



A PEOPLE'S POLICE FORCE
Police Accountability in the Modern Era

Rt Hon David Blunkett MP

July 2009

Foreword

I would like to offer my thanks to those who have been involved in drawing up this document, who have given advice or who have provided written material.

Individual police authority members, chief constables and the Association of Police Authorities have been constructive and have provided excellent examples of best practice.

Individual local authorities and members of the Local Government Association have also been of assistance, as has the Association of Chief Police Officers.

I am particularly grateful to parliamentary colleagues, including Tom Levitt MP, Rt Hon Alun Michael MP, Baroness Ruth Henig, Steve McCabe MP and, in addition, others who have contributed, including Dr Tony Wright MP and Judy Mallaber MP. Thanks are also due to Clive Betts MP, the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Government, because of the work that the APPG has done in respect of the review undertaken of the criminal justice system, supported by the Local Government Information Unit.

Personal thanks are due to Simon Holdaway, professor of criminology at the University of Sheffield and to Robert McFarland, who was previously commissioned by the Home Office to review the Forensic Science Service and the Police Information Technology Organisation. Both have acted as consultants and we appreciate the time and commitment that they have given freely to helping this review.

This report covers England and Wales only, as Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own separate arrangements.

We offer this contribution to the forthcoming development of a policing White Paper in the autumn of 2009 and to consideration by all major parties of their approach to accountability, answerability and responsiveness of the policing service.

We recognise in this paper the multilayered nature of accountability, both in terms of responding to the public and within the service itself (and the partners so crucial to the success of the police service).



We also touch on the question of accountability above and beyond the neighbourhood, the command unit and the police authority area.

However, the key remit of this report was to address the question of local and police authority-wide accountability, mechanisms for improvement and whether direct election (or a single police commissioner) was appropriate in enhancing accountability and answerability.

Our recommendations reflect our concern that confusion about the nature of accountability at different levels of policing and the nature of command and managerial structures should be avoided. We underline the importance of the police authority in its strategic role and the essential nature of direct accountability by the police to local people for neighbourhood and community policing.

We hope that issues relating to this important area of security and reassurance can be taken out of a party political bun fight and that a consensus can be reached instead on a reformed and improved way of delivering the service - as well as ensuring that those at different levels are answerable for the decisions they take and the responsibility they hold.

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Glossary

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers	www.acpo.police.uk
APA	Association of Police Authorities	www.apa.police.uk
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group	
BCU	Basic Command Unit	
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic	
ccfa	Community Call for Action	
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership <i>(in England)</i>	
CPRs	Crime and Policing Representatives	
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	
CSP	Community Safety Partnership <i>(in Wales)</i>	
EMSOU	East Midlands Special Operations Unit	
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary	inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk
IPCC	Independent Police Complaints Commission	www.ipcc.gov.uk
KINs	Key Individual Networks	
LAA	Local Area Agreement	
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	
MAA	Multi Area Agreement	
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority	www.mpa.gov.uk
NAO	National Audit Office	www.nao.org.uk
NPIA	National Policing Improvement Agency	www.npia.police.uk
PACT	Police and Communities Together	
SNT	Safer Neighbourhood Team	
SOCA	Serious Organised Crime Agency	www.soca.gov.uk

Overview

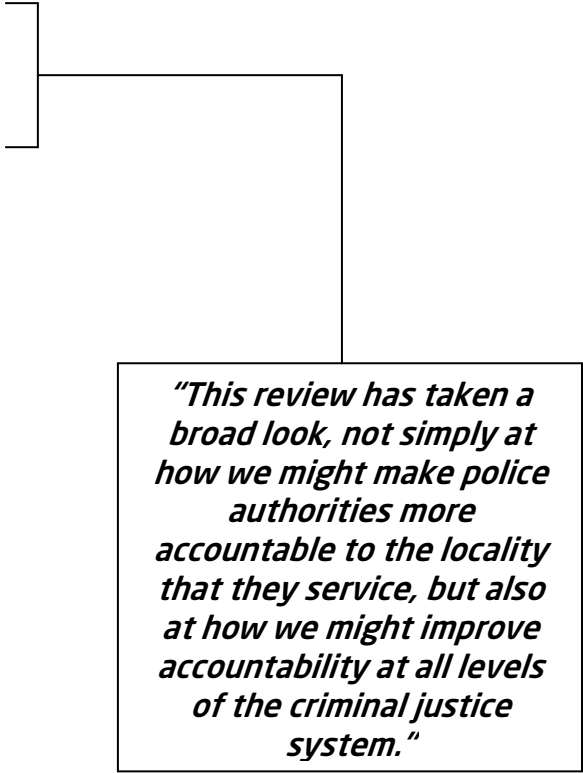
In December 2008, the then-Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, requested that David Blunkett lead a small working group to look at the issue of police accountability and how we might build on the proposals set out in the legislation before Parliament at that time in the Policing and Crime Bill.

This review has taken a broad look, not simply at how we might make police authorities more accountable to the locality that they serve, but also at how we might improve accountability at all levels of the criminal justice system. In doing so, we looked at the work of the police at several levels:

- within the **neighbourhood** (the very local tier, in which the development of Beat Teams and the innovation of Police Community Support Officers has been so significant);
- at the **Basic Command Unit** or command level, mirrored in many parts of the country by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (in Wales, Community Safety Partnerships);
- and at force level, where accountability to the broader, strategic **police authority** and that of the Chief Constable's team links to government and, ultimately, Parliament.

We have also looked at the role of the Home Office and the interface with other aspects of services. This included partners in crime prevention, crime reduction and community safety, particularly:

- local government;
- the youth service;
- those involved with the built environment and design;
- the probation service;
- youth offending teams;
- magistrates;
- district judges; and
- the Crown Prosecution Service.



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In keeping with other public services, contradictory demands are constantly made in relation to the police. Pressure exists, particularly at the moment, for the devolution and decentralisation of decision-making and policy, whilst at the same time there has never been a greater requirement for accountability nationally, including at the Despatch Box in the House of Commons.

As with so many other aspects of public service delivery, there is a need to urgently sort out who is accountable and responsible for what; how they are to be held to account; and to answer the question, 'On what basis should those with general oversight be held to account for aspects which have been decentralised to others?'

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There are two key problems in holding people to account for their responsibility for dealing with problems of crime and disorder at the local level. The first is the lack of clarity about the purpose of the criminal justice system as a whole. We believe that establishing clarity is crucial, not least because conflicts can arise between police commanders, police authorities and local councils when there is confusion over the purpose of police work. The key purpose of the criminal justice system is to reduce crime to the minimum so that people can be safe and confident in their community. Dealing with the reality of crime is a means to this end.

Investigation, detection, prosecution, imprisonment, partnership work, public reassurance and community engagement all make a significant contribution to achieving the safety and confidence of the public; but Victim Support reminded the Justice Select Committee of the House of Commons recently that "what victims want, other than not to have become a victim in the first place, is not to become a victim again". The reality of local crime and 'events' will place specific demands on the police and those who hold them accountable - which is why it is important always to bear in mind the key aim of creating safe, confident communities.

The second problem is that crime reduction and prevention requires a partnership approach - but the tendency of central government to set narrow, task-orientated performance targets and requirements for specific organisations, such as the police, which can militate against effective teamwork. Meanwhile, there is a temptation for

local authorities and others to see crime reduction as one task among many.

Accountability as it stands

Many different approaches to accountability are currently being adopted at neighbourhood level. We will be touching on some of those which are innovative and offer a promising way forward - as well as on aspects of consultation and outreach which do not.

Current legislation seeks to place a duty on police authorities to have regard to the public's views of policing in their area and for this duty to be recognised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) when they are carrying out their work. It is, however, in the community where people most regularly have contact with the police. It is at this level that they turn to officers when things go wrong and where the most meaningful engagement takes place.

We have recognised in our deliberations that it is necessary for the strategic police authority to receive proper information about consultation and accountability. They must then be able to build this into decisions regarding the delivery and use of resources, prioritisation and guidance. These will then be issued to the Chief Constable's senior management team in terms of how best to proceed in a coherent and meaningful way when it comes to broader community issues, the testing of public opinion and, of course, the crucial element of responding to the public's concerns.

Above all, this requires a scientific approach to complex social issues and a clear and consistent methodology that is understood by the police themselves, by police authority members, by local government and by wider partners and the local community.

The Home Secretary, on behalf of the Government, has placed an overarching duty on the police service to reduce fear of crime and thereby to increase confidence and security. Meaningful monitoring of the public's sense of well-being and feeling of safety is, of course, a critical aspect of both local policing and the overarching strategic role of the police authority. 'Having regard to' the views of the public pre-supposes proper, timely and reliable information being given to the public. Fear of crime is often generated by events outside either a neighbourhood or police authority area - and public reporting of crime (for the understandable reason that it is news) is often a distorted view of overall trends, or the likelihood of criminal behaviour and therefore the

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level of risk to individuals and families. This can create extraordinary demands on local police, as they struggle to reconcile the fear of crime generated from beyond the neighbourhood with the realities of what they can do on the ground street by street, community by community.

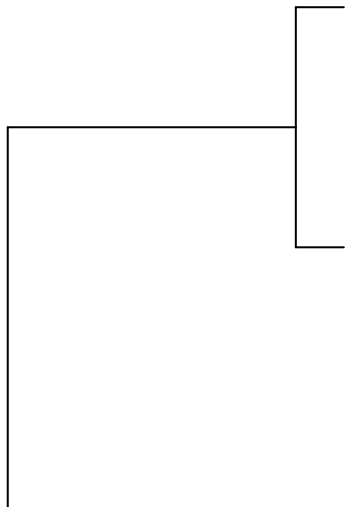
Mapping out a way forward

The only way to reconcile the conflicting demands of immediate attention to what are understandable short-term pressures and the need for a more long-term, overarching strategy is to base policing on good quality data. Without long-term analysis of trends of disorder, no police force will be able to adequately respond to crime at a local or divisional level. We have therefore made recommendations about the independence of statistical analysis and engaging wider partners in tackling prolific and repeat offending, as well as recommending the kind of preventative measures which have seen such a dramatic fall in burglary and car crime.

A reinforced method of identifying trends in crime could also enable policing at neighbourhood level, the prioritisation at BCU level and the strategic view of the police service through the police authority to take account of new trends such as e-crime and major new methods of fraud. This would assist the CPS and the judiciary in both training and preparation for handling new and unfamiliar aspects of illegality.

We are also painfully aware that the role of police authorities and, consequently, those at neighbourhood level, varies enormously depending on both the size of the area covered and the particular profile of the work undertaken. So the Metropolitan Police, for instance, have a direct role in accounting to the Home Secretary and hence to Parliament - as well as to the Mayor of London and the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) - not merely in relation to counter-terrorism, but also when it is working in conjunction with the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the UK Border Agency and in accounting for policing at major events, including high-profile demonstrations.

A number of strands exist, including HMIC, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) and, where appropriate, parliamentary answers,



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debates and Select Committee investigations. No such detailed national - as well as local - channels of accountability exist for the remainder of the criminal justice system.

Although endeavours are underway in Liverpool and Salford to replicate the very successful Community Justice Centre initiated in Redhook, New York, there has so far not been a systematic and universal effort to report back on, hold to account or, for that matter, to join up the various aspects of the service which affect the role of policing. Although there has been some sharing of best practice when it comes to successful detection and the future prevention of crime via Home Office toolkits, the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) has the task of developing evidence-based policing practice and disseminating this throughout the UK. Much remains to be done in the key area of confidence in the police and on local consultation - up to now, the emphasis has simply been on crime prevention and HR matters.

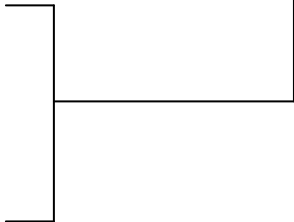
Responsibility for what, to whom?

Perhaps the greatest challenge surrounding the issue here, though, is clarifying the accountability of the Home Secretary, not just in terms of recent changes - for instance, to the responsibilities relating to London and the role of the Mayor and MPA - but also with regards to the delivery of a coherent, consistent and reliable police service across the country. For what particular tier of policing should responsibility be deemed to rest at the centre?

Self-evidently, there are matters which cannot simply be left to individual forces or police authorities and which require national direction - such as counter-terrorism and the fight against serious and organised crime. At the heart of this is the realisation - not appreciated by all sides on this debate - that a modern society requires a sophisticated and fully-trained police force able to combat challenges which are quite different to those of the 1850s - let alone the approach of Robert Peel.

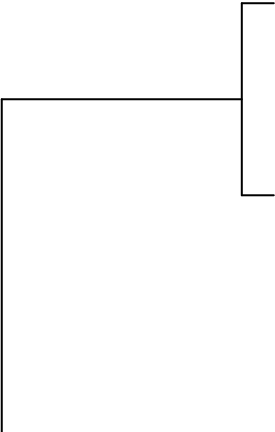
Perhaps we could proceed on the basis of an alternative 'four Ps' to the ones we use in relation to counter-terrorism. In this case, we could have 'protect', 'prevent', 'pursue' and 'partner' ('prosecute' being the job of the CPS, although a great deal of police time is actually spent on trying to get that process right). As with counter-terrorism, 'pursue' is important, as it involves the very difficult and challenging issue of

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detection, the use of forensic and other modern scientific methods and an appreciation of the link between very localised crime and organised and sophisticated criminal behaviour. The latter crosses not just artificial police service boundaries, but represents global criminality using techniques which are often either not available to or little understood by the policing service. Accountability is about requiring reform and substantial modernisation - not just about answering for measures or methodology already in place.

We hope that in our deliberations we give some guidance as to how, in delivery of public services more broadly, we might distinguish between responsibility for resourcing and strategic policy on the one hand and detailed delivery of service or requirement for intervention on the other. At present, we have the worst of all worlds: muddled if non-existent accountability in regard to the criminal justice system across the board; new forms of partnership working, without clarity as to who carries the can for what particular aspect of delivery; demands that the Home Secretary should release the reins of national responsibility whilst at the same time requiring him or her to act through Parliament; and a deeply unsatisfactory modern definition of what has become known as the 'tripartite system' of national, police service and police authority 'balance'.



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All of this is underpinned by a somewhat vague notion of what is or is not 'operational' and therefore ought to be 'left' to the police themselves. Again, who answers for what, and to whom, is often unclear.

A salient example of this is the incursions in 2003 into Windsor Castle and in 2004 into Buckingham Palace. Whilst Royal Protection (part of the Met) were responsible for the planning and preparation of security, other aspects of both the Met and local forces (in this case, Thames Valley) were brought into play. It was down to the Met Commissioner to determine any further action - including holding to account those responsible - but it was the Home Secretary who answered at the Despatch Box. Given that the Home Secretary could only use the blunderbuss power of removal of the most senior officers and had no hand whatsoever in determining either disciplinary action or remedial steps, the impotence to decisively avoid any further such events was matched by the imperative to reassure

and retain confidence in those with 'operational' responsibility.

Squaring the circles

To add to this confused situation, over the last 150 years there has been a wholly accepted myth that the modern police service should reflect the era of the voluntary or part-time constable - a nostalgia that longs for days that never existed. The notion of 'people's policing' led to statements in Parliament as long ago as 1856, when, during the passage of the major legislation to establish some semblance of coherent urban policing, it was stated that the proposals

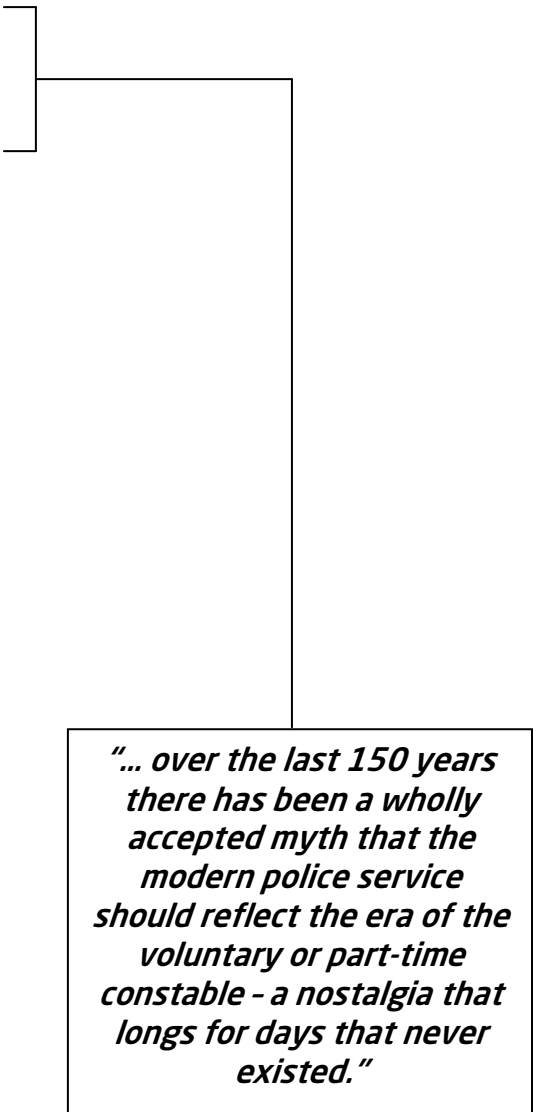
"took away the right of self-government and destroyed local institutions which had existed since Alfred; by requiring Chief Constables to make annual reports to the Home Secretary as to the state of crime, it was no better than the continental spy system ... the town councils were models of efficiency ... the proposal to give a Chief Constable control over his men might have originated from an Austrian or Russian nobleman; indeed it was the most un-English measure ever seen and seemed more fitted for Naples than for England"

The 1856 Bill brought in the 'head' of the force in the form of the Chief Constable and set up a minimal form of national inspection - which, in order to placate those against any kind of central interference, was at this stage entirely voluntary!

So, in our attempt to square the circle of increasing rational forms of accountability, we are endeavouring to find a way through the contradictory and often confused demands which are made in relation to efficient and consistent policing, localism, central government 'action' and the duty to respond. All of these demands do, of course, have to be met transparently in a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week media environment - and we have to establish clarity over knowing who to hold responsible when things go wrong.

Targets, which contributed together with partnership working to the dramatic fall of over 50% in incidents of burglary and 45% in car crime, are now seen as 'interference' - whilst record-keeping and statistical analysis are demanded at the same time as the universal cry goes up to reduce form-filling and obligations on the police to report back.

These circles *can* be squared - not least with the use of modern technology for both gathering and disseminating



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information - but the underlying conflict and contradictory demands need to be recognised and acted upon.

That is why we have come up with what we hope to be a consensus on the way forward which lays aside the disagreements over direct elections to police authorities at BCU level and propositions around directly-elected police commissioners. In their place we propose an incremental and tiered system of accountability, which recognises the different forms of policing, the different nature of the responsibilities held, the importance of engagement by the public - and making those who deliver policing services and make policy publicly accountable.

Where we are

As it stands, no one person is in overall control of policing in England and Wales. The current governance system, known as the 'tripartite arrangement', splits oversight between chief police officers, police authorities and the Home Secretary.

This system is not set down in one particular law, but has evolved from the time of the Royal Commission on the Police in 1962, and the Acts of Parliament which have flowed from it.

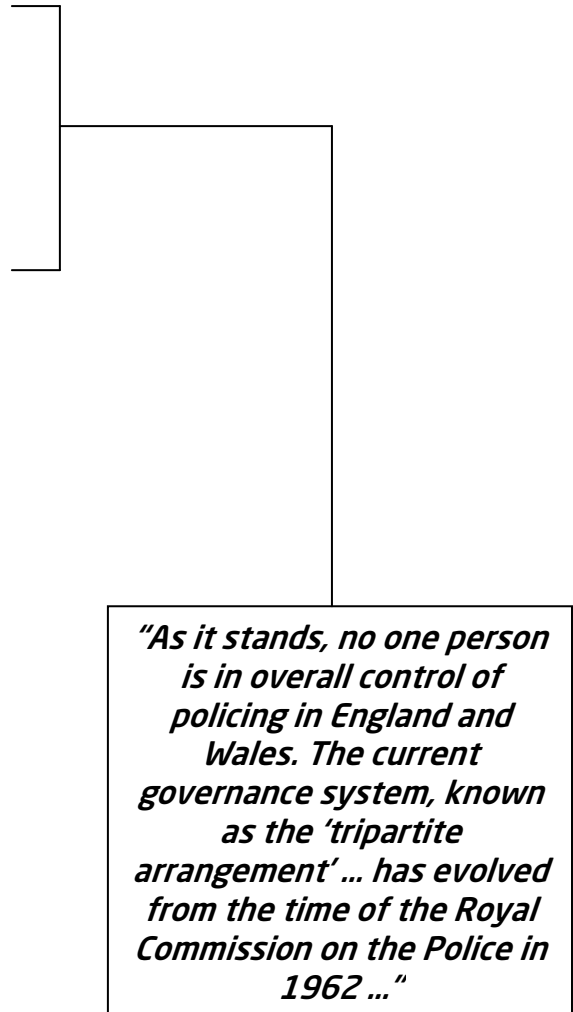
The tripartite arrangement is based on several broad principles:

- the political impartiality of the police;
- policing with the consent of the public;
- the Government's duty to provide a safe society; and
- the need for the spending of public money to be properly accounted for.

The role of the chief officers, who retain their operational independence, is to direct and control their force, including civilian staff and budgets. Police authorities have a statutory duty to "maintain an efficient and effective police force" for their area and to hold the chief officer to account. The Home Secretary is answerable to Parliament and the public for the provision of an effective police service and sets out strategic priorities for the police on an annual basis. He or she also sets the targets against which police performance is measured.

As far as police funding is concerned, the Home Office allocates grants to each of the 43 police authorities who, in turn, raise additional funds by levying a precept on local authorities. Police authorities also receive an allocation from the business rates from the Department for Communities and Local Government. It is then the role of the Chief Constable of each police force to agree the spending of the budget with the police authority.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) is a body independent of government which, in partnership with the Government and the Association of Police Authorities (APA), co-ordinates the development of the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



When a national police response is required ACPO, on behalf of all senior police officers, co-ordinates the police response. ACPO receives some specific funding direct from the Home Office.

Challenges to the tripartite arrangement

There have been several challenges to this structure in recent years. Sir Ian Blair, the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, argued that the police needed “a new structure and a new energy for public connection with policing”. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) argued that Britain’s 43-force structure was “no longer fit for purpose” and called for smaller forces to be merged to create a limited number - between 10 and 20 - of strategic forces.

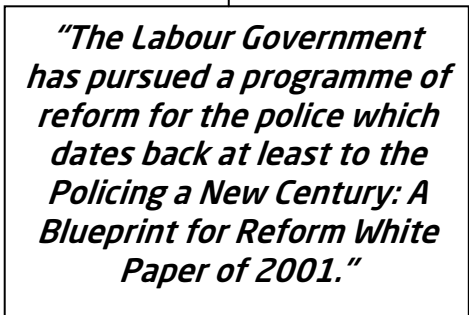
The Labour Government has pursued a programme of reform for the police which dates back at least to the *Policing a New Century: A Blueprint for Reform* White Paper of 2001:

“From the establishment of a Standards Unit through to radical improvements in the operation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, we will drive change forward. We wish to ensure that police authorities can do their jobs effectively, developing both their oversight and local accountability in a way which complements and reinforces the changes we seek to make.”

The measures to bring about basic reform led to substantial demonstrations by the police and a good deal of concern that reform was being pushed too far. In retrospect, this all looks very different!

Similarly, when pursuing radical reform to better equip the police service to meet the modern challenges it faces, in 2006 the then-Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, tried to reduce the number of police forces to 20, but was forced to abandon the attempt when it met with local and police authority opposition.

Of course, these reforms (in some cases, attempts at reform) took place against the background of falling crime and a record number of police officers on the streets, as well as the recruitment of Police Community Support Officers and the establishment of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) from 1 April 2004 - a new development in holding the police to account. Further, through Home Office sponsorship in the initial stages, 101 non-emergency numbers are working very effectively across the



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country, while local constables are giving out their mobile numbers to leaders in the community so that they can be more easily reached.

In February 2008, Sir Ronnie Flanagan published the final report of his independent review of policing. The question of how to make the police more accountable formed a large part of his report. Flanagan suggested that at a local level ("the coalface of policing"), accountability comprised three elements:

"1. 'responsiveness' refers to behaviour (actions and their conduct); which should be driven by priorities and need;

2. 'answerability' is the process through which those held to account are required to explain (and justify) their actions and how they relate to local people's concerns and input; and

3. 'structural accountability' is the formal set of institutionalised relationships that should help to bring about appropriate responsiveness and answerability; governance and scrutiny arrangements."

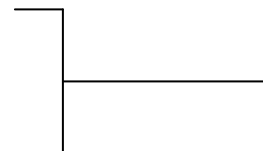
Flanagan identified what he called a "significant caveat to all of this":

"while national politicians have focused on structural reform, I am convinced ... that it is cultural change which is most likely to make the biggest difference to confidence, trust and satisfaction in policing."

There is therefore a distinction to be drawn between the justifications the police provide for their actions and the scrutiny arrangements which are in place by which those actions are judged; the two are, however, inextricably linked - and the police inevitably cannot properly explain their actions to the public if the mechanisms do not exist for them to do so and if the public cannot adequately feed their views to those who are deciding on strategic matters.

The July 2008 Green Paper, *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing Our Communities Together*, attempted to respond to Flanagan and to square this circle. In doing so, it caused controversy by proposing elected 'crime and policing representatives', who would make up a majority on police authorities and chair one of the 370 local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). This proposal was originally included in the Policing and Crime Bill, which was to put the proposals in the Green Paper into law.

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The proposal for CPRs drew an immediate response from the Local Government Association. A sharp letter from the then-chairman, Sir Simon Milton, argued: “There are already people elected at local level to represent the community and be their advocates over a range of services – councillors”. He argued against setting up a “parallel and potentially conflicting system with a competing mandate”. Chief Constables were equally disapproving, fearing that their role would, in time, become subordinate to a directly elected police authority chairman.

Political developments added to the pressure on the Government, with the conflict between Sir Ian Blair and the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, resulting in Sir Ian’s departure as Met Commissioner. Concerned about the politicisation of policing, particularly in the light of changes to the role of the Mayor of London which made him the chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority, the then-Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, removed the portion on crime and policing representatives from the Bill and commissioned this review “to take stock of the Green Paper proposals on police authority accountability”, while remaining “convinced of the merits of a directly elected element as a means to drive enhanced public engagement and accountability”.

New ideas

However, while this review has progressed, policy in this area has continued to evolve, not least in a speech which the Prime Minister delivered to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Conference on 12 May 2009. In that speech, Gordon Brown placed himself clearly on the side of direct rather than intermediary accountability, when he said that members of the public

“should be able to identify streets where they don’t feel safe and get their local force or council to take action - whether that means more police on the beat, more community support officers on local buses, or more street lighting and CCTV. So this summer we will launch the next stage in Safer Streets - an interactive website where the public share information with each other and use virtual pins to show the authorities where they want action.”

The influence which ordinary people are able to wield over policing priorities was uppermost in the Prime Minister’s mind:

"I want the way people feel about the service they get to influence how neighbourhood policing evolves in their area. There must be proper recourse and redress if the promises in the Policing Pledge are not delivered in every part of the country - so in the autumn, we will publish a White Paper to guarantee that accountability and to improve efficiency and productivity across the service."

The promised developments would be welcome at the local level, widening the methods by which neighbourhood policing teams receive information from the public about crime and disorder - while not compromising the overarching, strategic view of policing which is necessary at the police authority level. The key here will be, once we have ensured that those policing in the neighbourhood have the relevant information, how willing and able they are to pass this on in an understandable and usable form to local people.

In *Building Britain's Future*, published in July 2009, the Government stated that it will

"take a bold new approach to policing and justice. Having given each community its own neighbourhood police team, with police spending more time out on the beat tackling crime and local priorities, we will now give local people more power to keep their neighbourhoods safe, including the right to hold the police to account at monthly beat meetings, to have a say on CCTV and other crime prevention measures, to have their views taken into account in prosecution decisions and to vote on how offenders pay back into the community."

It would be a positive change for the public to have a greater say in crime prevention measures in their locality - although we would favour local authorities having a more direct say in commissioning specific services. We will discuss this later in this document.

While we await the promised White Paper, other proposals have been before Parliament. The Policing and Crime Bill was published and introduced as a Bill to the House of Commons on 18 December 2008, received a unanimous Second Reading on 19 January 2009 and had its Third Reading on 19 May 2009. At the time of this review, it is before the House of Lords.

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Part 1 of the Act contains the measures which are relevant to us here. It increases police accountability in the following ways:

- **by placing a duty on police authorities to have regard to the views of the public on policing in their area** in the exercise of all their functions;
- **by ensuring that HMIC assesses how well authorities are reflecting the views of the public when they inspect an authority's functions** (this gives HMIC the power to inspect whether police authorities are carrying out the Policing Pledge); and
- **by facilitating more collaborative working of police forces at regional and national level** by improving operational processes and clarifying the framework for collaboration agreements.

"In practice, the focus of any new law must be to empower citizens to call the police to account when they feel they are not receiving the proper level of service."

These are sound legislative proposals, but in practice the focus of any new law must be to empower citizens to call the police to account when they feel they are not receiving the proper level of service. This was recognised in the *Governance of Britain* Green Paper, published shortly after Gordon Brown came to office, which called for the introduction of a duty for local councils to respond to public petitions. The consultation document from the Department for Communities and Local Government which followed it, *Local Petitions and Calls for Action*, repeated the proposal for such a duty; and the Police and Justice Act 2006 enacted it for crime and disorder matters.

Local people therefore have the legislative means to request action on a community safety issue where they feel that the police or CDRP have failed to address their concerns adequately. According to the 2006 Act, they must approach their local councillor, who is under a duty to consider the matter and, if they think fit, refer it to the local authority's Crime and Disorder Committee. If they do not, they are under an obligation to give an explanation to the member of the public why they have not done so. If unsatisfied, the member of the public may take their case directly to the Executive of the council -

resulting in the same procedure of referral or explanation taking place. We are clear that this power, already on the statute book, now needs to be expanded in the way described later in this document.

The Crime and Disorder Committees of local authorities were also established by the 2006 legislation and they reflect the crucial role of councils in scrutinising the work of the police. The police have committed to providing a proper service to the public - not least through every force signing up to delivering the aforementioned 'Policing Pledge', which stipulates how neighbourhood teams must respond to incidents and binds them into regular public meetings - but local councillors have a clear mandate for holding the police to account and, rightly, are the primary means for the public to do so. Any changes in accountability arrangements must reflect this mandate. There is, however a contradiction in believing that it is the local council Cabinet Member and Executive who can direct the police. They can raise issues, they can engage in scrutiny; but in the end, it is of course the police service themselves who will have to answer - and the police authority who will have to make sure that mechanisms exist and are carried through to ensure that answerability is operating in practice.

It is not clear that the public are aware of the powers that they have, or the steps that will be taken if the local authority is unresponsive to their approaches or, of course, where the local authority's responsibilities for community safety are not relevant and therefore the issue is one requiring changes within the police service itself. In our recommendations, we seek to extend and develop this concept, so that both the HMIC and IPCC would have a role where satisfaction has not been obtained and change achieved. We remain sceptical as to how the 2006 changes have been implemented by local government across the country and how this fits with the Cabinet form of governance at local level. It would be helpful for the White Paper to clarify how this function is working and what further changes might be needed to turn good intentions into reality.

The Government has also published a fresh Green Paper - *Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice*. The Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Law Officers published this in April 2009. It contains a series of measures to ensure that the justice system is as open and transparent as possible; that it is

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responsive to the demands of communities; and that it is accountable to those communities.

The proposals are centred on three areas:

- **strengthening the connections between communities and their prosecution and court services** - building on the success of Community Justice schemes, enabling offenders to reform and make amends;
- **ensuring that justice outcomes are more responsive and more visible** - increasing the visibility of Community Payback so that justice is done and seen to be done and promoting the use of restorative justice; and
- **keeping communities informed, getting people involved and empowering communities** - by improving the information that the public receives about case outcomes, ensuring that the public can see a connection between the crime and the punishment (and reform) meted out in response.

"We believe that in the interests of the public and the avoidance of confusion, duplication and overlap, the involvement of the public in the criminal justice system should wherever possible be integrated or become co-terminous with arrangements for police consultation and feedback."

The Government proposes to do this by launching 30 pioneer areas across England and Wales, where communities can have more say in how justice is delivered in their neighbourhoods; launching a prototype of the first online Justice Maps to give people the chance to see the outcome of court cases for themselves; introducing Community Prosecutors with a specific role to engage with communities alongside the police and courts and ensure that local priorities inform the CPS; introducing Community Impact Statements, developed from Victim Impact Statements, giving communities the chance to feed their views directly into the justice process; extending the use of Citizens' Panels to give locals more say in how offenders on Community Payback schemes repay the community for their crimes; and establishing Virtual Community Justice Teams to apply a more intensive problem-solving approach to anti-social behaviour - tackling re-offending by offering tailored rehabilitation, such as drug assistance programmes. The proposals are out to consultation until Friday 31 July 2009.

We believe that in the interests of the public and the avoidance of confusion, duplication and overlap, involvement of the public (for instance, the establishment of panels) should wherever possible

be integrated or become co-terminous with arrangements for police consultation and feedback. A plethora of different mechanisms at local level only leads to confusion and disillusionment.


We welcome the introduction of community prosecutors, but remain disappointed by the approach adopted in the consultation in relation to community justice centres. Given that this appears to be on cost grounds, it is worth noting that the approach adopted from the Redhook centre, mentioned above in the introduction, can have major long-term savings. It avoids the 'escalator' approach to criminality, which ends up with those who could be rescued from a life of crime entering a system which, by its nature, has been shown to lead to recidivism.

Nevertheless, the measures in the Green Paper do enhance accountability by putting the views of the people whom the criminal justice system serves at the system's heart. Concurrently with the Green Paper, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Government, chaired by Clive Betts MP, undertook an inquiry and subsequently published *Primary Justice: An inquiry into justice in communities* on 20 July 2009. This report recommends

"a new approach to criminal justice. This ... should focus on primary justice ... [which] should be local, community-based and focused on prevention. It should be part of a wider approach that also tackles concerns about behaviour disruptive to good community relations, in a way that is effective and provides community reassurance without the need to criminalise that behaviour."

The APPG's inquiry, which ranged across the criminal justice system, underlines the fact that only partnership working across local services can bring the clarity of purpose and consistency of approach that will truly drive down crime and tackle its causes. For instance, reoffending to feed a drug habit can almost be guaranteed if drug rehabilitation is not immediately available to the offender; while we know that the lack of a home and a job makes reoffending more likely. It is therefore essential that all local services work together to tackle crime and that the contribution of each is recognised within the requirements, penalties and rewards issued by central government.

As the APPG report notes, a historic lack of local accountability means that a "new approach" is needed:



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"We have heard the message that professionals and the public at heart want the same thing, but have been driven apart by a system that separates rather than connects."

That separation of public from professional can also be said to apply to the police. This review proposes ways to once again bridge the gap which has arisen between the citizenry and those who are charged with their safety.

The problem

Robert McFarland wrote in Prospect magazine in August 2008 of "three imperatives: improved police capabilities, better professional leadership and greater efficiency":

"The argument about the place of the police in a free society has two related strands. In the first, a centrally directed police service is regarded as a potential threat to liberty and, in extremis, an instrument of tyranny. This view emphasises the need for the police to operate with the consent and trust of local communities. The second strand plays the Government's ultimate responsibility for the protection of society against the desire of local communities to control how they are policed."

This tension has never been directly addressed. Even when the tripartite arrangement was formalised in law, he wrote,

"it remained unclear how it was meant to work and, in particular, who was accountable to whom for what ... At a national level, 'tripartitism' means merely a presumption that the Home Secretary will consult with the national representative bodies of the chief officers and police authorities, who, even when in agreement with the Government, are constitutionally unable to impose decisions on their members."

This ambiguity has remained, and political parties have attempted to come up with their own policies to redress what is, at times, a serious imbalance of power and lack of accountability. The Liberal Democrats believe that police authorities should have far more power and have the sole right to sack and appoint the chief constable, be able to set local policing priorities, agree any national minimum targets (for example, for response times to incidents), determine budgets and change that part of taxation which is allocated to them. They also

"... political parties have attempted to come up with their own policies to redress what is, at times, a serious imbalance of power and lack of accountability."

believe that where a police force has the same borders as a local council, that council should be the police authority; and that two-thirds of the elected members of the police authority should be directly elected. They believe that the mechanism for this should be single transferable vote (STV) and that there should be no bar on a 'dual mandate' allowing people to be members of both the police authority and council. They say that police command units should be co-terminous with council boundaries; and that a third of the elected members of the police authority should be nominated from councillors within the force area. The remaining members (e.g. magistrates) should be co-opted. Currently, any vote relating to finance or the precept has to have a majority of elected members voting in favour; and the Lib Dems believe that this practice should continue.

The Conservatives' stated policy is to introduce directly-elected police commissioners. The Centre for Social Justice think tank - the brainchild of the former Tory leader, Iain Duncan Smith - has produced a policy report from its Policing Reform Working Group, entitled *A Force to be Reckoned With*. At its core, the report has three key recommendations: the creation of interventionist Neighbourhood Teams with a commitment to intervene in any observed criminal act; an elected Crime and Justice Commissioner for every police force area (who would chair the police authority and hold the local CDRP to account); and police training for "discretion and Restorative Justice".

This review has considered the problems which introducing directly-elected commissioners would cause and we are convinced that they represent the wrong approach. We have been fortified in this view by the comments of the incoming president of ACPO, Sir Hugh Orde, who stated at the July 2009 ACPO conference that

"if people seriously think some form of elected individual is better placed to oversee policing than the current structure, then I am very interested in the detail of how that is going to work ... Every professional bone in my body tells me it is a bad idea that could drive a coach and horses through the current model of accountability and add nothing but confusion ... I am sure that our current model can be built on, but it seems to me that communities have a right to have their police service held to account in a sophisticated and apolitical way."

We agree. At the heart of the difficulty with an elected commissioner system is the simple risk of an appeal to populism. Police accountability requires more than lofty rhetoric, or an expedient focus on simply what is 'of the moment'. It requires an understanding of strategy; of complex data about crime and related subjects; and an

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ability to question chief police officers, taking local opinion into account.

If we were to introduce elected commissioners, there is a clear danger of extremist political groups seeing them as a way of gaining publicity and of achieving appointment to an important, local post at the very heart of our communities. This is a threat which can no longer be dismissed by advocates of elected commissioners, particularly in the light of the European election results in the North West of England and in Yorkshire and the Humber. Members of the British National Party have been elected to local councils and the evidence is clear: where there are far-right elected representatives, divisions in the community are exacerbated and attacks on black and ethnic minority members of the neighbourhood increase. We can expect that the BNP would distort evidence about crime and migrants, crime levels and other matters to gain popularity during an election for a police commissioner position - and behave in just the same way should they achieve office. To argue that police accountability is simply a matter of responding to public opinion through the ballot box is to encourage popularism, to provide a platform for extremists and to allow extremist groups to become further involved in our local and national body politic.

“If we were to introduce elected commissioners, there is a clear danger of extremist political groups seeing them as a way of gaining publicity and of achieving appointment to an important, local post at the very heart of our communities. This is a threat which can no longer be dismissed by advocates of elected commissioners, particularly in the light of the European election results in the North West of England and in Yorkshire and the Humber.”

Quite aside from the danger of extremists achieving office, it is obvious that populist policies, thought up *ad hoc* to deal with the at times almost intractable problems of crime and disorder, will fail. An elected police commissioner, or some such official, whose pitch for election and whose ongoing style is based on popularism, is very likely to come into significant conflict with local police commanders and the Chief Constable. In the opinion of this review, a different, more balanced ‘political’ solution is needed to render constabularies accountable.

The simple fact of the matter is that, while elections are appropriate for multi-purpose bodies such as local councils (and indeed for Parliament), it is surely the case that the narrower the remit of the position under consideration, the weaker the case for having the occupier of that position decided by ballot. There is a clear argument for enhancing and increasing the role and responsibility of local government - and the question we have had to address here is whether policing should be included in that more comprehensive democratic forum. We have concluded that the local government strand of police accountability - albeit necessarily working in partnership and alongside the very specific operational and managerial role of senior police officers - requires a different approach.

In working out that new approach, however, it is certainly the case that we must have a better understanding of the problems which the police themselves are facing. In holding the police accountable, we have to be clear about the types of crime that different levels of the police force are focused on. We are in an entirely different world from the time of the 1962 Royal Commission; we are even in a different world from when the Labour Government came to power in 1997. The former Shadow Home Secretary, David Davis, reminded us on the Today programme on 20 April 2009 that the legitimacy of the police force derives from the consent of the public - Robert Peel's 'citizen-in-uniform'. But in the aftermath of the atrocities of 11 September 2001 and the terrorist attacks which came after it - not least those in London in July 2005 and in Glasgow in June 2007 - as well as the rise of globalised criminal activity (including e-crime and human trafficking) and the necessity of policing major demonstrations such as those at the 2009 G20 summit, it is wholly misleading to suggest that a beefed-up 'citizen-in-uniform' could adequately meet the challenges of the 21st century. A special constable may be able to fit this bill - but this is a niche role, rather than the totality of what we have legitimately come to expect from the police service.

Nothing illustrates the changes more graphically than what is happening with e-crime. As noted in the Government's cyber strategy, as e-commerce has grown, so has the perpetration of fraud - now costing Britain an estimated £1.2 billion (£50 billion worldwide), not to mention the disruption to business and the hurt and harm caused to individuals. Developing new skills and applying them in a way which reflects a much broader accountability than is needed for the delivery of the service through Beat Teams at neighbourhood level, is an essential part of a modern, professional police force, dealing with new forms of relationship, communication and interaction.

For an adequate system of accountability to be in place, local policing teams, Basic Command Units and constabularies must each be held to account according to their focus, by different methods.

Where we're going


This section sets out a model for police accountability at the level of the Safer Neighbourhood Team, of the Basic Command Unit and of the Chief Constable.

To meet the deficit which currently exists, we must introduce new and strengthen existing forms of police accountability - each one relating to the appropriate level of police command.

As we have seen, there is a widespread scepticism that directly-elected commissioners would achieve the levels of transparency and accountability that the public wants to see. Instead of pursuing that populist approach, we advocate a shift of responsibility for the influencing of local policing priorities away from a top-down approach towards empowering communities.

At present, police authorities have two obligations which relate directly to the needs of their communities: to consult with local communities and to set the strategic direction of local policing. The authority with which it meets these obligations comes from the indirect accountability of a bare majority of its members (i.e. local councillors); its control over budgeting as well as the hiring and firing of senior police officers; and the diversity of its membership. We will deal with the constitution of police authorities below; however, it is self-evident that they are imperfect tools for accountability, as they have no direct or formal connection with elected authorities and their scrutiny processes; the councillors who serve on them are sourced from 'higher-tier' local authorities only; there is an opacity around the appointment of members by the Home Secretary; and they have no direct links to communities.

The Government's proposed solution, as discussed, would have brought in a directly-elected and semi-autonomous element at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level. Even had this been taken forward, it would have failed to address the issues of transparency and accountability. Being at BCU level, it would have included no direct links to local neighbourhoods or village and parish level; it would have given the elected representative the responsibility for spending only money which was already committed to community safety and fighting crime; and, self-evidently, a single figure cannot represent the full diversity of needs of up to 250,000 people. Further, an autonomous representative is surely not consistent with the direction of policy in terms of joined-up government, or the general ethos of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).



"To meet the deficit which currently exists, we must introduce new and strengthen existing forms of police accountability - each one relating to the appropriate level of police command."

“Police authorities should stay - but the day-to-day decisions on community policing should be taken as low down the ‘pyramid’ as possible, closer to communities and certainly below BCU level.”

Police authorities’ accountability to government is currently opaque at best. They are inevitably accountable for their wider and strategic cross-boundary role; and national government appoints a fair proportion of their members and retains budgetary control through capping. But they are not in any real sense accountable either to central government or to local authorities. They operate at arms’ length from ‘top-tier’ local authorities, with no formal links to ‘lower-tier’ councils. Nor do they have links back to communities; nor are they transparent - as much of their business is conducted in private (often unnecessarily). The need for transparency in all police authority matters is paramount - particularly in the light of recent revelations surrounding the issue of remuneration and other ‘packages’ for police chiefs. If nothing else, this highlights the importance of police authority members being sensitive to and responsive about public concern - and, in particular, proper comparative work both within and beyond police service remuneration.

Constabularies, Chief Constables and Police Authorities

Although there are weaknesses in the system at present, we are agreed that there is a need to retain police authorities in a similar form to now. This is because the authorities are an appropriate level for principal budgetary control, advising and liaising with the Chief Constable, strategic planning and liaison with other authorities on regional and national policing priorities (such as terrorism and organised crime). It is also because, in sheer statistical terms, they are bodies which tend to much more accurately reflect the make-up of local communities (18% of members of police authorities define as black or being from an ethnic minority - something which direct elections to authorities would dilute as, predictably, members of the BME community would refrain from putting themselves forward). So police authorities should stay - but the day-to-day decisions on community policing should be taken as low down the ‘pyramid’ as possible, closer to communities and certainly below BCU level.

Police authority composition and duties

We believe that police authorities:

- should comprise lay members, councillors and a magistrate;
- that elected councillors should have a bare majority;
- and should be of variable size.

We believe that councillors should form either the largest group on the authority, or have a bare majority, both to bring a further aspect of democratic legitimacy to the body and to prevent, should councillors and independent members be of equal number, the co-opted magistrate always holding the balance of power when it comes to decision-making.

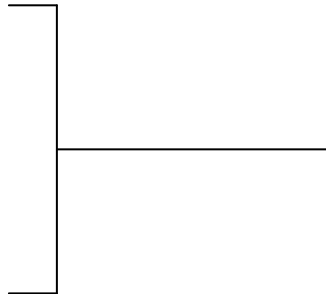
We are agnostic about the size of the membership of a police authority. We believe that it must be of a sufficient size for there to be suitably wide representation and so probably will consist of a maximum of fifteen members; but this number will necessarily vary between authorities, according to their role and location.

It is here, in particular, that we seek to address directly the problems which elected commissioners would give rise to. This model for a police authority brings in different interests and establishes appropriate checks and balances. It brings a range of skills and knowledge; importantly, it maintains the key relationship to the local authority; and it ensures that as wide a range of segments within the community are represented as possible.

Appointment to an authority should be undertaken by a selection panel consisting of representative local councillors, covering the political as well as the geographic spectrum; existing authority members; an outside expert; and a Home Office representative. Crucially, unlike now, all appointments should be based on stated skills and competencies related to strategic thinking and action, understanding complex data and the ability to call officials to account.

The post of chair of the authority should be regarded as one which is open to application by existing authority members, including councillors. A selection panel, similar to that which appoints authority members, should interview for the position of chair based on selection criteria related to the skills and competencies required for the post - with the aim of adding greater

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importance to the role, creating a profile that can be as prominent as that of an elected official would be.

In brief, the skills and competencies required for members of police authorities are those of:

- strategic planning - by which we mean a close analysis of crime data and relating that analysis to stated objectives in order to change aspects of crime and disorder and, therefore, policing strategy over a three to five year period. This implies a further required skill, namely:
- to be able to understand analyses of crime and related data, the contribution of a wide range of public and voluntary sector agencies in developing policing strategies, the role of CRDPs and using what can be complex data sets and relating them directly to strategic plans;
- key communications skills - members must be able to talk to local commanders and convey the police authority's views to the public, as well as to police officers; and finally,
- it is essential for police authority members to understand the *culture* of policing - the ways in which Chief Constables and all other ranks tend to respond routinely to incidents.

"An ability to think and make decisions strategically on the basis of rigorously gathered and analysed data about crime and disorder is ... a necessary ability for all police authority members."

An ability to think and make decisions strategically on the basis of rigorously gathered and analysed data about crime and disorder is an essential requirement for an adequate understanding of a local constabulary's performance; it is thus a necessary ability for all police authority members. Local authorities should build training and skills competencies into their process of nomination for all those put forward for police authority membership. Nominees from the community as non-councillor appointments should be offered the same initial or preparatory training - and this should be a standard part of anyone putting their name forward for, or being nominated to, a police authority.

The role of an authority

Police authorities' duties need to be more sharply focused upon calling a constabulary to account for its stated strategic objectives and reporting findings to the public. Their role should be clarified, with greater focus on their scrutiny role (in conjunction with the appropriate local authorities in their area), the monitoring of the police force and their assessment of the performance of the police force as a whole in reducing crime, reducing the fear of crime and providing reassurance to the public. It is our belief that the police authority should have a prime role in monitoring the progress of the police service in accounting to the public and answering for their performance.

If police authorities are to undertake this work satisfactorily, however, they will require access to excellent data. National standards for the adequacy and presentation of data are particularly important if they are to be able to undertake their scrutiny function. It is particularly important that long-term trend statistics are provided, moving away from short-term pressures to solve equally short-term and relatively unimportant problems.

We are therefore recommending that data should be analysed by a dedicated staff, under parameters defined by the UK Statistics Authority, located within the local authority. Ideally, this would be a lead metropolitan authority or county council, because this is the body holding data about a number of partners with whom the police need to work. The job of gathering health and other data into the analysis of crime would have to be a job for these new units of staff, with the money for the work coming from the dissolution of the crime and disorder functions presently undertaken by Regional Office teams.

With a new, more closely analysed set of data on crime, we believe that the police authority's current role - which includes seeking the public's views on crime and disorder and informing them about the authority's work - should be reformed. In our view, the Chief Constable, his leadership team and commanders should be the ones at the forefront of consultation with the public - so that their operational decisions, priorities and *modus operandi* can be questioned and so that they themselves can be held to account. They should demonstrate to the police authority that robust arrangements are in place for that consultation to be meaningful and they should be required to build on best practice to establish consultative community

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forums, tailoring them to meet local circumstances - and complaints that this has been tried, but has met with insufficient public engagement, will no longer suffice. We have evidence of very good practice which benefits police, community and mutual confidence, but also examples of poor practice, failure to engage the local authority as a partner and of ignoring existing forums and therefore duplicating meetings to no good effect.

The Chief Constable should be subject to the police authority in a number of other ways. He or she should be required to present an annual, rolling three-year policing plan covering crime and social order for authority approval and, crucially, account for the outcomes of that plan using data defined by the authority itself. This would greatly enhance scrutiny in place of current practice - where a Chief Constable can simply assure the authority that crime has gone down and there are limited ways for the authority to verify that this is the case. Furthermore, as part of the authority's assessment of the force, we believe that the chair of the authority should have a duty to hold annual personal assessments of the Chief Constable him or herself. This would be part of the appraisal system and would link to the scrutiny of the Chief's strategic plan.

In short, the police authority should hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of the force area, just as the non-executive directors of a company hold a chief executive to account. The chair of the authority needs to develop a relationship with the Chief Constable which is constructively critical and challenging, but positive. Getting this relationship right is critical to success, both for the force and for the authority.

Whilst we believe that the key role for the authority is this monitoring of the Chief Constable's actions, particularly in regard to public consultation, we also wish to ensure that the authority is connected to the force at the divisional level. To that end, we envisage each member of the authority having a special role working with local police commanders - being formally linked to them in partnership. This would ensure both that the commanders and the authority members themselves were listening to an adequate range of public views about crime and disorder. Conceivably, this would involve routine meetings that both make the commanders more accountable and ensure that authority members remain in touch with local opinion.

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Of course, to undertake these substantial duties, police authorities need to be backed up by adequate administrative support systems; and the provision of such systems for police authority members varies enormously across the country, from the very substantial to the minimal. This is another area in which the Government's White Paper might wish to address consistency and good practice.

Lastly in this area, we believe that this increased accountability for police authorities should be complemented by one simple reform: that, unless it is adjudged by a majority of members that the delicacy or confidentiality of the material they are dealing with makes it impossible, all police authority meetings should be held in public.

Funding

As well as the duties that police authorities are currently charged with, they must also agree the part of the police budget which is allocated directly from the Home Office. As is painfully obvious, all public services face enormous challenges when it comes to central government funding thanks to the economic downturn - and policing is no exception. It is crucial, however, that the police service remains responsive enough, through being sufficiently resourced, to be able to respond to crime and disorder at the divisional and very local level. These challenges will inevitably vary area by area.

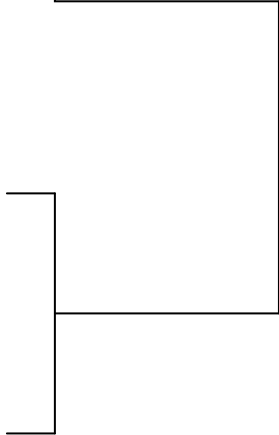
In the light of this, unless there is an objection from a majority of the relevant local authorities within the police authority area, we believe that there should no longer be capping by central government - and the process of 'nominating' forces for reduction in the next financial year, which simply represents a future cut in services, should also end.

This will inevitably have fiscal consequences; but one way in which such pressures can be alleviated would be by allowing local authorities greater freedom to use their own funds to commission policing services themselves, a point which we explore below.

Partnership working and cross-border collaboration

As stated, the role of a police authority and the challenges which they face inevitably varies from region to region. Often, however, there are challenges which necessitate two or more authorities working together. We have been impressed by the level of partnership working which is being undertaken, even

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before the passage of the new Policing and Crime Bill - particularly on matters such as serious, or 'level 2' crime. In particular, West Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Humberside police authorities have united to create 'hubs' to undertake counter-terrorism work and to tackle serious and organised crime. In doing so, they are filling a gap which has developed that was previously filled by the National Crime Squad. Unfortunately, the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) has not proved entirely successful in tackling these issues as its focus has switched to the international and intelligence arenas. In the light of this, we welcome the announcement in the Government's updated serious and organised crime strategy, *Extending Our Reach*, published on 14 July 2009, that police forces will be required to collaborate in regional units dedicated to combating serious and organised crime. We must avoid repeating past mistakes in respect of fighting e-crime and guarding against cyber attack. We look forward to the e-crime strategy promised for December 2009 - which should build on the first steps announced in the national cyber strategy on 25 June 2009.

In the meantime, however, the creation of 'hubs', such as that in Yorkshire and the Humber to tackle specific challenges, should be undertaken as quickly as possible. They develop expertise which smaller police authorities could never obtain single-handedly and allow lead authorities to co-ordinate action against the most serious crimes. This is an approach which the East Midlands forces have been urging fellow authorities nationwide to adopt against e-crime and which they have driven forward themselves with the establishment of the East Midlands Police Authorities Joint Committee. This Committee has overseen collaborative work between all forces in the region on specialisms such as serious and organised crime (through the joint East Midlands Special Operations Unit, or EMSOU). Given the need for expertise and the exponential increase in new areas of criminality, the wider application of these collaborative approaches, based on the Metropolitan Police's e-crime unit is, as has been recognised, crucial.

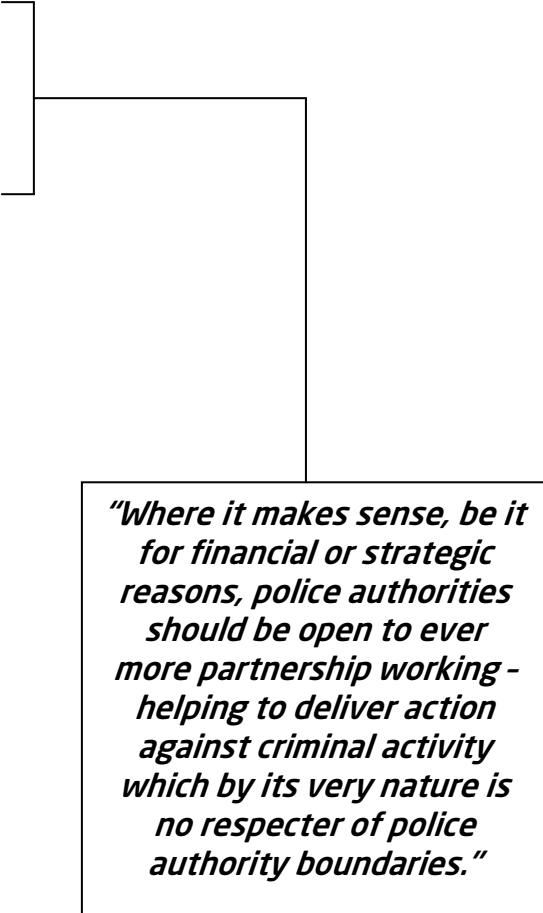
There are further examples of partnership working. Avon and Somerset Constabulary joined forces with Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and IBM to form Southwest One - a joint venture company which aims to deliver savings on finance, IT and property upkeep. Greater Manchester's forces have what were described to us as "mature scrutiny arrangements with regard to force performance" and they have developed

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“scrutiny partnerships with local authorities across Greater Manchester”. This collaborative work has led to both a more stable funding arrangement for policing for the area - with a three-year precept deal agreed with councils across the region - and enabled the police to tackle specific concerns raised by the public in different communities, such as off-road bike nuisance, gun crime in Trafford and hate crime in Oldham.

Where it makes sense, be it for financial or strategic reasons, police authorities should be open to ever more partnership working - helping to deliver action against criminal activity which by its very nature is no respecter of police authority boundaries. Government should also consider how it might facilitate police authorities directly commissioning specialist or niche services from other police forces across Britain, in a bid to further equip police authorities to tackle challenges which may not have presented themselves historically in their area. For instance, police authorities might wish to take a closer look at how their police force is addressing the development of scientific potential - the improvements which are needed in detection and the cross-border work which is essential if organised criminals from burglars to drug-dealers are to be identified and prevented from offending. As the tragic deaths of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in 2002 illustrated very clearly, the procedures and actions of one force can have a dramatic impact on the capability - and therefore the protective and prevention work - of another.

While the work of Local Strategic Partnerships and the consequent development of Local Area Agreements (where they are working effectively) are often seen as being relevant to local policing - and therefore to the work of the CDRP and its co-terminosity with Command Units - we believe that it is clear from these examples that the work of reinforcing partnership can be driven by the police authority as well as by local councils, underpinned and monitored by the work of the audit service (even with the difficulties of further cross-boundary agreement - Multi-Area Agreements are one way of addressing this). We are clear that partnership working is aimed at prevention, crime reduction and the avoidance of recidivism. Therefore, the cross-agency work required is essential in underpinning the broader role carried by the police service - but it should never obscure the clarity of the specific role of the police themselves. Clarity is required to avoid the police being held to account for the failings of others, including in the criminal justice system; but, equally, failings by the police themselves should not be offloaded onto the



“Where it makes sense, be it for financial or strategic reasons, police authorities should be open to ever more partnership working - helping to deliver action against criminal activity which by its very nature is no respecter of police authority boundaries.”

shoulders of those without either the specific powers or remit that the police service carries.

To ensure that partnership arrangements are working effectively, that there is broader involvement by all those local services whose work is essential to tackling crime and that accountability rests where it should, there is clear scope for the newly established Regional Select Committees of the House of Commons to undertake inquiries and publish reports. We anticipate that such inquiries would assist with identifying and spreading best practice and help with reassessing the role of Crime Co-ordinators. Some Partnerships have achieved significant improvements and the Select Committees could examine ways in which such improvements can be replicated elsewhere. For example, Cardiff's Crime Reduction Strategy - involving scientific analysis of the incidence of violence coming to Accident & Emergency units rather than just reported crime figures - has significantly reduced incidents of violence in the city.

We believe that these proposals strengthen the authority, skills and knowledge within police authorities, while retaining their proper distance from short-term pressure to commit resources inappropriately, as well as from undue political influence - which would be the consequence of elected police commissioners. In addition, we have provided a strong and meaningful link between police authorities and local communities through the strengthening and monitoring of processes of public consultation. The linking of each police authority member to a local unit commander would bring the authority closer to local policing and communities, thus bridging the gap between overarching strategy and the day-to-day concerns of citizens.

To complete this picture, it is necessary to ensure that the authority's work is as transparent as possible. We are therefore convinced that all police authority meetings should be held in public - with meetings going into private session only where it is adjudged by a majority of members that this is appropriate in terms of the delicacy or confidentiality of the material being dealt with.

BCUs, CDRPs and Local Authorities

Policing in England and Wales is organised through Basic Command Units (BCUs), each with a senior police officer with responsibility for delivering police services in a defined area. These areas are sometimes co-

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terminous with local authority boundaries; sometimes they are not.

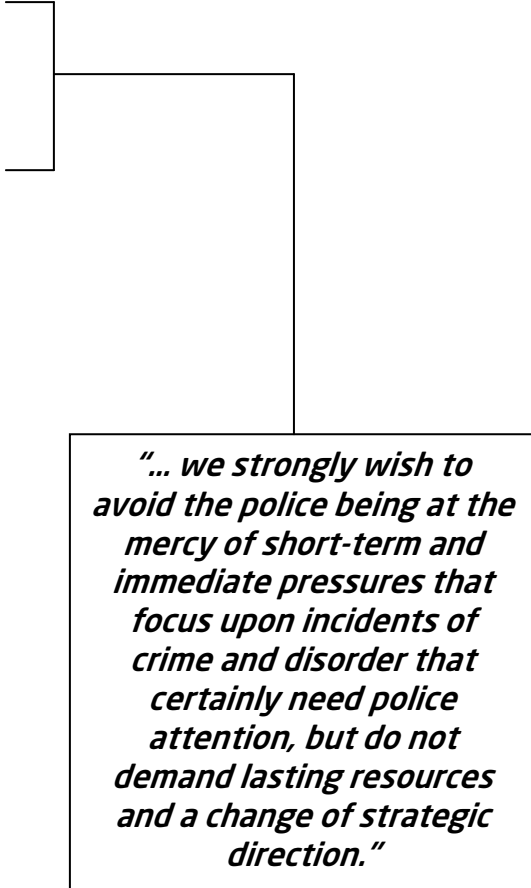
Clearly, the actions of police working in BCUs have a very significant impact on public views of policing and there need to be strong accountability arrangements at the local level. However, we strongly wish to avoid the police being at the mercy of short-term and immediate pressures that focus upon incidents of crime and disorder that certainly need police attention, but do not demand lasting resources and a change of strategic direction.

For this reason, we subscribe to the view that accountability at this level means that a local police commander and their police authority link are able to give a full answer about why such pressures are short-term and why the resources allocated to them are appropriate. Here, accountability means conveying a clarity of purpose and a transparency of information about why the police act in particular ways. However, we would go further here and say that there is a proper role for police authority members not simply to be linked to local police commanders, as detailed above, but to take part in their selection. This is because the authority has a duty to ensure that strategy is delivered by a constabulary - and the key people who will deliver it (namely, divisional commanders) need the confidence of the authority and that of the local community. Naturally, the relevant or lead local authority for the Command Unit area (or, as appropriate, the CDRP) should be involved in such appointments, with a seat on the selection board.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Basic Command Units

We have considered the role of CDRPs carefully, not least because the local police commander is a member of it. For that to be an effective relationship, we believe that there needs to be the same rigorous analysis of data applied to CDRP strategy (and understood by its members) as is relevant to the work of the police authority. One implication of this is that it may be possible for a local authority to undertake all data analysis of policing and for both the police authority and the CDRP to access and talk about the same data, working from a consistent methodology.

It is indisputable that CDRPs are a key aspect of local planning for policing. It is therefore essential to recognise the strong link provided by what is usually a local authority Cabinet Member who sits on the CDRP.



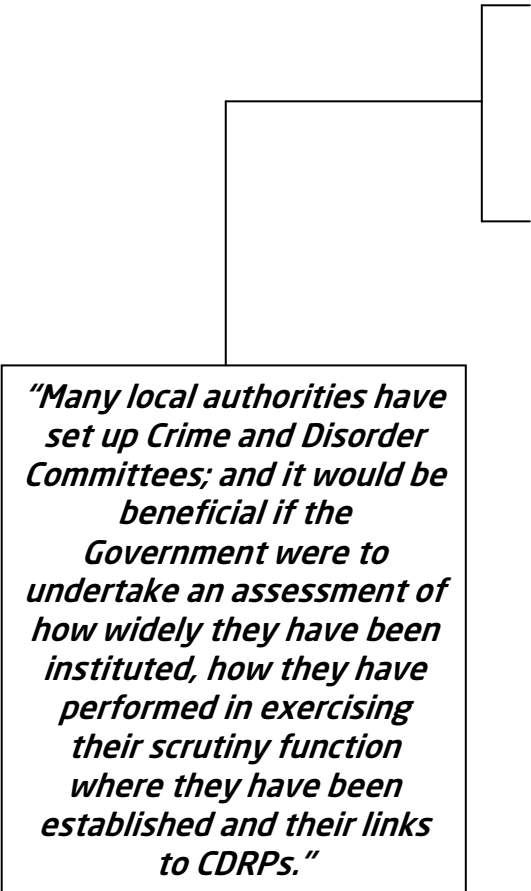
"... we strongly wish to avoid the police being at the mercy of short-term and immediate pressures that focus upon incidents of crime and disorder that certainly need police attention, but do not demand lasting resources and a change of strategic direction."

Although we recognise the different configuration of local government structures, we believe that this person represents an extra source of consultation and advice, alongside the councillors who sit on the police authority. Ideally (taking into account the logistics of achieving this), the Cabinet Member should sit on both the CDRP and the police authority - acting as a further mechanism for the public to feed in their views of policing priorities. We believe that it may also be time for the Government to take a look at greater coherence, co-terminosity and rationalisation of CDRP and local authority boundaries.

There should always be a clear responsibility for a Cabinet Member beyond community safety and into the wider areas of policing within that local authority's boundary; and the local authority's Crime and Disorder Committee should complement the council's partnership work through the CDRP. Those Committees themselves were set up by the Police and Justice Act 2006, which stated that local authorities should have such a body to review and scrutinise and make reports or recommendations regarding the functioning of the responsible authorities of the CDRP. Many local authorities have indeed set up such committees; and it would be beneficial if the Government were to undertake an assessment of how widely they have been instituted, how they have performed in exercising their scrutiny function where they have been established and their links to CDRPs.

In a similar vein, when it is undertaking its regular wider assessments of local authorities, it is our view that the National Audit Office should include in its deliberations a review of the effectiveness and use of councils' scrutiny functions in relation to the police, as well as community safety. As part of this, it could rate the local authority's performance in this area under the appropriate indicators.

Enhanced scrutiny by the local authority can assist the police to command the confidence of the public at every tier - but it is essential that officers, including local police commanders, take the initiative in listening to a wide range of community views and responding to them appropriately. Further, they need to be able to justify to their local public why they have acted in the way that they have. It need hardly be reiterated that transparency is of the essence if good police/public consultation is to be undertaken and if officers are to be properly held to account. We are therefore convinced that a BCU commander should consult with the public about the deployment of their



"Many local authorities have set up Crime and Disorder Committees; and it would be beneficial if the Government were to undertake an assessment of how widely they have been instituted, how they have performed in exercising their scrutiny function where they have been established and their links to CDRPs."

budget and its successful use, including where commissioning by the relevant local authority or authorities has taken place. Those commanders should report back to the local community on, at minimum, an annual basis; ideally, they would do so every six months. This would complement the detailed reporting back to very local communities, detailed below.

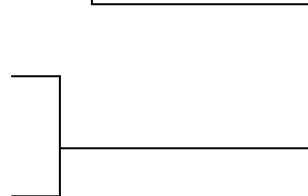
Local authorities commissioning services

Whilst some incremental progress has been achieved in areas where Local Area Agreements have been most successful, the commissioning of additional policing services by local government is still limited. There is a great deal of scope for innovation in this area. On some occasions, regeneration budgets have been deployed, allowing local residents to commission services through Area Panels and other mechanisms - but this remains the exception rather than the rule.

We favour local authorities commissioning extra police services as required, through the allocation of separate funds for specific operations. This would mirror the specific funds which can be allocated by national government for particular projects undertaken by police authorities working across boundaries (as has been done, for instance, in the East Midlands, where forces have worked in partnership on their mobile data project and on Automatic Number Plate Recognition) and could include, for example, local authorities paying for additional patrols of areas of concern, such as troublesome estates. We believe that this would strengthen the partnership between local authorities, police authorities and constabularies, as well as introducing an added dimension to the work of CDRPs - as this would be the forum within which local authorities make their proposals. Should local authorities and councillors become aware of an urgent problem, this method allows them to respond to shorter-term issues, or to justified political concern, while not compromising the overarching policing strategy for their area.

National government can assist this step-change by facilitating further pilot programmes which seek to integrate crime reduction and prevention measures across the criminal justice system. Local Criminal Justice Boards should have a much closer relationship to the structures which we outline in this report. This would help to provide a genuine partnership approach. Further work is recommended in this area - taking into account the recommendations of the aforementioned report of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Local Government. We are of course aware that there are some useful examples of

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how the commissioning of specific policing services has been developed - for instance, to tackle Friday and Saturday evening binge drinking, or the use of regeneration budgets for the 'buying in' of Police Community Support Officers and additional uniformed police (Sheffield City Council, for instance, is responsible for funding 20% of the city's PCSOs). We believe that this could be substantially enhanced and developed, even at a time of economic stringency, to meet very specific needs in a core area of public concern. It would be particularly effective when undertaken in conjunction with wider partnership approaches. Greater Manchester has done some interesting experimental work here, including with the Community Justice Centre approach in Salford.

"Accountability and answerability to the public is never more crucial than at the level of the neighbourhood and the local community - where people's fear of crime manifests itself most sharply and where the public interacts on a day-to-day basis with rank and file officers."

Government should return to the issue of how best to facilitate local communities holding a democratic ballot in a defined area or neighbourhood to raise a levy specifically for commissioning additional police resources. This would build on the concept of Business Improvement Districts and the work that is often undertaken across areas by a range of Tenants and Residents Associations, who themselves place a levy on members. There is also the example of Wimbledon Common, where residents in the surrounding locality have an automatic levy placed on them for the upkeep and improvement of the open space.

In this way, both for additional policing resources - and, possibly, physical security such as CCTV - local residents can have a say. It would also facilitate less well-off neighbourhoods matching what the wealthiest enclaves already provide for themselves in regard to additional security. For equity, it would be necessary for government to experiment with matched funding for the most disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods.

The Neighbourhood Level

Accountability and answerability to the public is never more crucial than at the level of the neighbourhood and the local community - where people's fear of crime manifests itself most sharply and where the public interacts on a day-to-day basis with rank and file officers.

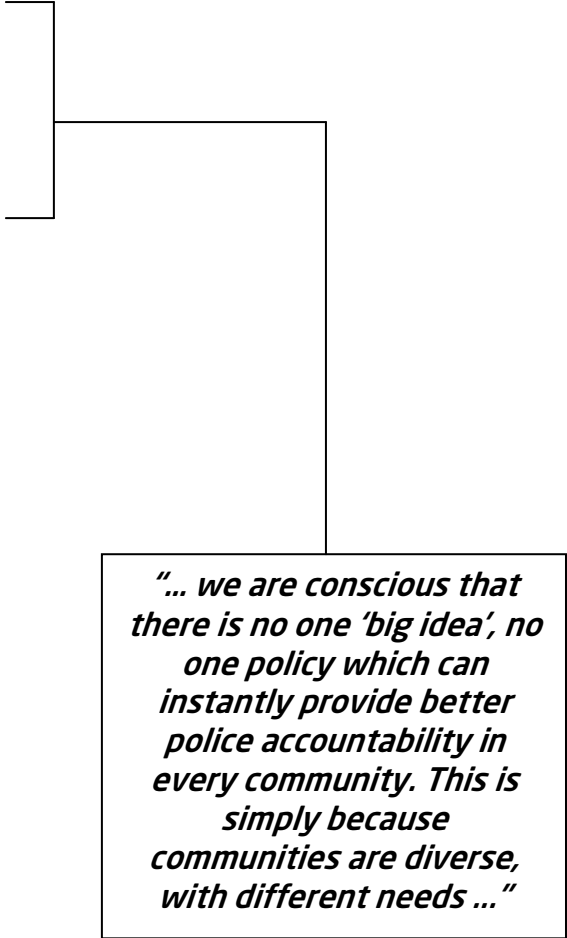
We have been impressed by a number of examples of police/public consultation which meet our understanding of local accountability. In hearing about them, we have borne in mind that, as so often in

political debate, we should avoid reinventing the wheel; and we are conscious that there is no one 'big idea', no one policy which can instantly provide better police accountability in every community. This is simply because communities are diverse, with different needs and different practices. Several of these practices have much to recommend them; and so we are offering less of a prescriptive approach here, and more of a 'menu' from which to choose.

There is no one policy which can be replicated across the country, in all circumstances, to ensure adequate local police accountability. Rather, we commend the examples which follow and note how a responsive police force can command public confidence. Partnership working - such as that undertaken by Greater Manchester force in Bolton, for instance - has demonstrated how, using a comprehensive neighbourhood approach and combining a range of services, the police can be integrated into greater accountability, public participation and the engagement of citizens in assisting the police - in a way that working in isolation cannot.

The key to success is to spread this best practice across the country, replacing what is at the moment a very patchy picture of performance - with, for instance, some Police and Communities Together (PACT) schemes working well and some being an example of a force simply going through the motions. The National Policing Improvement Agency has a Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing Programme, which attempts to identify what it is that the public wants from their police service and the quality they expect and then use that information to help forces "design and deliver policing services that people find easy to access and use and that are relevant and useful to them". Police officers can log on to the NPIA's Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing website for practical information and examples of effective practice, including an online library, case studies and advice on communications and development. We commend this work and encourage its extension. The NPIA should systematically review what is working best and provide a suitable manual for police authorities, BCU commanders and those working through the Beat Teams to be able to learn from and replicate the innovative practice elsewhere.

A system with which we have been particularly impressed is that of Key Individual Networks - KINs - which is run by Derbyshire Constabulary. In Derbyshire, the county is subdivided into 103 KIN areas, with the aim of recruiting around 100 members for each KIN. Whilst in reality having between 35 and 60 members is



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more typical, those who are selected (by Police Constables or PCSOs) or who self-nominate are diverse in ways which reflect their communities. Efforts are made to ensure that marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as children and young people or ethnic minorities, are involved.

Through electronic media, KIN members provide intelligence, feedback, ideas for improvement and the basis for selecting two or three key priorities for policing in each KIN area over a period of time. It has been suggested that each member of the police authority might be allocated a number of KIN areas, with whom they could build an ongoing relationship, providing direct feedback to the authority from key individuals on the ground. Volunteers provide the funding and awareness of the network is running at more than 50% of Derbyshire residents. Feedback to the community is done via door-to-door leafleting.

Derbyshire also has a 'reactive community interface' to complement the proactive KINs. The Community Messaging Service allows members of the public to sign up to be informed of criminal activity and risks in their area. 16,000 people in Derbyshire have so far signed up to this service. Meanwhile, PCs and PCSOs attend meetings of town and parish councils, tenant forums, youth groups and other community institutions on a regular basis; and information and accountability flow from public discussion at Area Forums; a higher SNT profile; greater contact with community groups; and an 0345 non-emergency telephone number.

There are further examples of good local practice in, for example, Castleford, West Yorkshire, where PACT meetings have been very successful, with up to 70 members of the public attending. Here, the crucial factor was preparation, the information given to the local community and the follow-through from the meetings themselves, which kept local people informed and engaged. Sadly, we were unable to identify instances of best practice taking place in London - and we recommend that the Home Secretary, in conjunction with the Mayor and the MPA, should discuss with the Met Commissioner, Sir Paul Stephenson, better ways of reflecting the good work which we know is happening within the Metropolitan Police Area. Because of the overarching role of the Met and the London-wide approach necessitated by the Mayor and MPA, it appeared that excellent practice at Command Unit level was somehow seen as being 'not for public scrutiny', which is a great shame. (In addition to this, we believe that it would be useful to examine precisely the

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benefits of the public scrutiny of the Commissioner's work, as regularly as currently takes place, given that this is more likely to be a sounding board for publicly-expressed gripes, rather than a full evaluation of the working of the Met and the progress that they make.)

There are, then, some examples of good practice when it comes to local policing accountability. The KINs system represents a promising approach to community-based accountability and shows how local people can meaningfully influence policing priorities where it really matters. In the light of the successful schemes highlighted here, we recommend that the Government commission research on the effectiveness of KINs and how it compares with PACT operations in other parts of the country, the variation in success of PACT meetings and how best practice from those which are operating well could be disseminated around the country. Any national guidelines which may emerge from that review on how a wider application of good schemes would operate should, however, not be too prescriptive; they should allow local variation according to circumstances, whilst observing minimum standards.

Sadly, there are parts of the country where local accountability mechanisms are not working in anything close to the successful way of the schemes highlighted above. The evidence is that, if police hold routine public consultation meetings, they are poorly attended and it is easy for them to be focused upon the concerns of one or two vocal individuals. In some areas, they only result in officers being taken off the streets for unproductive discussions with the 'usual suspects'. In order to counter this tendency, as we have stated, we think that it is important for local commanders and the Chief Constable to justify to their police authority the strength and impact of the consultation arrangements that they have put in place. These can and will be different in different command areas; but the key point remains that each must be robust, accessible for as wide a range of members of the community as possible and facilitate frank discussion on clear, transparent police information and strategy. It is also important that meetings do not become discrete and isolated events. Commanders must widely publicise the forums available and they can do this through more modern means such as websites, or through traditional methods of leafleting or through parish councils and the like.

We are at pains to make the point that, in a very important sense, it does not matter whether we call local mechanisms PACT or KINs or any other acronym. What matters is how it works - and that is by proper

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preparation on the part of the force, high-quality information which is then widely communicated to the local community (and, where appropriate, to special interest groups) in a form that is accessible and relevant to the particular meetings being held; and, above all, feedback to the public on what has changed in their area, any reprioritisation and what action has resulted from agreed goals. This can often be best achieved in collaboration with the local authority and other agencies (including youth workers, who often do not attend meetings either because they are not invited or, astonishingly in many examples we have received, because it was outside their normal working hours). Greater Manchester have examples - as indicated elsewhere - of good joint practice in terms of consultation and the achievement of agreed outcomes.

“... we seek a clarification and extension of the Community Call to Action established in the Police and Justice Act 2006 - it should be revisited and revitalised.”

The police authority would, of course, be overseeing this work as per our recommendations; but we would go further and seek to ensure that whether a force is succeeding in this endeavour should form part of the standard assessment of a force by HMIC (the most recent inspection regime, for Spring 2009, is attached to this report as an appendix). Formulaic ‘consultations’ have often led to people feeling that police authorities are merely going through the motions, rather than genuinely engaging them. It is not even enough for the police service simply to provide a mechanism by which the public can highlight problems which need their attention. The methods by which the police connect with the local community must also serve to mobilise it as a force for good which can work in partnership with them to fight crime and tackle disorder.

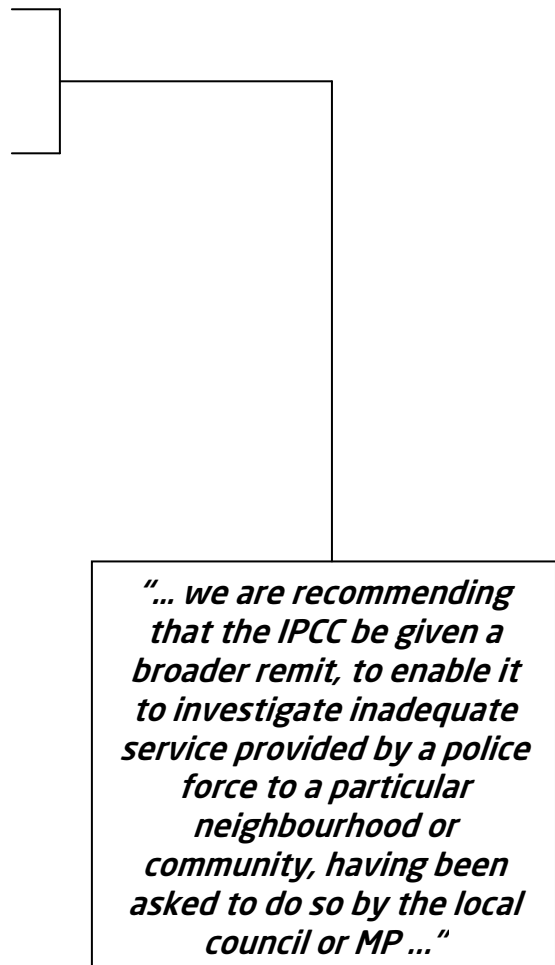
As we have noted earlier in this document, there are legislative measures in place for members of the public who feel that the police are not addressing an area of specific concern. In particular, we seek a clarification and extension of the Community Call to Action (ccfa) established in the Police and Justice Act 2006 - it should be revisited and revitalised. The idea previously discussed, both in local government documents and elsewhere, to develop the use of petitioning is one worth following through. Where a member of the public, or a community or Area Panel, feel that the police are providing an inadequate service on a consistent basis, there should be the facility of a petition - with a minimum number of signatures - which would be triggered by the agreement of either the local MP or the councillor(s) for the locality concerned. Such a petition, where it

related to BCU-level activity, would in the first instance be taken forward by the local authority Cabinet Member responsible. Where there is still an unsatisfactory response from the police, the petition would then be passed to the police authority, which would have the power to order remedial action to be taken within a specified timeframe.

Where such a petition is triggered, we would recommend that HMIC automatically become involved. We also foresee a role for the IPCC. At present, their investigations are confined to where there is a specific complaint against an individual officer or PCSO, or where there is a major killing or incident. The problem is that many 'complaints', especially at a lower level, are in reality a plea for improved and appropriate service by the police. In order to encourage a culture in which real issues are addressed quickly, we believe that the IPCC should be able to encourage a public service ethos and the police should be helped to be less defensive than they sometimes tend to be in responding to 'complaints'. With that in mind, we are recommending that the IPCC be given a broader remit, to enable it to investigate inadequate service provided by a police force to a particular neighbourhood or community, having been asked to do so by the local council or MP (which, again, would provide for sufficient protection from vexatious complaints).

There have been other measures which have been proposed by government in recent years which have, understandably, raised similar concerns to the Crime and Policing Representatives posited by the recent Green Paper. The Government suggested the establishment of 'community advocates' in the 2003 policing White Paper - a proposal which did not survive through the 2006 Act because of fears that it would establish a parallel system to that of local councillors, who are, of course, advocates with an electoral mandate.

We are recommending that the Government revisit this issue, with a view to establishing adequate processes, including support and training, for community leaders. In this way, the community could have a nominated voice - but not one that acts instead of councillors or police authority members. They would have a specific remit to liaise on behalf of small neighbourhoods with the police. This approach is already undertaken in some neighbourhoods, where appropriate mobile and other communication details are provided to key members of the community; but, with a wider application, it could



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increase accountability and help to revive and extend Neighbourhood Watch.

Alongside special constables - who are, after all, the 'citizen police' of the modern era - there would be proper advocacy in a way that was positive and supportive to the police, whilst responding to local people in a way that is not always possible with formalised meetings. As with the Derbyshire example mentioned above, those fulfilling a particular role would automatically be invited to local feedback meetings; but advocates could also be the backbone of the regular forum organised to ensure that the BCU area as a whole was covered and that the senior officers at that level were clearly accountable.

Once again, we emphasise that, in this report, we have endeavoured to recommend that it is the police who are accountable and answerable to the local community - and that it is the layers of representation (both in terms of those elected to the local authority and nominated to the police authority) which oversee that accountability, scrutinise activity and, in the case of the police authority, hold a strategic role in terms of both funding and overall priorities.

Conclusion

Apart from these formal means of police/public consultation and accountability, we emphasise that probably the most meaningful method of police explaining their work to local citizens and thereby making themselves accountable is through local PCs and PCSOs understanding the crucial role they play in the course of their routine work.

In this regard, we may perhaps look to Norfolk and the philosophy which underpins that force's everyday policing. Ian Macpherson, the Chief Constable, has impressed by having an extremely clear understanding of *why* local police undertake the duties they do - and by disseminating that view to officers, so that they in turn can communicate it to the public. PCSOs understand why they are outside the school gate at 3.30pm and can relate that to citizens. From the Chief Constable downwards, as in Norfolk, it is good practice to explain the purpose of the organisation's strategy to officers at all levels (once it has been agreed with the police authority), embedding it at all ranks. This has its own reward when it comes to explaining that purpose to the public and thereby increasing their understanding and confidence in officers.

"... probably the most meaningful method of police explaining their work to local citizens and thereby making themselves accountable is through local PCs and PCSOs understanding the crucial role they play in the course of their routine work."

The overall aim of our recommendations is to provide the community with a strong voice, articulated to unit police commanders and to the police authority. The keynotes of our proposals are robust, accessible, locally-tailored forums, within which there is honest, transparent communication between citizens and local unit beat commanders. We believe that the measures proposed enhance police accountability and we submit them in anticipation of the forthcoming White Paper and to all major political parties concerned with the accountability and answerability of our police service.

Conclusions and recommendations

Police Authorities and Chief Constables

1. We recommend that the idea of directly elected members to a police authority and the notion of elected police commissioners be dropped. We believe that while democratically elected bodies with a wide remit – such as local councils – are not only justified in terms of direct elections but essential for the life and well-being of our democracy, the narrower the remit of the particular office held, the less justified the case for direct election. We believe that there are better and more practical ways of making the police genuinely accountable for their performance in the service of the local community. We are also concerned about the potential for elected police authorities – and for the position of an elected police commissioner – to be hijacked by extremist political groups.

2. We recommend that police authorities should be retained; that they should comprise local council members, lay members and a magistrate; and that council members should be in a bare majority. We believe that appropriate checks and balances are maintained by this diversity of membership and the widest possible representation of all segments of the community. We are not recommending any specific number of members for an authority, although we think that a maximum of fifteen is appropriate in most cases, and the number set for each authority should take into account the size and geographic spread of the area concerned.

We make no recommendation on other authorities, such as the British Transport Police.

3. We recommend that appointment to a police authority should be undertaken by a selection panel consisting of representative local councillors (covering the political as well as the geographic spectrum), existing police authority members, an outside expert and a Home Office representative. All appointments should be based on merit, with an evaluation of skills and competencies, namely: an ability to analyse crime and related data; an ability to contribute to strategic planning (i.e. relate crime data to stated policing policy objectives); and the possession of key communications skills, networking ability and political understanding. In addition, an understanding of the culture of policing (how all ranks routinely respond to the public and to incidents) would clearly be an advantage. To facilitate this, we recommend that:

4. Local authorities should build training and skills competencies into their process of nomination for all those put forward for police authority membership. Nominees from the community as non-councillor appointments should be offered the same initial or preparatory training. We recommend that this should be a standard and enforceable requirement on anyone putting their name forward, or being nominated, to a police authority.

5. We recommend that the prime duty of police authorities should be clarified, including clarification on the scrutiny role (in conjunction with the appropriate local authorities in this area), the monitoring of the police force and assessment of the performance of the police force as a whole in reducing crime, reducing the fear of crime and providing reassurance to the public. In addition, we recommend that the police authority should have a prime role in monitoring the progress of the police service in accounting to the public and answering for their performance.

6. We recommend that in order to facilitate the authority undertaking its duties, including that of monitoring and scrutinising the work of the service, it is necessary to ensure that reliable and appropriate data is available. That statistical analysis should be undertaken by dedicated and trained staff, best located in the local authority (appropriately, a lead local authority) which is already gathering data from all relevant sources, including local partners, in order to provide the police authority - and the police force itself - with comprehensive, cross-cutting information, as well as data specified by the police in assisting them in carrying out their duties. There should be national standards for the adequacy, appropriateness and presentation of data, preferably established by the UK Statistics Authority. We believe that it is crucial that reliable data on long-term trends of crime and disorder in the area are provided, alongside mapping of immediate priorities and challenges. In this way, policing strategies can be developed which avoid short-term pressures and assist in the analysis of the causes of crime, whilst at the same time helping to provide proper information and data to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and local neighbourhood meetings. In this way, police authority members will be able to carry out their duties in adequately assessing and evaluating police performance.

7. As things stand, a police authority's role includes seeking the public's views on crime and disorder and informing them about the authority's work. We recommend that this should be reformed. The Chief Constable should consult with the public and demonstrate to the authority that robust arrangements are in place for that consultation to be meaningful. He or she should be required to build on best practice to use existing community forums or, where there is no existing forum, to work with the local authority and community to establish consultative community forums, tailoring them to meet local circumstances. Complaints that this has been tried, but has met with insufficient public engagement, will not suffice.

8. We recommend that the Chief Constable should present an annual, rolling three-year policing plan covering crime and social order policy, which should be subject to police authority approval; and that he or she should account for outcomes on the planned objectives, underpinned by data drawn from the independent statistical analysis set out in recommendation 6. The authority should hold an annual personal assessment of the chief constable's performance as a standard part of its appraisal.

9. The administrative support systems backing up the work of police authority members varies enormously across the country, from very substantial provision to minimal. This is an area in which the Government's forthcoming White Paper should address consistency and good practice.

10. We recommend that all police authority meetings should be held in public, going into private session only where it is adjudged by a majority of members that this is appropriate in terms of the delicacy or confidentiality of the material being dealt with.

11. As with all other public services, the policing budget faces severe pressure during the current economic downturn. We recommend that it is essential that policing is responsive enough at the local and divisional level to tackle crime and disorder which will inevitably vary area by area. In the light of this, unless there is an objection from a majority of the relevant local authorities within the police authority area, we believe that central government should give up the power to cap police precept levels and/or increases and end the process of 'nominating' forces for reduction in the next financial year, which simply represents a future cut in services.

Partnership Working and Cross-border Collaboration

12. We have been impressed by the level of partnership working and co-operation across police authority borders, particularly in Yorkshire and the Humber and in the East Midlands. In these areas, where 'hubs' have been established to tackle serious and organised crime and specialist functions, substantial progress has been made in filling a gap in what is sometimes known as level 2 policing. We welcome the announcement in the revised serious and organised crime strategy, published on 14 July 2009, that forces will be required to collaborate in regional units dedicated to combating organised crime and we recommend that work on this should take place as soon as possible. Such cross-border working has been necessary and critically important in filling the gap left by the amalgamation of the National Crime Squad into the new agency and SOCA's concentration on intelligence gathering and international work.

13. We recommend that, in addition to the cross-border co-operation we have acknowledged in this report, there are further, imaginative steps which might facilitate a police authority directly commissioning specialist or niche services from other police services across the United Kingdom; and that further work should be undertaken on this.

14. Collaborative working at a regional level should be encouraged or required where it is not already in place and we believe that the recently established Regional Select Committees of the House of Commons (and the Welsh Affairs Select Committee, in the case of Wales) should consider the potential for assessing and reporting on its effectiveness. We anticipate that such committee inquiries would assist with the spread of best practice and reappraise the role of the Crime Co-ordinator.

BCUs, CDRPs and Local Authorities

15. We recommend that the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership should be co-terminous with the relevant council, with councillors and police authority members sharing responsibility for making sure that the Partnership bases its work on an accurate assessment of local needs and problems; and that the BCU commander and the council chief executive account for effective joint working. Such work needs to be clearly accounted for as well as being fully integrated with the Local Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreements.

16. We recommend that the police authority has a duty to ensure that the Chief Constable's policing strategy is delivered on the ground. There is therefore an essential role for the police authority in the selection of local police commanders as, at this crucial level, it is important that they command the confidence of both the police authority and, of course, the local community. The relevant or lead local authority for the command unit area (or, as appropriate, the CDRP) should be involved in such appointments, with a seat on the selection board.

17. To strengthen the link between the police authority and the community served, we recommend it would be beneficial for each member of the police authority to be formally linked with one or more local police command areas. This would facilitate both the BCU commander having a direct link with that member and the appropriate authority member being able to appraise, as well as listen in to, how the police are accounting to the public. This underpins our overarching view that the police should

be accountable to local communities, providing a different role for the police authority to that often envisaged by those advocating direct election.

18. We recognise the strong link provided by what is usually a local authority Cabinet Member and the important role they play on the CDRP. We recommend that this individual should be seen as representing an additional source of consultation and advice to police commanders alongside the relevant police authority member. We further recommend that the relevant Cabinet Member should sit on both the CDRP and wherever possible - given the number of places available - the police authority as the local authority representative. This would provide a further mechanism for the public to feed in their views on policing priorities, through that elected local councillor.

We further recommend that there should always be a clear responsibility for a Cabinet Member at the relevant tier of local government, wider than community safety. The authority's Crime and Disorder Committee (where such a committee or panel exists), which should have been established following the Police and Justice Act 2006, should complement the authority's partnership working through the CDRP.

We recommend that the government undertake an assessment of how Crime and Disorder Committees have been used, their performance in exercising their scrutiny function and their links to other partnership approaches, including local strategic partnerships and the subsequent local area agreements.

19. Whilst some incremental progress has been achieved in areas where Local Area Agreements have been most successful, commissioning of additional policing services by local government is still limited. On some occasions, regeneration budgets have been deployed, including allowing local residents to commission services through area panels and other mechanisms - but this remains the exception.

We favour local authorities commissioning extra police services as required, through the allocation of separate funds for specific operations; and we therefore recommend that government should facilitate further pilot programmes in integrating crime and reduction, safety and prevention measures across the criminal justice system. Local Criminal Justice Boards should therefore have a much closer relationship to the structures outlined here, to provide a genuine partnership approach. Further work is recommended on this area, taking into account the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Local Government group report (publication 20 July 2009).

The commissioning of specific policing services, building on the 'buying in' of police community support officers and additional uniformed police for challenges such as countering late-night binge drinking and disturbances, could therefore be developed in conjunction with wider partnership approaches - Greater Manchester has undertaken some interesting experimental work here, including with the Community Justice Centre approach in Salford.

20. We recommend that government should return to the issue of how best to facilitate local communities holding a democratic ballot in a defined area or neighbourhood to raise a levy specifically for commissioning additional police resources. This would build on the concept of Business Improvement Districts and the work that is often undertaken across areas by a range of Tenants and Residents Associations, who themselves have a levy on members. There is also the example of the Wimbledon Common approach, where all those within a defined area of the

common have an automatic levy placed on them for the upkeep and improvement of the open space. In this way, both for additional policing resources (and possibly physical security such as CCTV), local residents can have a say. It would also facilitate less well-off neighbourhoods matching what the wealthiest enclaves already provide for themselves in regard to additional security. For equity, it would be necessary for government to experiment with matched funding for the most disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhoods.

21. We recommend that when undertaking its regular assessments of local authorities, the National Audit Office should include a review of the effectiveness and use of councils' scrutiny functions in relation to broader police effectiveness, as well as community safety, providing through its benchmarks of local authority performance appropriate ratings under the indicators, of performance.

22. We recommend that best practice should be adopted in reporting back by BCU commanders, not just to the relevant local authority but to a wider forum representing the community in that area, including any additional commissioning by the local authority themselves. Such reports should take place at a minimum annually, but preferably twice-yearly, and should complement the detailed report back at neighbourhood level as described in our report. At the heart of this reporting must be professional and consistent use of the data referred to in recommendation 6 above.

The Neighbourhood Level

23. We have concluded that there is no one policy which can be replicated across the country, in all circumstances, to ensure adequate local police accountability. Instead, we have noted excellent practice such as the Key Individual Networks (KINs) in Derbyshire; and in the West Yorkshire police authority area, where work in Castleford was specifically drawn to our attention. We also commend the work which the Greater Manchester force have undertaken on specific issues in diverse communities, tackling, for example, hate crime in Oldham and gun crime in Stretford - a responsive approach which is commanding public confidence. Partnership approaches in other parts of the force area, such as Bolton, have demonstrated how, using a comprehensive neighbourhood approach (combining a range of services), the police can be integrated into greater accountability, public participation and the engagement of citizens in assisting the police, in a way that working in isolation cannot.

We recommend that the key to success is to spread this best practice across the country, replacing what is at the moment a very patchy picture of performance (with some Police and Communities Together working and some being an example of going through the motions). We recommend that the National Policing Improvement Agency should support and extend its Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing programme and its attendant website. The NPIA should systematically review what is working best and provide a suitable manual for police authorities, BCU commanders and those working through the beat teams to be able to learn from and replicate the innovative practice elsewhere.

24. Whichever mechanism of local accountability is used, we believe that there are key elements to community meetings which must be in place: proper preparation on the part of the force; high-quality information which is then widely communicated to the local community (and, where appropriate, to special interest groups); meetings which are readily accessible; and, above all, feedback to the public on what has changed in their area and what action has resulted from the consultation which has

been held. The police authority should oversee this work and it should become part of a standard assessment of a force by HMIC.

25. We recommend that the Home Secretary, in conjunction with the Mayor and the Metropolitan Police Authority, should discuss with the Met Commissioner better ways of reflecting the excellent practice that takes place within the Metropolitan Police area - which we have specifically not been dealing with in this report, but which has been drawn to our attention. Because of the overarching national role of the Metropolitan Police and the London-wide approach necessitated by the Mayor and MPA, it appeared that excellent practice at command unit level was somehow seen as being 'not for public scrutiny'. This is a great shame, as good work is going on across the capital. In addition, we believe that it would be useful to examine precisely the benefits of the public scrutiny of the Commissioner's work, as regularly as currently takes place, given that this is more likely to be a sounding board for publicly expressed gripes, rather than a full evaluation of the working of the Met and the progress that they make.

26. We recommend that the Community Call to Action, established under the Police and Justice Act 2006, should be revitalised. For instance, the idea previously discussed both in local government documents and elsewhere, to develop the use of petitioning is one worth following through. Where a member of the public, or a community or Area Panel, feel that the police are providing an inadequate service on a consistent basis, there should be the facility of a petition (with a minimum number of signatures) which would be triggered by the agreement of either the Member of Parliament or the local councillor(s) for the locality concerned. Such a petition, where it related to BCU level activity would in the first instance be taken forward by the local authority Cabinet Member responsible. Where is still an unsatisfactory response from the police, the petition would then be passed to the police authority within a specified time, action would be necessitated. Where such a petition is triggered, then we recommend that HMIC automatically become involved (the IPCC where there is a complaint appropriate for their investigation as per our recommendation for expanding their role).

27. At present, the IPCC's investigations are confined to where there is a specific complaint against an individual officer or PCSO (or automatically where there is a killing at a major incident). We recommend that the IPCC should be given a broader remit in order to enable it to investigate inadequate service provided by a police force to a particular neighbourhood or community, having been asked to do so by the local council or Member of Parliament (which would provide for sufficient protection from vexatious complaints).

28. The Government suggested the establishment of 'community advocates' in the 2003 policing White Paper - a proposal which did not survive through the 2006 Act. We recommend that the Government revisit this issue with a view to establishing adequate processes, including support and training, for community leaders. In this way, the community could have a nominated voice (not instead of councillors or police authority members), with a specific remit to liaise on behalf of small neighbourhoods with the police. This is undertaken in some areas where appropriate mobile and other communication details are provided to key members of the community. In this way, alongside special constables (who are after all the citizen police of the modern era), there would be proper advocacy in a way that was positive and supportive to the police whilst responding to local people in a way that is not always possible with formalised meetings.

This measure could also help revive and extend Neighbourhood Watch - and to that end, we further recommend that the Home Secretary make a renewed commitment to support that initiative. We urge him, ACPO and the Inspectorate to undertake fresh work to renew police engagement and support for Neighbourhood Watch, especially in high-crime communities; and to promote best practice at every level.

As with the Derbyshire example, advocates fulfilling a particular role would automatically be invited to local feedback meetings, but such people could also be the backbone of the regular forum organised to ensure that the BCU area as a whole was covered, and the senior officers at that level were clearly accountable. Once again, we emphasise that in this report we have endeavoured to recommend that it is the police who are accountable and answerable to the local community and it is the layers of representation (both elected to local authorities and nominated to the police authority) which oversee that accountability, scrutinise activity and in the case of the police authority, hold a strategic role in terms of both funding and overall priorities.

Appendix 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Rt Hon Jacqui Smith MP
Secretary of State
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Rt Hon David Blunkett MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

16 December 2008

Dear David,

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN POLICING

In the Policing Green Paper, I set out a package of reforms to strengthen the public's voice in policing and to free up police time so that they can focus on the issues that matter most to the communities they serve.

These reforms are driven by my determination to improve public confidence in policing. To achieve this, we are strengthening public accountability in policing by:

- Delivering the new Policing Pledge in every force by the end of 2008. For the first time, this will provide clear national and local service standards that the public can expect from their police, including monthly meetings, crime mapping and call out times for local priorities.
- Removing all central targets on police forces, with the exception of setting one national target for them to deliver improved levels of public confidence.
- Recruiting a new 'army' of Community Crime Fighters - a local public champion for each Neighbourhood Policing Team area to galvanise the community and assist in resolving issues.
- Bolstering the role of local councils by introducing a new right to Councillor Call for Action in respect of crime and disorder by April 2009.

A further key element in our reforms is the work we are doing to address the lack of public visibility of police authorities and to make them more accountable. From next April, police authorities will face regular inspection to test that they are visible to their communities and are improving public confidence. Authority members will benefit from increased training to help them to deliver these goals and there will be further measures in the Policing and Crime Bill in the current Session.

Taken together, these reforms will have a dramatic effect in improving public confidence and I welcome the acknowledgement by colleagues in the Local Government Association and the Association of Police Authorities during the Green Paper consultation that more needs to be done to strengthen the visibility and accountability of police authorities.

The Green Paper set out proposals for the direct election of Crime and Policing Representatives to sit alongside local councillors and independent members on police authorities. This model was designed to enhance public engagement in policing, while at the same time explicitly avoiding any possibility that the operational independence of policing could be compromised by political intervention.

As you know, concerns about the politicisation of policing have increased since the publication of the Green Paper in July, not least because of the consequences of changes to the role of the Mayor of London that permit him to also chair the Metropolitan Police Authority.

In the light of recent developments, I would like to ask you to take stock of the Green Paper proposals on police authority accountability. I remain convinced of the merits of a directly elected element as a means to drive enhanced public engagement and accountability and I should be grateful if you would take soundings from parliamentary and local government colleagues on the strength of the proposals. I hope it will also be possible for you to discuss the issue with members of the Party's Crime, Justice, Citizenship and Equalities Policy Commission as well.

I would be grateful if you could provide me with your personal assessment of how direct elections could be delivered in a way that strengthens public accountability and supports the work already being done by local government colleagues to improve public confidence across public services.

Yours,

JACQUI SMITH

Appendix 2

POLICE GOVERNANCE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Source: *International Comparison Research: Models of Police Governance and Accountability* (APA/Northern Ireland Policing Board, July 2009)

England and Wales police governance model

In England and Wales a tripartite structure is in place for holding the police to account. This relationship allows responsibility for policing to be shared between the police authority, the chief constable and the Home Secretary. Chief officers are accountable for day-to-day operations; police authorities for agreeing strategic priorities, setting the annual budget and for ensuring the effective and efficient use of taxpayer' money; and the Home Secretary for setting the legislative and performance management framework within which police forces must operate.

Appointment to police authorities

Councillor members

Councillor members of the Cumbria, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk and Warwickshire police authorities are appointed by the county council from among their members. Members must be appointed in such a way that, as far as is practical, the political balance of the authority reflects that of the council.

For all other police authorities, the top tier councils that cover that police area form a joint committee. The makeup of this committee varies between police areas, but must be agreed by all councils. Where there is a dispute regarding the membership of the joint committee, the Home Secretary makes the final decision on composition.

The proportion of police authority members appointed from any given party by joint committees must, as much as practical, be the same as the councils in the police area taken as a whole.

The terms of office for a councillor member of an authority are decided by the Police Authority, but cannot exceed four years. There is no limit to the maximum number of terms a councillor member can serve.

Independent members

Independent members are people who live or work in the police authority area, and are appointed by the authority from a shortlist compiled by a selection panel. To ensure their independence they may not be a police officer, an employee of the police force or police authority or be a county, district or borough councillor.

The authority decides the term of office of an independent member. The term of an independent member may not exceed four years and a member cannot serve more than two terms without the consent of the Home Secretary.

The independent members of a police authority are appointed by a five member selection panel. Three of these members are appointed by the Police Authority and one is appointed by the Home Secretary. The fifth member, or independent assessor, is appointed by the other four members from a list compiled by the Home Secretary.

The role of police authorities in England and Wales

Police authorities exist to hold police forces to account in their communities and to do this they have a number of powers and duties. All authorities have a duty to ensure the maintenance of an effective and efficient police force for their areas, to this they must have regard to:

- the Home Secretary's **strategic policing priorities**;
- any **objectives** and **performance targets** determined by the authority; and
- any local policing plan issued by the authority.

They also have duties to:

- monitor their force's compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998;
- monitor their force's compliance with any plan issued under section 6ZB;
- ensure arrangements are made for their force to collaborate with other forces where it would be in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of the police force in its area or others;
- promote equality and diversity within their police force;
- appoint (and, if necessary, dismiss) chief constables and senior police officers;
- consult with local communities to find out what they want the local police to do;
- set the budget for their police force, and decide how much local people should pay for policing in the local council tax;
- set the strategic direction for policing locally and decide what the police should focus attention on locally based on their consultations with local communities; and
- make sure the police force is continuing to do a better job.

Appointment and removal of chief officers

Most of the duties and powers of police authorities are set out in the Police Act 1996, although this has been substantially amended by subsequent legislation. The principal power of any police authority is the power to appoint or remove the chief officer, although they may only do this with the consent of the Home Secretary.

The commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Force is a slightly different case. He or she is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on the advice of the Home Secretary, although the Home Secretary is required to consider the views of the Metropolitan Police Authority before giving this advice.

Police performance management

Police authorities have a role in the overall performance management of force activity and are required by statute to achieve continuous improvements in policing performance. Although the drafting of the Local Policing Plan is the statutory

responsibility of the chief constable, the police authority is actively involved in the process and approval rests with the police authority.

The Home Secretary sets out the key **national strategic priorities** for the police service and the Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) which must feed into the Local Policing Plans.

Local accountability

Tackling the causes of crime requires bodies beyond the police to be involved in community safety issues. It was for this reason Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) were created in England and Wales and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were created in Wales through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This Act established partnerships between the police, local authorities, probation service, health authorities, the voluntary sector, and local residents and businesses. These partnerships are working to reduce crime and disorder in their area by:

- establishing the levels of crime and disorder problems in their area, and consulting widely with the population of that area to make sure that the partnership's perception matches that of local people, especially minority groups, such as gay men and lesbians, or members of ethnic minorities; and
- devising a strategy containing measures to tackle those priority problems. This is to include targets, and target owners for each of the priority areas.

The strategy will last for three years, but must be kept under review by the partnership.

<http://www.apa.police.uk/apa>

Appendix 3

HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY'S PROPOSED NEW INSPECTION REGIME

Source: *Police Authority Inspection: Joint Audit Commission and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Proposals for Consultation* (Audit Commission/HMIC, Spring 2009)

The Policing Green Paper: *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our Communities Together* refers to the enhanced role, capacity and standards expected of police authorities. Our proposed police authority inspection framework aims to meet the government's objectives that inspections should:

- test whether police authorities exercise effective direction of policing outcomes on behalf of the public and ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of their forces;
- provide a clear focus on local accountability and how well police authorities are taking account of the views of people in their area about policing and helping police forces to improve public confidence;
- ensure that police authorities have the capacity and capability to carry out their principal duties effectively and are willing and able to take action to improve this where needed;
- be stretching and challenging to drive a focus on targeted improvement and give police authorities clear goals;
- be evidence-based and capable of providing judgements and comparisons that differentiate levels of performance against clear standards and performance criteria;
- provide the public with accessible information about the performance of their police authority and how this compares with others; and
- enable the Home Secretary to have a clear picture of the police authority performance landscape and to focus on persistent or major performance failure.

To deliver the government's objectives, we have adopted five guiding principles when developing the proposed framework. Police authority inspections will:

- evaluate the impact a police authority has in holding its force to account in delivering policing priorities in an area and, in doing so, identify how the police authority makes a difference in ensuring that the priorities are delivered;
- probe the effectiveness of the police authority's management of both its own and its force's performance, leadership and scrutiny; how it manages the use of its own and its force's resources and people efficiently and effectively and provides value for money; how it works in collaboration with communities and partners to build capacity; and how it ensures the delivery of outcomes and improvements that matter to local people;
- be proportionate. Inspections will draw on existing information including the information that police authorities use to run their business as well as evidence from other relevant audits, inspections and assessments;
- be conducted by small, joint teams of suitably skilled and experience staff from the Audit Commission and HMIC, together with an accredited police

- authority peer inspector who may be a police authority chief executive and/or police authority member; and
- be conducted at all police authorities in England and Wales in an eighteen-month period from autumn 2009 to the end of 2010/11.

Individual inspections will be publicly reported on the Audit Commission, Wales Audit Office and HMIC websites.

The police authority plays a vital role in ensuring the delivery of improved policing outcomes for local people; its core function is to secure an efficient and effective police force. We will deliver a balanced assessment of how well the police authority is delivering its principal duties, especially those designed to give the public a stronger voice in policing priorities and which put the citizen at the heart of service delivery.

Our focus will be on the outcomes and improvements that matter to and benefit local people. Police authorities will be assessed for their ability to look beyond their immediate area to deliver better policing services regionally and nationally in line with the Home Secretary's strategic policing priorities.

We will also assess whether the police authority has the leadership, capacity and capability needed to deliver future improvements.

Proposed assessment themes, key questions and assessment criteria for police authority inspections

There are four themes:

1. Setting strategic direction and priorities;
2. Scrutinising performance outcomes;
3. Achieving results through community engagement, partnership and collaboration;
4. Ensuring value for money and productivity.

Each theme is supported by key questions and assessment criteria that will be the focus of the inspections.

Assessment theme Key questions and assessment criteria

1. Setting strategic direction and priorities	How does the police authority ensuring that both it and the force have the leadership, capacity and capability to deliver good quality service outcomes on behalf of the public?
	The police authority demonstrates that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sets clear and ambitious priorities for policing in its area;• plans effectively for longer-term strategic challenges;• ensures the force is well led;• is properly resourced and skilled to discharge its governance responsibilities; and• ensures high professional and ethical standards are set for itself and the force.
2. Scrutinising performance outcomes	How effective is the police authority in scrutinising and ensuring that the force delivers the priority services that matter to local people?
	The police authority demonstrates that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• has the capacity to appoint senior officers effectively and that it holds the chief constable to account for delivery of objectives, priorities and quality outcomes;• properly considers the views of the public in holding the chief constable to account;• has a rigorous approach to performance scrutiny, analysing data to monitor performance and tackling under-performance; and sets challenging targets for performance and the Policing Pledge, fulfils its own role in delivering the single confidence target, and drives the progress of its force towards achieving this target; and• delivers improvements in protective services.
3. Achieving results through community engagement, partnership and collaboration	How well does the police authority achieve results through community engagement, partnerships and collaboration to deliver its ambitions and strategic priorities?
	The police authorities demonstrates that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• has secured and understood the views of local people about policing priorities in its area;• acts upon community concerns by setting priorities for policing that reflect local needs and will lead to improvements in public confidence;• provides feedback on how issues raised through consultation and community engagement have been considered;

- ensures that local policing services are accessible to all communities, including hard to reach and vulnerable groups;
- secures desired outcomes for local policing and community safety priorities through effective partnership;
- promotes and supports collaboration/joint working between forces and other local public service partners to improve efficiency, reduce costs, manage risk more effectively and deliver improvements in policing services nationally; and
- properly balances the focus on local issues and improvements in confidence with the wider needs of the public in policing regional and national concerns.

4. Ensuring value for money and productivity

How effective is the police authority in ensuring a clear and sustained focus on value for money to secure a good deal for the public?

The police authority demonstrates that it:

- has, with the force, made a comprehensive assessment of risk and threats, and ensures that resources are aligned to priorities, risk and threats;
- directs effort away from non-priority areas;
- ensures the force's use of resources reflects supply and demand profiles;
- regularly reviews costs and overheads; and
- sets ambitious local targets to deliver improved efficiency, effectiveness and productivity and challenges the force to achieve them.

Scoring and quality control

We propose to score each of the assessment themes separately on a scale of 1 to 4 and to combine these into an overall score. Published inspection reports will provide an overall assessment of the police authority and will be explicit, both in the scoring and supporting narrative about where improvement is required and about how quickly the improvements need to be made.

The scores of 1 to 4 for each theme represent the following descriptors of performance:

Score	Descriptor of performance	Public reporting
1	Police authority does not meet minimum requirements for this theme	Performs poorly
2	Police authority meets most of the Minimum requirements for this theme with some exceptions and areas of concern	Performs adequately
3	Police authority exceeds minimum requirements for this theme	Performs well
4	Police authority significantly exceeds minimum requirements for this theme	Performs excellently

There will be an overall police authority inspection score of 1 to 4 that the Audit Commission and HMIC will determine by calculating the average of the scores for each of the four assessment themes. Scores that result in an average of 1.25, 2.25 and 3.25 will be rounded down to give the overall score. Scores that result in an average of 1.75, 2.75 and 3.75 will be rounded up to give the overall score. Where the average score is 1.5, 2.5 or 3.5 the Audit Commission and HMIC will determine the direction of the rounding, exercising their professional discretion in weighing up evidence and context.

More detail and full consultation document:

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Consultation/20090429paconsultation.pdf>

