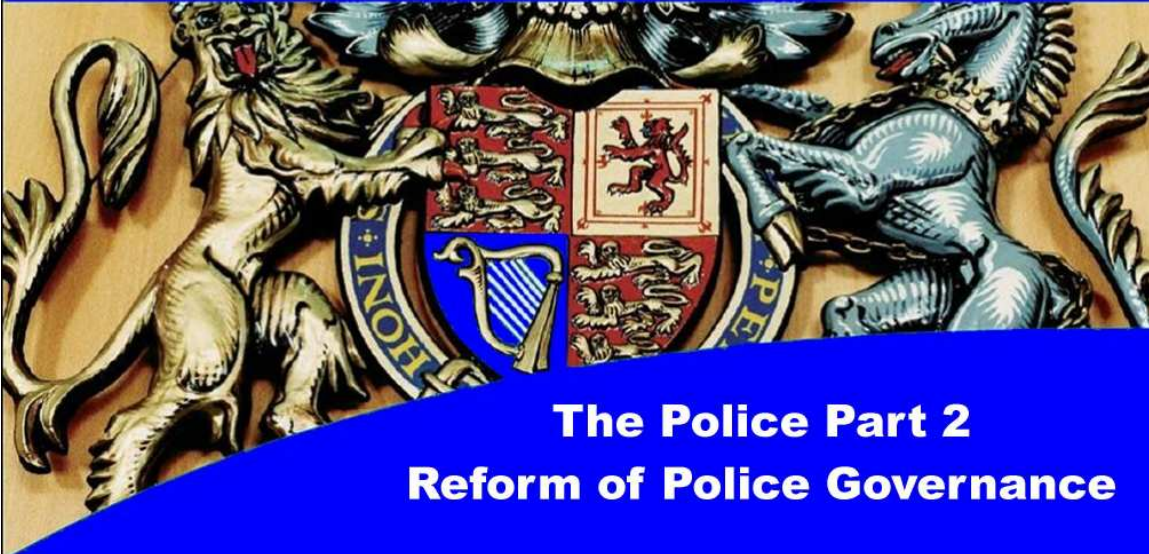


# CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE UK 2010



**An initial report to explore the need  
for reform of Police Governance in  
England & Wales**



At first glance, it is difficult to understand why police performance is currently under such intense scrutiny and why a range of politicians, practitioners and commentators are calling for fundamental reform of the Police Service. Police recorded crime has fallen since 2007 and the criminal justice system brings more offenders to justice each year than ever before.

### **Challenges to today's Police Service**

The positives outlined above mask the emergence of genuine performance challenges in the Police Service. Decline in the number of crimes committed is marred by criticism that recorded crime is open to manipulation and distortion to produce politically favourable results. Gun crime and violent crimes are more common now than in the past. Offenders Brought to Justice (OBTJ) targets are increasingly being met through punishment of minor offences, for example with cautions for the possession of cannabis. Those from disadvantaged groups are disproportionately affected by crime - and this is the case now more than ever before.

While the police management have diverted their focus on reassuring the public, overall police productivity in terms of crime detection is flat: each warranted officer detected just 9 crimes per year in 2009, less than in 2001, and each current detection costs more in real terms than a detection in 2001. Such productivity issues may in part be due to low levels of morale within the Police Service, as evidence suggests that many frontline workers are struggling to cope with changes in their working environment imposed by Chief Officers and feel ill at ease with the target-based performance management framework. Another explanation lies in the fact that the crime landscape itself is changing with increasing rapidity: new criminal techniques and technologies combine with a fast changing distribution of crime types, and shifting public and political priorities requiring an ever more responsive police system.

### **The need for reform**

The Government's main response to these challenges has been to significantly increase spending on the police. Police resources have increased by over 25 per cent in real terms since 2001. However, such a response is no longer sustainable. The recent Home Office spending settlement dictates that police spending will have to remain at current levels at least until 2012. Simply pumping money into the policing system as it is currently configured appears to be producing limited and perhaps even decreasing returns. As a result, officials and commentators have started to look for other ways to improve performance and responsiveness.

One area that has been the focus of much public debate concerns the potential for a radical reconfiguration of police accountability and governance arrangements - with, for example, the Conservative Party proposing locally elected Police Chiefs as the primary change mechanism.

The Flanagan Review looked at a range of issues involving efficiency and bureaucracy at the request of the Labour Government, while the Police Federation has called for a still wider Royal Commission on Policing to investigate fundamental issues such as the role of the police.

However, while such areas are certainly in need of reform, such changes are focused primarily on increasing police responsiveness and altering performance pressures; alone, they will be insufficient to generate required productivity improvements in policing. Furthermore, reform of accountability and governance mechanisms is likely take a significant amount of time to bear fruit. Therefore, alongside reforms of that kind, measures that can directly improve police productivity are urgently required, addressing performance and, crucially, workforce morale issues.

The police are unique in having avoided major reform under both Labour and Conservative governments. With funding set to be cut and with the police facing new challenges, the time has come for radical reform to the police service in England and Wales.

There are two main arguments for reform:

### **The world has changed.**

Society has changed in a number of important ways, increasing the range of demands on the police and requiring them, in turn, to change the way they work. These changes include a transformation in the kinds of roles the police are expected to perform, the emergence of new kinds of criminal activity that require a different response and higher expectations of public services generally.

### **Labour's policing strategy, based on increased spending on the police alongside performance targets set from Whitehall, is no longer sustainable.**

As the election approaches, the Government will undoubtedly attempt to claim responsibility for a "significant fall in crime over the last decade". In real terms, much of the fluctuation in crime rate had more to do with a number of major changes in the way crime was recorded than any direct influence of the Labour Party. Changes to the Home Office Counting Rules in 1989 and the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in 1992 marked increases in recorded crime rates. The apparent decline in crime after this was more to do with something criminologists call "attrition", opposed to any specific Labour strategy. This is reflected by a massive reduction in the reporting of crime by the public (British Crime Survey suggests that less than 40% of real crime is reported for various reasons).

Labour's approach to managing the police service over the last 10 years now needs to change dramatically if real reforms are to be seen. The Government's policing strategy has been to spend more money on the police (increasing the number of police officers to record levels) and to drive up performance through the use of centrally imposed targets. This approach cannot continue. There is no more money to spend and the target regime reduced the ability of police forces to respond to changing local demands.

Moreover, while crime has allegedly fallen, police performance on a number of key measures has not improved. Importantly, the number of detections per officer has fallen and public satisfaction with the police is lower than it was before Labour came to power. The manner in which detections are recorded is also subject of critical scrutiny. The Home Office reports detections (Offences Brought To Justice) in a number of doubtful ways. One of which is to count the detections per warranted officer. As we have reported from these pages previously, the number of officers actually involved in the detection of crime as opposed to warranted officer numbers is dramatically lower, so the real picture of offences detected per warranted officer is significantly lower than that reported by the Home Office, who use these numbers to curry political favour with the public.

If the police are to deal with new challenges and prevent crime from rising again, they will need to change the way they work.

## Areas for reform

There are four priority areas for reform:

- A need to better equip the police workforce to deal with new challenges, involving changes to how the police are paid, how they are recruited, the roles they perform and the way they are managed.
- A need to integrate information systems and processes across forces.
- A need to improve the quality of the relationship between the police service and the citizen. This requires changes to the way officers are trained, the further embedding of neighbourhood policing, greater public access to police data and more use of social media to open up new lines of communication and collaboration between the police and the citizen.
- A need to tackle an excessively bureaucratic and process-driven organizational culture. This means greater professional autonomy and discretion for officers, with a return to discretionary charging for custody officers with a problem-solving approach taken to crime and more space for innovation at the frontline.

## CHANGE STARTS AT THE TOP - WITH THE WAY FORCES ARE GOVERNED

None of these reforms can be progressed unless a wider set of problems are tackled that are caused by the way the police service is governed, organised and held to account.

**The governance of the police service causes four major problems:**

- It inhibits the capacity of the police to deal with local crime locally and to tackle serious and organised crime at the regional and national level.
- It does not deliver value for money, producing far too much overlap, waste, profligacy and duplication.
- It confuses lines of accountability, with a weak system of local accountability leading Whitehall to micro-manage police forces in a way that reduces responsiveness.
- It blocks change and reform by empowering internal stakeholders, who are able to rely on sufficient public sympathy to shield themselves from the pressure to change.

This final problem is the most significant. It means that despite three decades of change across the public services, the police, almost uniquely, were able to defend themselves from the public service reform agendas of both Labour and Conservative governments.

As a result of powerful stakeholders blocking reform the Government has had to spend more money on an unreformed system which could be working in a much more productive way by doing things differently. The fact that we are in a period of fiscal restraint means that finding a way to unlock reform has become ever more urgent.

Unless the governance system itself is transformed, any substantive programme of reform will suffer the same fate as those that preceded it: opposition within different parts of the service followed by a government 'U-turn' for fear of a politically costly conflict with the police. The first reform priority therefore has to be to design a system of governance that is more coherent and less fragmented and that empowers local and national police leaders to deliver change in the public interest.

## THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE IS FRAGMENTED

The structure of the police presents a block to necessary reform. The "tripartite model" - with power shared between the Home Secretary, Police Authorities and Chief Constables - means that Government does not have effective control over national policing priorities. The 43 forces are run as fiefdoms by their Chief Constables. To get things done, the Home Office resorts to bribing forces with sweeteners.

Let's look at the three police powers in more detail.



## ACPO - The Power Behind The Throne

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



Currently the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) - a self-perpetuating oligarchy - is the key influence on police forces. Oligarchy exists where all power is vested in a few persons or in a dominant class or clique; government by the few. In most cases, the members of an oligarchy share leadership in a sort of bureaucracy that allows different people absolute power over certain aspects of the machine. The difference between an oligarchy and a democracy is that the shared leadership is not dependent upon the will of the people. Members of an oligarchy achieve their leadership through selection from within the already established members. Therefore, an oligarchy is actually a form of shared dictatorship in which the people have a limited role in its government.

Chris Grayling, the Shadow Home Secretary, has voiced his concerns about ACPO :

***“It is strange that the Police & Crime bill gives ACPO a statutory position in advising on appointments when the status of ACPO itself remains undefined. Is it an external reference group for Home Office Ministers, or a professional association protecting senior officers’ interests? Is it a national policing agency, or is it a pressure group arguing for greater police powers?”***

There is a belief that politicians can control the police, harnessing the force to reassure the public that crime is being reduced. Politicians try to “out-tough” each other with their talk on crime. The result is increasing concern that the police are becoming “politicised” and that their “operational independence” is being eroded.

The UK has one of the most centralised criminal justice systems in the world. The centralisation phenomenon has been particularly pronounced in policing, where there has been a relentless drive towards government control through a many-layered management regime and the creation of a multitude of new national agencies such as the Police Standards Unit and the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA).

ACPO has the ear of the Home Secretary and this, in combination with its influence over senior officers (and those wishing to become senior officers), means it is a prominent voice in determining policy. There is now a widespread belief that ACPO is the main party persuading forces to adopt particular policies.

If the Home Secretary wants to ensure the adoption of a policy idea, he will “strike a bargain”

with ACPO to ensure its implementation. ACPO is the driving force behind policy, and the Home Office succumbs, either because of its own autocratic instincts or because ACPO are exceptionally good at pushing through the things they want.

This focus of ACPO on national policy means that individual Chief Constables are left focusing on administrative matters and equipment choices. In fact this situation should be reversed. ACPO could take a useful national lead on administration and interoperability while Chief Constables focus on their forces' operations.

## **Courting Controversy**

### **Party Political Bias?**

A Conservative government could find itself at war with police chiefs amid accusations that some are too close to the Labour Party. A Tory briefing document, seen by *The Times* Newspaper attacked the Association of Chief Police Officers, which represents the 350 most senior officers in England and Wales.

The note, written in Conservative campaign headquarters, accuses the association's leaders of giving "political cover to the Labour Government repeatedly and consistently" and engaging in "gratuitous photocalls" with Gordon Brown and other ministers. It claims that ACPO, which receives £18 million a year from the Home Office, has "publicly and privately lobbied against a number of key Conservative issues, going far beyond its role". The document adds that despite claiming to be an independent body that acts in the public interest, analysis of its statements "shows almost no criticism of the current Government".

The paper was prepared by David Cameron's strategy and policy unit, where radical reform of policing has been under serious discussion. It was written while Sir Ken Jones was president of ACPO, but since Sir Hugh Orde became head of ACPO relations between the Tories and senior police have continued to worsen. Party figures were infuriated when Sir Hugh, former chief constable in Northern Ireland, said that police chiefs would resign rather than accept the Tory policy of elected police commissioners to hold forces to account.

Sir Hugh's remarks led to a breakdown in contact with the Conservatives for several months. The deadlock was broken only recently when Sir Hugh and Chris Grayling, the Shadow Home Secretary, had a meeting.

Instead of consulting ACPO, Tory policymakers have been talking to their own group of chiefs about crime and policing policies. One police source told *The Times*: "I would be amazed if ACPO survived the election of a Conservative government."

The three-page briefing note contains a critique of the structure of ACPO, pointing out that although it receives vast amounts of public money, the association is a private limited company that is not accountable to the public or Parliament and not covered by the Freedom of Information Act.

The document outlines how, despite its private status, ACPO accrued operational policing roles in counter-terrorism, civil emergencies, intelligence gathering and ports policing. It also has subsidiary companies providing criminal record checks, security advice and road safety training.

The Tory note accuses the body of "bankrolling a 'gravy train' of ex-police officers who retire with a substantial police pension and then take up either consultancy work or full-time

employment with ACPO". It adds: "Parliament has never had the opportunity to debate the role of what is arguably one of the most powerful publicly funded bodies in the UK."

The final session of the annual conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers is the annual general meeting of ACPO Ltd. It must seem somewhat odd to go from debating crime reduction to discussing plans to generate income for the company. What is even stranger is that the operating capital has come from the public purse. This arrangement confuses the purpose of ACPO and erodes its integrity.

ACPO's members are expected to be the voice of the police service as it seeks to advise politicians and set policy. Few ACPO statements are controversial – chiefs have to work with the politicians in power and tend to toe the line.

The impression created is that of a club of like-minded, some might say self-serving, senior cops. ACPO would claim to be misunderstood, but that's a hard position to take when it can be seen setting up subsidiary companies run by former members. It is still difficult to understand how ACPO can argue to be an independent body acting in the public interest when it also competes in the private sector.

Questions concerning ACPO's impartiality come as it stands accused of having lost its political independence by appearing to be in the back pocket of the Government. This impression could be because the current group of senior officers joined ACPO at about the time that Labour came to power.

Sir Hugh Orde, the president of ACPO, was elected on a platform of reforming the organisation. Those reforms must cut deep. It is ridiculous that senior police officers are also directors of ACPO Ltd. The public want police officers to be police officers and nothing else. Time is running out for ACPO to assert its role as the impartial voice of the service.

Few understand that ACPO is a private company, which is funded by a Home Office grant and money from 44 police authorities. But despite its important role in drafting and implementing policies that affect the fundamental freedoms of this country, ACPO is protected from freedom of information requests and its proceedings remain largely hidden from public view. In reality ACPO is no more troubled by public scrutiny than the freemasons.

That is wrong. Senior police officers are acting with increasing autonomy in drafting these authoritarian new policies. If you wonder how it came to be that police officers are being equipped with 10,000 stun guns, despite the reports of hundreds of deaths in the United States, or how the automatic number plate recognition camera network was set up to record and store data from most road journeys, look no further than ACPO.

Too often it seems ACPO is the driving force behind policy, and the Home Office succumbs, either because of its own autocratic instincts or because the police are exceptionally good at pushing through the things they want.

Police chiefs dig in every bit as stubbornly as Eurocrats, and for the same reason: they hate the idea of having to answer to the rest of us.

### **Abuse of the Public Purse**

Daniel Hannan is a writer and journalist, and has been Conservative MEP for South East England since 1999. He believes that the EU is making its constituent nations poorer, less democratic and less free. He is the winner of the Bastiat Award for online journalism.

He recently wrote in the Telegraph about the outrage of quangos spending taxpayers' money to lobby for more taxpayers' money. Quangos are not simply lobbying for a greater role for themselves: they are actively attacking proposals for democratic reform, even when those proposals are backed by all three parties.

He revealed that ACPO, which has campaigned relentlessly against placing constabularies under local democratic control, retained the services of a lobbyist, Connect Public Affairs, to represent it during the passage of the Policing and Criminal Justice Bill.

Whatever the opinion about police accountability, it is outrageous that an unelected agency should use money from the public purse in an attempt (successful, as it turned out) to dissuade elected representatives from pursuing their stated policies?

Here's the best bit. Do you know what the Association of Police Authorities' slogan is? "Giving people a say in policing". Give them a say, ignore it, then spend their money.

*And another ....*

ACPO, Britain's most powerful police body, which is run as a private business, has spent millions of pounds meant for counter-terrorism work on luxury London flats for senior officers. The spending on an undisclosed number of apartments in the Westminster area is understood to be about £1.6million a year.

The money is taken directly from taxpayers' purse given to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) by the Home Office to tackle the terrorist threat across Britain. The funding - £33million last year - is supposed to be used to beef up regional police forces' anti-terrorism response and pay for crucial equipment and facilities.

Instead, ACPO's Terrorism & Allied Matters (TAM) committee, headed by Assistant Commissioner John Yates, has used millions of pounds from the budget to pay for flats. ACPO refused to disclose how many apartments it was paying for, or who was receiving the perk, but all are said to be well-appointed homes close to Scotland Yard.

ACPO insists they are 'occupied', but two well-placed sources told The Mail on Sunday newspaper that officers only occasionally stay in them. Local estate agents say the cheapest two-bedroom flats in the area cost £400,000 to buy or at least £300 a week to rent. But with the officers requiring a 'secure location' the flats are said to cost substantially more.

ACPO is already under fire for its commercial activities. Last year it was revealed that it was:

- Selling information from the Police National Computer for up to £70 - even though it pays just 60p to access the details.
- Marketing 'police approval' logos to firms selling anti-theft devices.
- Operating a separate private firm offering training to speed-camera operators, which is run by a senior officer who was banned from driving.
- Employing a number of former high-ranking police officers on lucrative short-term contracts. Its staff bill is £1.4 million a year – which averages out at £66,000 for each of its 21 employees.

This leads to questions about ACPO's central role in policing, writing rules on police operations, as well as campaigning on key issues such as the proposed 90-day detention for terror suspects and the DNA database.

ACPO president Sir Hugh Orde has pledged to reform the organisation, admitting its role as a private firm paid millions a year by the taxpayer to effectively run the nation's police forces was uncomfortable.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the police watchdog, went further, saying its 'status as a private limited company cannot continue'.

The revelations are expected to increase the pressure for the reform or abolition of the organisation. ACPO's terrorism committee budget is supposed to be separate from the organisation's other activities. But the revelation it is spending anti-terrorist money on perks for senior officers now puts this part of its work under the spotlight.

Mr Yates, who headed the cash-for-honours inquiry in 2006, attempted to justify the need for the flats and said they would be sold should they no longer be required. 'A massive amount of work was instigated post-9/11 to ensure that the UK had a national structure in place to tackle terrorism. This work required a vast amount of resources to ensure that a national counter-terrorism strategy was put in place. As a result, staff seconded to ACPO TAM were entitled to accommodation while working in London. This structure is now in place and as a result a review has been conducted of ACPO TAM, including the requirements for staff accommodation. All the properties for seconded staff are occupied and leases would be relinquished at the earliest opportunity if a property became vacant.'

Privately Yates is understood to be horrified anti-terrorist cash has been used in this way. He has ordered an internal review to examine how the counter-terrorism money is being spent to ensure that 'resources are used more cost effectively' in future. Sources say the accommodation issue is a high priority and future secondees to the body will have to make alternative housing arrangements when they are required in London.

One senior police source said: 'The flats are all over Westminster, like an address book for the well-heeled. They are empty most of the time because there is no need to use them. 'No politician will ever say this but the terrorism budget is over-stuffed. Every year they have a huge under-spend which they lavish on things that are not needed. These flats were bought out of this under-spend.'

Patrick Mercer, a former Tory Homeland Security spokesman, said: 'Every penny allocated to counter-terrorism is precious. It therefore disappoints me taxpayers' money is being used in this way.'



The money, amounting to at least £1.6 million every year, is taken out of the £33 million taxpayer grant to ACPO which is meant to be used on "counter-terrorism work." Instead, at least part of that cash has been used to buy apartments for its high-on-the-hog senior personnel to live a life of luxury when they are in London.

To add insult to injury, reports allege that the apartments stand empty most of the time because there is apparently no need for them.

The 280 men and women who comprise ACPO have long since turned away from their traditional role of upholding the law and fighting serious crime, in

favour of increasingly blatant attempts to curry favour with Labour by aligning themselves firmly with the Government's political agenda.

Even though it gets a state subsidy, ACPO is run as a private business with an annual income of around £18 million. Its president, Sir Hugh Orde has £140,000 a year plus a police pension.

In the past two years its influence and public role has expanded to playing a major role in formulating national police policy, advising Ministers and overseeing the development of the National Police Improvement Agency, which runs the controversial DNA database and Police National Computer. Its annual income from project work for the police and Home Office has risen to £15 million, from just £1.3 million in 2005.

Its growth has taken place without any parliamentary debate and without being subject to public scrutiny, and its decisions are largely taken in secret.

ACPO has also been involved in blatant party politics, has enforced excessive "multi-cultural and diversity" programmes amongst police forces across the country - all funded of course by the British taxpayer.

The time has come for this unelected, unsupervised and powerful body to be brought to heel and replaced with a legislatively-controlled organisation which can be called to account for its activities.

*And there's more . . .*

In another instance, the City of London Police was receiving £3.7million for a so-called 'ring of steel' that no longer exists. And Kent Police has also lost a huge sum allocated for anti-terror work that it was using to pay for community support officers.

The 'ring of steel' was introduced to protect key financial institutions in the wake of an IRA bombing campaign in the Nineties. It consisted of manned sentry boxes, road blocks, concrete barriers and chicanes on roads into the Square Mile. But the barriers have been largely dismantled during the past ten years and replaced with 190 CCTV and number-plate recognition cameras. This largely automated system was used to assist the Metropolitan Police investigation into the Islamic terrorist attacks on July 7, 2005.

But the audit of the City of London Police's terror funding suggested that this system was now a general policing tool rather than a counter-terrorism measure. The review, by the Association of Chief Police Officers' (Acpo) Terrorism Committee, which distributes £33million of counter-terrorism cash on behalf of the Home Office, has now cut £3.7million - or six per cent - from the City of London force's budget.

When first asked about the cut, City of London Police said: 'The City has received DSP funding since the 1990s due to its history as a terrorist target. We have been advised we will lose some funding because of a change in funding criteria, but protecting the City from terrorism remains a top priority for the force.'

Meanwhile, Kent Police has had its anti-terror budget slashed after the Acpo audit revealed much of the money was being used to pay part-time community support officers. Kent Police admitted yesterday that it was losing the funding. This follows a behind-the-scenes row in which the force insisted that it saw the part-time officers as essential for its anti-terrorism strategy. A spokesman for the force said: 'Kent Police's DSP funding covers a range of activities relating to counter-terrorism, including the policing of ports. Kent Police works with its

partners to prevent terrorism in addition to fighting serious and organised crime and stopping illegal immigration at our ports.

‘Part of our counter-terrorism strategy involves work within our communities, both to raise awareness of any potential threats and to gain information. We have been advised that our funding will be reduced and this will affect our ability to carry out work in these important areas.’

The move comes as Acpo faces questions about its own future and whether it is the right body to oversee Britain’s police forces. The organisation is a private company which describes itself as a ‘brand’ and is already under fire for its commercial activities.

### **ACPO COPS PAY & BONUS SCANDALS**

We have reported previously about alarming evidence of the manipulation of crime statistics sanctioned and implemented from Chief Officer level, forming a conspiracy to deceive the public into believing that crime is decreasing. The orchestrators of this deceit are the Government and Home Office, aided and abetted by senior police officers, who are obscenely rewarded for their part in the plot.

Our previous articles on the site have also revealed the disproportionate perks and bonus packages provided to many Chief Officers, some of which comprises bonuses for crime reduction and offences brought to justice that we would maintain does not stand up to closer scrutiny. If the full extent of these payments were revealed, together with the basis on which they are made, we believe the scandal that would emerge would make the MP’s expenses scandal look like small beer.

Front line police officers are unable to untangle this web of deceit, despite protestations by many with an informed and accurate perspective at the public facing coal face. Distortion of the figures has led to misallocation of financial and human resources, resulting in the public being deprived of the policing it deserves. The gravy train of police funds has been milked and the “con” disguised through years of bureaucracy, performance targeting and distraction techniques, making the task of basic policing more difficult to deliver.

Many senior officers who are paid grossly disproportionate salaries and bonuses for perpetuating the deceitful illusion of crime reduction. The honour and distinction of achieving a high rank in public service has been replaced with greed, with a convenient blindness to the immorality of their actions. A full, transparent 43 force public enquiry is needed to force the disclosure of these illicit payments and inducements.

“Cooking the books” of policing and crime statistics has dire consequences, plain for all to see. The victims in all of this are the tax payer, who is deprived of the police service contributions are intended to provide, and the front line police officer who is forced into silent acceptance of a job that has become enmeshed with bureaucracy, risk averse policing and fiddled crime figures. Who could blame officers that have no faith or respect for senior officers and politicians who orchestrate a criminal deception of the highest magnitude for personal gain, and then expect the staff on the ground to do their dirty work with no resistance?

Among the most disturbing are the revelations of Heather Brooke in the Guardian, about the expenses of [Sir Hugh Orde](#), the president of the Association of Chief Police Officers. The rot is clearly embedded within the “root and branch” culture of the highest ranking police officers, when the man who is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the Chief Officers in England & Wales sets such an example.

Heather Brooke was the journalist who exposed the MP's expenses scandal. In October 2008 she made freedom of information requests to every police force in the country seeking the full extent of chief constables' perks and pay. She wanted to investigate the rumours top police officers cops weren't just getting top salaries but all sorts of other benefits, from grace and favour homes to chauffeur-driven SUVs and private health insurance.

These perks may be perfectly acceptable - after all, it's a tough job. What is not acceptable is the vault-like secrecy in which they are awarded. Several forces told Heather their chiefs refused bonuses out of principle. But of all those who accepted them only one force, North Wales, fully disclosed the amount.

Why the secrecy? The official reason is that disclosure would be an invasion of chiefs' privacy. Here's the response given by City of London police: "We do not believe that disclosing the exact value of the commissioner's bonus will add significantly to the public interest. By contrast, given that the commissioner has refused consent to disclose and has a reasonable expectation that the exact value of his performance-related payment will remain confidential, we believe that disclosure would be prejudicial to the commissioner's rights and freedoms or legitimate interests."

What about the rights and freedoms of taxpayers to know how their money is spent? What about knowing the criteria on which these bonuses are awarded? Are chiefs paid for achieving political goals? For decreasing crime statistics? For increasing the number of ethnic minority officers? We just don't know.

We saw what lay behind MPs' cries of invasion of privacy. What might we find hidden behind police chiefs' resistance? The Belfast Telegraph published the results of a freedom of information request made by a former Police Federation chairman and member of the Northern Ireland policing board, Jimmy Spratt.

Spratt sought the compensation package of Northern Ireland's outgoing chief constable Hugh Orde, who is now president of the Association of Chief Police Officers. He managed to unearth a compensation package that included rent-free living in a £600,000 luxury home (purchased at taxpayer expense) along with the payment of all utility bills, including phone bills, electricity, rates, heating and property maintenance. This is in addition to a salary of £183,954 plus an annual bonus of up to 15% of salary. Other extras included £360 a year for broadband, £600 for private healthcare, and membership fees for Acpo and the Chief Police Officers' Staff Association, estimated to be £1,000 annually. Another £8,294 was claimed for oil and £13,413 for rates, while £33,904 was spent to repair "defective combined drainage system" and to replace the kitchen.

Now you might think that a member of the police board (the Northern Irish equivalent of a police authority) would know exactly what comprises a top cop's compensation package, as the board approves it. Not so. Spratt stated that when you have a £1.2bn budget "you can't really keep track".

"What you're presented with are accounts that are, well I wouldn't exactly call them basic, but they're not going into any great detail, and it's only when you start probing into the detail that you find these things out. I wanted to know what I was signing my name to." If only more police authority members did the same. As a former chief negotiator on police pay, Spratt thought he had a good idea what was on offer, but was "completely surprised" at the extent.

Where are these packages set? Spratt is finding that difficult to pin down. He's been told they're set by the Association of Police Authorities but its acting executive, Tania Eagle, told me that's not the case. "It's very unusual for one agency to be fully responsible for policy."

That's the problem. We need clear lines of accountability. We need to know who's in charge of setting and approving these packages and we need to get them out in the open. Even ACPO is being forced to agree. Spokesman Andrea Newman said: "Acpo is of the view that chief officers should be open and transparent about their remuneration and should be open to scrutiny - but disclosure is a matter for individual chief constables."

If these payouts are to be respected then chief constables must come clean about their pay. Secrecy feeds suspicion that these perks are based on politics and boys' club favouritism rather than effective policing.

### **Democracy is fine - Unless it prevents ACPO getting what they want**

Sir Hugh Orde says that he, and possibly other Chief Constables, would resign rather than accept democratic oversight.

Sir Hugh makes two arguments. First, he says he wants the police to have operational independence. So does everyone else. What the public want is democratic control over police budgets and priorities. Should the police spend their money on speed cameras or find resources for more foot patrols? Should they turn a blind eye to the possession of small amounts of cannabis? Should they let shoplifters off with a warning? These are questions in which local people have a legitimate interest. No one, as we suspect Sir Hugh knows perfectly well, is suggesting that elected representatives should be empowered to intervene in specific cases.

Sir Hugh's second argument is that voters can't be trusted. In an unbelievably patronising statement, he claimed that there are "no votes in protecting people from terrorism, from organised crime and from serial rapists that cross the country". We wonder whether he really believes this, or whether his true concern is that voters might want the police to spend more time on protecting property and less on encouraging diversity.

Either way, while Sir Hugh might have some support among the top brass - those ambitious Chief Officers who, during 13 years of Labour, were promoted because they seemed to believe that the primary purpose of the police was to promote equality - he is not especially representative of the broad mass of police officers, who joined up in order to be crime fighters, not social workers or Labour activists.

Sir Hugh's offer to resign should be politely accepted by any incoming Conservative Home Secretary. The same goes for any other Chief Constable who believes that the public cannot be trusted to have a say in how they behave. The sooner we clear the inveterate quangocrats out of policing, the better for everyone.

Sir Hugh complained that the police would become "politicised", yet the group over which he presides has spent years behaving in a quasi-political way, making statements intended to support this government policy or undermine that one. Established in 1948, ACPO - a private company funded by the Home Office together with contributions from police authorities - plays a key role in the formulation of public policy on criminal justice. Yet it is totally unaccountable for what it does. ACPO - rank officers can be found at Home Office press conferences and their comments are often helpfully attached to government press releases. They are up to their necks in politics. Indeed, Sir Hugh's intervention is itself overtly political. So it is a bit rich for him to complain about the politicisation of the police.

### **MERGING FORCES**

Sir Hugh Orde criticises the lack of leadership over this issue, saying: "There is no political

enthusiasm whatsoever to even raise this at a discussion level."

Perhaps they are suspicious of his motives. More accountability would throw the spotlight on ACPO, its value and its function. Would ACPO and Sir Hugh stand up to scrutiny?

There are 340'sh members in ACPO, perhaps he feels insecure in his position? Could this have an influence on his decision for fewer forces? Would local authority accountability render ACPO and the invisible police authorities as obsolete and expensive mechanisms that have outlived their usefulness?

There would be obvious benefits in fewer forces, but clearly there would be downsides too. Centrally accountable organisations have not worked in practice. There are cost saving benefits, but these would be offset by the imposition of national policies that do not always transfer well on a local level.

ACPO is a company limited by guarantee with no shareholders to answer to. Examination of the most recently posted accounts at companies house make interesting reading. They show surplus funds of £2,813,167. If ACPO have almost 3million in reserve, surely the best investment of those funds would be on equipment that will help protect the lives of the front line officers. One suggestion that was made this week was to provide life jackets for officers in force areas with high flood warnings, to help prevent incidents such as the sad loss of PC Bill Barker.

## **QUICK, TURN ON THE SHREDDERS! - ACPO quango to come under freedom of information laws**

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the publicly-funded private company that wields heavy influence over policing policy, will be included in the Freedom of Information Act from October next year.

The Ministry of Justice's announcement today follows criticism of ACPO's lack of accountability despite its powerful role. The firm sets national policy and practice, acts as a lobbying organisation for senior officers, and coordinates cross-force investigations and intelligence operations.

Justice minister Michael Wills said: "ACPO's functions are concerned with providing leadership for the police force, improving policing, acting as a voice for the force, encouraging high standards of performance and development, providing the strategic police response in times of national need and other ancillary and related functions.

"Policing is clearly recognised as a function of a public nature. For these reasons it is appropriate to include ACPO... for all of their functions."

Sir Hugh Orde, the former chief constable of Northern Ireland who took over as ACPO president last year, has backed the change.

The timing is unfortunate for ACPO, who should have been subject to FOI compliance along with all the other public sector bodies from the outset. As it stands, it has all the hallmarks of a department spring cleaning in advance of a new political power appearing on the scene to more closely scrutinise their activities.

The "Emperors New Clothes" spring to mind. When you strip away all the ulterior motives and hidden agendas, Sir Hugh and ACPO stand to be exposed for a boys club of empire builders who have lived profligate lifestyles at the tax payers expense.



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

## **NPIA - the toothless quango**

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) was established in 2005 to “provide a large and diverse portfolio of products and services” to police across the country. Its job is to manage national infrastructure and encourage the adoption of standard equipment, systems and practices.

It boasts of successes, spearheading the rollout of the new Airwave radio to facilitate communication across forces, and leading the IMPACT information-sharing programme and the development of the Police National Database.

However, although it is leading on these projects, the NPIA is powerless to enforce their adoption. The Police National Database, for example - which is costing around £600 million to roll out - is supposed to link up the computer systems of all 43 forces. But the NPIA has confirmed that participating in the new system is not compulsory.

THE NPIA website <http://www.npia.police.uk/> explains its purpose as follows:-

*“Policing is vital to public safety, NPIA is part of the police service. Our purpose is to make a valuable contribution to improving public safety”.*

**It goes on . . . .**

*“We provide a large and diverse portfolio of products and services designed to support the police service and wider policing family. Our market operates both in the UK and internationally. As a policing organisation we act as a central resource to ACPO and police forces, working with authorities and the Home Office to help improve the way policing works”.*

The NPIA promised to develop a strategy to cover all their work. The resulting National Improvement Strategy for Policing (NISP) is what they have based their business plan on. The aim is that NISP will help partners in ACPO, APA and the Home Office to take a long-term view about the police.

**The NPIA Capabilities are listed as :-**

- Strengthening leadership in the service at all levels
- Developing the skills and professionalism of the workforce
- Implementing effective operational processes, practice and doctrine
- Increasing the efficiency of service delivery by forces
- Transforming the way information, evidence, knowledge and science is used
- Continuously improving the delivery of national services
- Enhancing the UK's role in global security.

This all sounds very commendable on paper. The NPIA is tasked with the job of increasing police efficiency and to improve standards within the service. It would not seem unreasonable

to expect that the agency charged with this important responsibility, should lead by example, setting the highest moral standards.

The Times newspaper recently revealed that in fact the NPIA, rather than setting a fine example to the service, is disgracing it still further with its “gravy boat” culture at the very top of British policing.

#### **Let's start with its Chief Constable, Peter Neyroud.**

Mr Neyroud is the £195,000 a year boss of the Agency. Not an unreasonable salary you might think, taking into account the level of responsibility associated with the position. However, Mr Neyroud's employment package includes a Westminster apartment – in a block that has a gym, pool, sauna and valet parking – within walking distance of the agency offices. It cost the taxpayer £23,200 in 2008-09.

As a perk of the job, the flat has an income tax demand of approximately £9,000 a year, which the NPIA confirmed it has paid for a number of years. Sources from Revenue & Customs described the situation as “unusual” and pointed out that if the NPIA was paying Mr Neyroud's tax bill that amounted to another perk, which was also liable to tax.

Matthew Elliott, chief executive of the campaign group, the Taxpayers' Alliance condemned the package saying *“It is appalling that this quango is spending taxpayers' money on swanky accommodation for their top brass while frontline policing struggles to get the job done on limited resources. The NPIA shouldn't be handing out these generous benefits at all, and it certainly shouldn't be trying to cover the cost of tax on them as well. Taxpayers and ordinary police officers are incredibly frustrated by this kind of waste.”*

The NPIA is spends £19 million a year on consultants and recently employed an external contractor as its director of resources, paying him £296,000 – including accommodation costs – not a bad little number for seven months work.

The Agency senior managers have faced criticism before. They shared £82,000 in bonuses in 2008-09 and Peter Holland, its chairman, claimed £46,000 expenses in two years – including £2,800 on meals at the RAC Club in Pall Mall.

An NPIA spokesman defended the provision of a second home for Mr Neyroud and his deputy, stating that his family home is more than 120 miles from London. ***In fact, it seems that Mr Neyroud's permanent home is actually 50 miles from London and in an area where many London commuters live.***

One Oxford resident commented in the Times : ***“Neyroud lives in Oxford and was our chief constable. That's 45 miles from London, not the 120 listed. Oxford is within easy commuting distance. I and tens of thousands of others do it every day without the need for public subsidy or our tax bills paid. I do not think I have seen a worse case of public sector greed”.***

Closer examination of the most recent NPIA accounts make interesting reading too.

- 2008-09 accounts show Mr Neyroud was paid £190-195,000 p.a. with benefits in kind of £14,331.
- His lump sum pension at age 60 £600-605,000

- The role of Director of Resources was filled by Donald Muir, a contractor, from 1 July 2008 until 15 February 2009. Fees for this service, including accommodation costs met by the NPIA, amounted to £296,000.
- The Director of Resources, John Beckerleg, left on 30 June 2008 and received a severance payment, including lieu of notice, of £64,000.
- The Chief Executive Officer (Neyroud) and Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Barker-McCardle ) are provided with accommodation as part of their role. The cost of this, in 2008/09, was £23,200 and £22,900 respectively.
- The NPIA is currently reviewing the tax treatment and will bear any tax that may fall due.
- Jim Barker-McCardle (Deputy) was paid £160-165,000
- His lump sum pension at age 60 £505-510,000
- Peter Holland, Chairman was paid £95-100,000
- 4 other senior management are collectively paid £535-555,000
- 2032 staff (Why??) 1258 permanent, 64 Home Office staff, 266 seconded officers, 444 temp contractors with staff costs of £101,211,000 (£91million 07/08)
- They own land and buildings worth £70,762,000 {Inc Bramshill}(conveniently similar to the £70million Alan Johnson wants to knock off the overtime bill). Private sector businesses often sell property and have it rented back to them to realise cash (called sale & leaseback).
- They own dwellings worth £3,062,000 & vehicles worth £1,549,000
- Plant & machinery £3,580,000
- Communications equipment £138,142,000
- IT Hardware £28,710,000
- Web Development £1,020,000
- Fixtures & fittings £6,797,000
- ANTIQUES £2,113,000
- Assets Under Construction (?) £21,445,000

#### **Total Tangible Assets £278,361,000**

- They are owed £34,850,000
- They owe £71,729,000
- Cash in bank and at hand £5,245,000
- Cash in bank/at hand same time 2008 £42,254,000
- Fixed and current assets total £345million
- Deducting liabilities, the balance sheet is positive to the tune of £257million

#### **THIS BIT IS INTERESTING .....**

The following are services that the NPIA should be charging out more than they cost to deliver, but look at this :-

#### **Fees and Charges**

#### **COSTS TO NPIA**

- Fingerprint identification (IDENT1) 32,973,000
- Police National Computer (PNC) 29,526,000
- National DNA Database (NDNAD) 9,517,000
- Project support charges 42,709,000
- Other information services 70,918,000

- Information services 185,643,000
- Exams and Assessment 5,427,000
- Learning and Development Services 16,840,000
- Leadership Development Services 6,646,000
- Other people and development services 12,290,000
- People and development services 41,203,000
- Property recharges 22,432,000,000

**Total Costs £285,870,000**

**INCOME FROM CHARGING FOR THESE SERVICES :-**

**Total Income £49,784,000**

**Deficit -£236,086,000**

In short, from the accounts, it appears that they are spending hundreds of millions more than they receive in fees and grants from forces and the Home Office.

If this were a private sector company, some serious questions would need to be asked. They do not appear to be generating surplus (profit) at all, and as such the £236million deficit on services would appear to be a direct taxpayer drain.

There were suggestions on the Times site for a Home Office Investigation to be conducted. This would be totally wrong. Any enquiry should be independent of political influence.

The Times article received many positive posts from readers, a number of whom were sympathetic with the frontline officers who are being well and truly stiffed rotten by the Chiefs.

There was a time when the distinction of high rank in public service, together with the job security and the prospect of a gong, was thought compensation enough for a chief constable's modest pay. But now that is clearly no longer enough for them.

Alas, the same is true everywhere in the upper echelons of the state sector, where the spirit of public service has been supplanted by naked greed.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of good work done by the likes of ACPO, the APA and NPIA. However, for public confidence to be fully restored, accountability must begin at the top, with full transparency and independent scrutiny of each agency to assess its viability and value to the service and tax paying public.

#### **NPIA CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCE THEIR DEPARTURE**

A few months after stories about his lavish perks, and perhaps a few months before a new government reviews the existence of his fiefdom, Peter Neyroud has announced his intention to step down as chief executive of the National Policing Improvement Agency.

The Tories have said that if elected they will examine the future of the NPIA, which is supposed to drive efficiencies across policing, improve leadership skills and manage the DNA database (among many other things).

By the time he steps down Mr Neyroud, who holds the rank of Chief Constable, will have served 30 years as a police officer.

It can be no coincidence that Mr Neyroud has chosen the same time to conduct a media interview in which he now urges the Government to agree to an independent examination of what it is the public requires of the police and the right structures to fulfill those requirements.

It appears somewhat strange that this interview is timed on the approach to an election where the balance of power may shift and his Quango may well come under closer critical scrutiny.

Mr Neyroud's request follows a renewed appeal by the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) for a wholesale review of the structure, purpose and future of policing to be able to deal with the biggest threats of terrorism and cross-border crime.

"Logic suggests that now might be a good time to ask if the structure is fit for purpose. We need an independent, thoughtful but not long-winded review of what is the best structure to deal with the current threats facing the UK at every level," Sir Hugh Orde told The Times.

Mr Neyroud said Sir Hugh's comments are timely and should be listened to. Hardly surprising, as we have noted from the NPIA website that Sir Hugh Orde, as well as being President of ACPO is also an NPIA Board Member.

"I am in complete agreement with Sir Hugh," he said. "Given the cost pressures, unresolved issues on mergers and structure, the fact BCUs are disappearing like leaves in autumn, that forces are stripping out ranks in the way that is almost as dramatic as Patrick Sheehy's recommendations and that civilianisation will be under pressure because of cost.

"Given all of that, a proper strategic review is needed to map out what it is the public want from policing and what the right structure is to deliver that and the right mixture of staff and the right accountability.

"They are all being speculated about separately, they all need to be thought about together." ACPO has supported the rationalisation of the 43-force structure in England and Wales for a considerable time, but Mr Neyroud's intervention is expected to carry considerable weight as his role means he is in regular contact with senior politicians at every level and has always avoided contradicting government policy in public.

Mr Neyroud does not feel the review should necessarily be in the form of a Royal Commission, as the Police Federation is campaigning for, supported by former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair.

He said the service does not have the luxury of time that a Royal Commission would take, but that the constant speculation about structure is destabilising for those working within the current 43 forces.

Last week, the Home Secretary said he didn't agree that a review was needed. Speaking in a House of Commons debate on home affairs, Alan Johnson said Royal Commissions take a long time and nothing is achieved in the meantime.

"I respect Sir Hugh, a man of great experience, and I respect his views about that. But just because the last Royal Commission was in 1962, there has to be another one at intermittent periods. I think that we used to have these Royal Commissions that went on for a great deal of time and in the meantime everything was preserved in aspic because nobody knew what was going to happen next.

"I think the honourable member's point is that we should be consistently reviewing our methods of

policing to ensure they keep pace with advances in technology and things going on in the world, such as counter-terrorism. I would say we are doing that. Both Ronnie Flanagan's report, the Green Paper, followed by the White Paper and many other aspects over the past few years, have revolutionised the way the police do their work.

"We need to continue to change to meet the challenges of the times."

## **Chairman follows Chief Exec through the NPIA exit door**

Within days of Peter Neyroud announcing his departure from the NPIA the Chairman, Peter Holland has also announced that he will leave in September.

All a bit convenient at best, suspiciously coincidental to say the least, to lose two key figures from the top of an organisation in the immediate aftermath of a General Election. Or perhaps they've been reading the runes and reckon that the quango's future is less than secure?

It seems that certain individuals within this gravy train culture are fearful that a Royal Commission or new Government might derail the train, reveal the secrets they would rather be kept from public view about waste and inappropriate spending and the disproportionate presence the bodies represent in the political system.

### **UNCERTAIN FUTURE FOR THE NPIA**

The future of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) is undecided as speculation grows over plans following the general election.

Shadow minister for home affairs, Crispin Blunt, confirmed the Conservative Party is reviewing the effectiveness of the NPIA in improving standards across the police service and did not rule out radical reform of the agency.

The MP for Reigate was speaking at the launch of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) report into police efficiency and responded to questions over the role of the NPIA in coordinating collaboration and efficiencies.

He said: "We will want to take a careful view on how [the NPIA] has worked and make sure it is a vehicle for driving standards, or look at doing things differently. We haven't come to a conclusion yet."

Speaking at the same event, former Home Secretary Charles Clarke said it was bizarre that such an enormous number of people work 'at the centre' of policing. He said he would be in favour of just one agency, with half the staff there is currently, including at the Home Office.

"I would be in favour of taking a real knife - an intelligent knife - to have a real go at it," he said.



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

The Association of Police Authorities was set up on 1st April 1997 to represent police authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, both on the national stage and locally. It influences policy on policing and it supports local police authorities in their role.

There is a police authority for each local police force - 43 in all in England and Wales - plus an additional one for British Transport Police. In Northern Ireland the police authority is called the Policing Board but it has a similar role to police authorities in England and Wales

All police authorities are members of the Association of Police Authorities.

Ten things you need to know about **your** police authority

- 1** Your police authority is a group of 17 local people (slightly more in some areas) who hold the police to account on behalf of communities.
- 2** Your police authority consults with local communities to find out what you want from your local police.
- 3** Your police authority's job is to make sure that the Chief Constable (or Commissioner in London) delivers a police service which balances both national priorities and the concerns of local people.
- 4** Your police authority hires and, if necessary, fires chief constables and senior police officers - and also checks on complaints against police.
- 5** Your police authority publishes an annual plan, based on consultation with local people, setting out the services your police force should deliver in the year ahead, and the targets it should achieve.
- 6** As part of the annual policing plan, your police authority sets employment targets to ensure your local police reflect the diversity of local communities.
- 7** Your police authority holds the police budget. It consults with local people before it sets police council tax to ensure you get value for money.
- 8** Your police authority has a legal duty to promote equalities and good relations between different groups of people. As part of this, it ensures people know their rights if they are stopped or searched by police.
- 9** Around 10% of police authority members are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around 30% are women.
- 10** Your police authority makes sure the police service does everything it can to keep improving policing for your community.

### **Who is on the Police Authority?**

Most police authorities have 17 members:

- 9 local councillors appointed by the local council
- 8 independent members selected following local advertisements, at least one of whom must be a magistrate

## **What does the Police Authority do?**

The police authority sets the strategic direction for the force and holds the chief constable to account on behalf of the local community. Delivering policing services is the job of the chief constable.

The police authority:

- Holds the police budget and decides how much council tax should be raised for policing
- Appoints (and dismisses) the chief constable and senior police officers
- Consults widely with local people to find out what they want from their local police
- Sets local policing priorities based on what local people say matters to them and targets for achievement
- Monitors everything the police do and how well they perform against the targets set by the authority
- Publishes a 3 year plan and an annual plan which tells local people what they can expect from their police service and reports back at the end of the year
- Makes sure local people get best value from their local police
- Oversees complaints against the police and disciplines senior officers

## **What's the Police Authority for?**

To make sure that the local police are accountable for what they do to you - the people who live or work in the area and that you have a say in how you are policed.

## **Who Are the APA?**

The APA Council is made up of members drawn from 47 member police authorities, including the 43 geographical police authorities and members or associate members representing centralised services, such as the British Transport Police Authority. The APA Council consists of 80 members drawn from 49 member authorities. The Council is the main decision making body of the APA on major issues.

The APA Board leads on strategic decisions about APA business, and represents the APA in national negotiations. The members of the Executive are local police authority members who have been elected to serve by APA Council members.

The APA Secretariat is the central servicing and co-ordinating team for the Association of Police Authorities. It undertakes all the day to day business of the Association in supporting local police authorities and representing their views at a national level.

## **Responsibilities**

- the APA Secretariat keeps member authorities in touch with everything that's going on through circulars (available on the members only site), newsletters and personal visits;
- consults member authorities on issues of national importance to ensure that the national debates are informed by local views;
- spreads good practice by organising conferences, seminars and training days;
- publishes guidance and research documents;
- provides support, advice and assistance to member authorities.

## **Who polices the police?**

Chief Constables and other policing stakeholders are receiving a leaflet from the Association of Police Authorities (APA) in an effort to raise awareness about the role of police authorities.

Who Polices the Police? offers information on police authorities, including the importance of ensuring that policing decisions are taken on behalf of the whole community, and not for party-political reasons, and in ensuring that the police continue to do a better job on behalf of all communities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

APA Chairman Rob Garnham said: “At this time of heightened political interest in police authorities, it is useful to clarify our role, and the responsibilities we have in relation to governance of policing.”

In recent months, the APA and police authorities have taken on more responsibilities - working with the IPCC to make it easier for people to provide feedback on the police service they receive; new responsibilities in airports policing; and an increasingly relevant role in the response to the Policing Pledge. As of April, police authorities will also be responsible for the annual performance development review (PDR) of chief constables.

### **Police authorities 'not ensuring value for money'**

Most police authorities are failing to set priorities for local forces and do not ensure value for money, inspectors have found.

A joint investigation of ten authorities in England and Wales by the Audit Commission and the Inspectorate of Constabulary found only mixed performance, with the majority of authorities performing only adequately overall.

The ten authorities oversee £6bn of spending every year - or 44% - of the total annual policing budget, with one force, the Metropolitan Police Service, spending half of that sum.

In a report released recently, the inspectors published the results for nine of the authorities, rating them from 'poor' to 'excellent' in four broad areas. None of the nine received the top rating for value for money, with eight rated 'adequate'. Two were rated 'poor' for their scrutiny of local policing.

Inspector of constabulary Zoe Billingham suggested that part of the problem was in the breadth of police authorities' responsibilities, which range from setting ethical standards, reviewing costs and representing local public opinion to setting strategic priorities.

'Authorities are not yet demonstrating that they can respond to the many multifarious demands that are placed on them,' she said.

'There is very little evidence even of police authorities performing well, let alone excellently. They have to prioritise better... relentlessly and ruthlessly focusing on setting strategic priorities. They need to be in touch with the public and able to follow the money.'

It is the first set of assessments looking into the full range of work undertaken by police authorities. Inspections of the remaining 33 bodies will follow.

Chief inspector of constabulary Denis O'Connor said authorities could struggle to save £545m by 2014 as set out in last year's policing white paper. He criticised authorities for not comparing their force's spending data with those of other forces.

However, Gareth Davies, the Audit Commission's managing director for community safety, said those savings 'should be achievable by well-run forces and authorities'. But, he added: 'There is a question mark around the capacity.'

Rob Garnham, chair of the Association of Police Authorities, said the report highlighted many challenges for authorities. 'We must ensure that we are getting the best possible value for our communities in the difficult economic times that lie ahead, and in driving the longer-term future of police forces effectively. Authorities have a good track record on ensuring policing is efficient, but we know a step-change is needed in these difficult times. I am confident that we can rise to this challenge and make the desired improvements,' he said.

## **National funding**

The centralised model of police funding is a mess, eroding local accountability and inhibiting police forces from spending money where it would be most useful. It removes the incentive to spend effectively and efficiently, and denies local residents a say in how much they pay for their policing, and what its priorities should be. This disintermediation of the payment and the benefit prevents citizens from understanding what they pay for policing, and discourages them from taking an active part in reducing costs.

The bulk of police resources comes from central government grants, which have increased by 58 per cent in the past decade. The amount allocated to each force is based on a complex formula which in essence tries to predict the level of crime in each force, based on criteria including the number of single parent households, the number of long-term unemployment benefit claimants, the number of bars per 100 hectares, the amount of student housing and the number of residents in terraced accommodation.

The performance of a police force is not taken into account. The value of grants arising from this formula is then changed, multiplied by various scaling factors. An additional grant for various designated purposes is then added. Finally, in the case of the Metropolitan Police, a further arbitrary amount is added "in recognition of the Metropolitan Police's distinct national and capital city functions". For 2009-10 that amount is £202.5 million.

## **The "bribery culture"**

There is evidence of a "bribery culture", with government effectively withholding a particular piece of funding unless the force in question agrees to implement a given initiative.

One example of this was the recent rollout of the national Airwave radio system, where forces that needed to replace their ageing systems were offered money by the Home Office to do so - but only if they opted for the Government's preferred system.

The Home Office does not publish specific figures on these financial incentives, but one Police Authority member suggested that up to 60 per cent of police spending - £9 billion nationwide - is targeted Home Office grants.

## **A new deal with Chief Constables**

Any realistic police reform must attract the support of Chief Constables. Their powerful position and lack of accountability is one of the key defects of the current structure; equally, it gives them what amounts to a veto on reform.

Henry Brooke's 1964 Police Act passed without incident because the police hierarchy had succeeded in striking down controversial measures, such as the creation of a national force, in their evidence to the Royal Commission that preceded the Act. The Royal Commission noted that testimony "from persons and organisations closely associated with the present system" had been particularly compelling in rejecting the idea of a national force.

What remained was a coup for the Chief Constables. It created new, larger forces that would be overseen by local authorities that were weaker and less democratic than the watch committees.

The new deal for Chief Constables is a quid pro quo - greater independence from Home Office direction in return for greater local accountability.

### **Observations**

Never has the police service had so much money, so many officers or such access to technology. Yet never has public dissatisfaction with the police been so widespread. Complaints against the police have doubled in the past three years. This big increase, according to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, is due to allegations from law-abiding, middle-class, middle-aged and retired people. These traditional supporters of the police have never felt so let down.

A Home Office report, considered the most authoritative in the country, shows a huge gap between how we want to be policed, how the front line police want to police us and how we are actually policed. Why is there this gap and what can be done about it?

The UK public lacks the power to get the policing they want. Neither the public, their democratically elected local counselors nor their MP have any influence over the strategy of their local force, its funding or the appointment or removal of its Chief Constable. If the chief constable wants to close police stations against the wishes of the community, he can do so. If he wants his response teams to spend the day chasing petty detections to inflate his force performance, there is little to stop him.

Since the Police Act 1964 successive governments have accrued power to the centre. Law and order is a hot political issue. The government cannot be seen to fail. As in the NHS it exerts control through targets. Just as in the NHS these targets are often poorly thought out and measure the wrong things. Most of all, it stops the police giving the public the policing they want.

Our 43 police forces in England and Wales are wholly accountable to the Home Office and the secretary of state - "the chief constable of chief constables", as one police officer put it.

Frontline officers complain of central control and ill thought out government policies. A high level of bitterness and frustration exists at the sharp end of policing. Bonuses are paid to senior officers based on how they comply with targets. As in the NHS bad targets are coercing otherwise ethical public servants into unethical behaviour. Serious crime is ignored and minor crime elevated to the serious in order to satisfy the measurement regime. One officer said: 'We are bringing more and more people to justice - but they are the wrong people.'

Targets and increased central control are turning what should be an independent police force into what another officer described as, 'an extension of the government.' At the same time too much paper work sees officers spend only 14% of their time on patrol. Police numbers may be historically high but they are low compared to other countries while the ratio of crimes to officers is now overwhelming.

Targets miss the point of what the public wants. The Home Office judges each police force by how many crimes they detect and clear up. The public wants something different. They do not want the crimes happening in the first place. The absence of crime and disorder is not a target. As one constable wrote, 'I remember when it was a matter of pride to come back after a night shift to find no crimes had happened. Now all we are asked is why no one was locked up.'

## **Accountability**

Striking the correct balance between efficiency and accountability is central to public service reform. Unlike other services such as health and education, which are consumed by individual patients or pupils, policing is a public good and not subject to choice as a method of providing accountability. Consumer power can therefore only be exercised through a popular election.

### **Local accountability**

Political debate about crime in England and Wales has been restricted to point-scoring and blame games. The lack of accountability, and the need for politicians to be seen to be “doing something about crime” has created a culture of short-termism and knee-jerk reaction. It has resulted in the trading of meaningless statistics, accusations of interference and seemingly limitless centrally-directed initiatives.

One Chief Constable reported that he is accountable to “at least a dozen” authorities, with three - HMIC, the Police Authority and the Audit Commission - responsible for inspecting and auditing his force. But accountability to many bodies actually means no accountability at all.

Giving local officers real autonomy, discretion and the power to make their own professional decisions, rather than relying on Whitehall edicts, would start to rebuild the relationship between the police and local people.

The answer must involve getting the government out of the job of policing. The politicisation of the force must be tackled, with the removal of targets, not merely the promise of it as it presently stands.

A local tax to pay for the basic command unit and a commander who is selected by and answerable to taxpayers, whether through local government or even direct elections, would give the public that power. It would certainly put an end to the dangerous politicisation of our police force and the continuing alienation of the public.

The existing tripartite model of Home Office, Chief Constable & Police Authority needs a thorough overhaul. In place since 1964, its continuing value and fitness for purpose must be questioned if true reform is to be achieved.

### **A NEW SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE**

Despite the difficulties and problems that exist within ACPO, the APA and NPIA, we would not dismiss the potential for providing real value to the tax payer. It seems that many of their responsibilities and purposes are blurred and overlap, are duplicated or contradict the ideal of a single focus.

Bringing together the best skills and relevant experience within the three organizations, removing any private company status and returning the functions to one effective policing department would provide many advantages, save millions in wasted expenditure, release considerable duplicated resource and tighten up the whole governance of policing, increasing the effectiveness of the service. This would also create a single line of governance that would improve relationships with the public and within the force, between frontline and senior command officers, with the aim of improving declining morale.

## **Suggestions:-**

A new system of governance is needed for the police service in England and Wales that will do four things:

Enhance police flexibility locally while improving capacity regionally and at the Centre

- Reduce waste and inefficiency
- Strengthen accountability
- Facilitate change and reform throughout the service.

## **Suggested changes to the governance of policing**

- All local crime priorities should be set at the local level, most importantly by strengthening the role of elected local government. Priorities would be set at three different levels:
- Reformed police authorities made up of senior councillors would set the budgets and priorities for each police force and hold chief constables to account for performance.
- Local authorities would directly commission key police services from their respective Basic Command Units.
- Local neighbourhood policing meetings would set the priorities for each neighbourhood policing team.

A National Policing Agency should be established by merging the National Policing Improvement Agency and the Association of Police Authorities with those parts of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that currently coordinate or deliver national policing services.

The NPA would have powers to ensure that complex and serious criminal activity that crosses force borders was being effectively tackled through collaboration and to improve the efficiency of service delivery by all forces.

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