



# Memorandum

Police Federation of England and Wales, 15/17 Langley Road, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 6LP  
Telephone: 020 8335 1000 Fax: 020 8390 2249 [www.polfed.org](http://www.polfed.org)

## **The Review of Policing:**

**The Police Federation of England and Wales's response to the interim report and thoughts on the issues of managing resources and local accountability.**

---

We would like to take this opportunity to make more detailed comment on your interim report and provide you with further information, which we hope will assist you with your final report.

### **Interim Report**

There is much in your interim report, which we welcome and support. We concur with your recommendations on reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, particularly your call to allow officers to rediscover their discretion and we look forward to the NPIA recommendations on this in summer 2008. We were encouraged by your comments on National Crime Recording standards in relation to violent crime; your call for the introduction of mandatory standard forms; your suggestion for an NPIA investigation into the use of Airwave for Activity Based Costing; and news of the consultation on Stop and Account/Search which will be included as part of your review. We were also very interested in the ideas you highlighted which aim to streamline the procedure for prosecution in the form of the 'Directors Guidance Quick Process' (DGQP) and we look forward to ACPO and CPS implementing these. We welcome also your call for the increased use of technology in the form of virtual courts and mobile devices for officers but we especially support your recommendations for standardised, fully-integrated IT systems across all forces that enable one-time entry of data. We are hopeful that the Government, ACPO and the APA will pay heed to these important matters that your review has highlighted and will ensure the implementation of the necessary changes as soon as possible.

We, however, take issue with some of the points raised under the 'Neighbourhood Policing' section of your interim report. We feel that the Review has been overly skewed towards neighbourhood policing (NP) and has neglected the vital area of 24/7 response policing. As we pointed out in our response to the first part of the review, our report on 24/7 policing revealed ways in which the implementation of NP is having a negative effect on response policing and it is disappointing that this has not been considered by the review so far. One of the factors, which caused most concern, was the ring fencing of NP officers. We completely understand why this ring-fencing should occur but serious consideration needs to be given to the crucial role that NP officers currently play in filling the gaps in response teams – when ring-fencing is introduced, who will fill these gaps? We certainly would be extremely concerned if this were to be a PCSO as is implied in your interim report. Not only does this raise some serious questions about health and safety with PCSOs being exposed to confrontational situations, we fear that this will also serve to further dilute the office of constable. In addition, we question whether directly allocating those newly recruited officers who were former PCSOs to NP teams undermines the discretion of the Chief Officer.

Whilst we accept that PSCOs are now becoming an integral part of community policing and we can see their value as additional 'eyes and ears' of the police service, we believe that there are still several questions which remain unanswered about how they fit in with the work of sworn officers and how far their non-confrontational powers are being stretched. We are therefore deeply troubled by the notion that voluntary PCSOs might be introduced at a stage when the role and function of salaried PCSOs has yet to be fully established. As stated in your interim report under the heading of 'Providing a Quality Customer Service':

“[E]very contact an officer will have with any member of the public will 'leave a trace' – a trace through which not only will they be judged personally but through which their organisation and policing in general will be judged”(p41)

With PSCOs replacing the community role of many officers across the country it is important that the public can be clear and confident about what they can expect of a PCSO in comparison to a fully sworn officer and only when this clarity is established should any thought be given to extending the PCSO role to volunteers.

## **Operational policing – CID**

In our response to the first half of the Review, we raised concerns about the working conditions of frontline officers based on our research into 24/7 policing ('24/7 Response Policing in the Modern Police Organisation – Views from the Frontline'). We highlighted the frustration expressed to us by officers who felt that there were elements of their working lives that were standing in the way of them providing the quality of service they felt the public deserved.

As part of our ongoing review of the realities of operational policing, we have completed another piece of research, this time focussing on detectives. Our overall findings were that the experience of the CID officers very much echoed those of the 24/7 officers and that earning a position as a detective was no longer seen as something to aspire to. The final report on this work will be available to the public in January 2008 but we have enclosed an advance copy for your information. We hope that you will take the time to read this in full but in the meantime here are some headline points which we feel are of particular relevance to the review:

- We found evidence of the consequences of the pressure, lack of resources and lack of experience in the uniform teams. This led to a reduction in the quality of work handed over to the CID teams with poor quality statements and a lack of any initial investigation. This was compounded by a subsequent lack of contact between the detective and the arresting officer as they were frequently unavailable due to their other work demands.
- There was a distinctive lack of experienced detectives on in CID general office teams. Many officers were found to be young in service, and recruitment/retention problems had led to an over-reliance on trainee detectives and PC's on detachment with these officers being classified on paper as fully fledged detectives. This problem was compounded by a lack of supervision from detective sergeants who were under pressure to achieve figures for targets leaving little time for any constructive support or guidance for trainees seeking to gain experience.
- As with the response officers, the life of the detective is dominated by the pressure to achieve sanction detections. This pressure is exacerbated by a lack of understanding by managers who assume that once a charge has been achieved the job can be written off when in reality that is when the real work

of the detective begins. Again, officers expressed a general feeling of disservice to public as the drive to achieve sanction detections was shifting the focus of police work from 'quality' work. For example, in one London Borough officers claimed that most robbery arrests involved schoolboy's bullying each other out of dinner money. Bringing persistent offenders to justice was not thought to be an attractive prospect to managers as this would only count as a single detection so they focussed more on "quick wins". We also heard officers refer frequently to "house-keeping" arrests in a way to make the crime statistics to look "good".

- Fully fledged detectives appear to be thin on the ground in general CID offices. Many experienced detectives have gone to specialist teams leaving trainee detectives and PCs on detachment to cope with serious crime investigations. Officers report that whilst an attempted murder case can be as complex and labour intensive as an actual murder case, there will only be one detective assigned to the attempted murder case as opposed to a large team that will be dedicated to solving a murder.
- Officers in the forces that we spoke to reported that numbers of applicants for detective posts were most commonly in single figures. Frequently the PC's assigned to CID teams on temporary postings decide that the job is not for them due to the long hours, lack of flexibility' and lack of work/life balance they have experienced compared to their life in response. Many detectives working in a general CID office are subject to restricted overtime budgets meaning that the days of generous rewards for a disrupted home life are over and officers are working for time of in lieu of payment – time off that they cannot afford to take.
- Concerns remain about the increasing use of non-sworn staff taking over elements of detective work. Whilst some detectives could see the benefit of civilian statement takers there was apprehension that compartmentalisation of the role could lead to a loss of quality of investigative work and possible loss of evidence with no single individual on the case having a complete overview. Detectives were also concerned that breaking down the investigative role into separate functions and giving some of those functions to staff leads to officers losing skills. Officers also attributed success of the current civilian detective posts to the fact that most of them had been filled by retired police officers

and were, therefore, concerned as to where the experience and expertise would come from in future.

## **Local Accountability**

### 1. Local crime data

We recognise the need for local communities to be better informed about the crime and policing issues. Given that the majority of volume crime is committed by local offenders it is logical that the performance of the police should be measured against local policing needs rather than national performance indicators set by the Home Office and we agree with the sentiments of Professor Adrian Smith on this issue<sup>1</sup> as stated in the review he contributed to:

“Crime is often a localised phenomenon. Crime rates can and do vary between neighbourhoods and sometimes even from street to street. This means that the larger the geographic unit on which information is provided the less relevant it is likely to be for the person who wants to understand their own personal or family risks. The ideal, therefore, is information that is as localised as possible.” (Recommendation 3.13)

The provision of this local, empirical data will enable local communities to understand the facts regarding crime, disorder and offending rates and be more likely to involve themselves in consultation on the setting of priorities and objectives for the community. Other recommendations of the report on which we would concur are:

- Crime information and statistics are an integral part of neighbourhood policing teams;
- All crime data should be available on a local basis (not just for notifiable offences);
- There should be a shift away from national to local publication of statistics;
- There should be a review of recording practices.

---

<sup>1</sup> Crime Statistics: An independent review carried out for the Secretary of State for the Home Department, November 2006 available from [www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk)

## 2. Public consultation

We are aware that police authorities across the country organise regular focus group meetings with members of the public with the aim of identifying local policing priorities. We understand that these are of mixed success with sessions often being poorly attended. We therefore look forward to seeing what suggestions are made for ways in which the police service can ensure that the public are helping to drive local policing priorities and we will provide our thoughts on those suggestions in due course.

**7<sup>th</sup> January 2008**