 1 crime, with a new Serious Crime Force (SCF), answering to the Home Secretary, assuming responsibilities for most of the protective services currently delivered by the 43 forces, in particular serious and organised crime and major crime.

Where an area such as a town or county has a strong geographical and community identity, aligned with local government boundaries, there may be demand to create a smaller force for that area. The clear alignment of force and local authority areas would enable more visible, accountable and powerful partnerships to be created in the fight against volume crime. Such a change would be made possible by creation of the SCF, since the remaining administrative functions of forces could be devolved to smaller units. We will consult on whether an evolutionary path towards some smaller forces is practical and desirable. If it is, we will consider a procedure to allow the public the ability to apply for the creation of a smaller force in their area. We envisage that the change would be triggered by local authority application. The Home Secretary would then approve the proposal, after consulting with the new Inspectorate (see below), and it would be approved by the public in a referendum. The minimum size of a force would be one BCU. Larger cities would continue to need a city-wide force entity.
The following sections discuss these five alternatives in more detail.

**Model 1: the status quo**

The current structure is not a viable option for the future. Forces do not work together effectively and there is no mechanism to ensure that community policing will be protected. Many forces simply do not have the capacity to deal with serious and major crime. When a genuine emergency arises, such as the serial killer hunt in Ipswich last December, forces can rapidly offer each other assistance.\(^{153}\) HMIC are currently exploring options to improve collaboration between forces and have yet to publish their work. However, for day to day policing, present collaborative arrangements remain largely undeveloped. It is clear that, without significant change, the protective services gap will remain. In the words of Rick Naylor, the President of the Police Superintendents’ Association, “the gap has not closed, the gap is not closing, and I believe it will never close until the structure changes.”\(^{154}\)

As we have argued, the structure is also ill-equipped to deliver community policing over a sustained period of time. It is significant that the force where community policing is most advanced is the only one in England and Wales where a directly elected mayor has some responsibility for the force, the Met. If we are to truly deliver community policing accountability needs to be more local.

**Box 4.1 Policing structures in other countries**

*The United States.* There are three tiers of policing in the United States, federal, state and local. Apart from the federal level, policing in the United States is delivered, managed and financed locally. In total there are about 18,760 separate police agencies. Local forces are accountable to local politicians and typically raise 80 per cent of their own funds. While this system encourages accountability and innovation it also leads to wide variations in the size, cost and quality of police forces.

*France.* France has three different types of police, two national and one local. The Gendarmerie Nationale (GN) is a national force that polices rural areas and small towns and the Police Nationale (PN) is a civilian agency which polices urban areas. The GN and PN are now both controlled by the Ministry of the Interior. The final and smallest type of force is the Municipal Police, of which there are an estimated 20,000 officers. The municipal police were introduced in the 1980s and are controlled by local mayors.

*Republic of Ireland.* Ireland is policed by the Garda Síochána, or Peace Guard, which is a single national force. The Garda are headed by a Commissioner who is appointed

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by the Irish Government. He has two Deputy Commissioner’s to assist him. The national model of policing in Ireland is delivered on a regional basis by six Regional Assistant Commissioners who lead territorial policing.

The Netherlands. Until 1993 the Netherlands was policed by 148 different local police forces but there are now only 25 regional forces, ranging in size from 500 to 5,000 police officers. The regional forces are accountable to a Mayor (who is appointed by the Minister of Home Affairs rather than being elected), a public prosecutor and the chief of police. In addition to the regional forces there is a national police agency, the KLPD, which supports regional forces with specialist detective squads. The KLPD also carries out royal and diplomatic protection and polices waterways and roads.

Sources: Barry Loveday and Anna Reid, Going Local: Who should run Britain’s police? (London: Policy Exchange, 2003); Norman Dennis and George Erdos, Cultures and Crimes: Policing in Four Nations (London: Civitas, 2005); Garda Síochána Website; Policing in the Netherlands, report by the Dutch Police Department (January 2004).

Model 2: regional forces

Regional or strategic forces were recommended by Closing the Gap, the findings of which were fully accepted by the Government. Although the report correctly identified the protective services gap, its recommendation that force amalgamations were the solution was reached too quickly. The report did present four other options for closing the gap: collaboration between existing forces, lead forces for special capabilities, lead regional forces, and federations of forces. However, the report dismissed each of these options without due consideration. As a result of this the “immediate acceptance of Closing the Gap by the Government [was] matched by a sharply negative reaction from many senior police officers.”

There were several problems specific to the Government’s proposals, including a lack of debate and consultation, and a rushed timetable for implementation. Terry Grange, Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys, said that the Government’s plans were “verging on a shambles” and were “Alice through the Looking Glass stuff”. There were also concerns about the cost of mergers, which the APA estimated to be over £525 million across England and Wales. The Government initially only promised to provide £125 million, less than a quarter of the funding necessary, to pay for this and made these funds conditional on police authorities coming forward with voluntary proposals for mergers. When the programme was abandoned forces claimed assistance to meet a combined total of over £6.5 million in costs incurred through preparatory work, although the Government paid them less than £4 million.

Putting aside problems specific to the Government’s proposals for force mergers, there are several objections in principle to regional forces. While regional forces would be larger in size and therefore theoretically better equipped to deal with protective services and level 2 crime, they would also have many limitations. Regional forces would dilute the already weak accountability of the police as they would cover huge areas. For example, the proposed South West regional force would cover 8,187 square miles; people living in the north of Gloucestershire are closer to Scotland than to the south of Cornwall. This would mean that chief constables would be hundreds of miles away from many towns and villages. Kent officers could be closer to Calais than to their regional headquarters. Inevitably, regional police forces would become more remote from the communities they are meant to serve.

In fact, Tony Blair conceded, when he was Shadow Home Secretary, that amalgamations would undermine local accountability:

“Wholesale amalgamation of the smaller police services … would remove local policing further from local people when there is no evidence that it will create a more effective police service”.¹⁵⁷

Regional forces, more distant from the public, would be poorly placed to implement community policing. Accountability would ultimately reside at the strategic level and the police would be likely to focus on force targets rather than on delivering a quality local service tailored to local needs.

A study by Thames Valley Police raised questions about the advantages of larger forces. It noted that several of the top performing forces were small and that, although larger forces did have a slight advantage in delivering protective services, small forces regularly outperformed larger one in detection rates, public satisfaction, and a number of other indicators.¹⁵⁸

It was claimed that regional forces had the potential to generate efficiency savings. Bernard Hogan-Howe, Chief Constable of Merseyside argued that “43 forces with different IT, finance and procurement departments is a huge waste and could finance another 10,000 officers nationally.”¹⁵⁹ But the Thames Valley analysis concluded:

“It is not currently possible to show that the size of a force affects its cost efficiency, spending or performance to any significant degree. There is no clear evidence that police forces’ performance in crime reduction, detections or public perception relate to their size or number of police officers. Some small forces perform extremely well and some large police forces badly.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Tony McNulty, “Payments towards costs incurred on Police Restructuring”, Written Ministerial Statement, Hansard 30 October 2006, Column 4WS.
¹⁵⁸ Harrod, “Are larger police forces better than smaller forces?” Police Professional, January 2006.
¹⁶⁰ Harrod, “Are larger police forces better than smaller forces?” Police Professional, January 2006.
Box 4.2 Information communication technology

Any discussion of attempts by police forces to work together must consider ICT. While there are strong arguments for joining up ICT within the police this has been difficult to achieve. The 43 forces each have historically procured their own IT systems and their traditional geographic isolation has meant that these systems are not always compatible.

Work carried out by a leading supplier of police IT solutions indicates that there is little momentum around reform of the police information technology markets at the moment and, unlike other areas of the public sector, the shared services agenda is not seriously progressing.

The CBI notes in its document Transforming Criminal Justice that, to date, police engagement with providers has been fragmented. This is particularly the case in the IT market, where a number of niche players have dominated. Previous national projects have failed to take off. One such project was HOLMES2, which was designed to be used by the police service to run major crime enquiries and casualty bureaux after major incidents. However, only three forces have the electronic document management systems (EDMS) to interface with HOLMES2 – with even the second largest police force, West Midlands Police, unable to afford an EDMS to link into it. This is despite the fact that it has been operational since 1989.

This chronic lack of co-ordination was exposed by the Bichard Inquiry into the Soham murders, which highlighted a serious lack of information sharing between forces. In response to the Bichard Inquiry the Government launched the IMPACT programme which aims to introduce a Police National Database (PND) by 2010.

IMPACT consists of a code of practice for managing data, called Management of Police Information (MoPI), and a nominal index which lets police search for records other forces will have on any individual, though they will not be able to access the record itself. Between now and 2010 the Cross Regional Information Sharing Project (CRISP) will be introduced. This is a more advanced system designed to pave the way to the PND.

The PND will operate alongside MoPI and will replace the nominal index, CRISPs, and the Police National Computer (PNC). It will provide a comprehensive one-stop shop for searches across forces’ main operational information systems and national police systems. It will subsume the information currently held in the PNC and is the culmination of the IMPACT programme and will be operational by 2010.
IMPACT is a hugely ambitious programme. As mentioned above, police IT is highly fragmented. In crime and control approximately 26 out of 37 forces in England have different systems. There are more than 15 different HR systems in England and Wales, and over ten different providers of crime systems as well as a number of forces who run them in house. The Information Systems Strategy for the Police Service (ISS4PS) is an ACPO programme that attempts to set out a common architecture for police ICT services. It aims to enable individual forces to procure their own systems which will still be able to talk to each other. However ISS4PS is not mandated.

Similarly, the National Strategy for Police Information Systems (NSPIS) allows the core systems of forces to communicate with each other. However there have been concerns that NSPIS systems are not as effective as the systems they replaced and one force – an early adopter of NSPIS custody and case preparation products – has reinstated its “legacy” products.

In order to operate in this fragmented environment, IMPACT warehouses force data (which includes custody, case, call management, contact, intelligence and crime) as well as national databases (which includes convictions, ViSOR the Violent and Sex Offenders Register, the National Firearms Licence Management System, IDENT the fingerprint database, and the DNA database) and makes them all available to all forces. Eventually IMPACT will bring together 100 million pieces of data. Joining up intelligence databases which contain information of varying quality will also have serious implications for privacy and information security.

One solution to the fragmentation of police ICT is that force budgets could be top sliced so that ICT is procured centrally. This would ensure compatibility across all forces and allow the police to exploit economies of scale. However, it would also be a huge project and require many forces to retire perfectly good IT systems. It would also produce ‘a one size fits all’ ICT system that would stifle innovation and prevent forces from tailoring their systems to their specific needs.

If IMPACT and the PND are successful they will be able to meet the operational needs of the police to share information, and central procurement will not be necessary. There are questions about the amount of resources IMPACT is receiving and if it will be possible to deliver the system on time and in full. In June 2006 The Guardian reported that while the INI had been delivered on time “the programme as a whole was a mess”, the deadline has slipped by three years, and that costs have doubled. Two and a half years after Bichard recommended that “a national system for England Wales to support police intelligence should be introduced as a matter of urgency”, such a system is far from in place.
There are dangers that the programme will slip even further behind schedule. In a recent Westminster Hall debate Home Office Minister Joan Ryan admitted that due to technical difficulties a new search engine will have to be incorporated into CRISP application. CRISP is due to be operational by the summer of 2007. However, Joan Ryan admitted:

“The cost and delivery implications [of the new search engine] are currently under investigation, but unfortunately it means there will inevitably be some slippage in the time scale for deployment of the system.”

The Minister also admitted that there are “there are no guarantees Impact will not have to share some of the savings” currently being made by the Home Office as a result of “the considerable pressures” on its budget. It is essential that there is more central strategic direction over the use of ICT. While it is true that different forces have different needs, the disjointed and inefficient approach of the past cannot continue.


Box 4.3 ICT in Scotland

The Bichard report contrasted the inability to deliver an effective national intelligence IT capability in England and Wales unfavourably with Scotland. The report commented that:

“The Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) recognised that it was not acceptable to have a situation in which one force had no idea what intelligence was available to another elsewhere in Scotland. Consequently, in 1992 they introduced a database (running alongside the Scottish Criminal History System) that flags up the fact that local intelligence is held about particular individuals by police forces.... ACPOS also subsequently decided that the only sensible longer-term solution was the development of a common IT system. They agreed the core requirements, drew up a specification, sorted out the funding, procured a system and produced one simple
guide, which explained what officers on the ground needed to do.”

The Scottish Police Information Strategy (SPIS) is a centrally funded body that drives through information integration between the Scottish forces. In 2003 SPIS launched the Scottish Intelligence Database (SID) in partnership with ABM Intelligent Solutions which makes Scotland “the first country in the UK to successfully exploit technology to achieve true cross border policing and intelligence sharing.” Now, according to an ABM case study, all “17,000 police officers and 12,000 support officers at Scotland’s eight police forces ... have access to 90 per cent of the intelligence that is gathered in Scotland.” All forces in Scotland now use the same intelligence system and processes, and while this has resulted in significant change in the way many forces operated, they are now all beginning to reap the benefits of a common information strategy.

SID has brought about a cultural change in how Scottish police officers use intelligence. Prior to the implementation of SID a relatively small percentage of Scotland’s police officers submitted intelligence. There was no mechanism to feed back to officers the results that had been achieved and many therefore considered the intelligence system a 'black hole'. Even if their intelligence had resulted in an arrest, they would rarely hear about it. Since SID has been implemented over 70 per cent of police officers actively submit and research intelligence and this figure is growing. Each officer can see how their intelligence has helped other officers.

The Bichard report accepted that such a system is far more problematic in England and Wales:

"The variety of potential solutions and the number of involved parties, with sometimes conflicting interests, [in England and Wales] is much greater. The fact remains, however, that this is a national priority which goes to the heart of effective and efficient policing. The Home Office should take the lead more effectively than it has during the past decade, but, ultimately, this should be a priority for the Government as a whole."

As Box 4.2 shows the police in England and Wales have made some progress towards implementing a joined up IT system. However England and Wales remains a long way short of the SID.

Fewer regional forces would be more easily directed by the Home Secretary – indeed, that was probably a principal motivation for the Government in proposing them – and chief constables would inevitably answer increasingly to the centre. The plans had little to recommend them, and it was not surprising that on 19 June the Home Secretary announced that they would not be taken forward.

**Model 3: a national force**

One radical option is to have a single national police force as in the Republic of Ireland and France (although France does have a far smaller municipal police employed by mayors). Such a force might be better placed to tackle level 2 criminality and provide effective protective services. A single central force would also be able to exploit economies of scale, for instance in procurement. The model is favoured by the Police Superintendents’ Association which wants a national policing model delivered regionally.

But while a national force would “close the gap” it would be even less capable of delivering community policing than regional forces. Accountability would reside at the very highest level and people would have even less say over how they were policed. A national force might involve greater devolution of power to BCU commanders, but these commanders would have tactical rather than strategic command, limiting the impact they could have. Additionally, in a national force structure local commanders would inevitably look up to their regional and national bosses rather than down to the communities they serve.

There are other potential problems with a national force. The experience of the NHS does not suggest that public services are best provided by a single monolith. A single national force would in effect be run by the Home Secretary and, as current experience shows, standards cannot be driven up from the centre.

A single national force is not a viable option. In such a large organisation accountability would be too far removed from the citizen. Police forces grew out of localities and there would be considerable public unease about creating a single national force.

**Model 4: 43 locally accountable forces collaborating more**

One of the criticisms of Closing the Gap and the Government’s reaction to it was that neither paid enough attention to the potential for greater collaboration between forces. The APA proposed that forces could make formal agreements to share services, as an alternative means of enhancing protective services. This would enable forces to retain their local identity and

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161 Barry Loveday and Anna Reid, Going Local: Who should run Britain’s police, 2003, p.47.
accountability, while pooling resources and sharing service provision for certain functions, such as corporate and protective services. Protective services would be subject to a contract between police authorities which would name a chief officer with operational responsibility for a specific function.

Sharing services would have a number of advantages over amalgamations:

- It would achieve the economies of scale inherent in a merger without the additional costs.
- It would preserve local identity and accountability.
- There would be no need to equalise precepts.
- Implementation would be quicker and less disruptive.
- There would be a lower risk of an adverse impact on community policing.
- Resources could target criminal markets where they exist, rather than limiting shared services to authorities from the same government region.
- Existing links with local bodies would be retained. These include local authorities, the fire and rescue services, the crown prosecution services and the courts service.

The APA argues that sharing services will be more likely to encourage innovative thinking than conventional mergers which result in the creation of larger versions of the present authorities. Arrangements to share services could be legally binding, not ad hoc. Existing arrangements such as the Midlands Counter Terrorism Support Unit and the West Midlands Central Motorway Patrol Group, which already cross force boundaries, show that the solution is practical. It also works in the Army, where brigades perform operational and support functions while retaining the regimental structure.

Sussex and Surrey police forces are in the advanced stages of negotiating a shared protective services capability. The programme would create a central pool of officers and staff that would provide protective services such as roads policing and a murder unit to both forces. The unit would be under the command of a senior officer who would report to both chief constables and a joint committee of the two police authorities. The East Midlands Special Operations Unit (EMSOU) was established in 2006 in order to develop protective services in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire. It is being funded by £8 million from the Home Office, although that funding is only secure until 2008. This shows that it is possible for forces to collaborate the increase their protective services capabilities without merging.

However, it is by no means clear that similar arrangements are developing across other forces. Any performance framework must have collaboration criteria to encourage forces to work together to improve their protective service capabilities. As the creation of regional counter-terrorist hubs has shown, collaboration can be achieved if there is sufficient central impetus and resource questions are answered.
The Government has shown little leadership since the collapse of mergers. The Home Secretary has ultimate powers to direct collaboration, but the process is unlikely to begin seriously until a framework is developed which ensures that chief constables and police authorities can implement it. Ironically, while the Home Office has sought to interfere far too much in the detailed management of local forces, it has failed to drive or incentivise collaboration in vital areas where it is clearly necessary to overcome fiefdoms. It is possible both to defend the 43-force structure and to argue that it is unnecessary for there to be 43 separate HR departments, finance departments, or vehicle management departments. There is clearly potential for uniforms and vehicles to be procured centrally and for the sharing of more backroom services. Stronger local accountability is an essential feature of this model. This is discussed in chapter 7.

**Box 4.4 What is a Basic Command Unit?**

Basic Command Units or (BCUs) are the main operating unit of police forces. Typically, a force will divide its territorial area into a number of BCUs, each having its own complement of officers and staff. The officer in charge of a BCU, normally a chief superintendent, will be tasked by his or her chief constable with policing that locality and day to day decisions will be made as close to communities as possible.

BCUs deliver community policing and tackle antisocial behaviour and low level local criminality. In addition they gather intelligence, conduct investigations and provide responses to emergencies. Collaboration with partner agencies is also centred at the BCU level where the police work with CDRPs and Community Safety Partnerships. More serious crime and protective services are conducted at a force level. Strategic resource management and goal setting is also done at force level.

BCUs vary tremendously in geographic size and officer strength. Their optimum size was initially considered to be between 150 and 200 officers but by the late 1990s this figure had increased to between 250 and 350. There are now a growing number of huge BCUs with over 1,000 officers. Some BCUs are now comparable in size to small forces. For example the Bristol BCU of Avon and Somerset covers a resident population of approximately 406,000 people, but with two universities as well as a large transient population travelling to and from the city. This is a similar size to the Warwickshire Police force which covers a population of approximately 525,500. The Bristol BCU is policed by over 1,020 officers while Warwickshire Police have 1,040 officers.

The trend towards larger BCUs has coincided with a reduction in their overall numbers, which fell from 389 in 1997/98 to 244 currently. BCUs are now almost all fully coterminous with local government areas, making them well placed to deliver policing in partnership with other public services.
In a typical force 75 per cent of the budget is spent on frontline policing, and 60 per cent of frontline policing is spent directly in BCUs. The remaining 40 per cent is spent by the force in support of BCUs (see Figure 4.1).


Box 4.5 The role of forces vs. BCUs

43 Police forces:
- Combat the more serious and specialist crime; protective services.
- Provide leadership & service to the force, including support for BCUs and neighbourhood teams.
- Set strategic goals, and manage performance against these goals.
- Strategic resource management, including Human Resources and leadership; ensuring resilience.

244 BCUs:
- Provide effective response to emergencies and calls for service.
- Combat local crime and extremism.
- Investigate crimes, to help to bring offenders to justice.
- Work to reduce crime and improve community safety in partnership with other agencies (through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships / Community Safety Partnerships).
- Support neighbourhood policing.
Figure 4.1: Budget distribution of a typical force with approximately 3,000 officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Cost in £million</th>
<th>% of overall budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Territorial Policing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCU 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCU 2</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCU 3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCU 4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCU 5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force wide activity in direct</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>operational support of BCUs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads policing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ CID</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custody management</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and Airwave</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Force wide activity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resources</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional standards</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information systems</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>239</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Police Reform Taskforce research
Model 5: a Serious Crime Force, with the potential evolution towards smaller local forces

As forces increasingly co-operate to share protective and administrative services, and BCUs gain financial and management autonomy, a new structure will evolve which increasingly reflects the delivery of key policing services in a national framework. The new counter-terrorist hubs which, with national impetus, resources and command have been added to existing forces in three cities, are already effectively supra-force organisations.

The gap in protective services, and the increasing sophistication and mobility of serious and organised crime, require a stronger response. SOCA is currently an agency, not a force; its focus is on disruption and its attention is on internationally linked serious crime. It cannot close the gap in protective services in its current form.

A national Serious Crime Force could assume responsibilities for most of the protective services currently delivered by the 43 forces, in particular serious and organised crime and major crime. The SCF could also either lead or support major incidents, civil contingencies and major public order incidents. It would be constituted with a large pool of officers who could be sent into any area needing assistance with a major incident or crime. All cross-border and organised criminality would be dealt with by the national force, which would incorporate SOCA. Counter-terrorism could either be handled within the SCF or be dealt with by a separate counter-terrorist force or agency.

The creation of SOCA already underlines the need to ensure information exchanges, communication and co-operation between a national policing agency and local forces. Intelligence that thwarts terrorist plots often comes from police officers on the ground. As the Government stated in its draft “vision” for policing:

“Delivering this vision will mean different things at different levels of the Police Service – at neighbourhood, BCU, force, national and international level. But in describing success at these levels, we do not envisage five different Police Services operating independently: these are different levels of one service, each of which is dependent on the others, and where information and intelligence needs to flow freely between the levels. Success at the national level has its roots in neighbourhood policing, and vice versa.”

If level 1 policing were separated from level 2 and 3, it would be very important indeed that strong information sharing and co-ordination arrangements were put in place to ensure that a cultural divide did not appear – a problem that exists between the FBI and local police forces in the US. A key factor would be to ensure that career structures allowed, and indeed required,

personnel to move between national and local organisations – something which does not happen in the US.

The Conservative Party has already proposed a national border police force, which could form part of the SCF. The Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence Police could either be combined into a single force to protect national infrastructure or become part of the SCF.

As mentioned above, the Central Motorway Police Group, which patrols the motorways of the West Midlands, West Mercia, Staffordshire and Warwickshire force areas, shows that highways policing can already cross force borders. Highways policing could either continue to be conducted by individual forces, or in more collaborative arrangements such as the Central Motorway Patrol Group, or be combined into a separate national force which included the current British Transport Police (BTP), or form part of the SCF.

A potential evolutionary path towards smaller local forces. The effect of creating a SCF, together with increasing autonomy for the BCUs, would be to highlight what is left at force level. Already about 60 per cent of resources for front-line policing is spent directly in BCUs. Forces would be left with activity such as HR, corporate development, professional standards, finance and facilities management. These functions could either be devolved or handled through national or shared organisations (e.g. payroll).

Larger cities would continue to need a city-wide force entity, but in some areas such as a town or county with a strong geographical and community identity, aligned with local government boundaries, there may be demand for the creation of a smaller force. The clear alignment of force and local authority areas would enable more visible, accountable and powerful partnerships to be created in the fight against crime.

We would not prescribe the break-up of the 43 existing forces. We will consult on whether an evolutionary path towards some smaller forces is practical and desirable. If it is, we will consider a procedure to enable the public to apply for the creation of a smaller force in their area. We envisage that the change would be triggered by local authority application. The application would then need to be subject to the Home Secretary’s approval, after consultation with the new Inspectorate (see Chapter 7), because he must retain national responsibility for ensuring efficient and effective structures to deliver policing. Finally, the local population would have to approve the change in a referendum. The minimum size of a force would be one BCU.

In the United States, local mayors have been able to set up small new police departments, seceding from county forces and re-establishing community ownership of policing. Though we would certainly not envisage such a small force, one such new department in a California town

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166 The CMPG has its own premises in Birmingham. It is made up of 199 police officers and 20 support staff and is responsible for patrolling 630 miles of motorway stretching from Cheshire on the M6 to the Welsh borders on the M50.
of just 14,000 people, has the motto “no call too small.” The chief himself can be emailed. Another US police chief explained: “The small communities want more control than they are getting from the large countywide departments. If there is an abandoned car ... people want to be able to call the chief himself and make sure something gets done. It’s about quality of life.”

The problems of small forces highlighted by the Royal Commission in the 1960s would not occur today. The issue of corruption has largely been dealt with through better governance and public scrutiny. Efficiency would not be a problem because there would be structures in place for shared procurement, payroll and other functions on a larger scale.

The attraction of the smaller force model is that it would strongly enhance community policing, while the Serious Crime Force could ensure a strong national focus on the fight against serious crime. In a regional or national structure, local commanders could gain only limited autonomy – ultimately they would have only tactical command because they would not control all their resources and officers. Chief constables ultimately run forces and take the strategic decisions about priorities and resource deployment. In smaller forces, local commanders would have complete control over the officers in their force and would be able to deploy them strategically as they see fit. Smaller forces would more closely identify with their communities and be responsive to their concerns.

If smaller forces evolved, accountability arrangements would have to be adapted. These issues are discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 4 - key findings

STRUCTURAL REFORMS ARE NEEDED

If the police are to meet the two challenges of responding to the threat of serious and organised crime and of developing and sustaining community policing their structure must be reformed.

The current structure is not viable. It does not equip forces to collaborate effectively to improve protective services, nor does it ensure that community policing will be delivered and sustained.

Regional forces, favoured by the Government, would be too far removed from the public, and ultimately lead to centralisation and a loss of local accountability.

167 “New police forces can fill gaps in coverage (and gaps in municipal budgets)”, New York Times, 7 August 2006.
A national force would have the same weaknesses as regional forces, potentially delivering protective services at the expense of community policing.

TWO OPTIONS FOR REFORM

There are two options for force structure in England and Wales which would provide effective protective services as well as delivering community policing:

1. Approximately 43 forces with stronger local accountability matched with effective leadership from the centre to drive collaboration.

2. Approximately 43 forces with stronger local accountability, focusing principally on level 1 crime, with a new Serious Crime Force (SCF), answering to the Home Secretary, assuming responsibilities for most of the protective services currently delivered by the 43 forces, in particular serious and organised crime and major crime. We will consult as to whether an evolutionary path towards smaller local forces is practical and desirable.
Chapter 5: A professional workforce

If the police service is to meet today’s challenges it will require a workforce that is flexible, highly skilled, well motivated, fairly paid and representative of the population it serves. Workforce reform, a new focus on training and leadership, easier entry for talented individuals, and greater flexibility for police managers will all form a key part of the new police agenda.

New challenges

Technological change has greatly increased both the opportunities for successful policing and the range of skills required by the police. ICT presents the police with exciting opportunities to share data and intelligence far more effectively, but also raises technical and managerial issues. New technologies are vital weapons in the fight against crime, but require a whole new range of skills outside traditional policing competencies.

If police forces are to make the most of these opportunities and meet today’s challenges successfully, they will need highly professional, diverse workforces with multiple skills. As a modern service, the police workforce needs to be flexible, highly skilled, well motivated, fairly remunerated and representative. However, current workforce practices hold the police back. An ACPO document has argued that:

“There is a wealth of evidence from previous reports that despite the excellence of the majority of individual officers and staff, the police workforce model is in many respects obsolete with inefficient and restrictive practices causing waste and suppressing latent capacity.”

The police workforce model is in need of reform. A key goal should be to enhance the ability of police chiefs to manage their workforces. Like all managers, police chiefs need the flexibility and discretion to enable to them to innovate and ensure that their organisation can meet local needs.

A flexible workforce

Overtime. Overtime is designed to provide the police with a flexible workforce, and senior officers often argue that overtime is a useful management tool. It allows forces to call on additional manpower to meet contingencies and means that if a particular officer is needed to work on a case, for example the arresting officer, they can do so even if their shift is coming to an end. However, a Treasury document estimates that £250 million could be saved through

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169 See David Cameron’s lecture to the Police Foundation, 10 July 2006.
better overtime and sick pay management.\textsuperscript{170} David Cameron has said that overtime payments should be reduced in return for higher basic salaries.\textsuperscript{171} This could increase the flexibility of the police and make budget planning easier. It is essential that police managers retain the ability to deploy additional officers outside their shifts if necessary. Any review of overtime must be evaluated in terms of operational effectiveness and recruitment and retention, as well as efficiency.

**Pay flexibility.** At present pay scales relate to specific ranks. The Sheehy Report correctly argued that it is important for officers to be able to progress within ranks, not just between them. An excellent constable may not necessarily make a good sergeant, but currently moving up the ranks is the only way for officers to progress their career and increase their wages. The recent Police Federation study into 24/7 response teams highlighted the fact that experienced officers are often placed in specialised units, leaving difficult front-line policing to be dealt with and managed by the least experienced, least trained and least supervised teams.\textsuperscript{172} This leads to a situation where good officers become more remote from the public as they are promoted to managerial positions.

In the recent pay dispute the staff side made a submission to the Police Negotiation Board outlining proposals to create a new advanced constables’ pay threshold which gives access to a payment above the current maximum salary for constables.

\begin{quote}
“The payment would be dependent on the acquisition of appropriate accredited qualifications as well as appointment to a post designated by the force as requiring that level of competence. Continuing access to the higher level of pay would be dependent on continued employment in such a role.”\textsuperscript{173}
\end{quote}

This would enable excellent constables to remain on the beat and develop their careers without having to move into management positions. A similar mechanism already exists in teaching, the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) pay grade:

\begin{quote}
“The AST grade offers excellent classroom teachers the opportunity to continue teaching and use their skills to enhance the performance of other teachers. The pay spine reflects the fact that the grade is an alternative career path to taking up a leadership or management post.”\textsuperscript{174}
\end{quote}

By gaining accredited skills, police men and women would be able to apply for posts with more responsibilities that attract higher pay. This would align pay to ability and responsibility rather

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{170} HM Treasury, Delivering a step change in police productivity, October 2006, p.1.\textsuperscript{171} Speech in Portsmouth, 9 September 2005.\textsuperscript{172} Michael Chatterton and Emma Bingham, 24/7: Response Policing in the Modern Police Organisation – Views from the Frontline, (Police Federation, October 2006).\textsuperscript{173} Official Side paper for the PNB, Rewarding Skills and Performance, 2006.\textsuperscript{174} “Understanding Teacher's pay” www.teachernet.gov.uk.
\end{flushleft}
than time served. Such a pay scale would improve motivation and would ensure that the most talented officers were able to progress. Creating a higher pay scale for a constable would enable excellent constables to develop their career without moving them further away from the public. This would ensure that experience and expertise are retained on the front line.

A new rank of senior constable should be created that would be more demanding and better paid than the rank of constable. It should be open to officers who have acquired the accredited skills necessary to deal with the additional responsibilities. Discretion needs to be returned to the police at all ranks and one way to do this without risk would be to return discretion on the basis of experience and ability. In the future senior constables could be given more powers and discretion where appropriate.

**Modern employment contracts.** Currently ACPO ranks (deputy and assistant chief constables, and chief constables and their London equivalents) are all appointed on fixed-term appointments (FTAs). FTAs allow for a periodic two-way review of performance and make it easy to remove an underperforming chief and reward one who is doing well. Superintendents are not currently on FTAs but they do have elements of performance-related pay. There is strong public support for putting police chiefs on performance related contracts. In a recent ICM survey, 58 per cent of the public agreed with the idea, while only 38 per cent disagreed.\(^{175}\) If more power is to be devolved to the BCU level, FTAs should be extended to BCU commanders so that they can be held to account for their performance and rewarded for successes. We do not propose to pursue the Sheehy report’s recommendation of moving from tenure to FTAs for all ranks\(^ {176}\) since we accept the concern that this could harm recruitment and retention.

**The pension cliff edge.** David Cameron has singled out the problem of the pension cliff edge at 30 years’ service. Even if an officer would be better off leaving the force, they have a huge incentive to stay for the full 30 years in order to get their full pension. Similarly, a good officer who has reached 30 years of service and still has much to offer the force, has little financial incentive to stay on. There is concern that many senior officers in their fifties who could still offer many years of service are retiring after 30 years. People need to be able to leave and join the force at the right time and a more staggered pension scheme would facilitate this. Our final report will evaluate attempts to make the police pension system less rigid and propose any necessary further reform.

Over the next five years a large proportion of the police force will complete 30 years of service and retire. This will see the police lose a number of experienced officers simultaneously. A more flexible pension system would avoid this.

**Future of the omnicompetent officer.** Traditionally constables have been trained to be competent in all areas of policing and to be able to deal with all types of crime. Today the police

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175 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
are expected to deal with everything from truancy to terrorism, and policing now requires a far wider range of skills and competencies. In the words of Sir Ian Blair:

“New forms of crime and new legislation have combined to create a range of police tasks that simply did not exist 20 years ago. As well as coping with an increasingly complex criminal justice system, the police have to deal with child protection, counter-terrorism, drug trafficking, people smuggling and so on.”

The increasing variety of skills policing requires has led ACPO to argue that the model of the omnicompetent constable is no longer sustainable. It is impossible for a constable to be up to date with the full range of skills and techniques used by the police; instead growing specialisation and differentiation is required. Furthermore, it is unnecessary to employ sworn officers to do administrative tasks.

In Chapter 6 we explain how workforce modernisation and an extended police family could change the make-up of forces and lift the burden from officers. These reforms move away from the one dimensional relationship between police officers and police staff to “a richer and wider team approach to policing, applying the requisite and appropriate skills and powers to the task in hand.” Instead of seeking to skill every constable to a high level in every discipline, the police should skill all constables to a minimum standard in key areas, but beyond this introduce increasing specialisation among officers and staff. Yet, in spite of the changing shape of modern policing, many forces are showing little appetite for workforce modernisation – suggesting an attachment to a notion of omnicompetence in their officers that is unrealistic if future demands are to be met.

A highly skilled workforce

**Lower and middle ranks.** Centrex, the Central Police Training and Development Authority, is soon to be incorporated into the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and it is likely that police training will change in the near future. A survey by the Police Federation found that, discounting initial training, less than half of officers were “at least fairly satisfied with the additional ongoing training available to them to equip them for the needs of modern policing.”

While there is a broad national framework, much police training is an operational matter which is determined and purchased by chief officers. For example, some forces decide to put all their constables through the Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) to level 1, while others opt to use their budgets to train their detectives up to PIP level 2 and not to train their constables.

179 Ibid.
While chief officers should continue to be allowed discretion over training, minimum national standards should be set and training courses of a sufficient standard must be available.

With regard to assessment and promotion there are serious concerns surrounding the OSPRE examinations that determine promotion in the police force. Many do not consider the role play examination in OSPRE 2 to be a relevant assessment and there are now trials where OSPRE 2 is replaced by on-the-job assessment. Martin Tiplady, Director of Human Resources at the Met, has argued that OSPRE 2 is neither cost-effective nor relevant. It is sensible to keep the technical examination in OSPRE 1 but OSPRE 2 should be replaced, possibly by an in-force selection process. As the OSPRE procedure is currently under review we will await the results of the trials before coming to any firmer conclusions.

**Police leaders.** There are concerns that current training and recruitment are unsatisfactory, particularly at management level. In 2002-03, 94 per cent of police training was delivered to constables and sergeants, with only 1.5 per cent being delivered to superintendents and above. While this is roughly in line with the proportion of each rank in the force, it is arguable that higher ranks need more training as officers have little experience of management. In theory it is possible to progress from constable to superintendent without any additional formal training. A survey by the Police Federation found that half of inspectors, the first rung on the management ladder, had had no formal management training on promotion.

As policing is required to tackle ever more complex and large-scale challenges in the 21st century, the need to have a clear strategy for senior officer leadership development becomes ever more pressing. Police in executive roles are neither given the career development nor staff training that leaders in other public services, at home and abroad, have come to expect. Police leadership has for too long been achieved by an ad hoc and irregular process. As two veteran police trainers, Rod Adam and Peter Villiers, point out: “Despite attempts at Bramshill [the police staff college in Hampshire], there is still no appropriate, robust, inspiring and enduring model of leadership for the Police. The resulting philosophy is incomplete and the doctrine of leadership is confined to broad principles.”

Policing reforms in the US have often been achieved because senior officers are instructed not just in principles and theories but also substantially in methodology to achieve the best. British Army officers are taught “how to lead” at Sandhurst and then later, on the Advanced Command Staff Course, “what their leadership should achieve”. As police officers proceed to a more executive level, a combination of guidance, theory and doctrine of leadership should be part of

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181 Objective Structured Performance Related Exams. OSPRE is divided into two sections, OSPRE 1 which is a technical written exam testing officers understanding of the law and procedure, and OSPRE 2 which is an assessed role play. For further information of OSPRE see www.centrex.police.uk.
185 Rod Adam and Peter Villiers, Police Leadership in the 21st Century, 2003c.
their career development. The police leadership academy at Bramshill attempts this in a minor way using a number of short, modular courses, but fails to offer students clear procedures and methods to assist them in leadership, preferring to set out options. This is in stark contrast to the FBI and the US police.

The recommendations set out in the May 2003 project report of the Police Leadership Development Board should be built on by enhancing senior officer training and selection at Bramshill. In parallel, and in line with the report, career planning for senior officers will need to be put on a more centralised footing to ensure that good leadership is identified early and matched to suitable vacancies. The police currently have no adequate method of preparing and selecting the middle ranks for higher office in a way that brings to the fore leadership and strategic management. The President of the Police Superintendents’ Association told his conference that “there is precious little training” for superintendents even though they are “expected to take on some of the most difficult roles in the service.” For decades the British Armed Forces have used staff colleges as a proper part of the career development structure within their services while at the same time using the assessment and testing capability of the colleges to ensure that skills are matched to force needs. Today’s police could greatly benefit from a similar process.

When officers reach ACPO rank they should join a national cadre of senior officers who can be deployed across forces and responsibilities. Consideration should also be given to extending that cadre to superintendents so that BCU commanders are included.

Direct entry. One way to increase the level and range of skills in the police force would be to allow direct entry from other professions. Currently the need to serve two years as a probationer at the bottom of the pay scale is a high barrier to entry to the police for many people. Other private and public organisations benefit greatly from people coming into their organisations from outside and there is a strong case for allowing talented managers from outside the police service to enter at the senior manager level. A draft ACPO document has argued forcefully that a single entry point for all applicants prevents large sections of the community from applying to the police:

“The police service has inflexible recruitment practices preventing direct entry into higher levels or specialised areas regardless of proven skills and expertise. Such structures and inflexible pension provisions consequently focus police constable recruitment on the pool of people with potential rather than attracting a significant proportion with proven skills and knowledge. The service currently recruits, trains and rewards all recruits alike, whether they are mature, highly paid, skilled and experienced fraud investigators or community development managers, or a 19 year old school leaver. Two year probationary

186 “Police Leadership Development Board, Getting the Best Leaders to take on the most Demanding Challenges” 2003.
periods and residential training courses create further barriers to recruiting significant proportions of the community.”\textsuperscript{188}

Many police officers argue that first-hand experience of police work is essential for operational command. One common objection to direct entry is that police will not be willing to put their lives at risk on the basis of an order made by someone who has never been in that position. Also, several police forces do employ outside experts as senior managers without making them sworn officers.

Rick Naylor has said that the police should have an open mind about direct entry and that if somebody has relevant skills and competencies they could join the police at a level above probationer provided they were given the necessary training and had the knowledge needed for their job.\textsuperscript{189} As one senior officer told us, “You don’t have to have shaken hands with door knobs at 2a.m. to be able to run a firearms incident strategically.”

The Civil Nuclear Constabulary is already considering the appointment of a civilian chief constable to replace their retired chief. If the post is awarded to a non-police officer they will be sworn in as a constable.\textsuperscript{190} While the Civil Nuclear Constabulary is a specialist force that has a much narrower range of duties than the 43 police forces in England and Wales, the appointment of civilian chief officer would still set an important precedent.

Direct entry would not allow inappropriately experienced managers to move straight into senior police positions. People who enter the force at a higher level must have relevant skills and experience and prove that they qualified for the position they are applying for. For example the Civil Nuclear Constabulary is only considering non-police candidates for chief constable with three years’ board level experience. The post could also go to someone with particularly relevant experience in the nuclear industry. Mike Bowron, the Commissioner of the City of London Police, hopes that private sector financial specialists will be seconded to a new national fraud intelligence centre his force plan to set up.\textsuperscript{191} Instead of lowering standards, direct entry should raise them by increasing the number of talented and qualified people who apply to the police. It will also allow the recruitment of experts in particular specialised fields. As the head of the Met’s small Arts and Antiques Unit has explained: “You can train an arts graduate to be a police officer, but training a police officer to be an art expert is another matter.”\textsuperscript{192}

\textsuperscript{188} Association of Chief Police Officers, Draft ACPO vision for workforce modernisation: the missing component of police reform, 12 October 2005.
\textsuperscript{189} Question Time, debate at the Police Superintendents’ Association Conference, 21 September 2006.
\textsuperscript{190} Police Review, 9 February 2007.
\textsuperscript{191} “Police chief seeks business help on fraud”, Financial Times, 26 February 2007.
\textsuperscript{192} “Privatised police arrive on the street”, The First Post, November 27, 2006.
Two years of probation, right at the very bottom of the pay scale, is unnecessary for an experienced professional with skills and qualifications in another sector. PCSOs and Special Constables who go on to join the police are required to undertake this probationary term even though they have already been trained and, in the case of Specials, have exercised fully warranted powers. The requirement to serve two years as a probationer means that very few professionals join the police later in life. This is an unnecessary loss for the service, and it must be addressed.

**Graduate fast tracking.** The complexity and demands of modern policing have created a greater need for graduate recruits to the police. Although the exact percentage of graduate recruits is hard to calculate, studies have suggested that the figure is between 10 per cent and 16 per cent with the proportion of graduate recruits falling since 1995 (with the exception of 1999-2000). This might be caused by the police’s poor track record in fast tracking graduates. The Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates was introduced in 1962, but the Home Office target for participants to take seven years from graduation to chief inspector was not met for 30 years, in which time over 1,000 officers attended the fast track course. In 2002 the Accelerated Promotion Scheme for Graduates was replaced with the High Potential Development (HPD) Scheme. The Scheme was also open to non-graduates who passed the selection criteria and was designed to provide candidates with additional training to help them progress through the ranks.

The HPD scheme is currently under review by the Home Office, who have said that as well as attracting, identifying and developing people with exceptional talent, the Scheme should do more to provide development opportunities for a wider group of people. Any replacement should allow officers destined for leadership positions to progress quickly through the ranks so that they can develop policing and leadership skills earlier in their careers, and so that talented people can be attracted to the service.

**A well motivated workforce**

**Rewarding skills and performance.** One of the greatest problems with police pay is that it is bound to seniority. ACPO’s draft vision for workforce modernisation criticises the current pay structure for being outdated:

“Historic and divisive nationally agreed reward structures recompense longevity, rank and warranted status. These structures prevent rewards being based on the demands of the role, skills and abilities of the individual, performance delivery or regional recruitment market focus. With no incentive to specialise or professionalise, career ambition is directed narrowly to promotion and leadership roles rather than recognising development

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194 Ibid. p.25.
195 Home Office, Developing Future Leaders: Revising the HPD Scheme, December 2006.
of outstanding or advanced frontline staff. This has a tendency to pull high skill officers out of where they excel, reducing continuity in key roles such as neighbourhood policing.\textsuperscript{196}

The Government’s paper \textit{Rewarding Skills and Performance} notes that more needs to be done to link pay to performance and ability.\textsuperscript{197} It is important to note that performance-related pay in this sense should not entail piecework. Pay cannot be determined by crude targets such as the number of arrests made or sanction detection rates. It would be wrong and counterproductive to incentivise the police in a similar way to traffic wardens. But the principle of linking pay to performance is accepted by many officers. According to the most recent Police Federation survey, 41 per cent of federated ranks thought that appraisal of personal performance should have an important or very important influence on pay and only 4.8 per cent thought it should have no influence. Over half of respondents felt the acquisition of skills should be an important or very important determinant of pay.\textsuperscript{198}

A more subtle system is needed, linking officer pay to ability and performance. The suggestion favoured by \textit{Rewarding Skills and Performance} was to link pay to acquiring accredited skills and to the difficulty of a particular post. This would mean that an officer who worked long unsocial hours in a high crime area could be paid more than one who worked during the day in a pleasant community. Special Priority Payments attempted to implement this principle in a crude and divisive way and proved very unpopular. However, a more flexible and graduated scheme could match the work police do more closely, to the pay they receive. Greater flexibilities along these lines would also mean that forces would be able to employ people who were only willing to work particular hours, because they could pay them less. Another option would be to reward teams, rather than individuals, for their performance.

One radical idea that has been put to us would be to link pay to the acquisition of accredited skills and then let officers pay for part of, or even all, of their own training. This would motivate officers to improve their skills and qualifications themselves and would increase the professionalism of the workforce. However it is essential that any training and qualifications help officers to deliver a better service to the public and are not simply boxes to be ticked.

\textbf{Dealing with poor performance.} In any workforce, while the majority can be hardworking, dedicated and motivated, those who are not can have a disproportionate effect on the organisation’s performance. It is therefore important that an officer whose performance is unacceptably poor can be removed. As David Cameron has said, “once a police officer has completed two years of probation and become a full constable, he or she is almost unsackable. It

\textsuperscript{196} Association of Chief Police Officers, Draft ACPO vision for workforce modernisation: the missing component of police reform, 12 October 2005.  
\textsuperscript{197} Official Side paper for the PNB, Rewarding Skills and Performance, 2006.  
\textsuperscript{198} Police Federation of England and Wales, Survey of members 2006 top line report, 2006.
is bad for the public and bad for their colleagues that a simpler route is not available."¹⁹⁹ It is clearly a huge problem if an unmotivated officer cannot be removed for poor performance.

In spite of several recent changes, the dismissal process remains convoluted. Recently two detectives from Cheshire Constabulary were finally dismissed for stealing money seized in a drugs raid after a three-year, £1 million inquiry.²⁰⁰ Police tribunals are often conducted in a quasi-judicial adversarial manner not dissimilar from a military court martial, and often with a higher burden of proof than is reasonable. One chief constable has joked that it is easier to prove a murder than it is to prove that an officer is incompetent. A symptom of this is that lawyers are involved at each stage of the disciplinary process. In a review of police disciplinary arrangements, Bill Taylor recommended that “the involvement of lawyers should be minimised. They should retain a role at appeal stage and at other limited points.”²⁰¹ The Government is currently implementing recommendations of the Taylor review. It is essential that the mechanism for disciplining officers is proportionate, timely, transparent, fair and cost-effective. If after current changes have bedded in the mechanism still does not achieve these goals, further reform will be necessary.

A fairly paid workforce

As David Cameron has said:

“Police officers are among the bravest people in our country. They put their own safety – and often their lives – at risk in order to protect the public. So it is right that their terms of employment reflect their distinctive contribution to the public good. But a modern Conservative party should never let respect for the forces of law and order stop us asking tough questions.”²⁰²

Pay structures. The Government has recently commissioned a review of police pay by Sir Clive Booth, who is due to deliver his final conclusions in the autumn (see Box 5.1). The first part of Sir Clive’s review focused only on next year’s pay settlement, while the second and more comprehensive part will consider the whole police pay negotiating system. Wages make up approximately 80 per cent of the police budget and it is essential that future pay increases are affordable. However, any settlement should consider the many unique features of police work, chief amongst these being that the police do not have the right to strike. Furthermore, negotiations should be conducted fairly – unlike the Government’s approach last year. The first part of Sir Clive’s review recommended a new index which links pay to the public rather than private sector, as well as increased flexibilities. The Government is currently considering these recommendations.

¹⁹⁹ Speech in Portsmouth, 9 September 2005.
²⁰⁰ “Two detectives sacked after three-year, £1m inquiry”, The Times, 4 January 2007.
²⁰² Speech in Portsmouth, 9 September 2005.
If forces become increasingly localised, the question arises whether pay should be determined with more local focus. Two reforms should be considered. A national pay spine with variations at each rank could be set, allowing forces either to adopt it or opt out of it and set their own pay structures. The Met is very keen to set its own pay, but many other forces feel that they lack the size and expertise to conduct full pay negotiations. With a national pay spine, any force could provide their own pay negotiating mechanisms in-house or contract out the handling of pay settlements. Forces could even join together to provide their own pay negotiating mechanisms collectively. However, each force would always have the option to remain in the national system. An alternative is for the national pay structure to remain, but only to set basic wages, with other allowances, conditions and payments being set at force level. This would have the benefit of maintaining a national pay uprating mechanism while also giving forces more flexibility.

The potential for greater flexibility for forces in setting pay should take into account the current impact on forces around London which have lost officers to the Met attracted by the higher pay it provides.

Box 5.1 The police pay review

Police pay for the whole of the United Kingdom has been set centrally since 1919. In the 1970s low police pay had resulted in severe recruitment and retention difficulties, leading the Government to set up a Committee of Inquiry on the Police, chaired by Lord Edmund-Davies. In 1978 Edmund-Davies delivered his report. It recommended the creation of a Police Negotiating Board (PNB), made up of the staff side (Police Federation and the Police Superintendents’ Association), the official side (government, chief constables and police authorities) and an independent chairman, to bargain pay increases nationally. The police were offered initial pay rises and their pay was put on an escalator to ensure that, despite their lack of a right to strike, police wages would rise in line with other professions.

Since 1979 the PNB has been increased police pay each September in line with median private sector wages. However, last year, for the first time since the creation of the PNB, the Official Side did not agree to the indexed increase. In April 2006 the official side indicated that they were considering changing the index formula but promised that “until alternative arrangements were negotiated, all current pay uprating arrangements would be honoured.”

However, on 20 June, amid Home Office financial pressures, the Official Side failed to agree the annual indexed increase, which in 2006 was 3 per cent, and gave no reasons for the delay in agreeing the increase. Ten days later the Official Side offered 2.2 per cent which was rejected by the staff side. In October the process went to the
Police Arbitration Tribunal (PAT) which ruled in favour of the staff side and recommended that they be awarded a 3 per cent increase.

The PAT delivered its verdict on 6 November and was critical of the conduct of the Government in the negotiation process:

"In summing up, we are of the view that there has been a failure in the process through which the Official Side has thus far sought to bring about change to the pay system. The indexation arrangements have been in place for twenty seven years. In our view it is not appropriate in the context of the police service to set aside such a long standing mechanism in the present year in the absence of full negotiations over possible alternatives and instead offer a one-off pay settlement at a lower level so late in the day."

The Home Secretary accepted the PAT’s verdict and awarded the police a pay rise of 3 per cent. However, on 16 November Tony McNulty, the Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety, announced a review of the way police pay is determined to be undertaken by Sir Clive Booth.

On 21 February 2007 Sir Clive published the findings of the first part of his review, which considered pay arrangements for 2007. The review suggested that indexation should be retained for 2007 but using a public sector facing index. This index would link police pay to the median increase in public sector wages rather than private sector wages.

Sir Clive also recommended that this uprating should not necessarily apply to all areas of the service evenly. Instead the index “should be regarded as producing a ‘pot’ of money that can be applied differentially according to the needs of the service, including modernisation.”

In a Written Ministerial Statement the Police Minister, Tony McNulty welcomed the report’s recommendations and said he would “be considering them very carefully and consulting with policing stakeholders on them.” However, both the Police Federation and the Police Superintendents’ Association have signalled that they will resist the proposed changes.

The second part of Sir Clive’s review, which is due to be published in the autumn of 2007, has a much wider remit:

“To review the effectiveness of the negotiating machinery for the police, including the Police Negotiating Board and the Police Staff Council, and make
recommendations for how police pay and other conditions of service should be 
determined. The review must consider the option of a pay review body for police 
pay and consider the impact of any proposal for determining police officer pay, on 
the negotiating machinery for police officers.”

A leader in the Times supported the review’s findings:

“There is no question that law enforcement personnel deserve a special hearing. 
They risk their lives to protect us. By modern standards, however, the job security, 
overtime opportunities, early retirement options and, above all, pension rights 
already enjoyed by the police constitute compensation enough. These are broadly 
comparable to the pay and benefits enjoyed by the Armed Forces, who also may 
not strike – but who, unlike the police, do not have the compromise option of 
work-to-rule if dissatisfied with their lot. The Police Federation has proved a 
resourceful defender of its members’ interests, but when pressure rightly builds 
for a more efficient public service, the police cannot be a law unto themselves.”

Sources: Sir Clive Booth, Fair Pay for Police Officers: The First Part of a Review of 
Police Officer Pay Arrangements, February 2007; Tony McNulty, “Police Pay”, Written 
Ministerial Statement, Hansard 16 November 2006 Column 5WS; Tony McNulty, 
51WS; Police could swap universal pay rise for tailored awards, The Times, 22 
February 2007; Decision of the Police Arbitration Tribunal, Annual Pay Award, 
November 2006; “A Policeman’s lot”, The Times, 22 February 2007; Police Negotiating 
Board Staff Side, Submission to the Police Arbitration Tribunal, October 2006.

Box 5.2 Police pay in England and Wales and other countries

In England and Wales the starting salary for a PCSO is £16,280, rising to £18,713 
after five years. A PCSO in central London starts on £18,836, rising to £21,269. The 
starting wage for a constable is £21,009 and after completion of two years’ training 
this goes up to £23,454. Sergeants earn £32,985 on promotion, and this can rise up 
to £37,071.

The pay scale for inspectors ranges from £42,264 for a newly promoted inspector to 
£45,843 for an inspector with three completed years of service in rank. Chief 
inspectors earn £46,779 on promotion. All officers in London receive an additional 
London weighting.
Superintendents earn between £56,274 and £68,571, while chief superintendents earn between £67,200 and £71,031. Chief constables earn between £114,735 and £163,908 depending on the size of their force. The chief constable of the PSNI earns £174,834 and the Commissioner of the Met earns £234,939.

In New York the starting salary with the NYPD is $25,100 which rises to $32,700 after graduation and $59,588 after 5½ years. Detectives earn $88,000, sergeants $91,000 and Lieutenants $105,000. However, low starting age levels have been cited as a reason why NYPD are currently struggling to meet their recruitment targets.

In France the Gendarmemerie Nationale (GN) are paid starting wages of 15,240 euros net of tax which may increase to 33,840 euros after 25 years of service. The Police Nationale (PN) are responsible for urban areas and are better paid than the GN. Although exact salaries vary by area, a typical PN can earn in the region of 19,770 euros net of tax after 12 months and 33,528 euros after two years. France also has approximately 20,000 municipal police (data is not collected centrally on municipal police which makes exact their numbers difficult to determine) employed by local mayors who are also cheaper than the PN but have fewer powers.

German national police are paid a starting wage of 22,800 euros, although individual federal states have some discretion to alter this amount. In New Zealand the starting wage for a police officer is NZ$ 45,272 (approximately £15,800).

**Injury pensions.** Police injury pensions were regarded as particularly wasteful and expensive and the Government has recently reformed them. An injured officer’s pension is determined by their length of service, their final pensionable salary, and their loss of earning capacity as a result of their injury. Previously this loss of earning capacity would have been measured against police wages, but Government guidance now suggests that once an injured officer reaches compulsory retirement age (CRA) it is “no longer appropriate to use the former officer’s police pay scale as the basis for his or her pre-injury earning capacity.” Instead the guidance recommends “that the new basis for the person’s earning capacity, had there been no injury, should be the National Average Earnings (NAE) at the time of the review.”

The implication of this is that injured officers will receive substantially smaller injury pensions, with some more than £15,000 worse off a year. Public sector pensions need to be affordable and the Government’s argument that, once an officer reaches the age at which they would have retired in the absence of any injury police pay has no relevance to their loss of earning capacity, is correct. However, the way in which these changes have been implemented leaves much to be desired. Injured officers were under the impression that their awards would remain unchanged for life unless their medical conditions also changed. In the last session of Parliament Edward Garnier MP, then Shadow Minister for the Police, sponsored an EDM which expressed sympathy for these officers and noted that many of them felt they had been misled.

Forces have implemented the changes unevenly and many, including the Metropolitan Police Service, have refused retrospectively to apply the changes to injured officers who reached 65 before 1 April 2006. Subsequently a reform that was intended to “ensure that former officers are treated in a consistent way across forces” has actually increased differences between forces. It would be preferable if all forces applied the changes in the same way the Met has done. It is important that the any system of injury pension is fair, well balanced and proportionate to the injuries an officer has suffered. The system needs to be well managed to ensure that all claims receive an appropriate response.

**Sick pay and restricted duties.** As noted above, the Treasury estimates that £250 million could be saved through better overtime and sick pay management. The Met alone has nearly 2,000 officers on recuperative or restricted duties on full pay. These officers often work alongside civilian colleagues on much lower pay doing the same work. Recent figures revealed by a Freedom of Information Act request by the *Daily Mail* expose the extent to which officers are on restricted duties. In England and Wales 8,101 officers are being paid a full-time salary while on restricted duties. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair, has highlighted this as a problem and warned that in some cases officers on restricted duties are working as little as an hour a day. The wage bill of these officers, who account for almost 6 per cent of the total police force, is £243 million a year. This is excluding the sick pay bill which

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203 Home Office Circular 46/2004 Annex C.
these officers receive while they are off work. Further, a Freedom of Information request by the 
News of the World revealed that 1,131 officers are off work with stress every day.\(^{205}\)

The Sheehy report recommended that an open-ended entitlement to sick pay should be ended and that sick leave on full pay should be restricted to a period of six months with a further six months on half-pay (although these periods could be extended at the discretion of chief constables). This is a proposal that should be reconsidered, although it is possible that tighter management by forces, in part driven by financial constraints, will ensure sick pay is better managed.

The large numbers of officers on restricted duties reflect the Government’s desire to crack down on the number of medical retirements from the police. One former chief constable of West Yorkshire has written that when he took charge of the force it was accepted that officers might seek early retirement on quite spurious grounds because it was seen as “part of the system”.\(^{206}\) Improvements in the management of medical retirements have been made. In 1997-98 over 1,800 officers retired on medical grounds, accounting for almost 38 per cent of total police retirements. In 1999-00 this figure had dropped to 1,200 or 31 per cent.\(^{207}\) By 2004-05 there were only 405 medical retirements.\(^{208}\)

It seems that the Government’s drive to cut the number of medical retirements has been achieved not by better management and medical assessment, but by placing more officers on restricted duties. As the Chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, Jan Berry, has said:

> “Many officers are in a catch-22, where they wish to return to full-time duties but are prevented from doing so due to long-term illness. The logic would be to retire them on ill-health pensions but there is an underlying policy not to do so.”\(^{209}\)

While injured officers will have valuable skills and experience that the police should not lose, these skills are not being utilised by officers on restricted duties who perform the same functions as civilian staff. Police forces must manage sick pay and medical retirements more effectively to ensure both value for money and fair treatment for officers – and if necessary legislation should be amended to secure this.

**A representative workforce**

In the words of Sir Robert Peel “the police are the public and the public are the police.” The police rely on the consent of the public they serve and therefore it is vital that they are

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representative of the country as a whole. But this is not the case today since the police are made up predominantly of white males. While approximately 8.7 per cent of the population is non-white, only 3.7 per cent of police officers are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups, although this is a significant improvement on 2.9 per cent in 2003.

The need for the police to be more representative of the communities they serve was highlighted by the findings of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, chaired by Sir William McPherson. The inquiry found that institutional racism played a part in the flawed investigation by the Met of the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence by a gang of six white men. The unacceptable way the police treated Stephen Lawrence’s parents and the surviving victim Duwayne Brooks, as well as their failure to recognise the crime as racially motivated and their lack of urgency in the investigation, shocked many. The Lawrence Inquiry recommended several steps to be taken to address institutional racism in the police, and one of these was that “the Home Secretary and Police Authorities’ policing plans should include targets for recruitment, progression and retention of minority ethnic staff.”

However, last year a Home Office target for 7 per cent of police officers to be from ethnic minorities by 2009 was abandoned because it was it could not be attained. It was replaced by local targets aimed at ensuring that new recruits reflect the proportion of the BME population in each force area. Peter Fahy, the Chief Constable of Cheshire and ACPO lead on race and diversity, has said that on the basis of current trends it will take the police 17 years to be representative of the racial make-up of modern Britain. Mr Fahy feels that this is too long and has suggested that special measures must be considered to increase the proportion of ethnic minority police officers.

There are much higher proportions of ethnic minorities working as PCSOs (15.2 per cent BME), Specials (6.7 per cent BME), and police staff (6.2 per cent BME). Women are also better represented among PCSOs and Specials; as of March 2006 22 per cent of sworn officers were female, while the corresponding figure for PCSOs is 42 per cent and for Specials 32 per cent. One possible explanation for this is that PCSOs, Specials and civilian staff are not a full part of the police culture, and that it is the police culture which makes joining the force a less attractive option for women and ethnic minorities. Another explanation is that mistrust of the police in BME communities deters applications. There are also higher dropout rates for BME police recruits after their families and friends find out about the application; this does not happen to BME PCSO recruits.

The current policy is one of positive action, which targets recruitment at under-represented groups without altering selection criteria. This is distinct from both positive discrimination,

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which favours recruiting a minority candidate even if they are less able than other candidates, and affirmative action. Although definitions of affirmative action vary, the National Black Police Association defines it as an initiative where “when vacancies existed, people would be employed from the over-represented group, and the under-represented group at a pre-agreed ratio, to address the balance.” Many forces are currently pushing positive action to the limits and one force, Gloucestershire, was ordered to pay £2,500 to an applicant who had been randomly deselected because he was white.

Other forces have been able operate positive action without straying into positive discrimination. The Metropolitan Police Service has used positive action to achieve representative application rates. However, while almost 30 per cent of London’s population are BME, only 17 per cent the Met’s intake were. Through affirmative action the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) now recruits equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant officers, resulting in a dramatically more representative police force. But in England and Wales affirmative action, even for a limited period of time, would be highly controversial. Any form of positive discrimination would require a change in the law and risks increasing racial tensions. The police force must continue to become more representative, but the current approach is the right one.

Conclusion

These are undoubtedly challenging proposals for the police. But the results of them will be hugely in the interests of committed officers of all ranks. As David Cameron said in his Dalston speech: “There are many fine police officers in Britain, and senior officers of the highest calibre… I want to make the changes that will help them in their efforts to provide an effective, 21st century service.” And he set out his “offer” to the police: “You make the changes which will improve police performance… we will stop the centralisation, bureaucracy and political interference that gets in your way.”

214 National Black Police Association website, www.nbpa.co.uk.
216 Speech to the Dalston Youth Project, Hackney, 16 January 2006.
Chapter 5 - key findings

If police forces are to meet the challenges identified in Chapter 3, they will need workforces that are flexible, highly skilled, well motivated, fairly remunerated and representative. A key goal should be to enhance the ability of police chiefs to manage their workforces.

A FLEXIBLE WORKFORCE

In order to increase flexibility the balance between overtime and basic salary should be reviewed to ensure that police chiefs can call upon additional manpower when they need at an affordable cost. The police pension system should be more flexible in order to allow officers to join and leave the force at the right time.

A SKILLED WORKFORCE

After initial training satisfaction levels among the federated ranks for the training they receive are low. This situation must improve and while chief officers should continue to be allowed discretion over training, minimum national standards should be set and training courses of a sufficient standard need to be available. In addition the current promotion examination is not a relevant test of an officer’s ability and should be replaced.

A senior staff college similar to those in the Armed Forces could form a part of the career development structure and assess the capability of officers to match force and service needs. When officers reach ACPO rank they should join a national cadre of senior officers who can be deployed across forces and responsibilities.

A single point of entry to the police at the bottom of the pay scale dissuades professionals from outside the force from joining the police later in their careers. The police should allow experienced and skilled professionals to enter the force at a rank above constable, provided that they can demonstrate the necessary skills that that the police require.

The old-fashioned model of the omnicompetent officer should give way, through workforce modernisation and extending the police family, to forces consisting of teams with diverse specialist skills.

A MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

In order to improve motivation pay should reflect skills as well as seniority. A new...
rank of senior constable could be created in order to incentivise excellent officers to
develop their careers while remaining close to the public. In addition, teams could be
rewarded for their performance.

The mechanism for disciplining officers must be reviewed to ensure that it is fair,
proportionate, timely and effective. Fixed term employment contracts which already
exist in ACPO ranks should be introduced for BCU commanders.

A FAIRLY PAID WORKFORCE

Arrangements for police pay should continue to acknowledge their special status but
nevertheless be affordable. Injury pensions must be fair and proportionate, and sick
pay and restricted duties must be better managed.

A REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

The police operate by consent and if they are to continue to do so they must be
representative of modern Britain. Currently while approximately 8.7 per cent of the
population is non-white, only 3.3 per cent of police officers are from BME groups. The
police should continue to use positive action to recruit BME officers. Positive
discrimination or affirmative action would be counter-productive.
Chapter 6: Untying the police’s hands

The public wants the police to be crime-fighters, not form-writers. Yet, in spite of repeated Government promises to tackle excessive bureaucracy, police officers spend more time on paperwork than on patrol. This state of affairs could be changed by reducing paperwork, employing technology and modernising workforces to improve efficiency. Reducing central intervention and extending the police “family” will also help to free the police. “Summary justice” must not be an alternative to reducing police bureaucracy. Too often is leading to soft justice.

Part 1: Reducing the burden of bureaucracy

In 2001 a study by PA Consulting for the Home Office found that police officers were spending almost as much time in the police station (43.1 per cent of their time) as they are on the streets.\(^\text{217}\) For five hours a day, over 50 per cent of the officers on a shift were in the station. The study also found that most time out of the police station is spent dealing with incidents and making enquiries. Only around 17 per cent of police officer time was spent on reassurance patrol. The Home Office’s own figures show that only 1 per cent of police time is spent on proactively reducing crime.\(^\text{218}\) If the amount of time a police officer spends on the beat could be increased from one-fifth to two-fifths, this would effectively double the police presence on the streets of England and Wales. As this Chapter shows, there is considerable scope to free officers to spend more time out on the beat. The PA study said:

“But what accounts for the time operational officers spend in the police station? The two main culprits are the time taken to process prisoners and prepare prosecutions, and the other paperwork which the police must produce. Arresting someone – no matter whether they are a petty criminal or a serious offender – keeps officers off the beat for an average of 3.5 hours – often for far longer. At busy times there are bottlenecks in custody and frequent delays in carrying out finger-printing, photographing and criminal record checks. Delays are generally the same for a simple shop-lift as for a much more serious matter. Where a solicitor, appropriate adult or interpreter is required, this can trigger a further wait of on average an hour. If CCTV or an identity parade is involved further substantial delays can ensue.”

The following year the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, pledged a “bonfire of the paperwork” to free up more police time – he claimed up to 90,000 hours a year.\(^\text{219}\) The Home Office’s Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce published a report with 52 change proposals, which it claimed would “enable patrol officers to invest the time equivalent of 22,500 officers … in improved quality of service on the streets.”\(^\text{220}\) The Taskforce said that this should be achievable within

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three to five years. Today, nearly five years on, there has been no update published or follow-up audit made available as to how many of the recommendations have been implemented successfully. A key recommendation was for a “Home Office decision on a national non-emergency number”. Yet as set out in Chapter 2, the only decision the Home Office has made in this regard has been to shelve the programme.

The Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce defined the challenge for the Government as being to “provide the means which will enable police officers and support staff to work better, and to do their job free from complicated and time-consuming procedures, unnecessary to achieve results or protect basic human rights”. The Government responded with its White Paper which promised to free up the equivalent of 12,000 police officers for front-line policing by 2008 and claimed that they had already made 7,700 forms obsolete across all 43 forces. By February 2006 this figure had grown to nearly 9,000. But a report for the Police Federation pointed out that the Home Office has provided no information as to what these forms were, how frequently officers used them, how long each form took to fill in, and how much time has been saved. In focus groups carried out for the report not one officer could identify a form which they had used frequently being withdrawn, resulting in time being saved. In answer to a recent Parliamentary Question, the Home Office would not name the 9,000 forms which it claims to have made obsolete.

A Crown Prosecution Service report in 2003, Making a Difference: Reducing Bureaucracy and Red Tape in the Criminal Justice System, was equally unconvincing. It admitted that “non-prosecution paperwork … remains without any systematic mechanism for testing the need for a particular form, sharing good practice or ensuring the format and data content are not unnecessarily burdensome”. It listed a small number of forms which it proposed to make obsolete, such as Stolen Motor Vehicle Reports, a shorter Phoenix (PNC) form and a combined form for recording Nuisance and Malicious Phone Calls – but in the same section confirmed the introduction of the new “stop and account” form which, as is discussed below, is a significant impediment to the police. The report also proposed statutory charging, which, as we examine below, has increased delays faced by officers.

Four years after David Blunkett’s promise of a “bonfire”, the author of a report for the Police Federation commented: “The drive to reduce bureaucracy has not impacted in the slightest on the work of 24/7 response officers. On the contrary, they have experienced an increase in the
amount of reporting [of data] they are required to do.” Figure 6.1 sets out the latest figures from the Home Office, which reveal that:

- Police officers spend more time on paperwork than on patrol. Just 14 per cent of all police officers’ time is spent on patrol – a definition which “includes officers on foot/car/beat patrol, CID and traffic officers” – compared with 19.3 per cent of their time on paperwork.

- Even patrol officers spend nearly as much time on paperwork as on patrol. Just 17.3 per cent of their time is spent on patrol, compared with 16.5 per cent of their time on paperwork.

- The total time spent by all officers on paperwork has fallen only marginally, from 20.1 per cent in 2003-04 to 19.3 per cent in 2005-06.

- Although the proportion of time spent by patrol officers on paperwork fell from 18.8 per cent in 2003-04 to 16.4 per cent in 2004-05, it rose to 16.5 per cent in 2005-06.

- The proportion of time spent by patrol officers on patrol actually fell from 18 per cent to 17.3 per cent from 2003-04 to 2005-06.

The Home Office claims that “time spent on patrol is defined as time visible to the public and available to respond. As soon as an officer on patrol responds to an incident, or carries out any other activity, this ceases to be counted as time on patrol. The measure of time on patrol is therefore not an indicator of total front-line police presence. At the end of March 2006, 63.1 per cent of police officer time was spent on front-line duties, as measured by the front-line policing measure.” Nevertheless, overall a fifth of an officers’ time continues to be spent on paperwork.
Figure 6.1 Police officer time spent on patrol

Table A: All Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Time spent on incident-related paperwork</th>
<th>Time spent on non incident-related paperwork</th>
<th>Total time spent on paperwork</th>
<th>Time spent on patrol</th>
<th>Frontline Policing Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Data were not collected before 2003. The information is taken from activity analysis, which is collected by all forces over a two-week period in each year and provides a snapshot of how officers are deployed.

(2) Includes officers on foot/car/beat patrol, CID and traffic officers.

(3) Data were not collected before 2003.

Table B: Patrol Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Time spent on incident-related paperwork</th>
<th>Time spent on non incident-related paperwork</th>
<th>Total time spent on paperwork</th>
<th>Time spent on patrol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Data were not collected before 2003. The information is taken from activity analysis, which is collected by all forces over a two-week period in each year and provides a snapshot of how officers are deployed.

Notes

The Home Office states that:

“Time spent on patrol is defined as time visible to the public and available to respond. As soon as an officer on patrol responds to an incident, or carries out any other activity, this ceases to be counted as time on patrol. The measure of time on patrol is therefore not an indicator of total frontline police presence. At the end of March 2006, 63.1 per cent of police officer time was spent on frontline duties, as measured by the frontline policing measure.”

“Policing necessarily requires accurate recording, for example to ensure accountability and guard against abuse of powers, to prepare case files, or to take witness statements. Non-incident paperwork includes that relating to complaints, truancy sweeps, community policing activities, line management activities, and inquiries that do not progress to incident status.”

Source: House of Commons Written Answer, Hansard, 6 March 2007, Column 1930W.
Multiple reporting

The Home Office claims that “policing necessarily requires accurate recording.”\(^{230}\) This is beyond dispute; the question is whether all recording is necessary, and how efficient the processes are. Paperwork which the police have to deal with includes crime reports, intelligence reports, forms to log recovered property, missing person details, information required for special force initiatives as well as paperwork connected with the shift administration and the officer in question. One crime often leads to the same information having to be recorded separately in several different records, since even if forms are available electronically, very little officer time is actually saved because the IT legacy systems are mostly antiquated and do not talk to each other.

The Police Bureaucracy Taskforce report noted that “the delivery of a single and integrated national [IT] system is long overdue” and that the main time-saving would be derived from avoiding duplication of data entry.\(^{231}\) It detailed how the personal details of a charged person are recorded as many as 17 times onto different forms in a police custody and case file process. In a key section the report stated:

“This is at the hub of the bureaucracy problem. Repeated written entry of the same information is time-consuming, burdensome and gives rise to errors.”\(^{232}\)

In a trial in Warwickshire, a systems requirement was to populate the case file with information already collected during the custody process, or even prior to this in the case of repeat offenders. The time saved per file was in the region of two hours. The report concluded that a more integrated IT system would significantly reduce the paperwork burden on front-line officers and urged that this should be introduced as soon as possible.

However, five years after the Police Bureaucracy Taskforce’s report, a Police Federation report said:

“Officers are promised that bureaucracy will be considerably reduced, freeing up their time. Yet the system of control increasingly relied upon by management to improve effectiveness and efficiency, is based upon bureaucratic procedures and routines which officers are required to follow rigidly, for instance, in the investigation of crime through the use of burglary packs, and strict, extended reporting and recording requirements. The organisation is experienced as intrusive and punishment centred. Consequently officers, in time honoured fashion, still ‘work the paper’ to protect themselves and defend their actions through their reports. Both management and those subject to their control measures invest in bureaucracy.”\(^{233}\)

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\(^{230}\) House of Commons Written Answer, Hansard, 6 March 2007, Column 1930W.

\(^{231}\) Sir David O’Dowd CBE QPM, Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce, Change Proposals to Increase the Presence of Police in Communities, July 2002, p.22.

\(^{232}\) Ibid. p.23.

In the words of one police officer:

“I attend a crime and take down the victim’s personal details (date of birth, phone number etc). I then fill in the same details on the back of the crime report. I later do a file for court and put all these details again on the witness list (form MG9), I then email all the details to the witness care unit, and I then list the details again on the compensation form (MG19). Six months later I turn up in court and the victim isn’t there because no one could find their address.

Or, I arrest someone and write their name in my pocketbook with a quick description of the arrest. I then fill out an Incident Report Book and put the suspect’s name and details down again. In custody these are recorded onto the custody record, again onto the photograph-computer, again onto the fingerprint machine and again on a form for DNA. I create a report for CPS with the suspect’s details once more, carry out a PNC check entering their details again, I fill out Phoenix-compliant forms (to log info on PNC) which means filling out their personal details and description TWICE more. I write my statement, including the suspect’s details, then I create a file in which the suspect’s details will be listed two or three times. Months later our file unit sends me a request for work with only a case reference number on it and no one has any idea who this relates to. Arghhhhh, we’ve got problems.”

In December 2006 we began an investigation into police bureaucracy, involving site visits to eight forces and detailed conversations with officers of all ranks. We wanted to learn what constitutes bureaucracy and what effect it is having on officer time and morale. This section of the report looks at the obstacles to efficient and effective policing caused by bureaucracy at each stage of the reactive policing process. Its premise is that there is avoidable bureaucracy throughout the process - from call to attendance, through to booking in prisoners in the custody suite. It also considers the application of certain legislation and areas outside the reactive policing process in which avoidable bureaucracy is found.

Figure 6.2 illustrates the key stages in the processing of suspects by the police. It identifies several barriers to efficiency and effectiveness at each stage, from call to attendance right through to custody and disposal. We believe that our analysis and suggestions of improvements are challenging but credible and well grounded in operational realities. Throughout our investigation we encountered genuine support for our aims of identifying and reducing bureaucracy, and a reassurance that the areas of greatest concern were being tackled. One of the primary inefficiencies the diagram identifies is the need for officers to key in the same details on multiple databases, which are not connected to each other. The other main cause of bureaucracy is excessive central intervention and the reporting which it creates. This issue is examined later in this Chapter.

234 Source: private e-mail from serving police officer.
235 Gloucestershire Constabulary, Hampshire Constabulary, Nottinghamshire Police, the Metropolitan Police Service, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Greater Manchester Police, Surrey Police and Sussex Police.
Figure 6.2 clearly shows that there are several obstacles to successful performance. These start with the duplication of written details entered in the pocket book and incident recording book (IRBs), if both are used, followed by the re-entry of the same information into the custody record IT system. We have heard from officers that it is not uncommon for them to hand over their IRBs to the custody sergeant who then enters virtually the same information into the custody system – the first of several re-entries of the same or similar information about the crime and suspect in the processing of offenders in today’s police forces.

Once the suspect has been booked in (stage 3) there is often further duplication as details are entered on the force intelligence database (for intelligence purposes) and crime recording database (to record all crime for Home Office statistical returns). These are separate systems which record very similar information about the incident – information which has already been entered in the officer’s pocketbook and the custody record IT system. At this point in the process national databases may also have to be accessed, for example the MERLIN system (if the case involved youths, prostitute cautions, police protection and missing persons) and PNC forms, which must be completed for every arrest.

From stage 7 onwards the process moves towards the courts, and again unnecessary bureaucracy exists as more forms are filled in. At this stage the officers fill in the MG forms (which comprise the case papers), but again these contain much of the information already entered in previous systems, such as custody and intelligence databases. At the end of the process, the CPS IT system and court system become involved; but as we point out below these are not joined up which leads to inefficiencies in arranging for witnesses and police officers to be available for trials.

The efficiency barriers, forms, different IT systems, and multiple entries of the same data highlighted by Figure 6.2, demonstrate that the processing of an offender could be done much faster. It is not uncommon for an arresting officer to be unable to return to the beat before the end of their shift after making an arrest. Rationalising the IT systems, data entry and procedures for processing an offender would save large amounts of police officer time.

It should be recognised that Figure 6.2 may not be completely accurate for a particular given force – all 43 forces have local processes which cannot be replicated in a generic diagram. Nevertheless, the process flow has been validated with various officers in a number of forces, as well as professional police bodies and organisations. It represents a serious and informed attempt to map out the reasons behind much of the bureaucracy which faces the police today in the processing of offenders. It should be noted that the time estimates fall well within the range suggested by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, which last year stated that it takes 11½ hours to process an arrest.236

Key stages in police processing of offenders

1. Street resolution (PNDS, Street Ball, Summons, Advice Giving)
   - Street resolution
   - PNDS
   - Street Ball
   - Summons
   - Advice Giving
   - Decision to arrest
   - Wait to book in: waiting times vary considerably depending on the time of day and from Force to Force. An average would be 30 mins but might be over an hour at peak times. This can be a major bottleneck.

2. Make arrest and transport to custody
   - Transport to custody: time = around 30 mins but will vary considerably depending on distance traveled, traffic conditions etc.
   - Book in, search and record property, risk assessment, fingerprints and DNA - around 30 minutes on average

3. Book in suspect
   - Evidence gathering/pocket book entry - varies depending on the nature of the offence, but around 30 mins on average. This can take much longer if the collection and review of CCTV tapes is required.

4. Managed detained person under PACE
   - Investigate and build case
   - Creation of crime report and disposal - around 30 mins

5. Consider disposal
   - SP/009
   - Delayed by CPS
   - CPS IT System
   - Court IT System

6. Bail to return
   - CPS IT System
   - No order
   - Bail
   - Charge/remand
   - Bail to court
   - Extraordinary

7. Other disposal
   - CPS IT System
   - No order
   - Bail
   - Charge/remand
   - Bail to court
   - Extraordinary

8. Charge/remand
   - Bail to court
   - Extraordinary

9. Ongoing case building / investigation
   - CPS IT System
   - No order
   - Bail
   - Charge/remand
   - Bail to court
   - Extraordinary

10. CJU and CPS Discharge
    - CPS IT System
    - No order
    - Bail
    - Charge/remand
    - Bail to court
    - Extraordinary

11. Case complete
    - CPS IT System
    - No order
    - Bail
    - Charge/remand
    - Bail to court
    - Extraordinary

Source: Police Reform Taskforce, based on analysis of process flows within various police forces.
Unnecessary stop forms

The requirement placed on the police to record every stop they make applies when a police officer requests someone to account for themselves. A large number of interactions are covered by this provision; for example, the Metropolitan police make 30,000 stop and accounts and stop and searches every month, and in 2004-05 there were 839,977 stop and searches in England and Wales.237

The form is very long. It contains 40 questions and, according to the Police Federation, takes about seven minutes to fill in. The reason for the stop, the outcome and the self-defined ethnicity of the person stopped must be included in it. The Home Office has stated that the average police officer stops someone and completes one of the forms every 2.2 hours they spend outside a police station. If a police officer wishes to make a number of stops that means he could be engaged in filling in forms for a long time. The practical effect is that the officer will probably be deterred from making stops in the first place. The widespread view expressed to us was that this is the case. Conversely, there is also concern that officers make informal stops without recording them – breaking the law.

Part of the form includes a statement that the person being stopped does not have to give details of their name, address and date of birth. Officers have informed us that people decide that they just do not wish to complete that part of the form and walk away.

The cost of collating the forms and the bureaucracy that is created are significant. The Metropolitan Police Authority’s Bureaucracy Taskforce has estimated the cost of completing the forms at £720,000 annually, with front-line officers’ time being diverted from other duties.238 The Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce report urged the Government to “think carefully about the full implications of pursuing this amendment to stop and search legislation” because “the bureaucratic impact for frontline officers would be significant”.239

The stop form was introduced as a result of the Macpherson report, which accepted that stop and search was a valuable activity, but recommended that a record of stops be kept in order to build confidence amongst ethnic minority communities.240 There is clearly a need to build and then maintain such confidence, and it is essential that any suggestion of racism should be dealt with firmly throughout the police service.

It is argued that the stop form prevents officers from stopping people without reason. It is also

237 House of Commons Written Answer, Hansard, 19 March 2007, Column 676W.
argued that the record of stop forms may be useful in solving crimes. However, the information is gained at a high price, since the ability of officers to stop and talk to people without confrontation is essential to neighbourhood policing. Mobile working (see below) might speed up the process, but does not address this fundamental problem. However it is done, recording every stop is disproportionate. The “stop and account” form should therefore be scrapped. “Stop and search” forms should be retained since this is an intrusive exercise.

**Delay caused by statutory charging**

The CPS started operating in 1986, shortly after the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984 came into effect. From that point, the CPS had ultimate discretion over whether a prosecution should be undertaken. Both PACE, which is discussed below, and the creation of an independent prosecution service are generally regarded as important developments in ensuring the integrity of the criminal justice system.

Until recently the police retained the power to charge, though the CPS had the power to drop the case or amend the charges later. However, the recent introduction of statutory charging has seen the police lose the power to charge in all but the most minor cases.\(^\text{241}\) Statutory charging was introduced in response to recommendations made by Lord Justice Auld in his *Review of the Criminal Courts in England and Wales* published in October 2001. He recommended that the CPS should determine the charge to be brought against a suspect in all but minor routine cases, ensuring the correct charge from the outset, weeding out non-viable cases at an early stage and ensuring that the remaining cases are ready for trial at the point of charge.

Prior to the introduction of statutory charging, the prosecuting sergeant decided whether the case should go to court and this generally involved completing a one-page form detailing the charge. If the defendant pleaded guilty there was no need to compile the full case history and the case was closed. Only if they pleaded not guilty would a full file have to be compiled in preparation for subsequent court hearings.

Most would agree that statutory charging has put a greater burden on the police, or their file-building or prosecution support teams, which now exist in many forces to deal with this extra workload. A typical pre-charge advice file will contain:

- Key witness statements
- MG3 forms
- Any exhibits, CCTV footage or stills
- SDN (a hand written version of what the suspect said in interviews)
- MG6E (for any information which might undermine the prosecutions case, e.g. a history of false claims)

\(^{241}\) See Appendix 3 for full details, with exceptions, of where the Police may charge.
• Details of previous convictions
• Interview tapes
• House searches

Only once these have all been compiled does the CPS decide whether there is sufficient evidence to charge. If it decides that there is not, the case is sent back to the Officer in the Case (OIC) to gather further evidence. If the CPS does decide there is sufficient evidence to charge then the OIC is required to do a NAREY file for court – which involves filling out a further three forms:

• Copy of the charge sheet
• MG1
• MG6

The file is then ready for court and the first hearing. However at court, if the suspect immediately pleads guilty, then the whole file that has been built is never used and simply filed away.

One of the problems with statutory charging is that it requires considerable CPS resources to work effectively, which are rarely available. For example, in Gloucester there are three main custody centres across the county, but only two CPS lawyers are available (to authorise any charge) who are based in stations. Further, they work 9a.m.-6p.m., Monday to Friday, whereas prisoners are brought in around the clock, seven days a week. The result of this is that people are delayed in custody, with knock-on effects on officers’ time, or they are bailed, resulting in delayed justice. The telephone service CPS Direct can be used when there are no lawyers available, but officers must fax all the papers to them and then wait on the phone – sometimes for up to three hours – to hear the CPS decision on whether to charge.242 If they put the telephone down then they go to the back of the queue. Constant solicitor presence in every custody suite in the UK would make the statutory charging system work swiftly, but this is plainly impractical.

A further problem is that CPS performance targets conflict with those of the police. The Police Federation study of response policing highlighted the CPS target for the proportion of successful convictions that they bring to court.243 The report argued that this target made the CPS overly risk averse when deciding whether or not to prosecute, requiring the police to provide additional evidence and statements to ensure a successful conviction but resulting in more decisions not to prosecute. This CPS target conflicts with police targets to achieve as many detections as possible (if a case goes to court it is considered as detected whether the defendant is found guilty or not). In the words of one officer interviewed by the report: “we’ve got performance indicators to meet and so do [the CPS], but they are conflicting, going apart rather than going together”.244

244 Ibid. p.69.
One solution would be to return charging discretion to the police for a greater range of minor offences. The key question is where the line should be drawn. The CPS view is that statutory charging has saved time by ensuring that fewer cases with little chance of a conviction are brought to court in the first place. Cases were frequently contested at the committal stage and subsequently dismissed because the charging officer had overlooked a vital requirement. The implications of reform would therefore have to be considered carefully, especially with regard to offences (such as common assault and shoplifting) which are triable at the defendant’s election in the Crown Court in front of judge and jury. However, statutory charging appears to have saved time in the courts by sacrificing the time of police officers and it is arguable that too much of the burden has shifted to the police. With the right safeguards, and input from the CPS, limited charging discretion for offences such as handling stolen goods, petty theft and low level public disorder could be returned to the police.

Unnecessary use of sworn officers to do paperwork

We have seen how the police are subject to a large amount of extra paperwork and bureaucracy within the criminal justice system especially once the defendant pleads not guilty, since then there is no alternative to a full case file being compiled. In this event further forms have to be filed out – MG6C, MG6D, and MG6E, in addition to further statement-taking, forensic tests, interviews and property-related enquiries and so on. We have heard from police case perpetration officers and detectives that one of the most time-consuming forms to fill out is the MG6C – which lists all the unused material in relation to a case, and allows the CPS and defence to see what other potentially relevant material the police have retained in the course of the investigation. This can include officers’ notebooks with notes relating to the incident, search logs of houses, details of items found and so on. This form has to be completed as a matter of course for every case, and this burden currently falls entirely on police officers – since the police are ‘Disclosure Officers’ under PACE legislation.

We would not propose the civilianisation of the Disclosure Officer role (usually the OIC) – a sworn and qualified officer should be responsible for the information and evidence which comes to them, retaining overall control of the investigation, setting the investigative strategies and undertaking arrests of suspect. However workforce modernisation trials underway in some forces (see Box 6.1) are already demonstrating the value of a mixed workforce in the whole process of investigation, evidence-gathering and case preparation. Administrative and more routine tasks such as taking basic statements, making local enquiries house to house, preparing exhibits and other schedules and exhibit management could be passed more widely to civilian support staff.

It is already clear from the workforce modernisation pilots that efficiencies are possible. ACPO

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245 Appendix 3 makes a number of suggestions of offences for which charging discretion could be returned to the police.
estimates that workforce modernisation could allow the police to achieve 20 per cent more in some areas, which would be a highly significant gain. But outside of the ten pilot studies there is scant sign that many chief constables are embracing the reform with enthusiasm, and the Government has shown little leadership in driving the programme forward. Last year a policy review by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit noted that apart from the creation of PCSOs there has been “comparatively little serious workforce reform” in the criminal justice system. The review also argued that there has been a lack of political will to drive workforce reforms forward “due to opposition from the police”. Paradoxically, the recently announced general relaxation of Crime Fighting Fund penalties (see Box 6.7), which should allow police chiefs more flexibility to recruit civilian staff to work alongside sworn officers, may have the effect of discouraging chiefs from taking part in more formal workforce modernisation trials to change roles, responsibilities and working practices of police officers.

The Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce report made clear that it is incumbent on the police to secure the best advantage from the period of detention. Prisoner Processing Units (PPUs) deal with the evidential aspect of post-arrest activity and the Taskforce’s view was that “in light of the increasingly complex nature of investigation management, the task of conducting and co-ordinating enquiries should now be recognised as a specialism in its own right.” The Taskforce felt there was clear evidence that such units conduct enquiries more efficiently and deliver better quality case files. According to the report, “specialist officers typically complete suspect enquiries two and a half hours more quickly than the ‘generalist’ patrol officer who tends to be less sure of procedures and less proficient in the use of facilities (taking seven hours)”. It concluded that, from the patrol officer’s perspective, the benefits were clear: “following arrest, initial reception and delivery of an oral account to the evidence review officer, they return to the streets. A target time of 20 minutes turnaround will not be unreasonable – some six hours and 40 minutes more quickly than had they shouldered the burden of dealing with the detainee themselves”. This has been implemented to varying degrees in custody suites across the country, but there is a wide variety of waiting times and processes depending on the force and custody suite involved. Often this is related to the degree of civilianisation involved in a particular custody suite. While the Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce’s target turnaround time of 20 minutes is achievable in efficient detention centres during periods of low prisoner traffic, far longer times are regularly involved in many forces, especially during peak hours.

Removing sworn officers from unnecessary administrative duties and routine tasks where their skills and powers are not properly utilised should clearly be a key goal of both government and chief constables. It needs to be driven forward.

Box 6.1 Workforce Modernisation

In October 2005 ACPO’s Chief Constables’ Council approved a draft ACPO vision for Workforce Modernisation (WFM) as indicative of a direction of travel for reform. The WFM programme aims to test a range of concepts including increased specialisation in certain capabilities and enabling officers and police staff to work together in one clear framework of employment and deployment. Doing so will create capacity for the police to do more and be more effective. More specifically WFM sees civilian police staff performing time consuming functions previously performed by officers. By better matching skills and powers to tasks a more effective and efficient workforce can be created. For example, maintaining databases is not a good use of a sworn officer’s time. The job can be done by a civilian for considerably less money and will free the officer to spend more time on frontline policing. Further, few police officers are highly skilled at maintaining databases. A civilian specialist would be able to perform this task more cheaply and more effectively.

However, ACPO have stressed that this modernisation agenda must be constrained by the need for constables to retain key core skills “to allow their flexible and immediate deployment if and when required for response to emergencies and major or critical incidents.” Further, all critical decisions that involve the use of coercive powers must be taken by those holding the office of constable with associated accountability. A final constraint on WFM is that the number of police officers must not be reduced to an extent which compromises the flexibility and resilience of the police.

While many forces are experimenting with WFM on their own initiative, the Home Office sponsored ten small workforce modernisation pilots in Dyfed Powys, Humberside, Lincolnshire, the Metropolitan Police Service, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Surrey, West Yorkshire and Wiltshire. In the ten sites civilian staff perform a wide range of roles, such as custody detention, prisoner investigation, investigative support, and neighbourhood patrol.

These sites were given considerable freedom to interpret WFM locally in order to encourage innovation. A recent evaluation of the pilot sites by Accenture found that they had, individually, delivered many benefits. The report estimated that Custody Detention Officers in Dyfed Powys free up the officer time equivalent of 14,391 hours per annum while saving £256,917 across the force annually. In Wiltshire Local Investigation Officers freed up 12,598 officer hours over a 21 month period. In Surrey civilian administrators in Neighbourhood Policing Teams maintain databases, websites and records, manage reports, take minutes of neighbourhood meetings and prepare task schedules for teams coming on duty. They also update the public on
action taken on neighbourhood issues. Using officers to perform these tasks would have cost 21 per cent more.

As well as saving money and officer time, the new workforce mixes deliver better results in some cases. For example the civilian staff in Surrey’s Neighbourhood Policing teams were more skilled at typing and note taking than most officers, meaning that the tasks were performed more effectively. Better results were also achieved in investigations. By using mixed teams including civilian Investigation Support Officers (ISOs), Surrey were able to increase their detection rate by a third in the pilot area. In Surrey’s pilot CID teams a civilian Team Co-ordinator carries out time consuming but essential administrative and logistical tasks which account for 30 per cent of the team’s total activity. An investigating team, made up of one constable and two ISOs carries out the bulk of investigative tasks which accounts for 60 per cent of total activity, under the direction of a detective constable. The ISO’s have some designated powers and perform tasks such as statement taking, house to house enquiries, interviewing suspects and witnesses and searches, alongside the fully warranted constable where appropriate. The team is lead by the detective constable who does the remaining work which consists of higher level investigative tasks and tasking team members. The whole unit comprises six teams and is under the supervision of a detective sergeant.

There are several strengths to this type of mixed workforce team. Unlike sworn officers who have to maintain a wide range of competencies, ISOs are able to specialise exclusively on higher volume investigative tasks. This specialisation has lead to a higher proportion of cases being solved more cost effectively. In addition, by delegating administrative and logistical tasks to a single civilian the officers on the team are able to use their time more effectively and focus on the investigation itself. Finally by retaining a constable in the team and putting the unit under the leadership of a detective constable the scheme ensures that only those who hold the office of constable will use or direct the use of coercive powers such as arrest.

The strength of Surrey’s experiment with WFM is reflected by the fact that crime has fallen by a larger percentage in pilot wards than non pilot wards (7.1 per cent compared to 5.3 per cent during the first year). An evaluation by the Institute for Employment Studies found that the mixed CID teams were able to investigate as many crimes as the control boroughs with fewer staff and officers and in less time. As well as this the CID team has an 8 per cent lower running cost than before reconfiguration.

There is also evidence that WFM can improve the delivery of protective services. An ACPO document estimated that WFM could increase capacity for major crime
investigation by 27 per cent, and could improve capacity for tackling organised crime and counter terrorism by 34 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Humberside Police have been able to increase capacity and quality and reduce costs by 43 per cent by employing police support officers in key roles in their Major Incident Rooms.

Disjointed IT systems in the criminal justice system

One of the biggest barriers to joined-up justice is the fact that the police, CPS and magistrates’ courts are not on the same computer system. Disjointed IT results in a much greater need for paper documents and files relating to a case, which then have to be physically transferred or faxed between the CPS, the courts and the police. A National Audit Office report in 2003 recommended that the Government should “provide Crown Prosecutors with electronic equipment to enable them to update the case management system at court”\(^{249}\). An IT system that communicated between the courts, the CPS and the police would mean, for example, that officers could see at the touch of a button when they were required to attend court, without having to go through criminal justice units in forces. In addition, the courts would be able to see police officers’ availability when setting trial dates.

The subsequent Crime Prosecution Service report, *Making a Difference: Reducing Bureaucracy and Red Tape in the Criminal Justice System* proposed shared IT systems, stating that they would “enable practitioners and other partners to work together more effectively, at all levels, across the whole range of their work through the provision of enabling technology.”\(^{250}\) The CPS is currently piloting joined-up IT with the police and is working to share case management information. However, while the majority of police case management systems are NSPIS compatible,\(^{251}\) a number are not. Joining up the IT systems of the police with the CPS and courts is problematic because of the highly fragmented nature of police IT. In crime and control, for example, approximately 26 out of 37 forces in England have different systems. Similar fragmentation is found within the core HR systems and crime systems. Without an overarching national strategy for IT across the whole criminal justice system, it is unlikely that the police, CPS and courts’ IT will be joined up effectively.

Mentally ill detainees in custody suites

Under the Mental Health Act 1983, the police have a power to take a person who, in a public place, “appears ... to be suffering from mental disorder and to be in immediate need of care or control ... to a place of safety.”\(^{252}\) One definition of a “place of safety” under the Act is a police station, where a person can be held under that power for up to 72 hours. The person need not have committed any offence, but simply to have behaved in a way that gives the impression that he was mentally ill and a danger to himself or to others.

Mental health charities such as MIND have long argued that such detention in police cells is highly unsatisfactory since they do not have the facilities or trained staff to support them. The
Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPPC) has also stated that “It is widely recognised that police cells are not appropriate places of safety for people with mental health problems.”

People who experience mental distress may come into contact with the police for a range of reasons and people with mental health problems “are more likely to be victims of crime than the general public and so may seek assistance from the police.” In the custody suites we visited, over 50 per cent of people coming in had “warning makers” and therefore required a comprehensive risk assessment. The custody sergeants we spoke to estimated that up to 70 per cent of prisoners in custody overall had mental health issues and needed to be looked after by a healthcare professional. According to the Prison Reform Trust, “72 per cent of male and 70 per cent of female sentenced prisoners suffer from two or more mental health disorders. One in five prisoners has four of the five major mental health disorders.”

Half of all deaths in, or following, police custody involve detainees with some form of mental health problem.

It was also clear from our visits to police cells and custody suites that the current overriding performance measure for the police in this area is the safety of their prisoners. A whole variety of risk assessments are now undertaken to establish the vulnerability of prisoners – an understandable safeguard since they are being detained by the police and hence are their responsibility and liability. Yet bringing mentally ill people into a police station can often make their condition worse, since they can be in need of hospital treatment rather than imprisonment. Prisoners detained under the Mental Health Act are not in fact “incarcerated” but rather “detained” for their own protection. Writing in The Times on 30 January 2007, the Chairman of the Police Federation, Jan Berry, noted:

“Police cells are anything but a therapeutic place of safety and patently unfit for housing people suffering from mental health problems. Many ask: ‘Why am I here? I’m not a criminal.’ The stock reply is, ‘for your own good.’ But how can this be when essential specialist medical assistance is in such short supply?”

In cases where it would be more appropriate for suspects to be transferred as soon as possible to a secure mental unit, this is frequently not possible since many appropriate hospitals either do not have secure arrival facilities, precluding them from being classified as “a place of safety” and from receiving detainees. This places greater demands on the police to undertake constant supervision of mentally ill detainees, with the result that officers have to watch “at risk” prisoners in the cells. This can involve constant watch through the hatches in the cell doors, often for long periods. Police cells should only be used in this way as a last resort and “places of safety” should be in a healthcare-based environment. In a letter to The Times on 5 February 2007.
2007, Moira Fraser, Head of Policy for the Mental Health Foundation, called for “clear and enforceable restrictions on the use of [police] cells”, adding:

“… a change of attitude is also needed. Health authorities need to acknowledge their responsibility to provide appropriate mental health services for those who need them. Instead they often gatekeep their resources so rigidly as to exclude people from their care, leaving the police force to pick up the pieces.”²⁶⁰

Conservatives have tabled an amendment to the Mental Health Bill, which is currently in the Lords, to address this issue.²⁶¹ Lord Howe explained:

“The main concern here is that a police station is not a therapeutic environment for someone experiencing acute mental health problems. The police have little training or expertise in looking after people in this condition, especially people who may be unpredictably suicidal. There is often no ready means of keeping detained individuals under observation and a person’s state of mental health can deteriorate quite quickly. There is also the widespread feeling that police stations, with their implication of wrongdoing, are inappropriate places for the management even of very disturbed mentally ill people. That feeling is reflected in the National Service Framework for Mental Health, in the current code of practice and in numerous Mental Health Act Commission reports.”²⁶²

Lord Howe noted that the Police Federation would like to remove police stations from the legal definition of places of safety altogether, although he felt it was not possible to go that far. He suggested that the new Mental Health Act should include a requirement that the place of safety must, wherever possible, be a psychiatric hospital or other therapeutic environment, and where a police station is used, there ought to be a clear requirement to arrange an assessment or else to transfer the person to hospital within the shortest time possible (he suggested a 24-hour maximum).

One of the problems with the Mental Health Act is that it does not currently allow patients to be moved from one place of safety to another. Lord Howe argued that the consequence of this is that “vulnerable people experiencing acute mental distress are left languishing for hours while the police locate two doctors and an approved social worker to undertake a Mental Health Act assessment, even if a hospital bed is available.”²⁶³ Lord Howe suggested that the law ought to be made clearer on this point, because the ambiguity in the wording of the Act on the legality of transferring patients between places of safety has given rise to uncertainty. The Health Minister, Lord Hunt, undertook to examine this issue. He also claimed that increased capacity was being

²⁶¹ Mental Health Bill, Lords Committee Stage, Hansard, 17 Jan 2007, Column 754.
²⁶² Ibid.
²⁶³ Ibid. Column 755.
made available as alternatives to police cells: “from April 2006, we have made available a capital package of £130 million for the improvement of the mental health estate – in particular, for the development of hospital-based places of safety. This money will facilitate an increase in hospital-based safety facilities and will reduce the reliance on police stations.”

The IPPC is currently conducting a research project which seeks to examine the extent and use of police stations as places of safety under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act. The research “will collect and collate data from all 43 police forces in England and Wales for section 136 detentions in police custody in 2005-06. The data will include the demographics of those detained, the length of time they were held in police custody, and look for variations amongst police forces, identifying forces with high and low usage of s136 detentions.”

The use of police cells to detain people with mental illnesses places pressure on both the police and suspects themselves. It requires fundamental review.

**Foreign national prisoners in custody suites**

Delay in custody suites also occurs when foreign national prisoners who do not speak English are detained and the telephone translation service “Language Line” has to be used. This can be extremely time-consuming - it requires officers to tell the operator the questions they wish to ask the suspect in English, before handing the receiver to the suspect to hear the translator ask the same questions in their own language, answer and then pass the receiver back to the officer to hear the answer from the translator in English. It is also expensive, since there appears to no cap on what translators can charge for their services.

With the increasing immigration of foreign nationals and the diversity of languages, there is evidence that the time and expense spent using “Language Line” is likely to increase not decrease. The current arrangements need to be reviewed to ensure a quality service which provides value for money.

**The “Reducing Police Bureaucracy Unit”**

There is currently a “Reducing Police Bureaucracy Unit” within the Police Reform Unit in the Home Office, whose task it is to conduct a robust check of all policies before they are sent to forces as new forms or processes or reporting requirements. This is done through a “Gateway Check” process, under which any new forms or paperwork resulting from legislation are subjected to a test of “proportionality” and “reasonableness” according to the ends that it is designed to achieve. This acts as an important check on any new bureaucracy before it is passed on to police forces.

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264 Lord Hunt, Mental Health Bill, Lords Committee Stage, Hansard, 17 Jan 2007, Column 756.

265 [http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/index/resources/research/mh_polcustody.htm](http://www.ipcc.gov.uk/index/resources/research/mh_polcustody.htm).
The Reducing Police Bureaucracy report recommended that “all new legislation and related policy driven from the centre should be comprehensively assessed during its formulation to gauge and ameliorate its administrative impact on the service and particularly front line practitioners”. The Taskforce felt that without this commitment to future-proofing its “spring cleaning operation” would need to be carried out again “in no time at all”.

The post of Head of this Unit – the “National Bureaucracy Advisor” – has been vacant for some months. It also appears, from anecdotal evidence that not all new legislation is going through the “Gateway check”. The recent “Simple Adult Caution” involves a 16-page risk assessment for all people who are cautioned but several forces have formally complained to the Home Office about the bureaucracy caused by it. It appears unlikely to have passed a robust bureaucracy check by a dedicated team of policy experts and seconded police officers dedicated to reducing bureaucracy.

If the Reducing Police Bureaucracy Unit has a real role then it needs a Head. There is a strong case for recruiting this person from outside of the police service to permit a fresh and sceptical view of police procedures, and drive forward the reduction of bureaucracy with new momentum.

Box 6.2 A study in paperwork – the ‘grim RIPA’

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) was designed to provide an audit trail covering police surveillance operations and to ensure that the police act proportionately when invading people’s privacy. The principle of proper regulation of police activity in this sphere is important. However, issues have arisen because of its application to all offences which carry the possibility of a three year custodial sentence – the legislation as currently applied does not discriminate between serious and non-serious crime. RIPA forms are now used for the majority of volume crime, including vehicle theft and dwelling burglary, although the legislation was designed for more serious crimes than these. In practice any surveillance or covert activity has to be signed-off by a Chief Superintendent or above. This leads to situation whereby formal RIPA authorisation forms are being completed to enable officers to monitor individuals suspected of very low level crime, for example stealing confectionary from a newsagent. The number of authorisations is substantial – around 20 pages per case, several of which must be hand signed. The total number of RIPA forms created during 2005-2006 was 28,622, which equated to approximately 700 per force or more than two forms per force per day. Similarly, our study found that for the process of applying, registering and tasking an informant there were a total of 16 different forms. One operation with one informant would require 41 pages of forms would need to be filled out – and that is only for one job. We examine these issues in more detail in Appendix 2.


266 Sir David O’Dowd CBE QPM, Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce, Change Proposals to Increase the Presence of Police in Communities, July 2002.
Background. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) and its Codes of Practice are vital parts of the framework of legislation which ensures that the police have the powers they need to combat crime and that the rights of citizens are protected. As Ed Cape, Professor of Criminal Law and Practice at the University of the West of England, has said:

“It is important to recognise that, despite legitimate criticisms that may be made of PACE and the Codes of Practice, it is the subject of great interest by lawyers, judges and government agencies throughout the world, and is considered by many to be a model for a fair, rational approach to police accountability and to securing fair trial.”

However, more than 20 years since the legislation was first introduced, it is also important to ensure that it reflects the development of technology and enables the police to maintain the fight against crime. In particular, there has been criticism that elements of PACE have become unduly bureaucratic.

The Government undertook a review of PACE in 2002, which made a number of recommendations, and recently announced a further review which aims to “modernise police practice by improving efficiency, whilst ensuring the police are accountable for their actions and that victims rights are protected.” Final proposals are expected around spring 2008.

In a written ministerial statement explaining the reasons behind the current review, the Home Office Minister Tony McNulty said:

“PACE has been subject to continued change since it was first introduced. There is now a need for rationalisation. We know from stakeholders and practitioners that PACE has become unduly complex and bureaucratic.”

2002 Home Office review of PACE. The main conclusion of the 2002 review, conducted jointly by the Home Office and Cabinet Office, was that PACE struck broadly the right balance between the powers of the police and the rights and freedoms of the public. The police were seen to have a clear framework within which to operate, whilst the provisions of the Act protected the individual. However, the review concluded that the legislation had become increasingly rigid over time as a result of the influence of case law and the accumulation of additional legislation. It also suggested that there was a need to sharpen its relevance to enable
the police to fight crime in the 21st century. For example, many of the police interviewed pointed to the growth of the “drug culture” in the UK since the late-1970s and early 1980s. This development is just one factor that has had both a direct and indirect impact on crime in society. The report stated that:

“Society has become both more litigious and more risk-averse, leading to a build-up of additional regulation to safeguard the police and the suspect. This accretion of provisions has increased the burden on police. Additionally, UK legislation must now comply with the Human Rights Act and there is a risk that positive benefits from that will be accompanied by new administrative burdens.”

The review proposed a number of changes to amend PACE and the Codes of Practice, describing its proposals as “a vital opportunity to improve the way the police operate” and claiming that its recommendations would “bring about a real difference to the everyday lives of police officers on the front line, and consequently to the delivery of services.”

One suggestion made in the report was a call for an increase in the discretion afforded to the police:

“Frontline staff from both the police and legal profession suggested that a return to the original fluidity of the PACE framework was desirable. This could be achieved by allowing the police more discretion, and encouraging them to use their professional judgement, although clear boundaries would have to be retained.”

In fact, the pendulum appears to have swung in precisely the opposite direction. For example, the recent introduction of statutory charging, as discussed above, means that far from “allowing the police more discretion” they have been given less.

**2007 Home Office review of PACE.** In its latest consultation paper on reviewing PACE, the Home Office has proposed a number of areas for consideration. Notable issues the review will examine are: the detention clock; alternatives to detention; the creation of short-term holding facilities; greater use of biometric information for identification purposes, and introducing post-charge questioning.

**Detention clock.** PACE states that the police cannot hold a person without charge for than 24 hours. The 2002 review suggested that the initial detention period of 24 hours could provide insufficient time in which to conclude the investigative process and charge a detained person because of delays elsewhere in the custody process – for example, when obtaining the services of an appropriate adult, police surgeon or interpreter, or when a suspect might initially be unfit

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272 Ibid, p.10.
for interview for reasons of alcohol or drugs intoxication. The review looked at several options for amending the detention clock, weighing up the practicalities and attendant bureaucracies of each proposal. In addition to measures designed to enhance the provision of appropriate adults, healthcare professionals and interpreters, the review recommended that the initial period for which someone may potentially be detained for an arrestable offence should be extended from 24 to 36 hours, under the authority of a superintendent. This recommendation was not implemented.

The Government’s latest consultation paper acknowledges that the detention clock has remained largely unchanged since 1984 and wants to consider reforms which will result “in reducing the burden on officer time.” Officers we have spoken to raised concerns that the 24-hour detention clock can be exploited. For example, they claim that solicitors can arrive late and in effect “run down the clock”, thereby placing more pressure on the police to release suspects as they do not have sufficient evidence to charge. Further, it seems illogical that, if a suspect has to be left for several hours to sober up, or for eight hours to sleep, the clock should continue to run down.

It is conceivable that, even if the maximum number of hours were increased, many of the problems and “delaying tactics” discussed above could still remain. Instead, a system of “stopping the clock” could be considered. Under these proposals, the 24-hour period of detention would be retained, but the clock could be stopped when, for example, a suspect is left to sober up. The clock would have to be stopped under the authority of a superintendent, and an agreed list of “stoppable” reasons agreed between the Home Office, police and CPS. With the right safeguards, this would provide a fairer time period for the police to investigate and build the initial case, while ending any perverse incentives which favour delaying tactics by defence solicitors.

Street bail. Street bail is a Government initiative which allows officers to instruct offenders to appear at a police station at a later date, meaning that an arresting officer does not have to return to the station for each arrest they make. The programme was intended to reduce the amount of time travelling to and from the station, and allow officers to plan their work more effectively by giving them discretion to decide exactly when and where an arrested person should attend a police station for interview. There are, however, difficulties with street bail. Outside a police station officers cannot always identify the person they have stopped, and if the suspect supplies false details there is nothing to prevent them from jumping bail. In such circumstances, as a result of not taking a suspect back to the police station, they have been allowed to escape with no action being taken against them.

The 2007 consultation paper concedes that street bail has had limited take-up by forces, in part

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because of problems with identifying a person in the street correctly.\textsuperscript{274} The paper asks for suggestions that would help make street bail more effective. One possible solution, discussed below, is that improved use of mobile working will allow the police to access the information available to them in the station while they are on the beat. This would make identification less problematic and improve confidence that the offender will turn up at the requested place.

**Mobile custody suites.** A new suggestion made by the 2007 consultation paper is the creation of short-term holding facilities (STHF) in busy shopping centres and urban areas. Minor offenders could be detained in a STHF for a maximum of four hours, in which time their identity would be confirmed and their case could be processed. The consultation paper hopes that STHF would reduce the amount of time an officer is absent from their beat after making an arrest. It has been reported that “discussions have already started about building a ‘retail jail’ inside the Selfridges store in Oxford Street, London.”\textsuperscript{275}

A more effective alternative would be to develop mobile custody suites. As noted in Chapter 2, closing police stations has resulted in police officers travelling greater distances to fewer custody centres, increasing the amount of time when they are away from patrol. In New York, mobile custody suites in large vans allowed the police to place offenders in a secure environment and be back on the streets again in minutes. Mobile custody suites would be more flexible than STHF and could cover a wider geographical area. They could reduce periods away from duty without risking the rights of suspects. As we note below, they could be operated by the private sector.

**Biometric information.** Another suggestion made by the 2007 consultation paper is that the police should be able to take biometric information from a person arrested, reported, charged, summoned or convicted for a non-recordable offence without their consent, in order to confirm or disprove their involvement in the offence. The paper also highlights the anomaly that the police cannot take these samples from a person who refuses to give their true name and address or whose identity is doubted – the very people for whom biometric identification is most needed. The civil liberties group, Liberty, strongly criticised the proposals, commenting: “The Government is fast replacing the best traditions of English law with a chilling presumption of guilt. Dropping litter and bad parking are proposed as lame excuses for an ever-growing national DNA database.”\textsuperscript{276}

**Post-charge questioning.** The consultation paper also raises the possibility of questioning suspects after charge. The Conservative Party has already called for the use of questioning after charge in serious cases. This would allow the police to question suspects if new evidence becomes available and would reduce the temptation for the police to delay charging a suspect in anticipation of additional evidence. In particular, it would also allow the police to charge terrorist suspects earlier without jeopardising the possibility of a successful conviction, addressing police

\textsuperscript{274} Ibid. p.9.
\textsuperscript{275} ‘Tesco jails’ and more DNA testing planned, The Times, 15 March 2007
\textsuperscript{276} Ibid.
concerns without conceding extended periods of pre-charge detention.

Mobile working

Equipping officers to work outside stations (mobile working) has the potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and help to keep officers on the beat. Time and money are saved. If officers do not have to return to the station to fill out a crime report on the computer, there is no risk of them getting caught up in duties at the station rather than going back on the streets. Non-prosecution reports, which currently consume 12 per cent of patrol officers’ time, can be compiled anywhere, given the right IT connections, and a number of forces are currently undergoing various trials. The Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce recommended that “further exploitation of IT will enable officers to remain on the beat, ensure that intelligence assets are used appropriately and permit greater public access to policing services through the use of e-based technologies.”

Devices such as PDAs, Blackberries and vehicle-based laptops are common in many forces around the globe, where witness statements are filled in at the scene of the incident and automatically sent to central databases. Officers do not have to go back to the station to use office-located computers. Mobile working trials are currently being undertaken on a variety of scales in a number of forces across the country. In particular, PITO (the Police Information Technology Organisation) is working in partnership with five forces in England and Wales, as well as with Strathclyde in Scotland, to assess how to achieve successful benefits from mobile working: Bedfordshire Police, the BTP, Hertfordshire Constabulary, Staffordshire Police, Strathclyde Police, and Sussex Police. The main objective for all forces is to reduce the amount of time a police officer spends at the station, thus increasing efficiency, effectiveness and improving visibility.

The benefits of mobile working to the police service (and others) have been defined by PITO as:

- More accurate identification
- Higher quality of information
- Higher visibility of uniform police officers in the community
- Better targeting of resources
- More appropriate arrests
- Reduced investigation time
- Enhanced quality of service to the public
- Improved officer safety
- More timely warrant arrests

• Reduction in voice traffic.

The trials started in August 2006 and will finish during 2007. Some benefits are already emerging. For example, productivity in the trial forces has reportedly increased. The BTP recently reported that the number of stops has increased by 100 per cent and the number of intelligence reports by 50 per cent.\textsuperscript{280} The technology even has a translation system, which allows members of the public to select a national flag on the PDA screen and receive in their language an explanation of why they have been stopped. The BTP has reported that the handheld computers increase the profile of officers as they now spend less time in the office and more time on the beat.

More effective mobile working could also make street bail more effective. Mobile working can bring the information an officer has available in a station to them when they need it. By linking to the electoral register, the PNC, their own force crime systems, and even the fingerprint database, officers can identify a suspect in the street just as easily as in a station. The electoral register allows officers to check a suspect’s name and address. If the suspect gives the name and address of someone else, the officer can ask them for the names of their people who live in the next house. While this system is not foolproof it is considerably better than the current situation where officers have no means of checking the accuracy of information they have been given. There are also trials to allow officers to access the fingerprint database remotely. Operation Lantern is a mobile fingerprint reading system that is currently being trialled in ten forces. It allows officers to scan the fingerprints of suspects and then search IDENT, the National Automated Fingerprint System, for matches. By allowing officers to use these devices outside police stations, mobile working has the ability to make street bail much more effective.

However, despite its huge potential benefits, there remains no national mobile working strategy. The Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce stated in its report that “mobile data technology has a proven track record in policing but its application is being developed at different rates in different forces”. They called for “a co-ordinated approach to delivering an information exchange capability into the hands of patrol officers [which would offer] significant opportunities to reduce administrative burdens in addition to winning back patrol time.”\textsuperscript{281} According to PITO, a survey last year asking all forces what mobile working projects they were undertaking found that, of the 38 forces which responded, 32 were undertaking some sort of mobile data trials. However only Cambridgeshire had fully rolled out mobile working technology (Blackberries) to all response officers (approximately 1,100). West Yorkshire had deployed more Blackberries (2,300) but since it is a larger force this does not constitute a “force wide” roll out. A national roll out of mobile working technology and practices needs to be expedited. The lessons from these highly localised trials need to be learnt and best practice spread across all 43 forces in the UK.

\textsuperscript{280} Police Review, January 12th 2007.
\textsuperscript{281} Sir David O’Dowd CBE QPM, Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce, Change Proposals to Increase the Presence of Police in Communities, July 2002, p.11.
Summary

The recruitment of additional police officers and a public commitment to develop neighbourhood policing will have little impact until the major bureaucratic obstacles to police officer efficiency are addressed. The public want the police to be crime-fighters, not form-writers. And of course most officers want this, too. One danger of excessive bureaucracy is that it creates a huge disincentive for officers to make arrests. Part of William J. Bratton’s success in first reducing crime on the New York subway was that he addressed this issue. As Malcolm Gladwell observed:

“Previously police officers had been wary of pursuing fare-beaters because of the arrest, the trip to the station house, the filling out of necessary forms, and the waiting for those forms to be processed took an entire day – all for a crime that usually merited no more than a slap on the wrist. Bratton retrofitted a city bus and turned it into a rolling station house, with its own fax machines, phones, holding pen, and fingerprinting facilities. Soon the turnaround time on an arrest was down to an hour. Bratton also insisted that a check be run on all those arrested. Sure enough, one out of seven arrestees had an outstanding warrant for a previous crime, and one out of twenty was carrying a weapon of some sort. Suddenly it wasn’t hard to convince police officers that tackling fare-beating made sense. ‘For the cops it was a bonanza’, Bratton [said]. ‘After a while the bad guys wised up and began to leave their weapons home and pay their fares.”

In spite of the Policing Bureaucracy Taskforce’s claim that “a crackdown on paperwork and other administrative functions will release officer time for patrol duties, and its plea that “this report must not be allowed to gather dust” there is little evidence of progress. Overall our research shows that, in spite of the Government’s claims to reduce police bureaucracy, it remains a serious burden – what one Chief Constable we spoke to described as “the bureaucracy of bedlam”. Indeed, some of it – for example the stop form – has been introduced by the Government itself. As the Chairman of the Police Federation, Jan Berry, has said:

“There is no doubt … the bureaucracy in policing has not gone down, it has gone up. The joined IT has not been introduced and we have got more people counting and analysing than we have out there doing, and that has got to be the wrong way round.”

Chapter 6 Part - 1 key findings

THE POLICE SHOULD BE CRIME-FIGHTERS, NOT FORM-WRITERS
The public want the police to be crime-fighters, not form-writers. Yet police officers spend more time on paperwork than on patrol. Just 14 per cent of all police officers’ time is spent on patrol – a definition which “includes officers on foot/car/beat patrol, CID and traffic officers” – compared with 19.3 per cent of their time on paperwork.

If the amount of time police officers spent on the beat could be increased from one fifth to two fifths, this would effectively double the police presence on the streets without recruiting a single additional officer.

PAPERWORK COULD BE REDUCED
Recording every stop takes seven minutes and is an unnecessary impediment both to police efficiency and their interaction with the public. The “stop and account” form should be scrapped – although a form for “stop and search” should be retained.

TECHNOLOGY COULD IMPROVE EFFICIENCY
One of the biggest barriers to police efficiency is that IT systems within the police are not joined up. This means that officers frequently have to key in the same details on multiple databases. The personal details of a charged person can be recorded as many as 17 times onto different forms in a police custody and case file process. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the IT systems of the police, courts and CPS cannot communicate with each other.

Mobile working has huge potential benefits for the police, but there is no national strategy to develop it. While most forces are undertaking some sort of mobile data trials, only one has fully rolled out mobile working technology to all response officers.

WORK COULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE
Workforce Modernisation pilots show that efficiency gains of up to 20 per cent are possible by using civilian staff to release sworn officers from unnecessary paperwork. The programme is receiving only weak support from many chief constables and the Government – it needs to be driven forward.

Mobile custody suites, which could be operated by the private sector, could reduce police officer abstraction times without risking the rights of suspects.

BURDENS COULD BE REMOVED
“Statutory charging”, under which the CPS must formally approve all charges, causes delay. Charging discretion should be returned to the police for a wider range of minor offences.

A review of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act should include consideration of new provisions, subject to appropriate safeguards, to allow the detention clock to be stopped and permit post charge interviews.

The use of police cells to detain people with mental illnesses places pressure on both the police and suspects themselves and requires fundamental review.
Part 2: Reducing the extent of central intervention

Over the past decade police forces have been subject to increasing central intervention. The Government has introduced an array of new central targets, a central standards unit, an excessive and bureaucratic performance framework that tries to micromanage forces, and a National Policing Plan. Prior to this, forces were already subject to inspections from HMIC and the Audit Commission and received guidance from ACPO and direction from the Home Office. Increasing central intervention has been designed to drive standards up from the centre, but as we have shown in Chapters 1 and 2 the results have been questionable. Instead, central intervention has skewed police priorities, created additional bureaucracy and reporting requirements, and damaged morale.

In 1998 the Government introduced Public Service Agreements (PSAs) which created a whole new set of Government targets, such as “cut burglary by 15 per cent” or “improve the delivery of justice by increasing the number of crimes for which an offender is brought to justice to 1.25 million by 2007-08.” While the aims may be laudable, the police are under intense pressure to meet the targets – even if only administratively.

Work by Policy Exchange noted the police’s reaction to this proliferation of targets. In the opinion of one chief constable, the vast bulk of performance indicators, are “pointless”, and in general accumulating numerical outputs is “no good and little use”. In one force, “indicators were criticised as simplistic, and as missing a wider picture.” Another chief constable complained that “the Home Office’s indicators excluded important measures such as numbers of road deaths and incidents of violence against children.” Policy Exchange’s work also highlighted the fact that targets create perverse incentives, so that “only what got measured got done.” Another officer interviewed said the targets were “unimaginative, about preserving the status quo … and monstrosely bureaucratic.”

A recent NAO report criticised the PSA regime and warned that the one in five of the data systems used by departments “was not fit for monitoring progress on the key elements of their PSA targets or … had not been established at all.” A survey by Manchester Business School of seven Select Committees, of which Home Affairs was one, found that of 270 available PSA targets only 47 were mentioned at all in the committees’ annual reports. This casts doubt on the effectiveness of the PSA target regime. The problems with central targets are discussed further in Chapter 7.

In its 2001 White Paper, Policing a new century: a blueprint for reform, the Government announced the creation of a National Centre for Police Excellence (NCPE). The NCPE came

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285 Barry Loveday and Anna Reid, Going Local: who should run Britain’s police?, 2003, pp.22-23.
287 Ibid. p.17.
into existence in 2002 and was part of Centrex, the police national training body. It was designed to be a centre of excellence for all aspects of operational policing. The White Paper gives the following description of the NCPE’s functions:

“It will collate, develop and disseminate best practice on successful professional approaches to investigation. This will cover proactive and reactive investigative procedures, including crime scene handling, victim and witness issues, processing suspects, covert operations, specialist investigations of particular types of crime, and legal issues. It will guide all aspects of investigation for the entire police service.”

But the Government has moved far beyond the approach of disseminating best practice by issuing national guidance. In February 2002, before the NCPE had become operational, David Blunkett, then Home Secretary, warned Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir John Stevens that unless the force cut violent street crime within six months he would send in his own management hit squad. Mr Blunkett set out a four-point plan for change, saying: “we will give you the freedom to do the job, but if you don’t do it, I’ll have to intervene.”

Mr Blunkett’s actions were heavily criticised for interfering in the running of the police. The desire of the Home Office to direct forces from the centre manifested itself most clearly in the form of the Police Standards Unit (now part of the Police and Crime Standards Directorate) which was created in 2002. The Home Office website describes the PSU as a unit which “provides intensive support to police forces and Basic Command Units to help them meet the desired levels of performance.” In other words it is a Home Office department that intensively manages forces and BCUs. In addition many chief constables were wary of the PSU’s focus on BCUs rather than forces, which they felt undermined their authority.

Shortly after the creation of the PSU, the Government introduced a rolling three-year National Policing Plan. The first plan, published in 2002 for the 2003 to 2006 period, attempted to bring together the Government’s priorities, performance indicators and plans for new developments in one document. Individual forces were expected to draw up their own three-year strategic plans against the national priorities identified by the Home Office.

In 2003 the Government published performance monitors for each of the 43 forces in England and Wales, in order to assess their progress in meeting these priorities. By 2004-05 these performance monitors had developed into the current performance framework, PPAF (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7) which requires forces to report large amounts of information centrally for performance management purposes. PPAF requires the police to carry out 23 self-assessments which are overseen by HIMC, and to record and report on 32 separate statutory

289 Ibid. p.42.
290 The PCSD now has a budget of over £200 million and 150 staff.
performance indicators (SPIs). Which of these SPIs and baseline assessments are priorities is decided centrally. While it is important that the police are subject to a performance management system, PPAF places an unnecessarily onerous reporting burden on the police. In addition it does not hold them to account sufficiently in several important areas including protective services. Ken Jones, President of ACPO, has singled out PPAF as a particular cause of unnecessary bureaucracy:

“A lot of bureaucracy is about performance management. Even [the 68-page assessment document] is taking up officer time. This is of limited value. We have constantly got to be vigilant to drive bureaucracy down.”

PPAF is currently under review. The Home Secretary, John Reid, has told police chiefs: “We recognise that there are too many different sets of targets and measures. My hope is that we will be able to reduce by at least 50 per cent the number of performance measures.” However, even if performance measures are halved, onerous reporting standards and central intervention will remain.

In 2006 the Government created another new national policing body, the National Policing Board, comprising representatives of the Home Office, ACPO, the APA, HMIC and now the new National Policing Improvement Agency (see below). The Board is chaired by the Home Secretary and, much like the National Policing Plan, sets overall strategic goals for the police. The Home Office claims that the Board reflects the tripartite structure of the police and strengthens governance. However, there are reports that the Home Office dominates the Board and uses it as a vehicle to try to run policing from the centre.

The continuing accrual of power by the Home Secretary adds credibility to this view. The Police and Justice Act 2006 now gives the Home Secretary the power to issue directions to a police force if he is satisfied that “the whole or any part of a police force is failing to discharge any of its functions in an effective manner, whether generally or in particular respects”. In addition the Home Secretary can direct a force if he considers that it will fail in the future, and identical powers apply to police authorities. This gives the Home Secretary unprecedented powers to direct police forces. As David Cameron has said:

“The trend of growing national political control of the police is a deeply worrying one. A plethora of central agencies now intervene in local policing. The Police and Justice Bill gives the Home Secretary unprecedented powers to direct police forces. Crude national targets for police performance distort professional priorities, stifle initiative and frequently conflict with each other … Local police forces are not branch offices or franchised

293 A small number of SPIs come from BCS data.
outlets of a national corporation … The Home Secretary [has] announced a new National Policing Board with himself in the chair. It is naïve to believe that this is intended to strengthen the tripartite relationship between the Home Office, police authorities and chief constables. The Board is intended to assert Home Office control of policing.”

There has been some rationalisation of national policing bodies. In April 2007 the new National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) will be launched. The NPIA brings Centrex (the police training body), PITO (the Police Information Technology Organisation), and the National Centre for Policing Excellence into one body. Box 6.3 sets out the role of the NPIA.

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**Box 6.3 The National Policing Improvement Agency**

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) brings together Centrex, the police leadership and training body, and PITO, the police IT organisation, as well as taking on some new areas of work. It will become operational on April 2007 with an indicative annual budget of £403 million resource funding and £202 million capital funding.

The NPIA website gives the following description of its origins:

“NPIA has its origins in the ACPO response to the Government's November 2003 Green Paper. It proposed an agency to support the implementation of national standards in policing to eliminate duplication.


The NPIA is intended to be a police owned and led body which will provide overall strategic direction in a number of areas and ensure high standards. It will support the police service in a number of ways from its first day of operation. To do this it will:

- Look ahead to identify and plan for the future challenges to face policing;
- Define the police service's capacity to implement change and inform the priority and sequence of change programmes;
- Find and develop evidence-based policing good practice that works and support the service and ensure good practice is applied;
- Play a lead role in ensuring that an agreed programme of reforms takes place;
- Co-ordinate the future development, purchase and deployment of nationally-compatible systems and infrastructure, particularly information and communications technology;
- Design, develop, deploy and quality assure nationally-compatible learning programmes;
- Help the police service to recruit, train and develop its people and improve leadership at all levels;
- Ensure the workforce, processes, procurement and systems that support policing are as efficient and effective as possible;
- Use research and analysis and specialist systems and advice to improve policing and provide a better service to the public;
Ensure that police forces and police authorities are involved in every aspect of the agency’s work.

By merging some of the national policing bodies the NPIA potentially rationalises some of the central interaction with police forces. A national body to provide guidance and direction to forces in areas such as procurement, training and IT, has value. However there is some overlap between the roles of the NPIA and ACPO. ACPO describes itself as:

“an independent, professionally led strategic body. In the public interest and, in equal and active partnership with Government and the Association of Police Authorities, ACPO leads and co-ordinates the direction and development of the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.”

To avoid duplication the relationship between ACPO and the NPIA must be clear and their respective areas of responsibility defined explicitly.

Sources: www.acpo.police.uk; www.npia.police.uk.

Plainly some central co-ordination of policing is necessary. Paradoxically, while the Home Office has increasingly tried to micromanage the police from the centre, it has shown weak leadership in other areas of policing where the centre has a role in driving through reforms and improving collaboration. We have already noted the inefficiencies in the present arrangement under which 43 forces have different IT, finance and procurement departments. Box 4.2 noted the need for police forces to have compatible ICT systems, an area where the centre could provide stronger leadership. Equally, there are huge potential savings that the police could make by sharing backroom functions such as fleet management, uniforms, and administrative work. The 43 forces clearly find it hard to co-ordinate such joint action between them, and the centre needs to provide impetus and leadership to make collaboration work.

However, having so many bodies monitoring and directing the police inevitably leads to confusion and unnecessary workload for the police. “Planning and Review Team Performance Improvement Reports”, often over 100 pages long, have to be produced by each force every month. The level of work required is such that officers are regularly being taken away from their other duties just to undertake the assessments. This is arguably a disproportionate level of performance analysis. In the words of Jan Berry, Chairman of the Police Federation, “we have too many people counting things and not enough people doing things.”

The level of monitoring of the service must be reduced. Comparing the performance of the various police forces and spreading best practice would be more useful to forces. One force showed us data which stated they had 122 arrests in December in one CDRP – but no idea what they were arrests for. There is a continuing wealth of figures – but often with few, if any, actions resulting from them. There is a danger that, through excessive management of their

298 “Night’s falling on a Saturday night and not a single PC is on patrol” Sunday Express, 18 February 2007.
performance, the police have less time in which to perform. Increasing central intervention has undermined the ability of chiefs to use their discretion and professional judgement to achieve the goals they have been set as they see fit. It has also undermined efforts of the police to tackle problems that are serious locally but are not national priorities. As Ken Jones, the President of ACPO, has said of policing today: “It’s got horribly bureaucratic, formulaic and Byzantine and that’s just for cops – never mind victims and witnesses.”

Excessive reporting requirements also impose considerable cost. In 2005-06 the Metropolitan Police spent £122.2 million on “non-incident related paperwork” and £26.5 million on “checking paperwork”. This compares with £76.6 million spent on robberies and £48.8 million on house burglaries. Since the Met accounts for almost a quarter of the nationwide annual policing bill, and assuming that other forces do a similar amount, the annual cost of non-incident related police paperwork in England and Wales could be around £625 million.

It is not enough simply to reduce the number of performance measures, as the Government is promising. A fundamental reorientation is needed, reducing reliance on central intervention:

• **National government should set key standards.** The Home Secretary’s powers of intervention should be reserved for failures or when there is a national leadership requirement – for instance, in driving the shared services agenda, procurement and national workforce issues. The National Policing Board should be scrapped. It is dominated by the Home Office and its functions overlap with the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). The NPIA should remain to provide a strategic overview of policing and assume HMIC’s previous role of providing advice to forces.

• **An independent national body should publish data and monitor performance.** Any new performance framework must only collect the most important, strategic information nationally. This information must not be onerous for forces to collect. These proposals are set out more fully in Chapter 7. The Police Crime and Standards Directorate should be scrapped and its functions moved into other departments.

• **Force priorities should, as far as possible, be set locally.** National PSA targets should be replaced by locally set priorities. A national target to cut burglary is of little use to a force with very few burglaries but a high level of street robberies. Locally set targets will better reflect local needs. Targets should focus on the direct goals of policing, such as cutting crime, rather than proxy indicators of their goals, such as detection rates. This way the police will only be able to meet their targets by providing the service that the public want, not by ticking boxes.

• **Police chiefs should be given the freedom to manage their forces but be held accountable for their performance to the local community.** We set out proposals for achieving such local accountability in Chapter 7.

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300 “Police paperwork costs hit £625m”, Sunday Telegraph, 3 December 2007.
Home Office guidance on delegation to BCUs accepts that delegation improves motivation and increases innovation. It also argues that delegation from forces to BCUs leads to less bureaucracy, more effective partnership working, greater scrutiny of expenditure, and a greater impact of resources.\textsuperscript{301} The same benefits should be realised by delegating more responsibility and control from the Home Office itself.

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Chapter 6 Part 2 - key findings

CENTRAL INTERVENTION HAS GROWN …
Over the past decade police forces have been subject to increasing central intervention. The Government has introduced an array of new central targets, a Police Standards Unit, an excessive and bureaucratic performance framework that tries to micromanage forces, and a National Policing Plan. Forces are also subject to inspections from her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Audit Commission, and guidance from ACPO. There is a new National Policing Board and a National Policing Improvement Agency.

… AND PLACES A BURDEN ON THE POLICE
The annual cost of non-incident related police paperwork in England and Wales has been estimated at around £625 million. ‘Planning and Review Team Performance Improvement Reports’, often over 100 pages long, have to be produced by each force every month. The President of ACPO has said that policing has “got horribly bureaucratic, formulaic and Byzantine”.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS INTERVENED TOO MUCH IN MANY AREAS OF POLICING, BUT SHOWN WEAK LEADERSHIP IN OTHERS
Paradoxically, while the Home Office has increasingly tried to micromanage the police from the centre, it has shown weak leadership in other areas of policing where the centre has a role in driving through reforms and improving collaboration. There are huge potential savings to be gained from ensuring IT compatibility, joint procurement and sharing backroom functions such as fleet management, uniforms, and administrative work.

A FUNDAMENTAL RE-ORIENTATION IS NEEDED
National government should set key standards. The Home Secretary’s powers of intervention should be reserved for failures or when there is a national leadership requirement, for instance in driving the shared services agenda, procurement and national workforce issues. An independent national body should publish data and monitor performance. Force priorities should, as far as possible, be set locally. Police chiefs should be given the freedom to manage their forces but be held accountable for their performance to the local community.

\textsuperscript{301} Home Office and ACPO, Making delegation work: Guidance for the police service on delegation to Basic Command Units and support departments, September 2006, pp.5-6.
Part 3: Setting the police free

In addition to removing bureaucracy and central intervention there are other steps that can be taken to untie the police’s hands. “Summary justice” is the Government’s attempt to save police time, but it has frequently resulted in soft justice. Another barrier to police efficiency is the removal of police discretion under the weight of excessive political correctness and heavy-handed regulation.

Extending the police family to a wider variety of roles and making greater use of non-warranted and partially warranted civilians has the potential to release sworn officers for front-line duties.

“Summary justice”… or soft justice?

The Government’s summary justice programme is its flagship proposal designed to speed up the criminal justice system, ease pressure on courts, and reduce the paperwork and arrests officers have to make, saving them large amounts of time.

The Government’s vision is a criminal justice system that is:

“Simple: dealing with some specific cases transparently by way of warning, caution or some other effective remedy to prevent re-offending without the court process.

Speedy: those cases that need the court process will be dealt with fairly but as quickly as possible.

Summary: a much more proportionate approach still involving due process – for example dealing with appropriate cases the day after charge or during the same week (which would be a change in the way that cases are currently dealt with in the magistrates’ court).”

The Government hopes that summary justice will help meet each of these goals. Summary justice is not new and has been used in the form of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for parking and some driving offences since 1986 under the Transport Act 1982. FPNs have also been used for offences such as littering and dog fouling. A Home Office consultation paper described FPNs as “a swift way of dealing with someone believed to be guilty of an offence. Having been issued with a fixed penalty notice, an individual can decide either to pay the fixed penalty, or contest the case in court.” It was argued that as FPNs provide immediate punishment and reduce the amount of paperwork police have to do preparing cases for court; extending them to cover a

wider range of minor offences would enable the police to deliver simpler, speedy justice.

In June 2000 Tony Blair called for police to be given the power to march yobs to cashpoints:

“A thug might think twice about kicking your gate, throwing traffic cones around your street, or hurling abuse into the night sky if he thought he might get picked up by the police, taken to a cashpoint and asked to pay an on-the-spot fine of, for example, £100.”

Days later Mr Blair was forced to back down after ACPO expressed concerns that it would be impractical to extract on the spot fines and that the police were not set up to do this. However the proposal was reintroduced in the form of Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) by the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 as part of the Government’s strategy to tackle low-level antisocial and nuisance offending.

Penalty Notices for Disorder work in the same way as FPNs except that they can be used for more serious offences and count as a sanction detection. PNDs can be issued by the police and, in a limited capacity, by Community Support Officers and other accredited persons. They can be issued to someone over 16 years old and impose fines of either £50 or £80 depending on the severity of the behaviour.

Offences for which a PND might be issued include:

- behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to others
- drunk and disorderly behaviour in a public place
- destroying or damaging property up to the value of £500
- retail theft under £200
- sale of alcohol to a person under 18 years of age
- selling alcohol to a drunken person
- using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour
- breach of a fireworks curfew

Receiving a penalty notice does not count as a conviction. Recipients have 21 days to pay the penalty or to request a hearing; otherwise the penalty will be reissued at one and a half times the original amount. Failure to pay a penalty may result in a higher fine imposed by the court or imprisonment.

**Extending summary justice.** Recently the summary justice agenda has been widened to include punitive conditional cautions, which were controversially introduced by the Police and Justice Act in 2006. In September last year the Sentencing Policy and Penalties Unit in the Home Office even suggested that “serious crimes such as assaulting a police officer and

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304 Speech to the Global Ethics Foundation in Tubingen, Germany, 30 June 2000.
mugging” could be made punishable by PNDs to keep hundreds of thousands of offenders out of court. Not surprisingly, these plans did not make into the Government’s consultation paper on antisocial behaviour published in November last year.

There are also plans to extend punishments by summary justice and the range of people to whom they can be issued. The Respect Action Plan calls for summary powers to be strengthened, proposes increasing the penalty fine for serious PND offences from £80 to £100, and suggests trials to extend PNDs to under-16s, with fines being paid by parents. The Government’s latest proposal, outlined in a consultation paper in November, is to introduce a “deferred PND”. This proposal would mean that the fine would not be payable for up to six months, and maybe not even payable at all. Some senior police officers have welcomed the ability to attach conditions to the behaviour of offenders, with the sanction of a fine if those conditions are broken. However, there is clearly a danger that, if no sanction is intended at all, PNDs will lead to soft justice, or even injustice.

**Evaluating summary justice.** Summary justice has some appeal. An ACPO spokesman has said that the organisation had been actively involved in the preparation of the proposals and was keen to give police “non-bureaucratic powers” with the ability to back them up in the event of non-compliance. They are designed to provide to police with an efficient and effective tool to deal with minor offences while reducing the workload of the police and the courts.

However, in practice summary justice has had mixed results, frequently leading to soft justice, and in some cases no justice, or petty justice. *The Sunday Telegraph* recently reported that a woman who falsely accused a man of raping her was released with nothing more than a PND and an £80 fine. If her story had been believed the man she accused could have been jailed for life and if she had been taken to court she could have been jailed for six months for making false rape allegations. Destroying or damaging property, which in court could receive a fine of up to £2,500 or 3 months in prison, can now be punished with an £80 fine. Whether the fine is £80 or £100, it is simply not high enough to deter a criminal.

PNDs are increasingly being used to punish shoplifting of goods under the value of £200. 21,997 PNDs were issued for shoplifting in 2005 and 16,807 in the first six months of 2006. Even if the maximum penalty is increased to £100 a shoplifter only has to get away with one in two thefts to break even, or one in three to make a £100 profit. This allows shoplifters to profit while facing very low risks. Such light punishments for shoplifting do not sit well with the findings of Group 4 Securicor’s UK retail crime survey, which found that last year Britons admitted to shoplifting £1.7 billion of merchandise. The survey also discovered that 3.7

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305 “Muggers and thieves to be fined £100 on the spot”, The Times, 29 September 2006.
million Britons aged 16-65, almost one in ten of people in this age bracket (9.8 per cent), had shoplifted in the last year.\textsuperscript{310}

Since paying a PND is not an admission of guilt and defendants do not get a criminal record (if they pay within 21 days), PNDs do not deliver justice. A spokesman for the British Retail Consortium said: “This sends the wrong message to criminals. It tells them they have a licence to steal and won’t get any serious punishment.” The Police Federation has raised concerns that the excessive use of PNDs means that people can offend repeatedly without facing court action. Since details of PNDs handed out in England and Wales do not have to be put onto the Police National Computer, some serial offenders are able to avoid receiving criminal records.\textsuperscript{311}

One reason why the police use PNDs so frequently is that they count as a sanction detection, helping forces to meet their centrally set targets with the minimum effort. One in nine of the 1.5 million offences brought to justice (including non-sanction detections) is a PND. This is one of the reasons why the proportion of offences brought to justice which resulted in a successful conviction fell from just under 70 per cent in March 2004 to 53 per cent in March 2006.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6.3.png}
\caption{Proportion of convictions as a percentage of offences brought to justice, March 1999 to March 2006.}
\end{figure}


The Government is attempting to close the justice gap (the number of recorded crimes minus the number of sanction detections) through a measure that actually increases the true “justice gap”. In 2005 146,481 PNDs were issued, of which 62,174, (42 per cent), were not paid within 21 or 35 days and were referred to court. Although the majority of court fines are paid, Court IT systems currently cannot identify the number of PNDs registered as fines that have not been paid in full.\textsuperscript{312} As PNDs involve no admission of guilt and many of them may go unpaid, it is

\textsuperscript{310} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{311} “Repeat offenders ‘evading court’”, BBC News Online, 6 March 2007.
\textsuperscript{312} House of Commons Written Answer, Hansard, 11 January, Column 688W.
hard to see how they can deliver true justice at all. It makes no sense that unpaid PNDs count as an offence brought to justice and thus as a sanction detection. Offences for which PNDs have been issued should only be considered as detected once the fine has been paid. This would incentivise the police to monitor and enforce PNDs and also mean that the sanction detection rate gives a truer picture of the proportion of offences which are punished.

Summary justice has taken large numbers of serious cases out of the courts and punished criminals lightly or not at all. At the same time there have been several notorious cases where PNDs have been issued for trivial offences, such as to a stallholder who was displaying a T-shirt with the slogan “bollocks to Blair”, or a man who told a mounted police officer that his horse was gay. If these cases had been taken to court – assuming that the CPS had agreed to the charges – it seems unlikely that sensible magistrates would have convicted. However, most people, rather than risk losing the case, will simply accept the fine and pay it. This shows another danger arising from the increasing use of penalty notices for disorder: that they can lead to injustice, with improper decisions being taken by the police and people effectively being coerced into accepting a fine rather than run the risk of a prosecution.

A further problem presented by summary justice is the introduction of punitive conditional cautions. This measure allowed police officers to attach fines to cautions, in effect making them prosecutors and sentencers. The Magistrates’ Association has described this as “contrary to the principles of justice” and has stated that a “democratic legal system ensures that an independent tribunal – the judiciary – should sentence and impose punishment, thus preventing bias from prosecutorial authorities.” When the Police and Justice Bill was before Parliament the Conservatives were able to press the Government for some concessions. These included a reduced maximum fine of £250 and tighter guidelines over the use of punitive conditional cautions. While these concessions reduced the discretion of prosecutors when deciding punishments and limited the damage caused by the Act, our main objections to the principle of punitive conditional cautions remain.

There are also suggestions that the majority of PNDs are issued in police stations rather than on the street. This undermines the very rationale behind summary justice, that when an officer dealt with a low level crime they would be able to hand out a punishment and then go back on the beat without returning to the station. It is reported that the reason officers issue PNDs in police stations is so that they can take the fingerprints and DNA of the suspect. PNDs were meant to reduce on-shift abstraction rates. If they do not do this and do not deliver effective justice, they serve little purpose other than taking cases out of the courts and meeting sanction detection targets.

A large problem with the summary justice programme is that the Government’s central targets encourage the police to use PNDs and other instruments at their disposal in perverse ways. A reformed performance management framework (detailed in Chapter 7) will remove the incentive
for the police to issue PNDs for trivial and serious offences. Summary justice has the potential to save large amounts of police time and reduce the burden on the magistrates’ courts. However, these goals must not be met at the cost of undermining justice, and it will be necessary to define more specifically when a PND can be used and when it cannot. While police officers need to be given as much discretion as possible, current central targets and the perverse incentives they create mean that PNDs are being used inappropriately.

Returning discretion to the police

In the words of Paul West, Chief Constable of West Mercia: “One of the fundamental principles of British policing is that [each] police officer has a large degree of discretion.” However, the discretion of police officers has been eroded over time, further constraining police action. It has been undermined by a combination of legislation, legal action, force guidance, and government action.

The often excessive use of human rights and health and safety legislation has created a risk-averse culture in the police which has meant that senior officers limit the discretion of constables out of fear of being prosecuted or sued. In an infamous case in September 2002, the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir John Stevens, and former Commissioner, Lord Condon, appeared in court, charged by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) over the cases of two police officers who fell through roofs. The first case concerned the tragic accident of PC Kulwant Sidhu who fell to his death through a glass skylight while chasing two suspects in 1999. The following year PC Mark Berwick was injured after he fell from a roof in Harlesden as he chased a criminal. The HSE concluded that the Met had criminally failed to discharge its duty to protect officers from falling from roofs. In a case that lasted over a month and was estimated to have cost up to £3 million, the Met were found innocent and the presiding judge criticised the HSE for wasting public time and public money.

Had the case succeeded it would have forced the Met to instruct officers not to climb anything more than six feet high in pursuit of a criminal without first summoning ropes, ladders and climbing gear. This would have meant that criminals would simply have to climb a roof to escape without being pursued. In bringing the case against the Met the HSE demonstrated a lack of common sense and a lack of trust in officers’ ability to assess risks sensibly. It also distracted the Commissioner of the Met from his job of running the largest force in the country. As Sir John Stevens said: “At a time of unprecedented demand on London policing, Lord Condon and I have sat as defendants for five weeks in the highest criminal court in the land.”

316 Ibid.
There are clearly tensions between the duty of police officers to protect the public and the duty of forces to protect their employees. While the HSE have advised forces on how to assess risk better, there is a feeling among the police that the HSE overlooks the police’s duty to protect the public. Surrey Police operates under a principle of “Harm’s Way” which means that where it is necessary to protect a member of the public from danger, a police officer must be prepared to stand between the victim and the criminal in order to protect the former. The principle of “Harm’s Way” is popular with the staff of Surrey Police but, in a letter to all Surrey MPs, Surrey’s Deputy Chief Constable, Brian Moore, revealed that the HSE Executive had indicated that the principle could be unlawful.317 The letter also noted Surrey’s disappointment that a recent HSE report on Surrey Police ignored the issue of the “Harm’s Way” ethos. Surrey Police is now in a position where it has no guidance from the HSE about “Harm’s Way” and must operate not knowing whether it risks prosecution or not.

Although the Met won the case brought against them by the HSE, the very fact that it was brought to court in the first place inevitably affects force and officer behaviour. The uncertainty over the legal balance between the duty of the police to protect the public and the duty of forces to protect officers creates further difficulties for the police. Heavy-handed interpretation of legislation has also been applied to criminals as well as police officers. Instances where police refuse to chase motorcycle thieves because they are not wearing helmets,318 or are unable to publish wanted posters because of a belief that the suspects’ human rights might be infringed319 are consequences of an increasingly litigious and demanding public environment. Too often health and safety or human rights legislation is interpreted in a way that ignores common sense and constrains the police. Last year a suspected car thief threw bricks at police from a roof as he evaded arrest for 19 hours. After 12 hours the police accepted the suspect’s demands for food and cigarettes, which they lifted up to him by a crane, on the grounds that they had to protect the suspect’s human rights.320 It is likely that the officers attending the scene considered the risk they faced of prosecution when deciding how they would act.

There are many other examples of over-zealous interpretation of legislation undermining police effectiveness. For instance, it was reported that police in North Wales muzzled their dogs out of fear that bitten suspects would sue them321 (although the force claimed that the dogs were being muzzled for operational reasons).322 The constant fear of being sued or reprimanded for behaviour most people would consider reasonable has caused the police to become risk-averse.

In February William Bratton, police chief of the Los Angeles Police Department and former commissioner of the New York Police Department, gave an interview to *Police Review* in which he stressed the importance of risk-taking officers if success is to be achieved:

317 Letter to Surrey MPs from Surrey Police Deputy Chief Constable Brian Moore, 19 February 2007.
319 “Wanted: for crimes against common sense”, Evening Standard, 5 January 2007.,
320 http://www.thesun.co.uk/article/0,,2-2006260255,00.html.
321 “Police to muzzle dog squads for fear of being sued”, Daily Mail, 15 October 2006.
322 “Criticism as police dogs muzzled”, BBC News website, 16 October 2006.
“For the police service to be successful, [officers] have to be willing to go into harm’s way. I am a risk-taker in my leadership style, so I certainly have that approach. When you are risk-averse you do run the risk of not succeeding in your vision.”

More common sense should be applied to policy-making and the interpretation of legislation. Discretion should be returned to individual officers to act according to their professional judgement within a framework that holds them to account for their actions.

Central targets, in particular sanction detection targets, are perhaps the biggest factor in the decline of police discretion. The previous section showed how the Government’s focus on detection rates encourages the police to issue PNDs for offences that should go to court and for acts which are offences only in the most extreme interpretation of the law. Chapter 7 discusses the adverse consequences of the sanction detection target in more detail, but here it is important to note the effect which central targets have on officer discretion.

As one former officer has said:

“The Labour government’s detection culture has led my colleagues and I to cherry-pick jobs. If there’s a choice between a job that gives me my tick in the box and one that doesn’t, there is no competition.”

Because the sanction detection target makes no distinction between offences of different severity, the police are encouraged to treat all crimes equally. This means that the police are encouraged to devote large amounts of their time to trivial crimes in order to detect them. The following extract, from the book of one police blogger, shows how central targets take away officers’ discretion to deal with minor cases sensibly and proportionately:

“It works like this: there’s a playground fight between Wayne and Dwayne. Neither boy is really hurt and neither wants to press charges. Simultaneously, a man is punched in the shopping centre and he does want to press charges.

Under the new scheme, each incident is now treated equally, which means that, if it’s reported, it will be allocated a crime number. Whereas, in the old days, Wayne would have got a ticking-off, now — because it has been reported — we must create a crime number, and this means we have to solve, or ‘detect’ it.

If we don’t, it’s on our force crime records as an unsolved crime and the Chief Constable, the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister don’t want that, because spiralling crime rates

are electoral poison. So, what do we do?

We convince Wayne and Dwayne to make quick statements saying they won’t give evidence in court. Then we can file the matter as solved. Hey presto! — that’s one detected crime, for the record, filed away, in a drawer, for ever.

If we never find our shopping centre assaulter, well, that’s not great, but at least our crime figures over the two incidents will show a 50 per cent detection rate.

I have to say, I’d prefer the traditional approach of a stern talking-to (time involved: ten minutes) than all that statement-taking and form-filling (time involved: hours and hours) for essentially the same result.”

Our proposals for better ways to measure police performance are set out in Chapter 7. The current targets clearly undermine police discretion and must be rethought.

**Extending the “police family”**

As Chapter 5 noted, the increasing demands on the police make it both inefficient and unsatisfactory for sworn officers to be used for every function the police perform. Many tasks do not require the powers and skills of sworn officers and could be done more effectively and more cheaply by other staff. Box 6.1 highlighted the many advantages that have been realised by expanding the role of civilians in the ten workforce modernisation demonstration sites, but there is scope to go further.

Extending the police “family” in a variety of ways would allow local police partners and the private sector, as well as the police service itself, to do more to support full-time sworn officers. Extending the police family would remove the need for them to perform activities that do not contribute to their core goals of preventing crime and bringing criminals to justice. By making greater use of the available sources of support, the police’s hands can be untied, allowing officers to work on the front line and rebuild links with the public.

**Police Community Support Officers.** Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have been introduced in order to provide a uniformed presence on the streets, deal with low-level crime and sub-criminal anti-social behaviour, and free the police to spend more time on serious crime.

PCSOs were introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002 and are employed by police authorities and directed by chief constables. They are not fully sworn officers and have no powers of arrest, being given only “powers sufficient to deal with antisocial behaviour and minor disorder.”

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325 Home Office, Policing a New Century: A Blueprint for Reform (Cm 5326), December 2001, p.11.
These powers were formalised in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and chief constables can decide what specific powers to issue to their PCSOs.

PCSOs are broadly popular with the public. Surveys carried out by the Met, which has by far the largest proportion of PCSOs, show that 81 per cent of people think that PCSOs are doing an excellent or good job in their local area and that 95 per cent of people have seen PCSOs in their area.326

The introduction of PCSOs allows the police to provide a more visible street presence. As they are cheaper than sworn officers – constables can cost the public 70 per cent more than PSCOs – PCSOs allow more manpower to be deployed on the streets.327 Also, because they do not have powers of arrest they are not taken away from their beats as often as officers who have to return to the police station whenever they make an arrest. This comes with the obvious drawback that, unlike Special Constables and fully sworn officers, PCSOs do not always have the powers needed to tackle situations which they face.

The wider police family plays an important part in community policing and increases the uniformed presence on the street. However, it is important that PCSOs should supplement the police presence on the street rather than being used to replace sworn officers on the beat.

A number of concerns about PCSO arise:

- There will now be 8,000 fewer PCSOs since the Government abandoned its pledge to recruit and fund 24,000 by 2008.
- PCSO numbers may not be sustainable. The Government funds 100 per cent of the cost of PCSOs for the first year of recruitment but after this they only meet 75 per cent of the cost. Forces are expected to find matched funding for the remaining 25 per cent.328
- A Home Office evaluation, while generally positive, found that “no discernible differences were found in the trends in the numbers of crimes and incidents between areas with and without CSOs, before and after their introduction” and that “many members of the public, whilst appreciating the role of CSOs, would have preferred to have had fully sworn police officers.”329
- There has been some suggestion that PCSOs require a career structure. However, it is important that PCSOs are incentivised to remain in their communities for as long as possible so as to build relationships, and that removal to other duties or to new positions is avoided.

328 Home Office, Neighbourhood Policing; Your police; your community; our commitment, March 2005.
• Research by the Met revealed that a third of PCSOs want to become police officers. This could lower retention rates and also demoralise PCSOs who were not successful when applying for police posts.\textsuperscript{330}
• While PCSOs were introduced in order to increase visible patrolling, a trial in Bexley involving PCSOs in response teams has proved successful.\textsuperscript{331} This raises questions about how PCSOs are best deployed.

After four years in operation, and with a new recruitment ceiling having been set, it is time to re-evaluate the business case for PCSOs, their performance and costs so as to ensure that they can be deployed effectively in the future.

**Neighbourhood Wardens.** Unlike PCSOs, community wardens are not employed by the police but by local authorities. The term neighbourhood warden covers a wide range of people in various schemes who offer a semi-official presence in public areas. What all these schemes have in common is that police partners finance and direct additional manpower in support of the police. The Police Reform Act 2002 allows wardens to be accredited with limited powers.

An advantage of community wardens is that communities have genuine ownership of them and can direct them to meet their specific needs. A report for the Police Foundation has found that “some neighbourhood warden schemes in the UK have demonstrated particular success in involving and supporting vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups (eg. the disabled, the mentally ill, rough sleepers and drug users, as well as the young), and bridging gaps between community groups.”\textsuperscript{332}

Wardens allow partners in the police family to take action of their own to increase community safety and support the police. Box 6.4 details the Civic Watch Scheme in Westminster, which includes Neighbourhood Wardens. Westminster Council works closely with the police to coordinate Civic Watch with police action. Similarly, the Raising Hope initiative in Middlesbrough (see Box 6.5) involved local government using wardens and other measure to help the police with community safety issues.

Previous chapters have emphasised the importance of partners working with the police in order to fight crime. Neighbourhood wardens are an excellent way of doing this. They allow the police’s local partners to supplement manpower and share responsibility for community safety. Wardens could be used more widely than they are now and the range of powers they can be accredited with should be reviewed to determine whether they can be made more effective.

\textsuperscript{330} Assistant Commissioner Territorial Policing on behalf of the Commissioner, Role of Police Community Support Officer in the Metropolitan Police Service, 25 January 2007.
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{332} News release on The Value of Foot Patrol, Report by Dr Alison Wakefield, Police Foundation, 2006
Box 6.4 Westminster City Guardians

In 2001 Westminster Council launched a neighbourhood warden scheme which has now expanded to almost 100 “City Guardians”, employed directly by the Council to tackle antisocial behaviour.

The City Guardians also work to address environmental issues by proactively reporting faulty street lights, litter, graffiti, abandoned cars, and commercial and residential waste. Westminster Council’s website says that this proactive reporting “means that areas patrolled by the City Guardians have issues dealt with earlier and more effectively, with businesses and residents noticing the difference in these quality of life issues.”

The Guardians provide a visible presence on the street which reassures the public. An evaluation of the CivicWatch scheme (a wider scheme that the City Guardians are a part of) found that in two areas, Church Street and Lancaster Gate, a high percentage of residents regularly saw the City Guardians: 83 per cent and 73 per cent respectively. The figure of people who regularly saw the Guardians in the whole of Westminster was 56 per cent.

CivicWatch has four objectives: tackling antisocial behaviour, reducing crime and disorder and fear of crime; improving community confidence; improving the environment; and signposting support for young people and others at risk. The evaluation found that the City Guardians service made “a positive impact on all four CivicWatch objectives, particularly in relation to public reassurance and community safety.”

The findings of the report were, however, mixed. Satisfaction levels of the wardens were reasonable, with 59 per cent satisfied and 18 per cent very satisfied. Only 33 per cent of respondents felt the City Guardians’ service had decreased crime and antisocial behaviour, and 25 per cent disagreed. Residents felt that the City Guardians service has been more successful in improving the local environment than in addressing crime and antisocial behaviour. “47 per cent said they have improved the local environment and 22 per cent felt this was not the case.” However, our meetings with senior police officers in Westminster Borough confirmed that they are strongly supportive of CivicWatch and the Guardians.

Sources: CivicWatch Survey Report (City of Westminster, October 2006); http://www.westminster.gov.uk/policingandpublicsafety/crimeandlawenforcement/cityguardians/.
Box 6.5 Street Wardens in Middlesbrough

Street wardens are central to the “Raising Hope” initiative pioneered by Ray Mallon, Mayor of Middlesbrough. This is based on a partnership between the local authority and the police and the employment of over 70 wardens who can expect to deal with around 400 incidents a month. These have now become, as the Mayor has recently argued, an “integral part” of the law enforcement and crime detection and reduction network within the area.

The “Raising Hope” initiative achieved success soon after its launch in October 2002. In its first six months crime fell by 18 per cent, burglary was down by 40 per cent and auto-crime by 36 per cent. In the six months since October 2002 to April 2003 there were 2,800 fewer victims of crime compared to the same period the previous year.

The Wardens also deal with environmental issues. They have gone on litter picks with children, raised money for guide dogs for the blind, and painted out graffiti “resulting in almost total elimination of graffiti”, according to the Department of Communities and Local Government website. A recent evaluation of the use of street wardens in Middlesbrough found that “the Warden Service has made a substantial contribution to tackling Crime and Anti Social behaviour in Middlesbrough”, and that “the Wardens have also built a positive relationship with many parts of the local community and have made advances in tackling the fear of crime.” The report also noted the positive “political intervention in the service … which is directly targeted to further enhance this service.” The accountability provided by Middlesbrough’s elected Mayor has helped to drive and expand the recruitment of wardens.

Special Constables. Special Constables are warranted part-time volunteers with full police powers. They have a 175-year history and are part of the community and could therefore be a vital component of a renewed focus on community policing. There are currently over 12,000 Specials – compared to 67,000 in the 1950s. The training and development costs of each Special Constable is estimated at approximately £3,000. The average Special provides 171 hours of service per annum and costs £3.43 per hour of duty in their first two years (due to the cost of initial training), and just £2.40 per hour subsequently. The Special Constabulary is not only “extraordinarily cost-effective, but it is more representative of the community than any other body delivering policing services.” 32 per cent are women and 6.7 per cent are from ethnic minorities.

There are various Home Office initiatives that involve co-operation with the private sector to increase the number of Special Constables. In the ShopWatch Scheme the retail sector pays members of staff for a four-week training period and then allows them one day’s paid leave each fortnight to patrol in the area where they work. There are also schemes where Special Constables with subject expertise are being taken on in specific areas, such as the Met’s arts and antiques unit. These Specials provide expert advice on forgery, fraud and stolen art that officers cannot be trained to have.

One idea currently being looked at by the Met is encouraging police staff to become Specials. The Met have calculated that if 25 per cent of their police staff became Specials it would result in 300 extra officers per day in London, or almost 10 per borough.

A more exciting idea, and one which would improve the links between forces and local communities, would be to establish a new cadre of Police Reserve Officers (PROs) similar to those in the Armed Forces and also analogous to the retained fire-fighters. They would receive some remuneration and training, and commit to being on duty for a set number of days per year. In May 2005 Durham Constabulary began paying Specials a small allowance and have since seen the number of Specials applying to their force increase by a third. The scheme has allowed Durham to increase significantly the number of their Specials. We set out our proposal to create a new cadre of PROs in more detail in Appendix 1.

Contestability. While the core functions of the police require sworn officers, more police activities could be provided by the private sector, so releasing sworn officers for front-line duties. There are many examples of where police forces have already successfully contracted out functions. Private companies manage custody suites and prisoner transport. Sussex Police contracted Reliance to provide six new Investigation and Detainee Handling Centres (IDHCs).

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334 Ibid.
335 “Privatised police arrive on the street”, The First Post, 27 November 2006.
They felt that supervising detainees did not require sworn officers. Since the IDHCs were contracted out, detainee throughput has increased by 25 per cent and time saved on booking in and keeping detainees has allowed the police to increase their visibility on the streets. In spite of adverse initial media coverage, private companies now successfully transport prisoners to court. Forensic services such as the collection of finger-printing and DNA are already handled by the private sector in many forces.

There is scope to go much further. Commercial security firms could bid for contracts to manage crime-scene guarding or cordon duties. The private sector could provide a mobile “street-to-suite” service that would give the police on a busy Saturday night the ability to stay deployed on the ground after a suspect was arrested. This would need major reform to procedures for booking in, crime scene statements and custody drop-off but would dramatically reduce periods away from front-line duty. Other back room functions that take enormous amounts of time, such as typing up transcripts, could also be civilianised. The British Transport Police (BTP) do this already at peak times by bringing in civilian staff on overtime at new year to allow BTP officers to get back on patrol. There is also room to expand the role of the private sector in supporting the police. Some industries already provide money and assistance for specialist services that directly benefit them. For example, industry helps fund the Met’s anti-film piracy unit and the dedicated cheque and plastic crime unit, jointly run by the Met and City police.336

Incentives could be given to the police themselves to improve their performance by competing for contracts, just as prisons do now. Several large force management contracts for IT/radios/fleet management have been part of PFI-style arrangements for some years but there is not much innovation. Much of what is spent in each force is spent in the same way on exactly the same things and usually with the same people.

Some functions that the police currently perform need not be done by them at all. For example, security checks at the conferences of political parties, pursuing people who jump bail (see Box 6.6), monitoring “at risk” prisoners and carrying out general security checks could be taken away from the police altogether and contracted out to the private sector.

A Freedom of Information Act request by the TaxPayers’ Alliance (TPA) revealed that the Metropolitan Police is currently pursuing 4,037 criminal suspects who have jumped bail in the last two years, including over 500 serious and violent offenders. These offenders include 56 drug dealers, 74 burglars, 52 robbers, 13 rapists (including attempted rapists), and eight suspects who were caught in possession of a firearm.

The TPA suggests that if the police cannot catch suspects who skip bail, private bail bond companies should be brought in to do the job. In the United States bail bondsmen employ bail enforcement agents to recover fugitives. It is estimated that bail enforcement agents capture about 90 per cent of the 35,000 people who jump bail in the United States each year, saving law enforcement agencies time and money.

Bail enforcement agents would have to be fully licensed and have their powers carefully specified in law. But as specialists with clear contractual obligations they would be strongly incentivised to bring fugitives to justice – and they would remove a burden from the police.

A majority of the public support this idea. A recent ICM poll asked: “Some people have suggested that security companies could be contracted to support the police with tasks like supervising offenders and tracking down suspects who jump bail. Do you think this is a good or bad idea?” 55 per cent of respondents thought it was a good idea, while only 41 per cent thought it was a bad idea.

**Sources:** TaxPayers’ Alliance press release, 27 February 2007; BBC News Online, 19 June 2003; ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, prepared on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
**Civilianisation.** The process of civilianisation sees support staff based in police stations performing functions such as filling out paperwork that would otherwise be done by sworn officers. This allows officers to spend more time on front-line policing and can also make processes more efficient and economical.

As Box 6.1 showed, forces in the workforce modernisation pilots have civilianised several posts both to untie the hands of the police and improve effectiveness. As one former chief constable has argued, where officers do not provide a direct service to the public, and where they do not require police powers or training to do their job, their posts should be civilianised and they should be returned to front-line operational duties.\(^{337}\) In this way police resources can be used more effectively and efficiently.

The restrictions of the Crime Fighting Fund (CFF) incentivised reverse civilianisation (i.e. an inability to recruit civilian staff leading to sworn officers having to do backroom jobs), but have now been relaxed by the Government, giving local forces more flexibility to decide the staff mix most appropriate to their area (see Box 6.7). However it is important that, with increasing funding pressures, chief constables use these flexibilities to put more officers on the beat.

**Using volunteers … and keeping police stations open.** As local communities become more closely involved with policing, volunteers could be recruited – for example, to help man new kinds of community police stations which could exist on shared premises with other community facilities. In some forces in England and Wales this is beginning to happen. For example, in the Met some 500 volunteers allowed 17 closed London police stations to be re-opened.\(^{338}\) An IPPR report has suggested that there are lessons to be learnt from Japan in introducing new kinds of police buildings:

> “The Japanese police have tended to attach a greater priority to visibility and reassurance than their British counterparts. This is reflected in the widespread distribution of urban Kobans or police boxes and Chuzai-shos, rural police sub-stations. Kobans are usually manned 24 hours a day, and are staffed by rotating teams of two or three community officers who use them as a basis for foot patrols. Community officers are expected to visit every home on their beat twice a year. Sometimes housed amid a row of shops or public building (school or library), they are more often small independent structures with a reception area and back office. They tend to be well designed – a few are strikingly modern – and provide a popular interface with the local police. Chuzai-shos house a police office in the front, and family accommodation to the rear, and are relatively cheap to run. Ironically, both types of building were only introduced into Japan after Second World War, and while the Chuzai-sho resemble old style British rural police stations, the Koban is actually influenced by the traditional British police box.”\(^{339}\)

As the report added: “A local police station, open 24 hours a day, or even a modest high street ‘cop shop’, can offer a reassuring sense of security, even if in practice, the public uses it relatively little. A touring or mobile station can do the same.”

Box 6.7 The Crime Fighting Fund

In a written ministerial statement on November 27 the Government said that it would announce extra flexibilities in the Crime Fighting Fund (CFF) before Christmas. Details were sent to police authorities and chief constables on 21 December (when Parliament had risen) but not announced publicly.

The CFF was introduced in 2000 in order to recruit 5,000 extra police officers over three years and it continues to be paid to maintain a minimum number of officers in each force.

Forces were subject to penalties should numbers fall below this amount. Financial penalties are equivalent to the costs of each officer below their minimum that a force goes to, e.g. if a force is ten officers below their minimum force strength they would be penalised the cost of ten officers from their crime fighting fund allocation.

Because the CFF made it financially difficult to cut officer numbers, whenever forces need to make cutbacks they were forced to reduce head count among support staff. The consequence of this was that many forces do not have enough support staff and then use sworn officers, who are more expensive, to carry out administrative tasks. This process is referred to as “reverse civilianisation”, where sworn officers carry out tasks previously performed by civilians.

The relaxation means that payments from the CFF “will be made irrespective of force strength on 31 March 2007.” However the Government reserves the right to make “future continuation funding dependent on force strength targets if there is evidence in a force that:
- performance has fallen
- there is a clear link between this fall in performance and the reduction of officer numbers and
- the force is unable to give assurance that they can take action to mitigate the fall”.

These flexibilities should enable the release of sworn officers to do front line duties. But if this does not occur or, worse, the consequence is a reduction in police officers on the beat, public confidence will be seriously undermined.
Chapter 6 Part 3 - key findings

SUMMARY JUSTICE IS LEADING TO ‘SOFT JUSTICE’

The Government’s use of ‘summary justice’, its flagship solution to untying the police’s hands, is frequently resulting in soft justice, with Penalty Notices for Disorder of only £80 being issued for a range of offences. The move is helping the police to boost detection rates but has resulted in a drop in the proportion of offences which are taken to court.

DISCRETION SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE POLICE

The police have lost their discretion to act according to their professional judgement. Political correctness and heavy handed interpretation of legislation have created an atmosphere where the police are cautious of being sued or prosecuted. A common sense approach to policy making should allow discretion to be returned to individual officers. This will allow them to act according to their professional judgement within a framework that nevertheless holds them to account for their actions.

THE POLICE FAMILY SHOULD BE FURTHER EXTENDED

In order to set the police free, the police “family” should be extended with a new cadre of part-time paid police reservists joining Police Community Support Officers, whose role should be re-evaluated, and greater use of wardens. Volunteers should be used to help man police stations.

Commercial security firms could be contracted to manage crime scene guarding or cordon duties, provide mobile “street-to-suite” capabilities, pursue people who jump bail, monitor ‘at risk’ prisoners and carry out security checks.
Chapter 7: Accountable policing

The police should be locally accountable to the public, through the direct election of police commissioners to replace police authorities and through a “right to policing” for local communities. Elected commissioners would work with partners to deliver local, joined-up justice. At the national level standards should be ensured by a strong independent inspectorate and a streamlined set of national indicators to measure what matters.

Direct accountability

The link between the constable and the citizen is the foundation of policing by consent. As Sir Robert Peel said in 1829, “the police are the public and the public are the police”. Rebuilding that link will be a vital step in restoring public confidence in the modern police service. Stronger accountability will require new governance arrangements which involve the public more directly, backed up with proper and independently produced information about police performance.

David Cameron has said:

“We live in the age of accountability, in a society in which people have legitimately high expectations when it comes to service. There have been welcome developments in neighbourhood policing which can strengthen the links between communities and local forces. Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships can involve local authorities in coordinating community safety. By aligning these with Basic Command Units, a clearer line of responsibility can be built with local police commanders. But these reforms simply aren’t sufficient to provide a real local say over policing and balance the powerful influence of central government. A more powerful, clear and direct form of local accountability is needed.”

The public’s demand for accountability in the police is clear:

- In a MORI poll for The Sun conducted in 1999, over two-thirds of voters agreed with the statement “I would have more confidence in the police if they were more accountable to the public”. 36 per cent strongly agreed while another 31 per cent tended to agree. A much higher proportion of BME voters – 55 per cent – strongly agreed with the statement.

- In an ICM poll for Policy Exchange in 2002, an overwhelming 80 per cent of respondents said that they would like to have more input into the priorities set for local public services, with over half saying that locally elected management would provide a better service.

341 Lecture to the Police Foundation, 10 July 2006.
342 Ipsos Mori, Attitudes Towards Policing, 25 February 1999. The poll was conducted at the time of publication of the Macpherson inquiry report on the death of Stephen Lawrence.
343 Barry Loveday and Anna Reid, Going Local: Who should run Britain’s police?, 2003.
In an ICM poll for the TaxPayers’ Alliance conducted in January 2007, 58 per cent of people agreed that “We will only reduce crime if we take power away from London, create elected local mayors and give them the power to change how different areas are policed”. By contrast, only 35 per cent of respondents agreed that “We need national control of policing to make it most effective and local control would mean damaging differences between how different parts of the country are policed.”

In a MORI poll for Ernst & Young conducted in November 2006, 69 per cent of people said that a “directly elected councillor” for policing would be desirable to take into account the views of the public. More than half of those questioned supported a transfer of responsibilities from central to local government because of a belief that local politicians listen more closely to them. As Ernst & Young’s report concluded, “Narrowing the gulf between provider and consumer and strengthening accountability are clear public priorities …. We believe that there is a growing case to be made for directly-elected leaders with specific, visible accountability for services to strengthen the connection between what people want from public services and what is actually delivered on the ground.”

A subsequent ICM poll for the TaxPayers’ Alliance in March 2007 found that 89 per cent of people felt that their local police force should be answerable to the community for the force’s performance in tackling crime. 1 per cent did not know and only 10 per cent disagreed.

Do you think your local police force should be answerable to the community for the force’s performance in tackling crime?

Source: ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, prepared on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.

The independent “Power Inquiry”, established in 2004 to explore how political participation and involvement could be increased, recommended that the public should have a more direct influence on the political decisions that concern them: “We should be creating a culture of political engagement in which it becomes the norm for policy and decision making to occur with

345 Ernst & Young, Great Public Services Need Great Commissioning, January 2006.
direct input from citizens. This means reform which provides citizens with clear entitlements and procedures by which to exercise that input – through conception through to implementation of any policy or decision.”

The Government has found it easier to discover the rhetoric of citizen empowerment than to deliver the policy. Gordon Brown has simultaneously called for “a radical shift of power from the centre” while publishing a Treasury paper lauding the Government’s “sustained … programme combining targets, PPAF measures … [and] PSU intervention”, and calling for “new capacity and leadership from the centre”. David Miliband has spoken persuasively of “double devolution”, where power is devolved not just to local government but also to citizens themselves, while attempting to abolish one lower tier of local government and reassemble it at the regional level. There has been less double devolution than doublespeak.

The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit has conceded that governance and accountability in the criminal justice system remain weak and that while “strong accountability at [a] local level could ensure system pressure … there has been a lack of political will to take this forward.” The Home Office action plan agrees that the public “rightly expect responsive, visible and accountable local services within an effective national framework.” However, the accrual of power to the centre has characterised New Labour’s approach, and the devolution of power to the community or individual level has been wholly unconvincing. Ministers set great store, for example, by the provision of local police officers’ e-mail addresses and telephone numbers to the public, as though such basic requirements of proper community relations were a substitute for local accountability.

Similarly, the “community call for action” provided in the Police and Justice Act 2006 is a cumbersome and bureaucratic mechanism of last resort for dissatisfied community groups, enabling them to arraign police commanders through the intervention of local authorities. But if local commanders are required to follow national priorities regardless, the procedure is at best a distraction, at worst a gimmick. As David Cameron has said: “This is phoney accountability. It

347 “... in the new century people and communities should now take power from the state and that means for the new challenges ahead a reinvention of the way we govern: the active citizen, the empowered community, open enabling government .... I want a radical shift of power from the centre” (Speech to Labour’s Party Conference, Manchester, 25 September 2006).
348 HM Treasury, Delivering a step change in police productivity, October 2006.
349 “First, the devolution of budgets down to individuals ... opens up a different form of accountability: direct to the citizen, rather than via the state .... Second, the devolution of power down to the neighbourhood level opens up a major opportunity for the voluntary sector .... As we devolve power down to new neighbourhood structures and build on neighbourhood management, we should look at the potential for neighbourhood-based grant giving, for instance, through citizens’ juries, community empowerment networks or community foundations” – speech to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations annual conference (21 February 2006).
351 Home Office, From Improvement to Transformation: An Action Plan to reform the Home Office so it meets public expectations and delivers its core purpose of protecting the public, July 2006.
gives the illusion of community empowerment, while giving communities no formal power at all over local policing. It’s all about public relations, not police performance.”

In the late 19th century local watch committees met weekly to run police forces. They had the power to hire and fire individual officers and often used it. It was not until 1964 that watch committees were abolished. They were replaced by police authorities which are meant to hold the police to account on behalf of local communities. The Home Office website describes the “tripartite” system as follows:

“A three-way system of responsibility ensures forces run smoothly:
• we fund the police and have overall responsibility as overseer and coordinator.
• chief police officers have responsibility for the direction and control of regional forces.
• police authorities make sure local forces operate efficiently and effectively.

This system prevents political interference in policing and avoids giving any single organisation power over the entire police service.”

In fact, as we have demonstrated, the balance of power has shifted markedly towards central control. In the words of Direct Democracy, a movement of Conservative representatives and activists committed to making localism the core of the Party’s platform:

“The police and the public have never been more remote from each other. Police authorities – appointed bodies comprising local councillors, Home Office-appointed “independent” members, and local magistrates – are supposed to represent the community in the supervision of the police. They are one of the three pillars in the ‘tripartite’ structure implemented in 1964, the others being the Home Secretary and the chief constable. Over the years, and especially since 1997, the police authority has become by far the weakest of the pillars. Chief constables are accountable in practice not to the representatives of the community but to the Home Office in Whitehall, which works to ensure – through targets, central funding streams, and bureaucratic audit and inspections – that local forces implement national policies designed to bring down national crime figures. The Home Office has imposed de facto national control of police forces – as we saw when David Blunkett, responding to the public furore following the Soham murders, demanded the resignation of the Chief Constable of Humberside, despite the local police authority supporting him”.

Police authorities were deliberately reconstituted in the 1990s to include members appointed by the Home Secretary with the aim of insulating the police from what was seen as local political

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352 Speech to the Dalston Youth Project, Hackney (16 January 2006).
353 Chris A Williams, Britain’s police forces: forever removed from democratic control?
354 www.direct-democracy.co.uk.
interference. But the effect was to emasculate them. As a Government Minister, Lord Rooker, has said:

“No-one is going to kid me or anyone else that [police authorities] actually represent anyone. Let us not beat about the bush. The fact is that if one person in three knows the name of his Member of Parliament, I doubt whether more than one person in a thousand knows the name of any member of the police authority in his area.”

Lord Rooker was not far from the truth. A recent ICM survey has found that 94 per cent of people could not name the chairman of their police authority.

The Home Office has conceded that involving communities in priority setting may improve effective policing. We propose that the police should be made more accountable to local communities at every level: in neighbourhoods, at the local command level, and at the strategic force level.

1. Accountability at neighbourhood level

A right to community policing. The public’s strongest demand is for community policing. It is clearly highly desirable that neighbourhood policing teams should be in place everywhere and entrenched with dedicated officers who are incentivised to remain in post. The deployment of resources should be a matter for chief constables answering more directly to their communities, not for central government diktat. But as a report for the Police Foundation noted, people “want to be asked about what they want and have their requests for a decent service taken seriously.”

In Chicago we saw for ourselves how effective regular beat meetings can be (see Box 2.4). Not only did the regular meetings help the police to identify the public’s priorities, but they also helped build a relationship between the police and ethnic minority communities that had traditionally distrusted them. Many forces in England and Wales now hold regular meetings with local communities at neighbourhood level where citizens can meet their local neighbourhood policing teams to discuss their concerns and identify solutions to problems.

However, this is discretionary, and in some forces the police prefer not to involve local councillors. Only a few forces appear to hold monthly beat meetings in all of their neighbourhoods. Lancashire holds monthly Police And Community Together (PACT) meetings in each of their 240 neighbourhoods. The meetings are successful and are usually attended by 20 to 25 people but on occasions have been attended by over 100 people. However, despite this, a survey by the Force last year found that 78 per cent of respondents were unaware of PACT.

356 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
357 Home Office Strategic Policy Team, Reducing crime – an overview analysis, March 2006.
359 Based on conversations with Lancashire Constabulary Neighbourhood Policing Implementation Team.
The Government has not prioritised beat meetings, although it does have programmes in place to encourage community engagement more broadly. The National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP), which has been operating in 16 pilot wards across eight police forces since 2002, involves “local communities in identifying priority crime and disorder issues in their neighbourhood which they then tackle together with the police and other public services and partners.”

In many neighbourhoods this may involve beat meetings but in others, such as neighbourhoods with a high proportion of elderly people, door-to-door visits or telephone surveys may be more appropriate. Evaluations of the pilot sites showed that the programme had a positive impact on crime, perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour, feelings of safety, and public confidence in the police. Each force has community engagements strategies in place with some placing more emphasis on beat meetings than others. Alternative strategies include developing key individual networks of local people who live, work or regularly pass through a neighbourhood, focus groups, public forums, surveys and environmental visual audits. These strategies are all designed to allow local people to determine priorities and involve them in community safety.

Although the police should continue to reach out to communities in a variety of ways, there is no reason why these strategies should not be used alongside monthly or bi-monthly beat meetings. The public should be given a right of access to their local police through regular beat meetings, which should involve the local parish/town and district/borough councillors. ICM’s survey found that 86 per cent of people think that giving people “the right to regular meetings with their neighbourhood police officers to hold them to account for their performance” is a good idea. A formal entitlement or “right” to community policing would ensure that beat meetings took place – the exact form could be left to the discretion of chief constables – and would raise public awareness of them. In spite of the Government’s promise that everyone should know their local police officers, almost three quarters of the public know none of the police officers in their neighbourhood. This demonstrates that the Government’s current strategy for community engagement is not working. As mentioned above, one of the strengths of the Chicago Alternative Policing programme was that regular beat meetings allowed the public to develop long-term relationships with their local police officers. If such meetings are to take place in England and Wales, the reforms discussed in Chapter 6 must be implemented in order to give the police the time to interact more with the public.

361 Ibid.
362 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
363 Ibid. 73 per cent of respondents knew none of their local neighbourhood police officers, 13 per cent did not know many and only 1 per cent knew all.
Figure 7.1 Poll question on police accountability

Local communities should have the right to regular meetings with their neighbourhood police officers to hold them to account for their performance.

Source: ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, prepared on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.

A right to information about local crime. Police forces in the UK are slowly beginning to provide localised information about crime. For instance, the Metropolitan Police website allows residents to access monthly and annual data on crime rates at the level of their ward.\(^\text{364}\) The data is standardised at crimes per 1,000 population to allow comparison between wards; this would also allow comparison between forces, although the website does not do this. Other forces provide more data than the Met. For example, West Yorkshire maps crimes over a month\(^\text{365}\) and CDRPs in Sussex work with Sussex Police to also provide localised crime mapping.\(^\text{366}\) However, the Los Angeles Police Department’s website is far more impressive, allowing residents to see real-time maps showing exactly where individual crimes, clearly identified by categories, have been committed in their neighbourhood within a one to five mile radius over the past week.\(^\text{367}\) This data is much more localised and accessible than the information provided by the few forces that publish crime maps in this country.

\(^{365}\) http://www.beatcrime.info/.
\(^{366}\) http://www.caddie.gov.uk.
In addition, an e-policing bulletin updates citizens with localised information. Such information is a powerful tool for individual citizens, not only exposing crimes in a way which strongly incentivises local officers to address the problem, but also equipping people to make decisions. As the LAPD website says, “being informed about crime in your community is the first step in preventing future occurrences.”

Overall crime statistics are important, but they can mean little to the public. What people really care about is crime in their neighbourhood – the crime that affects them. British citizens should have a right to high quality real-time crime data in their neighbourhood. In addition, they should be able to compare crime levels over time easily, between neighbourhoods and between forces. The data should be published by forces, so that they can also provide local information about officers, contact details etc. But the standard and integrity of the data should be governed by the new independent Inspectorate (see below).

**Local control of community safety budgets.** In Milton Keynes, Local Management of Community Safety (LMCS) enables communities at a parish level, or through their parish at an estate or street level, to develop solutions to crime and antisocial behaviour in partnership with the established agencies such as police, fire, health and Milton Keynes Council. LMCS places multi-agency teams of workers on the ground that include parish community safety officers, safer communities wardens, police area beat officers and community support officers as well as the various council services such as housing, the youth service, waste disposal and abandoned vehicle officers. The teams work closely together, encouraging local people to report crime and
disorder and setting up ways of resolving the problems that are identified. Following initial trials, LMCS is now fully developed in four parishes.368

But such involvement of parish councils is unusual. A survey for the Commission for Rural Communities found that only around 20 per cent of parish and town councils felt effectively consulted by local authorities and the police.369 The vast majority – approximately 90 per cent – have no delegated responsibility for crime and disorder. Yet 73 per cent of town councils and 44 per cent of parish councils already spend their modest resources on crime prevention. Categories of spending included:

- CCTV (17 per cent)
- Neighbourhood Watch (16 per cent)
- Youth facilities (11 per cent)
- Design improvements (11 per cent)
- Information campaigns (8 per cent)
- Lighting (5 per cent)
- Police & Community Support Officers (3 per cent).

As the final report of the Lyons Inquiry into Local Government noted, “there is evidence that people value local policing highly and where there are local concerns about community safety and cohesion they may choose to ‘buy’ more police via a local tax”.370 Certainly local communities are increasingly picking up the bill for policing. The amount of police expenditure financed through council tax has almost doubled, in real terms, since the Government took office. As central funds for Community Support Officers taper, councils are being asked to fund their continuing employment. In return, communities should be empowered to control significant elements of community safety budgets and secure the level and type of policing and local protection that they want. An ICM survey found that 76 per cent of the public thought that giving local communities a say over their local council and police budgets was a good idea, and 36 per cent thought it was a very good idea.371

371 ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.
It should be noted that local government community safety budgets are relatively small. The crime reduction and safety services budgets of local authorities in England and Wales totalled £361 million in 2005-06, roughly 1.5 per cent of total local government spending in England, excluding education, social services and police expenditure. However, the money could have a real impact local communities. It could be used to fund a dedicated police officer, PCSO or warden who would have a non-abstraction agreement; clean graffiti or purchase specific equipment. There have already been instances where public organisations such as schools have agreed to fund PCSOs on the condition that they patrol their area and have a non-abstraction agreement. The power could even be used to mandate or support the re-opening of a local police station.

Alternatively, councils could choose to return money to voters, in the same way as passengers receive financial redress from rail operating companies, or the companies from their monopoly client (Network Rail), if service agreements are not met. All of these possibilities would give a powerful incentive to chief constables to ensure that communities were satisfied.

This approach has already been experimented with by the Government in their New Deal for Communities programme. For example an NDC in Leicester had problems with youths joyriding stolen motorbikes in a park so they purchased two new motorbikes for officers to use to chase them.

Giving citizens an effective financial stake in the provision of their local policing will be a powerful step towards the genuine empowerment of communities to ensure the safety of their neighbourhoods and the level of protection they want.

Source: ICM, Police Reform Survey, 2-4 March 2007, prepared on behalf of the TaxPayers’ Alliance.

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Box 7.1 Hammersmith and Fulham 24/7 neighbourhood policing

Hammersmith and Fulham, a Conservative controlled Council, is launching an 18 month trial of round-the-clock neighbourhood policing. The council is spending £1.5 million over two years to set up pilot 24/7 neighbourhood policing teams in two wards. The scheme consists of teams headed by a dedicated inspector who will manage five sergeants, ten police constables and 15 PCSOs. These teams are far larger than the current Safer Neighbourhood Teams which are made up of one sergeant, two police constables and three PCSOs. Local business and the Fulham NDC (New Deal for Communities) are also contributing funds.

The council wants to see zero tolerance policing on the streets of Hammersmith & Fulham and hopes the pilot will confront antisocial behaviour such as graffiti and littering as well as more serious crime. Its website says:

"Working with the police, we are determined to take a tough line on yobs, street drinkers and litterers as a way of bringing all our crime figures down. It's an approach that worked in New York, where crime figures tumbled under Mayor Giuliani's zero tolerance clampdown."

Criminals operate around the clock, and, while the roll out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams across London is a step in the right direction, these teams do not operate on a 24/7 basis. Hammersmith and Fulham’s two pilot wards will see their existing, ten hours a day, five days a week Safer Neighbourhood Teams transformed into larger teams providing round-the-clock policing. Councillor Greg Smith, who is responsible for the plans, said:

“This experiment is a massive sea change and a hugely ambitious project for a local authority to start. It will immediately benefit the residents in the test area and ultimately residents across the whole of Hammersmith & Fulham."

“Residents want a more visible, local uniformed presence 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – just like they have in New York and Chicago. This is a genuinely groundbreaking approach to crime and antisocial behaviour in London.”

The pilots, which are due to begin in April 2007, are supported by the Metropolitan Police Service and the Metropolitan Police Authority. Hammersmith and Fulham’s strategy for tackling crime also includes Neighbourhood Wardens who patrol crime hotspots and focus on environmental issues and antisocial behaviour.
While providing these improved services Hammersmith and Fulham Council has also been able to cut council tax by 3 per cent this year.

2. Accountability at local command level

The increasing responsiveness of BCU commanders and their operational sub-commanders to their communities has been a positive development. Essentially this has been discretionary, but in addition to the Community Call for Action the Government proposes to enhance BCU accountability by making them answerable to overview and scrutiny committees for their contribution to the delivery of local community safety priorities. Although ministers have said that BCU commanders should be publicly answerable to the communities that they serve, the Government also maintains that BCU commanders will remain accountable to chief constables. Joint Home Office and ACPO guidance clearly states that BCU commanders “will continue to be under the direction and control of their chief constable and be accountable to them for the discharge of their functions.”

Instead, the Government intends to strengthen accountability at the command level through CDRPs. However, as this Chapter later argues, CDRPs remain invisible to the public and are intensely bureaucratic. Unless they are dramatically transformed, CDRPs will not provide real accountability. A more radical suggestion from the Superintendents’ Association is to give elected representatives a role in the selection of BCU commanders. There are certainly advantages to strengthening accountability at local command level, and BCUs are closer to citizens than forces. Indeed, if the current 43-force structure is retained, it would be desirable to continue the process of devolving power, budgets and responsibility to BCU commanders, and to consider how to formalise their answerability to local communities.

But ultimately BCUs will continue to possess only tactical, not strategic decision-making powers and answer to chief constables. Making BCU commanders directly accountable to local communities would fundamentally alter the balance of power in police forces and raise the question of who actually runs a force. Such direct accountability can only work at force level, where strategic and resource decisions are ultimately made. Otherwise the person who is accountable to the electorate will not have the necessary degree of control to implement strategic changes. While moves to increase the answerability of BCU commanders are welcome, direct accountability must reside at the strategic, rather than just the tactical, level, if it is to be meaningful.

375 Home Office and ACPO, Making delegation work: Guidance for the police service on delegation to Basic Command Units and support departments, September 2006.
3. Accountability at force level

The direct election of police authorities was proposed and then apparently rejected by the current Government when David Blunkett was Home Secretary. But the experience of cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Boston, where improvements to policing have been driven by elected mayors and their appointed chiefs, makes a single point of accountability an attractive solution. As Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago has said: “I’m the one who gets called up about a problem. I’m the one who gets called up about the street lighting and the abandoned car. I’m the one who gets blamed if the police don’t arrive. I’m the one they blame if a city truck is broken down.” During our visit to Chicago officers of all ranks conceded that they had originally been sceptical about Chicago’s Alternative Policing Strategy (see above) – but the Mayor’s personal impetus had ensured its introduction and success.

The direct election of a commissioner to replace police authorities, to whom chief constables would be accountable, would transform the relationship between police forces and their communities. As David Cameron has said: “For the first time, local communities will be truly empowered to insist on the local policing priorities they want. It will give them a real choice over the crime fighting strategy in their area. And it will be an important element in the process of re-energising local democracy.”

Where there is a directly elected mayor whose jurisdiction is congruent with a police force area (currently only London), the mayor would exercise the functions of the commissioner.

Preserving police operational independence. Senior police officers tend to express concern about enhanced local accountability, fearing that it will compromise their independence. As the think tank Demos commented:

“The clearest manifestation of the difficulty in coping with … demands is the deteriorating relationship between the police, the public and politicians, increasingly characterised by mutual suspicion of each other’s motives and legitimacy. Politicians and the public expect more influence in framing policing priorities at the local and national level, while police officers resist what they see as unreasonable interference in matters that are properly operational concerns.”

But the existing “tripartite” balance and the independence of chief constables has already been seriously undermined by the Government in its assumption of power at the centre. The quid pro quo for greater management freedom for chief officers is stronger accountability at the local level. Forces cannot simply be left to their own devices. In an age of consumer power and

378 Lecture to the Police Foundation, 10 July 2006.
increasing demands for institutional accountability, police chiefs must answer to someone. The solution is to restore the proper balance between local and central influence. While police forces should answer to their communities over strategy, local influence should not extend to operational decisions. As the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland recommended, the concept of “operational responsibility” is preferable to that of “operational independence” (see Box 7.1). The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 requires the Northern Ireland Policing Board to draw up a policing plan, appoint the chief constable, who must have regard to the plan, “secure that the police are efficient and effective”, and “hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of his functions”. Similarly, we propose that commissioners would appoint and dismiss chief constables. They would set their own targets for the force, draw up their own policing plans, and, crucially, control their own budgets.

**Box 7.1 Operational responsibility of chief constables**

The Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, chaired by Chris Patten, was set up in June 1998 by the UK Government following the Good Friday Agreement. It examined the issue of the “operational independence” of chief constables:

“6.19 One of the most difficult issues we have considered is the question of ‘operational independence’. Some respondents urged us to define operational independence, or at least to define the powers and responsibilities of the police. The Police Authority and the Committee on the Administration of Justice both advocated this. The Authority told us that under the present arrangements if a chief constable decided that a matter was operational, and therefore within the scope of police independence, there was nothing that they could do to pursue it. We have consulted extensively in several countries, talking both to police and to those who are responsible for holding them accountable. The overwhelming advice is that it is important to allow a chief constable sufficient flexibility to perform his or her functions and exercise his or her responsibilities, but difficult if not impossible to define the full scope of a police officer’s duties. The term ‘operational independence’ is neither to be found in nor is it defined in any legislation. It is an extrapolation from the phrase ‘direction and control’ included in statutory descriptions of the functions of chief constables. But, however it may be defined, it is not acceptable that scrutiny of the police should be impeded by the assertion, valid or otherwise, that the current legislation empowering such scrutiny is limited to matters outside the scope of operational independence.”

380 The Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 Act requires the Secretary of State's approval for the appointment of the Chief Constable in Northern Ireland. We would not propose this requirement, except possibly in the case of the Metropolitan Police – see below.
“6.20 Long consideration has led us to the view that the term ‘operational independence’ is itself a large part of the problem. In a democratic society, all public officials must be fully accountable to the institutions of that society for the due performance of their functions, and a chief of police cannot be an exception. No public official, including a chief of police, can be said to be ‘independent’. Indeed, given the extraordinary powers conferred on the police, it is essential that their exercise is subject to the closest and most effective scrutiny possible. The arguments involved in support of ‘operational independence’ – that it minimises the risk of political influence and that it properly imposes on the Chief Constable the burden of taking decisions on matters about which only he or she has all the facts and expertise needed – are powerful arguments, but they support a case not for ‘independence’ but for ‘responsibility’. We strongly prefer the term ‘operational responsibility’ to the term ‘operational independence’.

“6.21 Operational responsibility means that it is the Chief Constable's right and duty to take operational decisions, and that neither the government nor the Policing Board should have the right to direct the Chief Constable as to how to conduct an operation. It does not mean, however, that the Chief Constable's conduct of an operational matter should be exempted from inquiry or review after the event by anyone. That should never be the case. But the term ‘operational independence’ suggests that it might be, and invocation of the concept by a recalcitrant chief constable could have the effect that it was. It is important to be clear that a chief constable, like any other public official, must be both free to exercise his or her responsibilities but also capable of being held to account afterwards for the manner in which he/she exercises them. We recommend that the Chief Constable should be deemed to have operational responsibility for the exercise of his or her functions and the activities of the police officers and civilian staff under his or her direction and control. Neither the Policing Board nor the Secretary of State (or Northern Ireland Executive) should have the power to direct the Chief Constable as to how to exercise those functions.”


Checks and balances. Concerns have been expressed that electing individuals in place of police authorities will lead to extremism or crude populism. Taken to their logical conclusion, these are unpersuasive arguments against any form of democracy. Nevertheless, it will be important to make certain that sufficient checks and balances exist to ensure that the commissioner’s powers cannot be abused.
The role of commissioners would be statutorily defined. They would chair police boards on which non-executive directors would play an important role in exercising scrutiny. The mechanism for appointing the non-executives therefore needs careful consideration, but while councillors and magistrates can bring valuable experience to police authorities, automatic mandate of these positions should be avoided.

We will also need to consider what additional scrutiny should be applied to commissioners. There will need to be clear procedures for any corruption investigations to be conducted by outside police forces. Ultimately the people will decide on the effectiveness and conduct of the person they elect. But their ability to exercise this judgement could be enhanced. A power of recall – forcing a new election – could, for example, be triggered by an adverse report from the new independent Inspectorate (see below).

If the 43-force structure is retained, forces will keep responsibility for all three levels of policing, not just level 1 crime. A directly elected local commissioner will inevitably have a strong focus on dealing with level 1 crime, but forces also need to address more serious crimes that cross force borders, and low visibility crimes such as fraud. Collaborative arrangements need to be driven forward and joint accountabilities for them need to be agreed. This is the case with existing collaborative arrangements, including the new counter-terrorist hubs, for which solutions have been found. But it is essential that the national impetus to “close the gap” is not lost.

We will consider further what powers the Home Secretary should retain over local forces. Clearly he must be able to deploy officers in cases of national emergency, but the Home Secretary currently has far greater powers of intervention than this, together with other national responsibilities – for instance, relating to the pay, conditions and rank structure of the workforce. The fundamental principle should be that the role of the Home Secretary over local policing should be substantially reduced and refocused onto the areas of national policing and security which are properly his responsibility.

**Funding.** It is essential that there is a direct and transparent funding arrangement between voters and elected commissioners so that the public can judge the effectiveness of the policing they pay for. In 1996-97, almost 85 per cent of police forces’ gross revenue expenditure was financed through government. In 2006-07 the proportion is expected to fall to 60 per cent. The amount of police spending financed through council tax has therefore doubled in real terms between 2001 and 2006-07. Council tax now accounts for more than 21 per cent of police force expenditure finance, compared with 12 per cent in 2001-02.\(^{382}\)

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381 A recall election is a procedure by which voters can remove an elected official from office. In the United States recall elections are currently prohibited in the federal system. The majority of states allow recall elections in local jurisdictions, but only 18 states permit recall elections to remove state-wide officers. Governor Gray Davis of California was successfully removed under recall in 2003.

382 The remaining 18.3 per cent of the police budget is made up of specific grants, income (which includes direct income from local authorities) and reserves.
The interim report of the Lyons Inquiry into local government argued that local government funding is too complicated. The report singled out the complexity of the “police grant and of precepting” as an issue that was “raised more than once at regional meetings and in submissions”. It has been suggested that police precepts could be collected separately from council tax. The report argued that people are often willing to pay more for a service as long as the service itself is clearly defined. A separately collected precept would arguably create a stronger awareness in the public of how much they were paying for policing and what level of service they were receiving in return. However, it would also have significant and unnecessary cost implications. The final report of the Lyons Inquiry did not return to this issue. So long as the funding arrangement of the local police is clear, who actually collects the precept is less important.

Of the £12 billion total revenue expenditure for police forces in 2006-07, over £1 billion comes in the form of specific grants, much of which is ring-fenced and must be spent in specific ways. Ring-fenced funding reduces the autonomy of police forces and makes funding arrangements overly complicated. Funding for PCSOs provides a good example. Because Labour had made a manifesto pledge to deliver 24,000 PCSOs they gave forces money that could only be spent on the recruitment of PCSOs. Many forces welcomed the money and were happy to spend it that way. However, some chief constables would have preferred to spend the funding on additional police officers. Individual forces should be able to decide upon the best mix of workforce and on how to spend their budgets. Block grants allow decisions to be taken closer to citizens and by local forces who are better placed to know the needs of their area than central government.

**The special role of London.** Both the Metropolitan Police Service and the City of London Police are special cases. We have no proposals to change the arrangements for the City of London Police, which is a unique force. So, in many respects, is the Met. With 30,000 officers it comprises a quarter of England and Wales’ force strength. It serves one of the largest capital cities in the world. In particular, it has national policing functions, including important responsibilities for counter terrorism. These functions mean that the Commissioner of the Met answers both to central and local government. In fact he has multiple accountabilities: to the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister, the Mayor, the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and to the Greater London Assembly (GLA).

At the last election the Conservative Party recognised that these arrangements needed simplification, and proposed to abolish the MPA and transfer its powers to the Mayor, with the London Assembly carrying out the MPA’s scrutiny functions. However, because of the Met’s national functions, the Commissioner would continue to be appointed by the Home Secretary, although in consultation with the Mayor. Some have proposed that the Met should be accountable to the Mayor alone. This could happen if the force’s national policing functions

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were transferred to the Serious Crime Force which had separate accountability to the Home Secretary.

There is evidence that two-thirds of Londoners would like the Met to be more accountable to the boroughs.\(^\text{385}\) Whoever the force’s chief answers to, there is a case for strengthening the accountability arrangements of the Borough Commanders to their local communities.

**Figure 7.4 Survey of Londoners on police accountability**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the following, if any, do you think the Metropolitan Police is most accountable to?</th>
<th>Which of the following, if any, do you think the Metropolitan Police should be most accountable to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Home Secretary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mayor of London</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual London boroughs</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The relationship of commissioners with local government.** The principle of local partnership in the fight against crime is an important one. It is epitomised by Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).\(^\text{386}\) They were set up in 1998 as statutory bodies bringing together police, local authorities, fire and rescue and police authorities and Primary Care Trusts.\(^\text{387}\) There is one in every local government area, a total of 376 in England and Wales. Their aim is to reduce crime, the fear of crime, antisocial behaviour and drug-related crime and they each have specific crime reduction targets.

CDRPs are accountable to the Crime Reduction Director in the relevant regional government office. Every three years the CDRP must conduct an audit of crime, disorder and substance misuse in its area. Once the audit is completed the community, including hard-to-reach groups, must be consulted on the findings and the partnership must then establish the public’s priorities for action.

Some CDRPs have been successful. But they can also be bureaucratic, and they are largely invisible to the public. A 2000 survey of Londoners found that only 9 per cent of respondents

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\(^{385}\) MORI poll on attitudes to London policing, March 2006.  
\(^{386}\) Community Safety Partnerships in Wales and some other areas.  
\(^{387}\) Health Boards in Wales.
had even heard of CDRPs. In spite of the fact that the Crime & Disorder Act 1988 placed duties on parish councils to prevent crime and disorder, a survey by the Commission for Rural Communities found that only 21 per cent of parish councils were involved in their local CDRP, while 13 per cent did not know whether they were or not.

If they have heard of them, the public is faced with a bewildering range of local bodies and agreements, with the inevitable acronyms to match. The Home Office explains that “in community safety terms, the principal partnerships are Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships, particularly in Local Area Agreement areas”. It admits that “there are inevitably overlaps between the two agendas” set by local community safety plans and CDRPs. A bigger role for council overview and scrutiny committees will add to the confusion.

The Government has conceded that “it is important that CDRPs should be both more visible to the communities they serve, and more accountable to them.” However, the Respect Action Plan’s suggestion that CDRPs will be placed under a statutory duty to hold regular “face the people” briefings – question and answer sessions open to the public, media and community groups – is weak. A bolder idea is to democratise CDRPs, partly through direct election of local residents. But this calls into question the role of local authorities and councillors.

The Audit Commission’s report into CDRPs argued that central government should shift the “focus to improving services at the neighbourhood level”. The current partnership arrangements require fundamental review. More effective, far more visible and accountable local community safety partnerships are needed. Partnerships need to aim for the clarity and bite achieved when services are accountable to a single Mayor. They should be co-ordinated by, and answer to, the locally elected commissioner – not to regional government offices. They should have their own budgets and they should be able to devolve spending to the most local level. They should produce a single local community safety plan which has buy-in from all stakeholders. And they should have the active involvement of senior councillors from all local government tiers.

**Joining up justice.** In a recent policy paper, the Assistant Chief Constable of Surrey argued that successful police reform must be accompanied by wider reforms in the criminal justice system:

> “Government policy puts a disproportionate focus on the police to tackle the ills of the UK as a high-crime western society …. We have failed to learn the key lessons of American cities such as New York and Chicago: local government needs to be as accountable for neighbourhoods and crime as the police, punishment needs to be more effective, public prosecutors need to be as accountable for convictions as police commanders, etc. Reform

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390 Ibid.
393 See A Force for Change – Policing 2020 (Demos, April 2006).
for these institutions is at least as critical as it is for the police”.

It is clear that at a local level the criminal justice system needs to be joined up if it is to work effectively. At force level local criminal justice boards attempt to do this, while CDRPs are meant to bring partners from outside the criminal justice system into contact with the police. There are already important synergies, but also overlap, between CDRPs and the 42 local criminal justice boards in England and Wales. A recent Local Government Association paper said:

“We have an important opportunity to change the way offenders are managed, both in custody and in the community. The criminal justice system must be more transparent and accountable locally, so that in our villages, towns and cities, justice is seen to be done and its delivery is locally controlled. People who live and work in our communities have a personal and collective stake in breaking the cycle of crime and re-offending”

“The increased use of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) will achieve a joined up approach to reducing the rates of re-offending. Greater involvement of communities in the reintegration of ex-offenders back into the community is fundamental to addressing the worrying trend of increased levels of re-offending on release from prison.”

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) already bring together chief officers of local criminal justice agencies to deliver the PSA targets in their area and to drive through criminal justice reforms. Membership of the boards comprises police chiefs, the Crown Prosecution Service (which already has a structure mirroring police force areas), the court service, youth offending teams, prisons and probation. Each LCJB produces delivery plans for bringing more offenders to justice, improving the effectiveness of trials and public confidence, and reports on progress to the National Criminal Justice Board.

We will want to consider how the new elected Commissioners can play a wider role in the criminal justice system. We will consult on how elected commissioners could work with LCJBs, and others, in order to join up the delivery of justice at a local level. It is essential that judicial independence and that of the CPS is not undermined, but, by working with LCJBs, elected police commissioners could provide a holistic approach to crime reduction.

Community Justice Courts also have the potential to deliver joined up justice. These courts have representatives from other parts of the criminal justice system, such as probation and the police, as well as partners, such as housing, mental health and charities. There are two pilot Community

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395 Mark Rowley Police Reform – The Surrey View – The Third Age of Policing, Transforming from Craft to Profession (Surrey Police, 2005).
396 Local Government Association, Neighbourhood by neighbourhood: local action to reduce re-offending, November 2006.
397 Although the management of the CPS is now being reorganised on a regional basis, local prosecutors remain linked to police force areas.
Justice Courts in Liverpool and Salford, and their initial results have been encouraging. A full review of these pilots is expected in May.

In whatever way it is done, it is essential that local justice is joined up if repeat offenders are to be dealt with and if crime is to be reduced. The current, fragmented system is unsatisfactory. As Tony Blair has said, the criminal justice system is the “the public service most distant from what reasonable people want”.

4. Accountability at national level

As national crime-fighting agencies such as SOCA develop, the accountability arrangements for them will need to be reviewed and probably strengthened. It is currently very hard to judge SOCA’s effectiveness. While national bodies should clearly report to the Home Secretary, we should consider strengthening the parliamentary oversight of their operations.

Ensuring standards

The quid pro quo for trusting professional leaders is that there must be clear information for the public and a regime of robust public inspection. Any performance management framework must be carefully constructed to ensure that the police are measured on what the public want them to do, not proxy indicators of this. Sir Robert Peel’s ninth principle of policing was that “the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it”. However, this is not reflected in the current performance management framework of the police. Professor David Bayley has differentiated between direct performance indicators, such as crime rates or fear of crime, and indirect performance indicators, such as the number of police or detection rates. Direct measures focus on what the police have actually achieved, indirect measures are proxy indicators.

For example, the public wants the police to catch criminals, and serious ones in particular. The current performance measure – sanction detection rates – is imperfectly designed because the police can simply increase their rates by issuing cautions and warnings for generally unpoliced crimes such as cannabis possession and speeding. Rudy Giuliani has emphasised the central role that robust performance measures based on direct indicators played in New York’s fall in crime (see Box 7.2), but in England and Wales the current framework focuses too much on indirect measures. The core tasks of the police are to: reduce crime and catch criminals; protect the public and their property from serious crime, organised crime and terrorism; respond to emergencies, and tackle low level local criminality. These goals must be at the heart of any police performance management framework.
Inputs vs. outcomes

Since the 1980s all political parties have tended to describe their policing policies in terms of police numbers. We have led the way in arguing that the focus should be on results and outcomes rather than inputs. It makes no more sense to measure police performance by the number of officers than it does to measure NHS performance by the number of doctors. The Government has now adopted this position – though, typically, it has already twisted the principle to justify its cuts in funding for neighbourhood policing.

Nevertheless there remains compelling evidence that increased police presence on the street does actually cut crime. As Chapter 2 noted, evidence from the aftermaths of 9/11 and 7/7 and from President Bush’s visit to London suggests that more police on the street do indeed cut crime. A large part of the fall in crime in New York was also attributable to increased officer numbers.

A balance must be struck between developing a new outcomes-led approach and recognising the value of maintaining – and increasing – a uniformed presence on the streets. It could be argued that more police out on the street is itself an outcome, while simply recruiting more police is an input.

Ineffective targets

As has already been noted, central government targets have often skewed police activity, making them focus their efforts on areas the public do not want them to. The classic example of this is sanction detection rates. In 2002 a Crown Prosecution Service paper said: “Only a fifth of crimes recorded by the police result in their perpetrator being brought to justice. We can and must do better.” Four years later the so-called justice gap remained a problem, as Tony Blair acknowledged: “Over the past 50 years, the detection rate almost halved. 47 per cent of all crimes were detected in 1951 but only 26 per cent in 2004-5.” Indeed in 2005-06, of the 5.6 million recorded crimes, only 1.3 million resulted in a sanction detection, where the crime is solved and the defendant is punished. As Chapter 1 noted, this contrasts to a clear-up rate of 46 per cent in Scotland.

Closing the justice gap is indeed important, but the pressure on forces to meet such a crude target has had many unintended consequences which interfere with the real fight against crime. Chapter 6 has already discussed how the sanction detection target encourages officers to issue PNDs for inappropriate offences which are either too serious or too trivial to receive a fine, and how the requirement to “detect” all reported crimes undermines officer discretion. A recent report by the Police Federation contained several further anecdotes about the damaging effects

of the sanction detection target. Here is one:

“We know that the students are around at lunchtime and break time at the local college and if we pull them more often than not we’ll get a cannabis detection. What we should be doing is going into the college and saying ‘we’ve’ got a problem here, and try and educate the students about the effects of smoking cannabis, but we don’t because we know there’s some nice detections to be had for the month …. Why get rid of our detections by educating people?”

The most recent crime statistics reflect increasing levels of this behaviour among police officers. They showed a 9 per cent increase in drug crime which the report ascribed to “an increase in the recording of possession of cannabis offences” coinciding “with an increase in the number of formal warnings for cannabis possession.”

In order to meet sanction detection targets the police can “fish” for minor offences at the expense of more serious ones. In this way the police cherrypick their jobs, picking those which will give them easy detections at the expense of more serious but also harder to solve crimes. So the crude sanction detection target, far from improving the quality of policing, actually lowers it.

Indeed many of the cases of political correctness and pettiness by the police reported in the press often stem from their need to meet detection rate targets. One such incident involved a model pupil who was given a formal reprimand for pushing another pupil. The school suspended the boy and considered the matter closed but, after the incident had come to the police’s attention, they issued the pupil with a formal reprimand. If the police were allowed to use their discretion sensibly they would not have involved themselves in a matter as trivial as this. However, once an incident has been reported to the police and a crime number has been generated, the force’s detection rate will drop unless the crime has been solved. It was in order to “detect” this “crime” that the police took action that means a violent crime will show up on any CRB checks run on the boy for the duration of his lifetime. This is not only a waste of police resources, it borders on injustice. As one former police officer has said, the policy of sanction detection rates “means pointless and repetitive paperwork and less time spent on the street …. Meeting policy-driven government statistics has taken priority over preserving life and protecting property.”

A local newspaper article about the same former officer gave many more examples of the lengths officers will go to in order to get detections:

“He gave one example of an incident when a man was found hanging from a tree having committed suicide. When officers found a weapon in his pocket they seized on the opportunity to report it as an offence.

405 “Model pupil ends up with criminal record for a push in the playground”, Daily Telegraph, 18 December 2006.
When the body of a drug dealer was found in a flat, he claimed officers were more interested in recording a detection of drugs found on the scene than investigating the death.

Mr Hills said that after he was called to a fight between a jogger and a dog-walker he was encouraged to fill out paperwork treating both as suspects even though he knew who was at fault. By treating both as offenders the incident counted double in the force statistics.

He said: ‘This happens all the time. Officers report two crimes for one or even one when there should be none. It is widespread. For some it has become a sport. I have had colleagues who compete to get the highest number of detections. Officers are spending less and less time on the street where the public want them to be. I was spending at least two thirds of my time doing paperwork at my desk’.

Such examples demonstrate the perverse effect of central targets. A more sophisticated measure would allow the justice gap to be closed without creating such perverse incentives for the police. For example, instead of an overall detection rate, rates for individual crimes could be published, so that bicycle crime is not effectively given the same weighting as homicide. Alternatively, if it was still necessary to produce one overall figure this figure could be weighted according to the seriousness of each crime. As was noted in Chapter 1, the ONS has already developed such a weighted count.

Detection rates are not the only central target that skews police activity, although they do so in the most dramatic way. Consider the target to cut burglaries by 15 per cent. If a particular force or BCU has a low burglary rate but very high robbery rate, as some do, this target will not be suitable for them. They will have to move resources from other areas, possibly tackling robbery, to focus on reducing burglary. As their burglary rate is already low it will require a disproportionate effort from them to reduce it by 15 per cent. This shows that targets set nationally will not always match the needs of local forces, and in some cases may conflict with them.

Box 7.2 Giuliani on the importance of good performance management

“There are a number of different things that you can look to, to describe the turnaround [in crime in New York]. But the most important thing is we arrived at a new way of measuring what society wanted from the Police Department. For years, the idea was that what society wanted from the Police Department were a lot of arrests and a lot of police officers making a lot of arrests. That actually isn’t a bad

measure, but it isn't really what a public expects from a police department.

What the public wants from a police department and from its city government, it actually wants a Platonic ideal. The ideal that it wants is no crime and perfect safety.

Well, you can never arrive at no crime and perfect safety. So really what it is entitled to is as much reduction in crime, as much safety as a human institution can produce. And by using crime statistics instead of arrests as measuring the success or failure of a police department, and by doing that in a very, very complete way, and in as honest a way as possible, what essentially we did was to tie the accountability and the measurement of the Police Department to the realistic political goal that people had for the Department.

So every day we measure 76 precincts in New York City, and what we’re measuring is, have murders gone up or down, have rapes gone up or down, have car thefts gone up or down, have-what has happened in all of these areas in which the public expects its police department to perform and are they in fact making the city safer.

And then you can subdivide it into accountability. Accountability for the Mayor, because if crime is going up then the Mayor has to have an explanation for the people of the city. Accountability for the Police Commissioner, who’s going to have to explain that to the Mayor. Accountability for the 15 precinct commanders in which crime has gone up as opposed to the remainder, in which crime has gone down. Why has that happened and what plan do you have so that if it is happening you have some understanding of why it is happening and what can you do about it?

And that's the Compstat program that has won all kinds of awards. It's built very simply on taking something that was unaccountable before and making it accountable, being willing to be measured, being willing to be tested.

Bureaucracies have a terrible time with this. Because the minute you arrive at realistic, objective tests, then people have to perform. And it's much easier, like the Mayor didn't have to perform when the City was unmanageable, bureaucracies don't have to perform when there are no measures of whether they're achieving or they're not, and you're not willing to set out those measures in advance.”

The current performance assessment framework

The Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) published by the Home Office is the current performance management framework for the police. As previously noted PPAF consists of 23 qualitative baseline assessments and 32 quantitative performance indicators. These are combined to produce seven headline performance areas: reducing crime, investigating crime, promoting safety, providing assistance, citizen focus, resource use, and local policing.

There are several problems with PPAF. It measures a number of the wrong things, it measures too much, and its data is questionable. While it is true that PPAF has helped to overcome the lack of performance culture in the police it has created such a culture in the wrong areas. There are many indicators included in PPAF that are inappropriate. For example, while it is important that the police use their resources effectively, this does not directly affect the public. Similarly, qualities such as leadership and training, development and organisational learning are important traits for any organisation, but should not be assessed centrally. These indirect performance indicators do not actually reflect on whether or not the police are successfully doing their job.

By assessing police performance though factors which can be instrumental in achieving the goals of policing, rather than simply assessing them against these goals, the Government has created a system which allows the police to excel without actually doing their job. A force can succeed in several performance indicators without actually improving the service it delivers and in some cases by making it worse. As has been shown above, forces can increase their sanction detection rate (which is both a PSA and priority performance indicator in PPAF) by concentrating on large numbers of minor offences and leaving more serious criminals alone. This is clearly absurd. In addition PPAF neglects protective services and collaboration, and this has, in part, contributed to the level 2 gap.

As well as measuring the wrong things, PPAF measures too much. As noted in Chapter 6, PPAF places an onerous reporting requirement on the police; 55 performance indicators, many of which are self-assessments, mean that the police are required to expend a significant amount of effort on managing their performance. PPAF drains resources and police time from front-line policing.

Finally, the data that goes into PPAF is questionable. The 23 baseline assessments are “designed primarily as a self-assessment with the degree of validation/reality-checking undertaken by HMIC dependent on a force’s overall performance and the rigour of its internal assessment processes.”409 In other words, the forces are required to carry out self-assessments in 23 areas that may be checked by HMIC. It is questionable whether self assessment overseen by an inspectorate that is too close to both the police and the Home Office, provides robust data for performance management purposes.

409 HMIC, Metropolitan Police Service Baseline Assessment October 2006, p.4.
In addition to this qualitative data, quantitative figures from 32 Home Office statistical performance indicators are used to provide an overall assessment. As the first Chapter noted, the statistics produced by the Home Office are neither the most reliable nor the most accurate of figures. These statistics are then combined with the baseline assessments to generate seven headline figures graded from poor to excellent. The grades are determined by comparing the force’s performance in that area to the average performance of forces most similar to it the previous year. However, as the inputs themselves are suspect, these final grades may not accurately reflect performance. The last PPAF assessment contained several anomalies. For example, Northamptonshire had the third highest rate of crime reduction in the country, yet was graded “poor” for reducing crime.\footnote{Police Review, 10 November 2006.}

The Government has acknowledged the limitations of PPAF, and the Police Crime & Standards Directorate is currently working on an alternative framework, Assessments of Police and Community Safety (APACS). APACS seeks to combine assessments of the police, CDRPs and drugs intervention programmes into one framework. It also seeks to reduce the number of performance indicators counted nationally and will publish only five headline grades. These headline grades are likely to be satisfaction and confidence, promoting community safety, tackling crime, protective services, and managing capability. The exact nature of APACS is still under consideration.

The direction of APACS appears right, but it has some potential shortcomings. Assessing the police and their partners under the same framework should help address the lack of scrutiny of partners. However, using a single framework must not allow partners to blame each other for poor performance and thus avoid accountability. There are also concerns that APACS will still try to measure too much. A presentation by the PCSD explained that each of the five headline performance areas in APACS should contain the following underlying domains:

a) overarching contextual judgement and diagnostic data
b) indicators linked to local priorities for improvement (could be force or BCU/CDRP etc)
c) performance indicators for outcomes
d) performance indicators for equality and fairness

Unless some of these indicators overlap, APACS will have a minimum of 25 performance indicators. Also, many of these underlying domains may require more than one key indicator to reflect performance accurately. By specifying so many components, APACS runs the risk the number of performance indicators it uses will spiral towards PPAF levels. Another presentation by the PCSD on APACS also raises doubts about the simplicity of the framework as the two slides shown in Figure 7.5 demonstrate.
Figure 7.5 APACS Presentation

An alternative

The think tank Demos noted the comments of police officers expressing bewilderment about how they are measured:

“Do we police what we count? We took our eye off the ball on antisocial behaviour in the past because it wasn’t measured and you don’t focus on what you’re not held to account for …. What is success for us? Is it detection rates? Is it social trust? Is it quality of life?”412

Under our models of policing, force targets would be set locally, not nationally. But measurement of performance would have to be national so as to be able to compare forces accurately. The police could be subject to a far simpler set of performance measures which would be aligned to what society broadly wants the service to deliver, making them less open to manipulation. At the local level the police would be assessed on three factors:

1 Crime reduction – this would be the prime measure, being the main purpose of policing. Crime reduction would be measured by overall crime and supported by weighted or differentiated detection rates. These figures would be accompanied by a qualitative report that would ensure that improvements were genuine rather than simply administrative.
2 How safe the general public feel – measured by robust and independently conducted attitudinal surveys.
3 How satisfied victims and witnesses are when they come into contact with the police – also measured by attitudinal surveys.

In order to meet these goals the police would have to deliver excellent customer care, solve crimes, prioritise serious ones, and reduce crime in their area – exactly what the police are for. The police would not be encouraged to meet their targets by sitting in their station, ticking boxes on forms that mean nothing to the public. Additionally these measures would place far less of a reporting burden on the police than PPAF.

A crucial element of this approach would be to ensure that the assessment and the surveys were conducted by an independent body – not the Government.

Crime figures that can be trusted

The Government has been shown to manipulate and spin statistics systematically to present itself in the best possible light. In evidence submitted to the Parliamentary Science and Technology Select Committee, the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies said that the Home Office had ignored their interpretation of crime data and that “through various manipulations of

the data, the Home Office method does what it can to capitalise on chance, producing much more favourable findings overall.” The author of the submission, Professor Tim Hope, a criminologist at the University of Keele told The Guardian:

“I had pointed out prior to the Home Office publishing [crime statistics] that I thought their interpretation differed from our own and I had identified where I thought the difference lay.

“Despite that, they proceeded to publish their own analysis. The inferences from that analysis were, let us say, rather more favourable to the political interests in this programme than were my own.”

Professor Hope added that several researchers at a conference in 2003 were prevented from presenting work paid for by the Home Office, even though they were already on the conference programme. He believed this was because the Home Office wanted to control the way the information was released. To make matters worse, the statistics that the Home Office misrepresent are themselves not always initially correct. The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee was told that one in five sets of statistics collected or collated by the Home Office has been found to be inadequate.

The Home Office has been criticised by the Statistics Commission for manipulating their publication in order to put a positive spin on the Government’s performance. Recommendation 4.1 of the independent crime statistics review commissioned by then Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, advised that the Home Secretary should ensure that there is an actual and perceived separation between those who produce statistical data and commentary, and those who are responsible for policy advice and whose performance will be judged on the data produced. The independent review felt that this separation could be achieved by having senior statisticians employed by the national statistician and seconded to the Home Office. This does not go far enough. If crime figures are truly to be trusted by the public they must be recorded completely independently of the Home Office, perhaps by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

A separate review of crime statistics by the Statistics Commission also suggested that the British Crime Survey (BCS) should be moved to the ONS who have the methodological expertise and are independent. The independent review disagreed with this on the grounds that the BCS “is

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414 “MPs accuse ministers of twisting science for political purposes”, The Guardian 8 November 2006.
415 “Home Office figures are not up to scratch, senior official admits”, The Times 16 January 2007, p.4.
one of the most important research tools and sources of information for the Home Office to
manage the crime problem.”\textsuperscript{418} We do not find this argument convincing, since there is no reason
why independently complied data cannot be readily made available to the Home Office to help
its planning.

The BCS could also be improved. The independent review recommended extending its coverage
to the under-16s and those living in group residences, such as students. It also recommended that
regular, though due to costs, less frequent, commercial and industrial victimisation surveys be
conducted to give a fuller picture of crime.\textsuperscript{419} We support these recommendations.

It is important that the publication of crime statistics is accompanied by a qualitative report that
highlights specific issues that headline figures will not reveal. For example, if the police decide
to crack down on drunken behaviour in town centres on a Friday and Saturday nights, the
immediate effect will be that their crime figures will go up, whereas in reality the police are
doing more to cut crime. Qualitative reports published alongside crime statistics at force level
will help guard against the misinterpretation and indeed the misrepresentation of these statistics.

Survey data

We agree with the Statistics Commission that the BCS should be separated from the Home
Office, but would go further and argue that recorded crime should also be published
independently. We are not persuaded that the measures proposed by the independent review will
insulate statisticians from Home Office officials sufficiently for the data to be interpreted
impartially or for the public to trust it. It makes sense for survey data of victims, witnesses and
the general public, which should be made available to the public, to be collected and published
by the same body. This body could either be the ONS or, as will be discussed below, a newly
independent, beefed up Inspectorate.

A new Inspectorate

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary is too close to the Government and police forces.
There needs to be a more independent and rigorous inspectorate that will serve as a champion of
the people rather than the police.

HMIC has a relatively small budget of £10.9 million, and only 144 staff. This compares to
OFSTED’s budget of £220 million. Of HMIC’s staff, almost half – 71 – are employed by the
Home Office, while 67 are seconded from the police and other Government departments. Six
are Crown appointments made by the Home Secretary. HMIC is in no position to drive through

\textsuperscript{418} Review carried out for the Secretary of State for the Home Department, Crime Statistics: an independent review,
\textsuperscript{419} Ibid. p.10.
improvements in the policing system because it is part of the system. A leaked Treasury document criticised HMIC for lacking “the capacity to provide real impetus [for reform] even when the solutions are widely agreed upon.”

HMIC does offer valuable advice to the Home Secretary and to police forces, but this should be not the role of an inspectorate. If the Home Secretary wants a professional police adviser he should appoint one. The role of advising forces could be taken up by the by the new National Policing Improvement Agency. Meanwhile the Home Office’s Police Standards Unit, part of the Police and Crime Standards Directorate, which has some inspection functions, could be subsumed into the newly independent HMIC.

A new Inspectorate should be significantly strengthened and fully separated from police forces and the Home Office. It should report to Parliament rather than the Home Office and inspectors should be appointed by Parliament, not the Home Secretary. It should become in part an economic regulator, ensuring value for money as well as monitoring standards. It could also take over responsibility for publishing crime figures from the Home Office. It needs to be less a candid friend to police forces and more an outspoken champion of the public interest.

Measuring protective services

A problem with PPAF was that it did not measure protective services and as a result the police neglected this area. Its replacement, APACS, is likely to include a headline figure on protective services. If we adopt a model of 43 locally accountable forces collaborating more, protective services will have to be assessed at the force level. The reformed Inspectorate would oversee this and could provide the trigger for intervention by the Home Secretary to ensure effective collaboration. This could help to address the problem of locally accountable forces refusing to work together.

If a Serious Crime Force is introduced, assessment becomes more straightforward. A new local assessment framework would be applied to individual forces which would have little responsibility for protective services. A new framework would be used to assess the national protective service capability.

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420 HM Treasury, Delivering a step change in police productivity, October 2006, p.3.
421 See Reform’s proposal for ‘Ofcop’ (A Better Way [Reform, 2003]) and Demos’ similar proposal for “OfPol” (A Force for Change – Policing 2020 [Demos, April 2006]).
Compstat, short for Computer Statistics, is a police management tool that was pioneered in New York in the early 1990s and played a vital role in the city's sharp drop in crime. Compstat includes a Geographic Information System (GIS) which allows the police geographically to record and map occurrences of crime. Compstat programmes have been successfully used in many other American police departments such as Boston, Philadelphia, Miami, New Orleans, Newark, New Jersey, and Los Angeles.

Compstat relies upon timely and accurate intelligence, rapid deployment, effective tactics and relentless follow up and assessment. Using timely and accurate intelligence effectively allows the police to monitor performance and target resources in a much more efficient and proactive way. Rapid response to problems identified by Compstat, coupled with effective tactics, which are informed by the intelligence provided by the system, enables police action to be more effective. Finally, relentless follow up and assessment ensures that problems are solved and that area commanders are accountable for their performances. If crimes or calls for assistance increase in a local commander's area, the chief can ask them why this has happened and what they plan to do in order to address it. This places a huge incentive on local commanders to cut crime.

Under Compstat in American cities, local commanders could only meet their targets by cutting crime, exactly what the public want them to do. While crime is caused by many factors outside of the control of the police, and therefore not usually a good indicator of performance, using highly localised data allows external factors to be accounted for in performance assessment. This high level of accountability also encourages chiefs to delegate authority to local commanders. As the LAPD website says:

“A vital component of the COMPSTAT philosophy is its emphasis on holding police managers directly accountable for combating the crime in their assigned area and providing them the authority to deploy their resources to achieve the desired results.”

Compstat has many other benefits in addition to improved performance management. By providing accurate and timely intelligence the system ensures that frontline community police officers on foot patrol have the same intelligence about crime trends and patterns as senior detectives do. These are the officers who will have most contact with potential suspects so it is vital that they are well informed. This information enables officers on foot patrol to target their efforts more effectively and to proactively reduce crime. Also, by analysing trends officers can tackle
emerging problems before they become more serious. This type of problem solving policing was vital to the successes of the New York and Chicago police.

Government guidance on police performance management highlights the benefits of Compstat and GIS. All forces in England and Wales have developed performance review structures which put into practice some of these principles. We attended a Compstat meeting in the Eastern Area BCU of Hertfordshire Constabulary in Stevenage. A crime analyst had prepared a detailed document analysing the performance of each Operational Command Unit (OCU) in the BCU which was presented to OCU commanders by the BCU commander. The analysis also identified crime hotspots, trends, emerging issues and relevant intelligence.

American cities used Compstat to focus their efforts to reduce crime. However, performance management in England and Wales is built around central government targets, such as sanction detection rates, which do not directly cut crime. Unless police forces in England and Wales focus their performance management structures exclusively on actually cutting crime, they will not achieve the same results that American police departments have.

As well as adopting performance management structures, most forces in England and Wales now use crime mapping. GIS is a vital component of Compstat, as it helps the police to identify problems and proactively solve them before they escalate. However, there is little systematic information about how GIS is used in England and Wales. ACPO has recently set up a National Police Geographic Information Board, working under the Information Management Business Area, which will seek to provide a clearer picture of GIS use.

The most comprehensive study of GIS use in England and Wales is a recent Home Office survey of crime analysts. The survey found that 70 per cent of respondents considered crime mapping to be very important, and that three quarters used crime mapping once a week or more. However, the survey also found that GIS was used primarily for descriptive analysis in audits, rather than to identify proactive steps that could be taken to reduce crime. In addition the survey also found that the quality of the data was a concern, with over a third of respondents indicating that available data was insufficient or very poor.

Chapter 7 - key findings

DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY
The police should be made more accountable to local communities at every level: in neighbourhoods, at the local command level, and at the strategic force level.

Local communities should be given a “right to policing”, with access to their local police through regular beat meetings involving councillors, and to detailed information of crime levels in their area. Communities should also be given control of community safety budgets.

Local BCU commanders should be given more responsibility and control over budgets.

At force level, directly elected police commissioners should replace police authorities. The role of the Home Secretary over local policing would be substantially reduced and refocused onto the areas of national policing and security. There would be a direct and transparent funding arrangement between voters and elected commissioners so that the public can judge the effectiveness of the policing they pay for.

Chief constables should retain “operational responsibility” for day to day policing, in line with reforms to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. However, elected commissioners would appoint and dismiss chief constables. They would set their own targets for the force, make their own policing plans, and, crucially, control their own budgets.

JOINED UP JUSTICE
Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships are invisible to the public and bureaucratic. More effective, far more visible and accountable local community safety partnerships are needed. They should be co-ordinated by, and answer to, the local elected commissioner – not to regional government offices. They should have their own budgets and they should be able to devolve spending to the most local level.

We will consult further on whether elected commissioners could be given a much
wider remit in the criminal justice system than just the police. This could be achieved by putting the commissioner in charge of the local criminal justice board, so joining up the delivery of criminal justice in each area and particularly enabling focus on dealing with repeat offenders.

CENTRAL TARGETS TO MEASURE WHAT MATTERS
Central targets for the police are manipulated and assessment of the police is bureaucratic and complicated. Targets should be set locally, not nationally, and police performance assessed on three simple factors:

1. Crime reduction – measured by overall crime and supported by a weighted detection rate though this will be given less importance than crime levels. This would be the prime measure.
2. How safe the general public feel – measured by robust and independently conducted attitudinal surveys.
3. How satisfied victims and witnesses are when they come into contact with the police – also measured by attitudinal surveys.

AN INDEPENDENT INSPECTORATE
Performance assessments, crime figures and the British Crime Survey should be conducted completely independently of the Home Office.

Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary is too close to the Government and police forces. There needs to be a more independent and rigorous inspectorate that will serve as a champion of the people rather than the police. It should report to Parliament rather than the Home Office and inspectors should be appointed by Parliament, not the Home Secretary. It should become in part an economic regulator, ensuring value for money as well as monitoring standards.
Conclusion

Many of the proposals in this report are challenging. They represent a fundamental shift of power from central government to local communities. They will require the police to adopt new ways of working. And they raise a number of key issues which we want to discuss:

- What should be the proper national-local balance in policing? Our aim is to give maximum local discretion while recognising that central government has responsibilities for setting standards and ensuring co-operation where a national lead is required.

- Which of the two models we propose for the structure of policing – 43 forces collaborating more effectively to strengthen protective services, or 43 forces plus a Serious Crime Force – is preferable?

- If a Serious Crime Force were established, how would it interact effectively with local police forces?

- Would it be practical and desirable to allow the creation of smaller local forces?

- How could elected commissioners work with the rest of the criminal justice system to ensure “joined up justice” in their areas?

We welcome responses to these questions and all of the other issues raised in this report. These are ideas for consultation, and we wish to begin a national debate. But our direction of travel is clear: stronger accountability, better performance, reforms to unlock leadership.

The benefits of reform would be enormous. Lower crime would benefit all sections of society, but particularly the poorest communities where crime is highest. Local accountability would help to build stronger communities. And a highly trained, well-motivated and professional workforce would drive up performance and deliver better value for money for taxpayers.

In David Cameron’s words:

“We cannot be tough on crime unless we tackle the issues which are holding back police performance. This is the most difficult and controversial part of the crime agenda. But … unless we have the courage and the determination to pursue radical police reform, we will never build the safer communities we all want to see.”

422 Speech to the Dalston Youth Project, Hackney, 16 January 2006.
Appendix 1

A new cadre of Police Reserve Officers

The Special Constabulary celebrated its 175th Anniversary last year. Forces across the country marked the occasion with charity events and fund-raisers. A national advertising campaign to promote the work of Specials was unveiled and, in a number of forces, new recruitment drives were launched.

As a part-time volunteer force, Specials have long been valued by chief constables as a helpful addition to force ranks. A debate over the role and functions of Special Constables has emerged in light of recent Government-funded attempts (and independently some local initiatives) to encourage recruitment, expand their participation in neighbourhood policing functions, and harness more regularly the skills that these volunteers bring to modern policing.

As part of a wider, more diverse police family, policy in recent years has made some attempt to boost retention rates and create a larger, more permanent Special Constabulary that is better able to improve levels of police visibility and give chief constables greater flexibility in deployment. However, it is unlikely that, even despite existing initiatives, any significant renaissance in the Special Constabulary is under way.

The number of Specials has been in general decline historically, and there is some evidence of a negative effect on the intake to the Special Constabulary since the creation of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). While the current position of the Special Constabulary in England and Wales represents an untapped resource of enormous potential, certain limitations on work conditions that have prevented Specials being used to maximum effect remain.

Unless addressed, these inherent limitations on regularity, responsibility and reward, make any attempt to cultivate a renaissance in police volunteering difficult to envisage. Only if a new approach to Specials is taken will there be a chance to stimulate a real growth in their numbers and the opportunity for the Special Constabulary to become a more vital and expanded component of modern policing.

Background

The Special Constabulary is comprised of volunteers who opt to become fully-fledged police officers for a minimum of four hours per week (16 hours per month or 200 hours a year), although many offer to work considerably more hours. They wear a near-identical uniform and in many forces carry the same personal protective equipment – though the issuing of equipment to Specials is not standardised. Special Constables have identical powers to their regular (full-time) colleagues.
apart from restrictions on where those powers may be used outside their home force area. Special Constabularies are headed by a commandant or chief officer, who are themselves volunteers, and most units have their own organisational structure and grading system. Special Constables in a number of forces in England and Wales, including the British Transport Police, have no separate administrative structure and no grading system. With the exception of a handful of bonus payment schemes, Special Constables are not remunerated for their time. The Home Office lays down a standard rate for limited travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses, but these are minimal.

**Role.** Specials work alongside regular police officers, and are most frequently used to supplement regular officers on special occasions such as carnivals, fetes, sports matches and other outdoor events. However, event policing and cordon duties are not the only tasks for which Specials are used. A number of forces have developed specialist units and associated training schemes for Special Constables, including public order duties for policing demonstrations. A few forces also have traffic teams made up of Special Constables.

Over the last five years, moves towards neighbourhood policing schemes have involved the inclusion of Specials in beat-patrol teams. Alongside PCSOs, and regular full-time police officers, Specials have become a valuable addition to neighbourhood policing in a number of forces. Including Specials in neighbourhood patrols increases the available skills and arrest powers in a PCSO team and improves the street-level experience Specials can gain while on duty.

**Numbers.** Home Office statistics for police service strength in England and Wales up to 31 March 2006 show that there has been an upturn in Specials recruitment since 2005. During the last two years the number of serving Specials has increased by 11 per cent up to the year ending March 2006, and 8 per cent during the previous year. The total number of serving Specials now stands at 13,179. In the year to 31 March 2006, 3,954 Special Constables joined and 2,189 left.

Specific figures on the number of Specials in each force are limited, but the most recent for the calendar year 2005 show that recruitment was steady, although some forces – notably the City of London, Greater Manchester, Humberside, Leicestershire, the Metropolitan Police, North Yorkshire, South Wales and West Yorkshire – are processing more new applicants than others:

423 These current restrictions will change in April 2007 when the Police and Justice Act 2006 amends the Police Act 1996. From this date Special Constables appointed in England and Wales will have the powers of a constable within any force area in England and Wales, in the same manner as regular officers.
**Figure A.1**

**SPECIALS IN POST AT 31 DECEMBER 2005 BY FORCE (AND APPLICATION TO JOIN BEING PROCESSED)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Current total</th>
<th>Application being processed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avon &amp; Somerset</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of London</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbria</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon &amp; Cornwall</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyfed Powys</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucestershire</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Manchester</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwent</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humberside</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicestershire</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Police</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northamptonshire</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northumbria</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Yorkshire</td>
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<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottinghamshire</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wales</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Yorkshire</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Figure A.2 Total police service personnel 1998-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>% increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>126,800</td>
<td>141,200</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Constables</td>
<td>18,300</td>
<td>11,900</td>
<td>-6,400</td>
<td>-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>145,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>159,400</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The number of Special Constables fell by more than a third between 1998 and 2005 and, as a proportion of full-time police officers, the number of Specials has fallen from 14 per cent in 1998 to 8 per cent in 2005. The general increase in full-time officer recruitment since 2000 has played a part in this fall. Nonetheless, the average drop as a proportion of total police numbers (including PCSOs) from almost one in eight officers (12.6 per cent), to more than one in twelve (8.1 per cent) is noteworthy.

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The introduction of PCSOs as a new rank of police officer, following the Police Reform Act 2002, does appear to have had a negative effect on the recruitment into the Special Constabulary, with a strong inverse correlation between the decline in the number of Specials, and the increase in PCSOs since 1998. Clearly there were members of the Special Constabulary who transferred to become PCSOs, and some who would otherwise have joined as Special Constables, perhaps in advance of becoming a full-time police officer, who chose to join up as PCSOs instead. To this extent the creation of PCSOs may have blunted the appeal of becoming a Special with a large number of prospective applicants.

**Attitudes.** Reasons for becoming a Special Constable vary, but research into what motivates people to leave (and one of the biggest limitations on expanding the numbers and role of Specials is poor retention rates) has highlighted some consistent themes. A survey of former Special Constables by Gaston and Alexander (2001), found that the three most frequent reasons given for resigning from the Special Constabulary were: work or study commitments (22 per cent); to join the regular force (19 per cent); or domestic reasons (15 per cent). Former and serving Special Constables were also asked to choose from a list the three main factors that made them resign or would be likely to do so. After the above three reasons, the other factors that were most frequently cited related to the conditions and nature of the work itself:

- Poor supervision by Special supervisors
- Lack of training
- Not feeling valued
- Uninteresting duties
- Not being deployed in a worthwhile manner

This survey supports other anecdotal evidence that suggests that while some choose to go on to become full-time officers, too many Specials who might otherwise choose to do so, in fact do not because of work factors. Many of these current limitations in the Special Constabulary that this survey highlights – including factors that affect retention rates – are practical rather than cultural issues borne of a lack of capacity for developing the conventional Specials’ role.

**Current limitations**

The Special Constabulary in England and Wales represents an untapped resource of enormous potential. The value of Special Constables has been acknowledged by senior police officers for many years, but until very recently, general employment arrangements had not been reformed to encourage recruitment and little progress had been made towards reversing the historic decline in the number of Specials. While the duties Specials perform have become more varied, and they are now starting to become integrated into neighbourhood policing programmes in a

number of forces, there has not been a step-change in the numbers serving in the Special Constabulary, nor has there been anything beyond patchy success in expanding their role and functions.

This lack of workforce development is the main reason why, despite a small upturn in the last two years, the general decline in Special numbers has continued unabated. Turnover rates of 18 per cent per annum are also high.427 The average Special Constable only stays with the force for five years which means they leave shortly after building a base of knowledge skills and experience that could be of great use to the service. The current volunteer force of Specials does a laudable job, but the nature of their limited, unpaid role, creates artificial limitations. It does not give chief constables enough latitude in incorporating them more fully in operations, or enough motivation in recruitment. Nor does it serve to make the job role attractive enough to capture many more potential volunteers in wider society. These limitations, which are not comprehensive, may nonetheless be classified under three headings: Regularity, Responsibility and Reward.

- **Regularity** issues prevent Chief Constables and senior officers regarding Specials recruitment as a priority, and problems with retention only reinforce the hierarchy’s view that Specials are nice if you can get them, but because of a lack of regularity, force planning has to regard them as a bonus rather than an essential component of day-to-day operations. The limited hours Specials work are decided by the individual, and this lack of regularity across the board restricts what deployment options are available to borough commanders and is an inherent limitation on any attempt to regularise a force-wide neighbourhood policing scheme that incorporates Specials.

- **Responsibility** issues impact on Specials in that forces often do not have the time or resources to devote to recruiting volunteers with particular qualifications or to training Specials on the job to take on wider duties. This is reinforced by an attitude that is sometimes present, namely that dedicated Specials are probably best viewed only as pre-recruits to full-time officer status. This lack of development opportunities within the role of Special Constable limits job opportunities available to Specials and inevitably makes the work less appealing to some potential recruits.

- **Reward** issues prevent senior officers recognising the contribution that Specials bring and often the personal sacrifice many make when they already have families and full-time employment responsibilities. On a more practical level, not being able to reward Specials financially limits the ability of chief constables to build up a pool of volunteers who can be called upon at short notice to assist police operations. In addition, lack of any pay for their time does nothing to aid retention of Specials, and it immediately excludes a significant

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number of community-minded individuals – particularly young people – who would willingly give up some of their time to help the local police, but are unable to give their services free. Whether volunteers should be paid has been a long-running debate within the police, with some Special Constables taking the view that to formalise pay arrangements – if only to the extent of offering a small annual retainer – would somehow dilute the character of the role and attract applicants who do not share the core volunteer ethic. Nevertheless, as the policing family grows and becomes more diverse, modernising pay arrangements should apply to all branches of the sector, and retaining existing, unpaid arrangements for Specials does not address any of the incentive or management issues that currently prevent them from playing a larger role in front-line policing.

Unless addressed, all these inherent limitations – regularity, responsibility, and reward – make any attempt to bring about a renaissance in police volunteering difficult to envisage. Only if a new approach to Specials is taken will there be a chance to stimulate a real growth in their numbers and the opportunity for the Special Constabulary to become a more vital part of modern policing.

Box A.1 Durham Police – Specials Incentive Scheme

Durham Constabulary has been pioneering a financial incentive scheme to boost recruitment and retention of Special Constables. With Home Office funding, Durham established a scheme in May 2005 which offers a payment of £1,500 to Special Constables completing a year of service with the force. The retainer is available to all Specials who complete a minimum of six hours service a week, although allowance is made for training and annual leave. The payment scheme – the only permanent one of its kind in the country – is designed to incentivise a greater level of volunteering from existing Specials above the standard minimum of 16 hours per month, and also to encourage the recruitment of new Specials to the force. The payment is received in January, as a "bonus" and is tax free.

In the time since its launch, the scheme has significantly boosted recruitment. In the first 14 months, the number of Durham Specials increased from 82 to 110, with a further 43 applicants going through the selection process. The scheme has also improved retention rates: in the same period, just three officers left the organisation. In a report to the Police Minister, the Chief Constable, Jon Stoddart, said that the vast majority of the Specials – 84 per cent – had elected to join the allowance scheme and he was confident that the growth would continue. The Durham Special Constabulary draws its volunteer recruits from a wide base of local residents, including a number of students from Durham University.
A significant consequence of the incentive scheme is that Specials in the force are now used more routinely, and are deployed less erratically with each reporting directly to the 13 full-time community inspectors, who, between them, have responsibility for distinct geographic areas across the Durham force. One of the main motivations for the scheme was to give senior officers greater “ownership” over what was recognised as an untapped, underused resource. The functional limitations of a purely volunteer-based force was one of operational predictability. Specials were expected to complete a minimum number of hours per week, but in reality, a borough commander did not have strict authority to compel attendance at desired times because they were unpaid volunteers. A small annual retainer has increased the control Specials can be expected to be subject to vis-à-vis working hours.

The incentive scheme has improved both recruitment, and employment routine, such that the planning for the use of Specials for upcoming policing work has become much more predictable and routine. This has aided timetabling and force deployment, especially with regard to neighbourhood policing teams in which Durham Specials now have a permanent part.

**Sources:** “Bounty Pays Off for Police”, The Newcastle Journal, 22 August 2006; Interview with Durham Chief Constable John Stoddart, 16 January 2007

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**A formal police reserve**

Having considered the current position and state of the Special Constabulary, we take the view that a whole new structure for Specials is needed in Britain. We propose the creation of a new cadre of Police Reserve Officers (PROs) with the following characteristics:

1. PROs would be paid for their time and could also receive an annual income tax rebate to further incentivise uptake.
2. PROs would be required to work a set minimum number of hours each month above the current 16 hours but ultimately at the discretion of chief constables.
3. PROs would operate under a standardised grading structure that would be decided by national agreement.
4. Training across all forces would be enhanced with new opportunities being provided to train on the job.
5. There would be expanded opportunities for PROs to specialise in different areas of policing and crime reduction as individual forces see fit.
6. PROs would form an integral part of neighbourhood policing teams in the future.
7. PROs would continue to be more representative of the community they serve than regular police officers and would appeal especially to younger recruits.
Pay and fiscal remuneration

“I’ve got nineteen years service [as a Special Constable] and I’ve been paid for the last two. Over the last two years, I’ve done more hours than I’ve ever done before because being in the Reward scheme motivates me. Furthermore, in the last two years I’ve received more training than I’ve received before, including training alongside regular colleagues for the first time … this is because my force is now investing in me to get more out of my increased hours, [the] upshot being that I’m probably enjoying being a Special more than I ever have ….”

The Durham experiment gives strong support to the argument that paying Specials works. As they are doing the same job as regular police officers, it has long been argued that restricting any financial remuneration to a very limited range of expenses does nothing to encourage others on the fringe to consider offering their time, nor does it adequately reflect the valuable role that Specials now perform in front-line neighbourhood policing. The positive practical impact on retention, and force deployment, experienced with the Durham scheme are also acknowledged.

Therefore, all PROs regardless of age or experience should be paid for their time based on completing a statutory amount of hours volunteering per month. The payment should be tax free and paid quarterly, and be limited to the requisite hours determined by individual forces. PROs would still be able to volunteer to work additional hours over and above those required to receive the quarterly retainer, as many Specials already do.

To further incentivise the role of PROs, and to aid retention, the tax system could explicitly reward this form of civic action. A tax rebate on a PRO’s main source of income from full-time PAYE employment (or self-employment) could be considered. Alternatively, some form of council tax rebate could be considered. Tax rebates in whatever form would be paid in recognition of a full year’s quota of volunteering hours (determined locally). Individual forces could impose additional qualifications for this rebate, possibly to include completion of certain in-work training courses.

The exact level of fiscal remuneration would need further consideration and should also be subject to the discretion of individual chief constables who could choose to pay out annual performance-related Christmas bonuses. A scheme of this nature already operates. Derbyshire Police Authority has started to make annual awards of £500 to the eight Special Constables who have made the most significant contribution to the force over the course of a year. This sort of budgetary discretion should in future rest with chief constables and be applied more broadly.

429 In Humberside, the Special Constabulary Allowance pilot scheme for paying Specials included offering a reduction in council tax for those living in and serving in the Hull area, equivalent to 50 per cent for joint occupants and 75 per cent for people living on their own, on top of the annual £1,500 retainer.
**Working hours.** In return for financial remuneration, PROs should be required to work additional hours over and above those set currently. In respect of volunteering hours, we take the view that Government should set national guidelines for a recommended minimum monthly requirement for Police Reservists but that individual chief constables should have the power to alter this if they choose, including increasing it in light of local recruitment conditions. Forces which are undersubscribed for PROs at any time should have the ability to reduce the required working hours and/or alter pay and conditions for new Reservist recruits.

Extended working hours for PROs may cause resistance from some regular officers who might see opportunities for overtime pay restricted. However, as with the level and form of payment for PROs under the new system, much needed reforms to pay and conditions for regular officers will also need to be taken into account in constructing a volunteering framework for PROs.

**Grading structure.** A Police Reserve Force would benefit from a new standardised grading structure which at present does not exist. Forces should consult amongst the ranks of existing Special Constables, and ultimately co-operate with each other to determine the most appropriate grading structure. The grading structure may be one means of introducing a degree of variability in pay amongst volunteers in the new Police Reserve Force, if this is deemed appropriate. Currently, the grading structure denotes experience and seniority among Special Constables but does not equate to differing powers. This would remain unaltered.

**Training.** A significant operational advantage of Special Constables is their formal powers of detaining and arrest. They are equipped physically and mandated legally to make arrests and to intervene in violent or dangerous situations in a way that PCSOs are not. An expanded police reserve would require a more standardised, and frequent, training schedule – decided locally to take account of different force requirements – to reduce operational risk and enhance success. As an operational resource to deploy in emergencies, training should also take account of the fact that PROs would be more useful to police commanders in high risk situations than current PCSO arrangements.

Major incidents like the 7/7 bombings in London prove the value of an extended police family where non-regular officers can perform vital cordon duties at the periphery of a major incident scene, leaving regular officers to conduct rescue and recovery. However, in future, a well-resourced volunteer police reserve could augment these duties currently performed by regular officers and PCSOs significantly, and if necessary, actually aid officers in front-line rescue and recovery duties in a way that PCSOs are, by their nature, less equipped to perform. While many Specials are already trained in public order duties for policing events like football matches, more systematic training should be available with time dedicated to this aspect of work as a PRO (and counted as part of volunteering hours).
**Specialisation.** There have been some cases of forces introducing specialist policing teams made up of Special Constables – for example in roads policing and dog units – and they have been popular wherever they have been tried. Warwickshire and Devon & Cornwall Police have both for a number of years trained some of their Specials to work with the force’s Road Policing Unit, including some response driving. Opportunities for PRO specialisation should be enhanced and it should be marketed as a means of expanding the scope of recruitment to take advantage of volunteers with professional skills. The City of London Police recruits accountancy specialists to work directly for its Fraud Squad and this principle should be extended into other areas; for instance forensics.

**Neighbourhood Policing.** The philosophy of neighbourhood or “broken windows” policing is crucial to achieving sustained long-term reductions in crime and we endorse moves made by police forces to set down a permanent neighbourhood policing arrangement based on beat-patrol teams that include Specials. Those forces, such as Durham and the Metropolitan Police, who already use Specials as an integrated part of their neighbourhood policing schemes can testify to their effectiveness and this should be a model to be emulated.

We envisage PROs over time forming an integral part of neighbourhood policing teams, where their skills and powers will increase the capabilities of beat-patrol teams. As PROs become more of a regular feature of policing in Britain, and as their numbers grow, we expect to see them used to increase the number and regularity of neighbourhood policing arrangements. We especially see an important role in this regard for PROs in expanding coverage of neighbourhood policing in rural areas where on-the-ground force presence is currently weakest and where there is real public concern over low police visibility.

**Federation membership.** One factor that needs to be considered in the creation of a PROs is the relationship of this new force to existing officers, employment arrangements and in particular the Police Federation. PCSOs are not members of the Federation. However, the Federation has long argued that Specials should be required to become members, which would require primary legislation. This argument will be stronger if Specials become part of a formal reserve force which is larger. The Home Office conducted a survey of Specials through MORI in summer 2005 with mixed results. 45 per cent of those responding were very or fairly interested in joining the Police Federation, with 40 per cent not very or not at all interested and 15 per cent didn’t know/weren’t sure. Crucially, the overwhelming reason (67 per cent) given by those not interested in joining was that the subscription cost (£3.60 per week) is too high.\(^\text{430}\)

**Diversity.** One important aspect of the Special Constabulary has been its diverse composition. When their numbers are compared with those for their regular colleagues, women account for 33 per cent of the Special Constabulary, but only 22 per cent of regular officers.\(^\text{431}\)

\(^{430}\) Special Constabulary National Conference, 31 March – 2 April 2006, Home Office Update.

account for 7 per cent compared with only 3.7 per cent for regular police officers. This strength is a good foundation for introducing PROs and expanding the volunteer base to attract many more recruits, especially young people who are already viewed as valuable additions to police ranks not least because crime victims are disproportionately young themselves. University towns like Durham have shown the strong potential for recruitment of Specials among those community-minded young people away from home at university. The potential attraction of a paid role as a PRO to increase a student’s term-time income is also clear.

**Force impact**

We will consider carefully the potential impact of the creation of PROs on current personnel arrangements and future funding requirements of police forces. At present there may be nothing intrinsically antagonistic about the two roles of Special Constable and PCSO, most obviously because one is still a part-time volunteer and the other is a full-time officer required to work regular timetabled shifts (albeit with more limited hours and employment routines). Our approach has been to give autonomy over such decisions to chief constables to decide their own force mix.

**A culture of social responsibility**

The modern Conservative Party is committed to fostering social responsibility. One key sign that encourages the Party in this aim is the general increase in the willingness of individuals from all backgrounds to volunteer at local level to help their communities. A new culture of social responsibility is emerging in Britain and we have a duty to allow it to flourish and to provide new opportunities for the civic armies of volunteers to play a useful role. This culture of social responsibility should not be limited to the caring, or pastoral, activities that volunteers so often undertake. There is no reason why volunteering cannot also be about securing and defending the physical safety of a community, as it has in fact always been in the form of reservist fire-fighters in countries around the world, or the Territorial Army in Britain. The Special Constabulary has always fitted perfectly into the mould of what social responsibility means – making a personal sacrifice for the good of your community. Government should give this urge every opportunity to be satisfied; currently, the work arrangements in the Special Constabulary do not do this.

In its 2004 police White Paper – *Building Communities, Beating Crime* – the Government explicitly stated that volunteers should be part of the extended policing family, and that they had a role to play in reducing crime and fear of crime.432 Last year the Home Office hosted a seminar at New Scotland Yard on police volunteering that again acknowledged the important role that police volunteers (Specials, wardens and civilian staff) all play.433 However, as has been argued above, in the field of the Special Constabulary, the aspiration has not been matched by delivery

and severe limitations to expanding their role in policing remain.

The creation of PROs – requiring primary legislation – would illustrate a future Conservative Government’s clear commitment to enhancing social responsibility and expanding the opportunities available for people to volunteer. This new reserve force would overcome many of the limitations that the current Special Constabulary faces, making it welcome as a policy proposal among senior officers, not least because the recruitment of large numbers of PROs who would become more experienced and be better motivated than the current Special Constabulary would significantly enhance the crime reduction capabilities of the police.

The growing market for civic action in society generally has the potential in this context (and also in light of the historically high numbers of Specials previously attained) to expand significantly further. There is no necessary limit to the number of willing volunteers so long as the role of a PRO can remain fulfilling and attractive to people of all ages and backgrounds. Over time, PROs could come to perform a well-recognised function as a permanent, valued police presence in communities across the country. Being a PRO would become one of the most respected and admired examples of civic action.

Retained Fire-fighters

The contribution which PROs could make to policing is illustrated by the vital role of retained fire-fighters in the Fire & Rescue Service. They provide an efficient, cost-effective service that provides emergency cover to more than 60 per cent of the UK. They are equipped with the same kit, vehicles and equipment as a full-time crew, and are called upon to attend the same range of incidents as their full-time counterparts at any time of the day or night. In return they are paid a retaining fee along with an additional payment for every incident attended. They are also required to attend a training evening for between two and three hours per week.

Background. Retained fire-fighters are men and women who are “on call” to respond to a range of emergencies. These may be fires, floods, road traffic collisions or chemical spills. Many retained fire-fighters have other full or “part-time” jobs, but when the call comes they are expected to be ready to drop whatever they are doing and become part of the team. They work alongside full-time fire-fighters. Although they are “part-time” they are trained and capable people saving lives and making headlines.

Numbers. There are approximately 18,200 retained fire-fighters in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. They supplement 38,600 full-time fire-fighters. According to the Fire Service http://www.fireservice.co.uk/role/retained.php. They are generally located in rural communities, although some units are located in more busy urban areas to provide fire cover alongside their full-time colleagues. Many full-time stations are supported by a complement of retained fire-fighters to provide extra cover and to crew additional appliances.
**Costs.** The total cost of the fire service is £1.5 billion of which the retained element is £70m. This works out as a cost per head of population of £33 pa. Typically a retained fire-fighter is paid a retainer of up to £2,585 a year and a call-out fee of £11.80 an hour. Some fire and rescue services have decided to pay part-time fire-fighters a salary under new schemes aimed at increasing recruitment.

The retained fire service is a cost-effective and crucial part of the UK’s fire service capability. It provides a significant part of the geographical coverage at a small proportion of the total cost. If PROs could add similar resilience to overall policing then the national force would be significantly enhanced.

Although there is not a formal *Ambulance Service Reserve*, volunteer organisations such as St John’s Ambulance and the British Red Cross provide similar back-up to the regular Ambulance Service. They enable it to utilise extra vehicles, personnel and equipment in times of crisis. Support is usually formalised through an agreement with a local Ambulance Trust, which enables local volunteers to support their regular local Ambulance Service. This support is often significant. St John’s Ambulance, the largest volunteer Ambulance reserve, has 44,000 volunteers nationwide, of which 20,000 are aged 5-17. Like the retained fire service, it contributes significantly to the resilience of the Ambulance Service as well as enhancing its capability to deal with any major emergency or during periods of high demand for ambulance services.

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435 Retained Fire-fighters Union (RFU) http://www.rfuonline.co.uk/.
Appendix 2

A case study in bureaucracy – the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) sets out the procedures to be followed when intercepting communications, but it has proved very problematic for officers who have long complained about how time-consuming it is to comply with. Indeed a recent review by ACPO found there were unnecessary forms in place, training was “piecemeal” and different guidance was being given to different forces.436

RIPA legislation is designed to provide an audit trail covering police surveillance operations and is intended to ensure that the police act proportionately when invading people’s privacy. However, issues have arisen because of its application to all offences which carry the possibility of a three-year custodial sentence – the legislation as currently applied does not discriminate between serious and non-serious crime. RIPA forms are currently used for the majority of volume crimes, including vehicle theft and house burglary, although the legislation was designed for more serious crimes than these. It is possible that an “audit trail” culture means that the bureaucracy is being applied to less serious crimes which should not require this level of paperwork.

In practice any surveillance or covert activity is now being signed-off at chief superintendent level or above. This leads to situation whereby formal RIPA authorisation forms are being completed to enable officers to monitor individuals suspected of very low level crime, for example stealing confectionary from a newsagent.

The number of authorisations is substantial:

- Directed Surveillance (i.e. most common surveillance)
  Law enforcement agencies granted some 23,628 directed surveillance authorisations during the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, and 3,073 were still in place at the end of that period.

- Intrusive Surveillance (i.e. higher level)
  There were 435 intrusive surveillance authorisations during 2005-06, which represents a slight fall when compared with 461 in the previous year. Some chief constables have informed Commissioners that they are low users of intrusive surveillance due to lack of resources.

- Covert Human Intelligence Source (i.e. informants)
  There were 4,559 CHIS recruited by law enforcement agencies during the year; 5,211 were

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cancelled during the year (including some who were recruited in the previous year); and 4,075 were in place at the end of March 2006.\textsuperscript{437}

Hence the total number of RIPA forms created during 2005-06 was 28,622, which equated to approximately 700 per force or more than two forms per force per day.

One of the corollaries of all this paperwork is that officers are being taken off front-line duties to help populate the RIPA forms, and the time spent filling in the forms is disproportionate to the ends they achieve. In order to undertake surveillance on a suspected cocaine dealer in a bar the following RIPA sections would need to be completed:

- Application form (4 pages)
- Intelligence schedule (minimum 2 pages)
- Authority form (2 pages, hand-signed in every case)
- Review form (5 pages)
- Renewal form (for surveillance lasting over 3 months - 5 pages)

And when the police decide to cancel the operation, there is a

- Cancellation form (6 pages).

The Superintendents’ Association wrote to the Home Office two years ago flagging up this disproportionate application of the RIPA legislation\textsuperscript{438} and even formed a focus group to examine it. A series of recommendations was put to the then Police Minister, Hazel Blears. No changes have yet been made to the way RIPA legislation is enforced.

Formalising the use of intrusive surveillance is an important safeguard. However, it is clear that this has itself generated a considerable paper trail. We believe that this issue merits further study. A careful review should consider whether the paperwork could be reduced while retaining essential safeguards. One option would be for the Office of Surveillance Commission (OSC), which is required to inspect forces’ compliance with RIPA legislation, to reduce considerably the length of the forms required for less serious crimes. The full form could be retained for the most serious suspected offences (e.g. terrorist suspects) and the most intrusive forms of surveillance, but only a much reduced and simplified version would be necessary for lesser offences - including all volume crime.

\textsuperscript{438} Based on conversations with a Chief Superintendent from a large BCU in a medium sized force.
Registration of informants

A good example of the way the pendulum has swung away from a paperless process to a bureaucratic one can be seen in the way a CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Source - or informant) has to be registered and tasked by the police. What was once a completely form-less process is now extremely form-intensive. Formalising the relationship between police and informants is an essential safeguard. However, our visit to one police force revealed that for the process of applying, registering and tasking an informant there were a total of 16 different forms.

Figure A.3 Screenshot of the 16 forms needed to deal with one informant

Source: A Police computer at a station we visited

The following forms are necessary to deal with an informant in Nottingham:

1. Application for Participation of a Covert Human Intelligence Source (6 pages)
2. Authorisation Form (4 pages)
3. Contact Information Report (1 page)
4. Application for the Authorisation and Use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source (i.e. tasking the informer with a piece of work – n. b. one of these forms is needed for every separate task the informer is asked to undertake) (2 pages)
5. Meeting Log (n.b. one of these is needed after every meeting with the informant, detailing what they were tasked with, what was discussed and so on) (2 pages)
6. Memorandum of Understanding – Commencement of Operations (2 pages)
7. Oral Authorisation for use of a CHIS (to record verbal consent to use a CHIS) (2 pages)
8. RIPA Form for use of a CHIS (2 pages, 10 boxes to fill out)
9. Local Registration Document (3 pages)
10. National Registration Document (3 pages)
11. Review and Renewal Application (3 pages)
12. Reward Application (to pay money to informant) (2 pages)
13. Risk Assessment of CHIS (5 pages)
14. Terms and Conditions Document (given to informant detailing the relationship) (2 pages)
15. Application for Cancellation of Authorisation (to cancel the relationship) (2 pages)
16. Memorandum of Understanding – Closure (a form needed to end the relationship with the informer) (2 pages).

In total, for one operation with an informant, 41 pages of forms would need to be filled out – and that is only for one job. If the informant is subsequently asked to undertake further work, more copies of several of the forms – for example, the Memorandum of Understanding, Commencement of Operations, Meeting Log Form and Terms and Conditions Document - would need to be completed.

As a result it appears that typically each detective constable can only deal with two or three informants, since they do not have time to complete the paperwork for any more. This runs counter to the National Intelligence Model, which advocates receiving as much intelligence as possible and not limiting intelligence gathering.

This issue clearly merits further study and a thorough review should consider whether the paperwork could be streamlined while retaining essential safeguards. This would allow detectives to spend more time collecting intelligence from communities, potentially leading to more operations and detections.
Appendix 3

Statutory Charging
The police may determine the charge in the following cases:

i. Any offence under the Road Traffic Acts or any other offence arising from the presence of a motor vehicle, trailer, or pedal cycle on a road or other public place, except where (and the charge must therefore be determined by a Crown Prosecutor):

   The circumstances have resulted in the death of any person; or

   There is an allegation of dangerous driving; or

   The allegation is one of driving whilst disqualified and there has been no admission in a PACE interview to both the driving and the disqualification; or

   The statutory defence of being in charge of a motor vehicle (unfit through drink or drugs or excess alcohol) may be raised under Section 4(3) or 5(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988; or

   There is an allegation of the unlawful taking of a motor vehicle or the aggravated unlawful taking of a motor vehicle (unless the case is suitable for disposal as an early guilty plea in the magistrates’ court).

ii. Any offence of absconding under the Bail Act 1976 and any offence contrary to Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986 and any offence under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the Metropolitan Police Act 1839, the Vagrancy Act 1824, the Street Offences Act 1959, under Section 91 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967, Section 12 of the Licensing Act 1872, any offence under any bylaw and any summary offence punishable on conviction with a term of imprisonment of 3 months or less except where (and the charge must therefore be determined by a Crown Prosecutor):

   The Director of Public Prosecutions publishes other arrangements for the charging and prosecution of these offences. 439

Charging discretion could, for example, be returned to the police for the following offences:

- Low level dishonesty offences such as petty theft, shoplifting (e.g. theft of a Mars bar), handling stolen goods of minor value (e.g. possession of stolen credit cards)
- Low level violence such as common assault and low level public disorder.
