

The police mission in the twenty-first century: rebalancing the role of the first public service

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Reform

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Stephen Greenhalgh was appointed Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime (DMPC) by the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, in June 2012. Since then he has set the budget plans for the Metropolitan Police and devised a cost-reduction strategy to realise over £500 million in savings by 2016. He framed the 20-20-20 Challenge for the Met Police which forms the basis of the Mayor's strategy outlined in the Police and Crime Plan – to cut key neighbourhood crimes by 20 per cent, to boost confidence by 20 per cent, whilst cutting costs by 20 per cent. Since March 2012, overall crime in London is down 11 per cent and public confidence in the police is rising. Stephen is the executive lead for the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and as DMPC, exercises the powers afforded to elected PCCs outside the capital. He was previously Leader of Hammersmith and Fulham Council from 2006 to the end of May 2012.

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Introduction

In common with other public services, the policing landscape in Britain has undergone unprecedented structural reform in the last few years. The police reform agenda of the Coalition Government since 2010 has instituted major changes to police governance, training, pay, conditions and pensions, which the Home Secretary is right to describe as the most significant for over 50 years. The reforms have all been controversial but they were necessary to ensure British policing could become more professional, accountable, and locally-driven. Whole new institutions – like the College of Policing and the National Crime Agency – have been created, whilst others have been reshaped or abolished.

The most important reform – the introduction of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) – was also the most contested, largely because both opponents and advocates could foresee how important it would be. Despite a rocky start, PCCs are now well established and forging important new relationships that will improve public safety. To this end it is hoped that PCCs will catalyse much wider changes to policing and other public services, with the opportunities for systemic improvements that strengthen collaboration and enhance customer service only just beginning.

The next phase of police reform

Policing is one public service reform programme that has been successfully landed, despite sustained opposition, when others have been scaled back or abandoned completely. But the new settlement we have now is the product of just the first phase of police reform that required new legislation, guidance and lengthy independent reviews.

This first phase was all about form, not function. It created new structures; it did not change the culture. It reassigned some personnel; it did not redefine the mission. There was some rhetoric about the police role, but little new policy that actually rebalanced that role. The components of the new policing settlement are easy to identify, with PCCs the most visible part. What has been harder to gauge is what all the reforms mean for the job of policing itself, the

mission that drives police officers, and the work that they do each day to deliver the first public service.

Now we are entering a second phase of police reform which must be about function, not form. About what the public can realistically expect from the police, what the policing function is beyond fighting crime, and how the police can be equipped to deliver their core mission in an era of complex threats, high public demand, and shrinking budgets.

The hardest question facing the police in the next decade is not whether the new settlement is the right form. That debate has ended, and none of the biggest challenges facing policing are addressed by the stale proposal of police force mergers. But rather, given the new settlement, how should the policing *function* adapt to the pressures of the modern world? A function – or mission – that is getting pulled and probed and tested every day by budget reductions, high public expectations, and new patterns of crime.

The role of democratic governance

PCCs matter because they are increasingly facing choices about how policing services are configured and, unlike the old appointed Police Authorities, it is their right – justified by an electoral mandate – to decide the balance between competing demands on the police service. Parliament created a new tier of leadership overseeing the police that has been empowered to make executive decisions about how policing is delivered locally. Previously, these decisions were taken largely by the police leadership on their own, or in response to directives issued from Whitehall.

This was a critical reform that will beget many more improvements as elected PCCs strive hard to respond to local concerns and improve the policing service to the public. Without the injection of democratic governance it would have been difficult for the Home Office to loosen its grip on policy and to allow local police forces more freedom to respond to the challenges they are facing. The explicit legal remit for “And Crime” gives PCCs a unique role to drive collaboration with other agencies and to address problems beyond policing, including the efficiency and effectiveness of local criminal justice.

By setting a budget and defining priorities, the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) and other PCCs have gone beyond simply performance monitoring – they have authorised and at times initiated changes that will shape what the police do and how they do it. This debate goes beyond a simple numbers game to a bigger agenda around the policing style and the role of police, which is no longer just a matter for the professional preference of chief officers, unhindered by public expectations.

So decisions about how to allocate finite resources, for example whether to maintain numbers of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), or keep police stations open, are choices that reflect not just economics, but a certain view of what the police should be doing and what their role is, supported by a clear set of manifesto commitments. It is informed by the professional view of the service, but no longer dictated by that alone.

No serious debate can begin before policymakers address the question about the police's function. The policing mission as currently discharged has become too broad, and the police need a rebalanced mission and more support from outside policing, if they are to adapt to the spending squeeze and crime challenges of the twenty-first century.

1

The squeeze

No public service in the UK in 2014 has continued to enjoy the spending largesse that defined the 2000s, but some have found it easier to absorb budget cuts and others, like town halls, had to start cutting earlier and are further down the road of austerity. Looking out to 2030 and beyond, policing is one public service that is facing a long-term fiscal and demand squeeze that it is currently not prepared for, not least because of its history of almost uninterrupted expansion.¹

Successive post-war decades of real terms increases in funding saw policing spend grow as a share of GDP and a doubling of the size of the workforce (police and civilian staff) from 100,000 to 200,000 between 1961 and 1991. There was then a surge in spending after 2001 which expanded the police even further, to reach approximately 300,000 personnel by 2010.²

The police, like all public services, are now experiencing significant financial pressures that have meant difficult decisions. The Great Recession triggered an unprecedented series of unavoidable public spending cuts that reduced police force budgets by more than 20 per cent. This led to an unavoidable reduction in staff. Since 2010, the total police workforce across England and Wales has fallen by 37,000 (or 13 per cent).³ In London, a 20 per cent cut in the Home Office grant has translated to an unprecedented budget challenge with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) having to identify £500 million in savings by 2015/16.

A new economic reality

This reality of policing on a smaller budget will not be short-lived; it will become the new normal. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has projected that, based on current spending plans which ring-fence health and education from budget reductions, the knock-on effect elsewhere out to 2018/19 will be even deeper cuts to areas like the police:

1 Blair Gibbs, Rory Geoghegan, and Edward Boyd, *Cost of the Cops* (Policy Exchange, 2011).

2 Jonathan Cribb, Richard Disney, and Luke Sibieta, *The public sector workforce: past, present and future* (IFS, 2014).

3 *Ibid.*

“At the extreme, if there were no reductions to the education and NHS workforces between mid-2013 and 2018–19 the OBR’s forecasts could only be borne out if the rest of general government shrank by 40 per cent. Even if education and NHS were cut by 200,000 from mid-2013 to 2018–19, the cuts to the rest of general government would still need to be about 30 per cent.”⁴

Political debate is often framed in terms of the current funding pressures resulting from the fiscal priorities of the existing Government, or the impact of one change to top-slice annual Home Office grants. Occasionally it extends to discussion of reductions continuing for a few years beyond the next election. What has not yet been properly debated, let alone confronted, by most politicians and police leaders is the strong likelihood that police spending may not return to pre-2010 levels for a generation or more, if ever.

Some leaders in the justice system are beginning to accept this new reality. In a speech to the law reform charity Justice in March 2014, the new Lord Chief Justice said:

“We live in times where, so it seems now and for the foreseeable future, the State is undergoing a period of significant retrenchment. The political parties are agreed that the budget deficit must be reduced; the cutback on government expenditure is to continue for the foreseeable future. It was an approach born in times of austerity, but there is no indication that there will ever be a return to times of abundance in the provision of funding by the State.”⁵

The reductions in agency budgets will continue, and the whole of the public sector is having to cope with major reductions in funding, particularly local government and the criminal justice agencies. Even those areas of protected spending like the NHS are feeling increasingly under pressure as healthcare costs increase alongside demand.

Furthermore, as a share of national expenditure, it is probable that for

4 Jonathan Cribb, Richard Disney, and Luke Sibieta, *The public sector workforce: past, present and future* (IFS, 2014).

5 Rt Hon Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, “Reshaping Justice”, (3 March, 2014).

future governments, “public safety” as a whole – alongside defence – is going to lose out in the competition for resources against health and welfare spending and even education, irrespective of which Party is in office. Even if these other agencies do not enjoy large increases in funding, their share of a smaller cake is likely to grow.

The economic reality in America, the UK, and much of Europe means that over the next fifty years the substantial and unavoidable growth of non-discretionary spending on health, pensions and welfare to support an ageing population will almost inevitably mean that policing must get accustomed to the new normal. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has already projected further growth in NHS spending as a share of GDP as a result of demographic trends.⁶

In this context, it is imperative that the police, even more than other public services, become more skilled at the financial discipline needed to raise productivity and cut waste. It is even more critical that they embrace collaboration, and service integration, to define who is taking a lead and who is providing a supportive role. The fact that other public services are under pressure makes it essential that the police do not pick up all of the slack. In a world where all players have less to spend, service gaps will multiply if agencies are allowed to retrench without an honest conversation about who should own which responsibilities and where lines of service provision are drawn.

Responding to the financial challenge

The vast majority of today’s serving chief officers attained Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) rank – and therefore substantial resource management responsibilities – before the current round of public spending reductions began in 2010. The generation that follows them will be more accustomed to what the role demands from them – fewer resources and fewer staff to deliver the same or better outcomes, where genuine boosts in spending will be a rare and unexpected gift.

With less taxpayer funding and the unit cost of policing not becoming significantly cheaper, hard choices are needed. Further reductions in support staff are likely and over the longer term, we can expect a

6 Office for Budget Responsibility, *Fiscal Sustainability Report* (2013).

policy shift to cope with this retrenchment – towards more mixed-funding models for public safety and a larger role for the private and charitable sectors.

This reality should spur more genuine collaboration across a host of functions and public sector agencies, with perhaps only an irreducible core of functions left exclusively in the hands of the State and funded wholly by taxpayers by 2030 – including courts, the judiciary and a narrower idea of those core police roles that can only be discharged by warranted constables.

Competitive tendering of police support functions is an important and necessary step in making policing as efficient as possible. However, it is not sufficient. Such is the scale of the fiscal squeeze on policing that something more fundamental is required.

Nor is it viable in the long-term to pursue a policy of shunting the fiscal burden onto local ratepayers in the form of increases to the policing precept for council tax. A majority of PCCs across England and Wales are opting for that approach in 2014/15, in the hope that extra revenue will see them through and forestall extra staffing cuts. But raising the precept by the maximum permitted amount without triggering a referendum (so council bills rise by 1.99 per cent) is no substitute for a radical reshaping of the service to prevent crime and tackle rising demand.

Loading extra costs on council taxpayers may avert an unpopular reduction in officer numbers for a further year or two, but the precept can never raise enough to help plug the funding gap in the long-term, and council funding is already under severe strain. PCCs also face the shortcomings of all precepting authorities: they can raise revenue on the margins but they are tacking on to someone else's bill. This means PCCs are insulated from public reaction because the lion's share of the tax bill falls elsewhere, and as central funding for the police reduces and the pressure grows to raise more funding locally, PCCs are cushioned from public anger.

This is one key structural failure of the PCC reforms in that they did not go far enough in terms of budgetary control. The best forms of accountability link local taxation with the service that is provided locally. PCCs ought to be as conscious of the costs of the service

that they oversee and the willingness of their constituents to fund that service based on its performance, as local authorities are. In future there is a strong case for further structural reform, not just to the oversight responsibility that PCCs have – including the wider criminal justice system and emergency planning and resilience – but so that PCCs can truly own the cost of the service they oversee, as others have argued.⁷

Until that important step is taken, the power to raise the precept is no power at all, and it is certainly not a solution to the fiscal challenge that confronts policing. Instead the police need far more systemic reforms that prioritise a preventative operating model and aligns this with more cost-effective ways of meeting the legitimate demands on their core policing function.

Budget choices in London

The budget challenge in London's policing is unprecedented. Never before has the Met Police needed to make such large savings – over £500 million by 2016. The Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, is the first leader of the Met to have to manage with a smaller budget. Every one of his predecessors had more resources each year.

Unlike other elected Police and Crime Commissioners around the country, Boris Johnson has chosen not to hike the police precept and load more cost on to council taxpayers. In addition the Mayor's manifesto had a clear pledge to keep officer numbers high – at or around 32,000 – because those numbers are what is needed to keep a growing capital safe. Raising taxes or slashing police numbers are not options open to MOPAC to balance the books. Nor is another exceptional hand-out from the Home Office likely to be forthcoming, even if the special needs of a capital city ought to be better reflected.

There remain huge efficiencies that can be driven out of policing and so far the experience in London suggests that, with political will, difficult decisions that have been put off for years can be taken and the sky does not fall. The philosophy was to reduce, release and reform:

⁷ Max Chambers, Ruth Davis, and Charlotte McLeod, *Power Down: A plan for a cheaper, more effective justice system* (Policy Exchange, 2013).

- **Reduce** the overhead. This meant tackling the high back office costs that had grown substantially in the years of plenty. It involved taking out substantial numbers of civilian staff posts and reshaping the Met's support functions. Big savings in procurement and contracts, most notably in ICT, are also being made.
- **Release** under-utilised assets. This was a clear option for MOPAC in London, where the MPS estate had grown to over 500 operational buildings. Selling off under-utilised buildings, including 29 police stations, means that MOPAC can cut the Met's property running costs by £60 million a year – this pays for the 1,200 extra police officers that the Met are putting into boroughs over the next two years. In addition these property disposals should generate up to £500 million in capital receipts that will be ploughed back into the remaining buildings and wider infrastructure so that a run-down, largely Victorian police estate is fit for the twenty-first century and frontline officers have the modern technology and equipment they need.
- **Reform** the Met. This involves the introduction of a whole new operating model. The MetChange programme and the new Local Policing Model are both designed to make the Met Police leaner and more efficient, whilst improving the whole organisation's ability to respond to crime and serve the public.

In London the Mayor has the freedom and the collective control of budgets beyond policing to enable him to cut his share of the council tax by 10 per cent over 4 years, whilst freezing the share that funds policing, which in the latest budget amounts to £562 million.⁸ However the vast majority of the Met budget – approximately £2.9 billion out of £3.5 billion – will remain funded by national government. With a budget challenge today and a long-term fiscal squeeze in the decades to come, MOPAC has accepted that we cannot square the circle just by asking someone else to pay more to fund the same model. We have to change the model.

As all elected commissioners understand, even with fewer resources for policing, the public still expect politicians to deliver on crime. To

⁸ Greater London Authority, *The Greater London Authority Consolidated Budget and Component Budgets for 2014-15* (2014).

do that, politicians need credible plans to spend resources wisely and to start to debate crime policy that goes beyond prison sentencing and police numbers. This debate is not just about how to raise productivity and unlock efficiencies, but how ultimately to prioritise finite public resources – even to the point of scaling back certain commitments and sharing the policing function with other actors. The challenge is to define how that can best be done, without eroding the police’s ability to discharge their core functions, on which public confidence and consent depends.

2

Modern demands on the police

The limits of the police role and the case for a rebalanced policing mission need addressing, not just because public resources are limited, but because the demand on the police is changing.

Falls in police funding in the decades ahead would be manageable if the demand on policing was also expected to decline, but it is far from clear that it will. Even as the demographic profile of the UK ages, policing demand may go on rising. And based on the last two decades, there are strong arguments to say that the police will face high and rising demands in future that cannot be satisfied by the current policing model. As Professor Martin Innes has observed, “Demand for police services from the public always outstrips the capacity to supply”.⁹

Demand on the police in London

The Met Police handles over 5 million calls a year, although channel-shift away from telephone to online and the growth of awareness around the non-emergency 101 number is taking some demand away from 999, which has seen daily average volumes fall 10 per cent since 2010/11. In the year after 101 was introduced 999 calls decreased on average by 192 per day:¹⁰

Table 1: Daily call volume to 999 and 101 numbers July 2010 – July 2013

Source: MPS figures supplied to MOPAC (2014).

Period	Emergency 999 calls	Non-emergency (local number) / 101 calls
4 July 2010 – 3 July 2011	5,620	8,136 (pre 101 launch)
4 July 2011 – 3 July 2012	5,428	8,022
4 July 2012 – 3 July 2013	5,078	7,651

In 2012, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) entered the debate about the police’s role with a study that demonstrated that the daily work of the police – though not all about crime-fighting – was largely dominated by response to crimes that had occurred, or

9 Martin Innes, *Reinventing the Office of Constable: Progressive policing in an age of austerity* (2013).

10 MPS figures supplied to MOPAC (2014).

to calls for service from people who suspected a crime might take place or where the circumstances could give rise to one.¹¹ Inspections undertaken for the *Taking Time for Crime* report concluded that around 80 per cent of time during officers' shifts was accounted for by crime, although this was typically reactive response, where crime prevention was not a mainstream activity resourced to the extent needed.

One of the forces surveyed was the Metropolitan Police Service, and the HMIC study included a snapshot of demand across a number of shifts in the Met. The full picture for London showed the volume and diversity of the demand that is placed on the police, based on 2.4m incidents in London alone in 2011/12, and the time it took up.

See pages 20-21.

Previously unpublished, this HMIC analysis showed that:

- In 91 per cent of incidents in London, there was a crime or the potential for a crime to happen.
- In 33 per cent of the 2.4 million recorded incidents a crime had actually taken place, and in a further 17 per cent of incidents, some form of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) had occurred.
- The data also shows that 40 per cent of all recorded incidents were in relation to public safety and welfare issues. Missing persons incidents account for 11 per cent of all public safety/welfare related incidents recorded in the MPS. This is more than the 6-force average of 8 per cent.

The HMIC analysis indicates that police officers in London may spend a larger amount of their time dealing with crime compared to other forces. The data supplied by the 6 forces used in the HMIC report showed that in 28 per cent of recorded incidents a crime had actually taken place (as compared to the MPS proportion of 33 per cent). The type of crime MPS officers are dealing with also differs slightly from other forces – the Met Police records a higher proportion of violent offences (23 per cent), as compared to the average across the forces

¹¹ HMIC, *Taking Time for Crime: a study of how police officers prevent crime in the field* (2012).

of 19 per cent. Half of all incidents are in relation to acquisitive crime (in line with the force average).

However the data also showed the high demand for social protection and safeguarding duties. With 95,577 incidents recorded of missing persons – although only a third would become a formal investigation – these types of incidents still amount to 1 in 25 of those recorded by the police in London, higher than the number of burglary incidents.

An expensive example of contemporary demand on the police in London is missing persons, and the policing effort absorbed in tracking and reuniting missing people with their families or carers. This is one area where policing abuts other services and staff outside of policing follow rules that oblige them to involve the police when it is not always necessary.

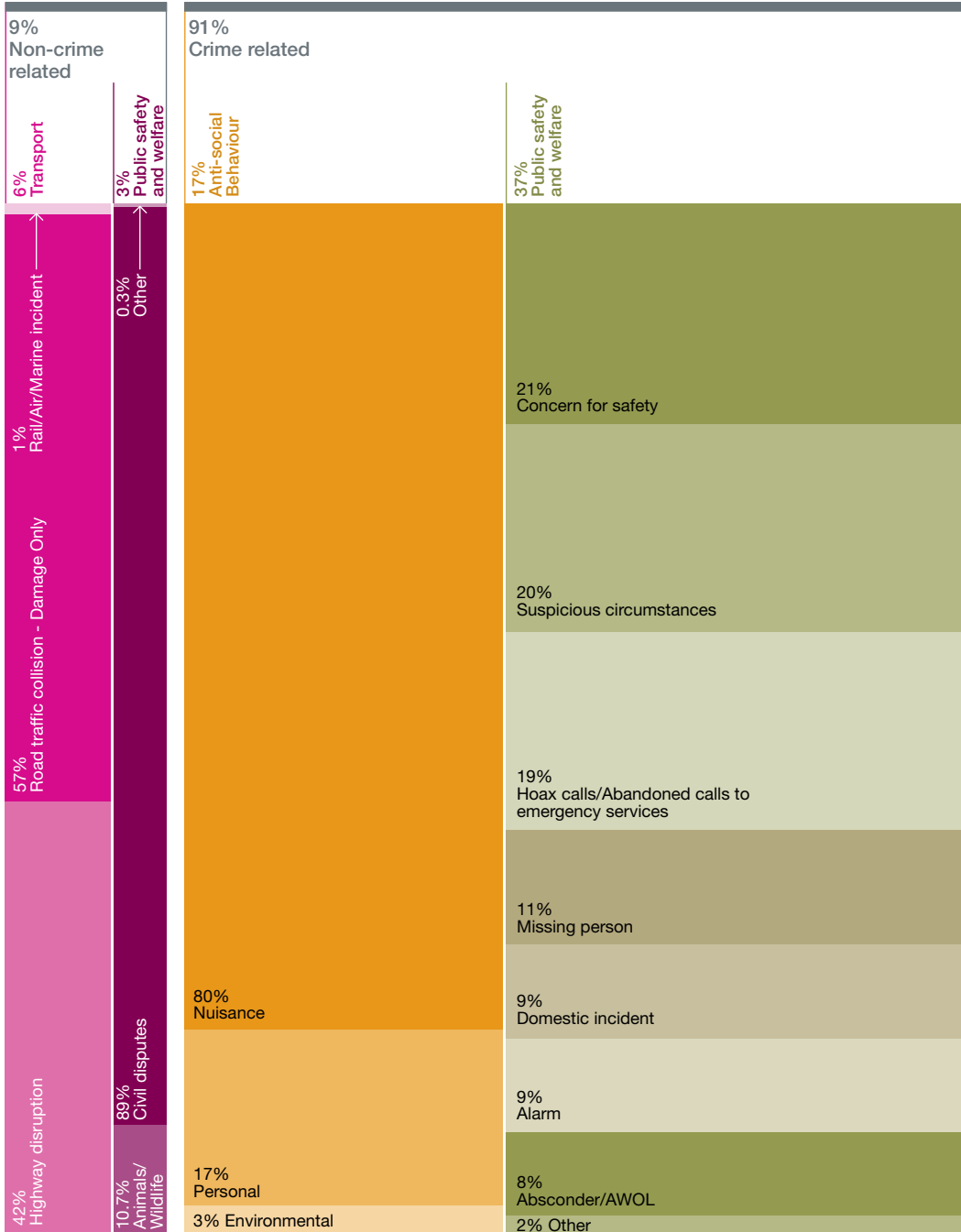
In 2013, the Met Police conducted 32,152 missing person investigations, of which 24,401 were classed as medium or high risk. The true cost of these investigations is not known, but some estimates put the cost at up to £2,000 per case.¹² And this demand is not evenly spread across London, with one south London borough recording a total of 2,436 missing person investigations in 2013, and nearly 1 in 10 (2,127) of all high/medium risk investigations across London.¹³ Clearly the police must respond to a missing child report, but is enough being done to understand what is driving this demand failure in cases of repeat runaways and must it always be up to the police to pick up the cost?

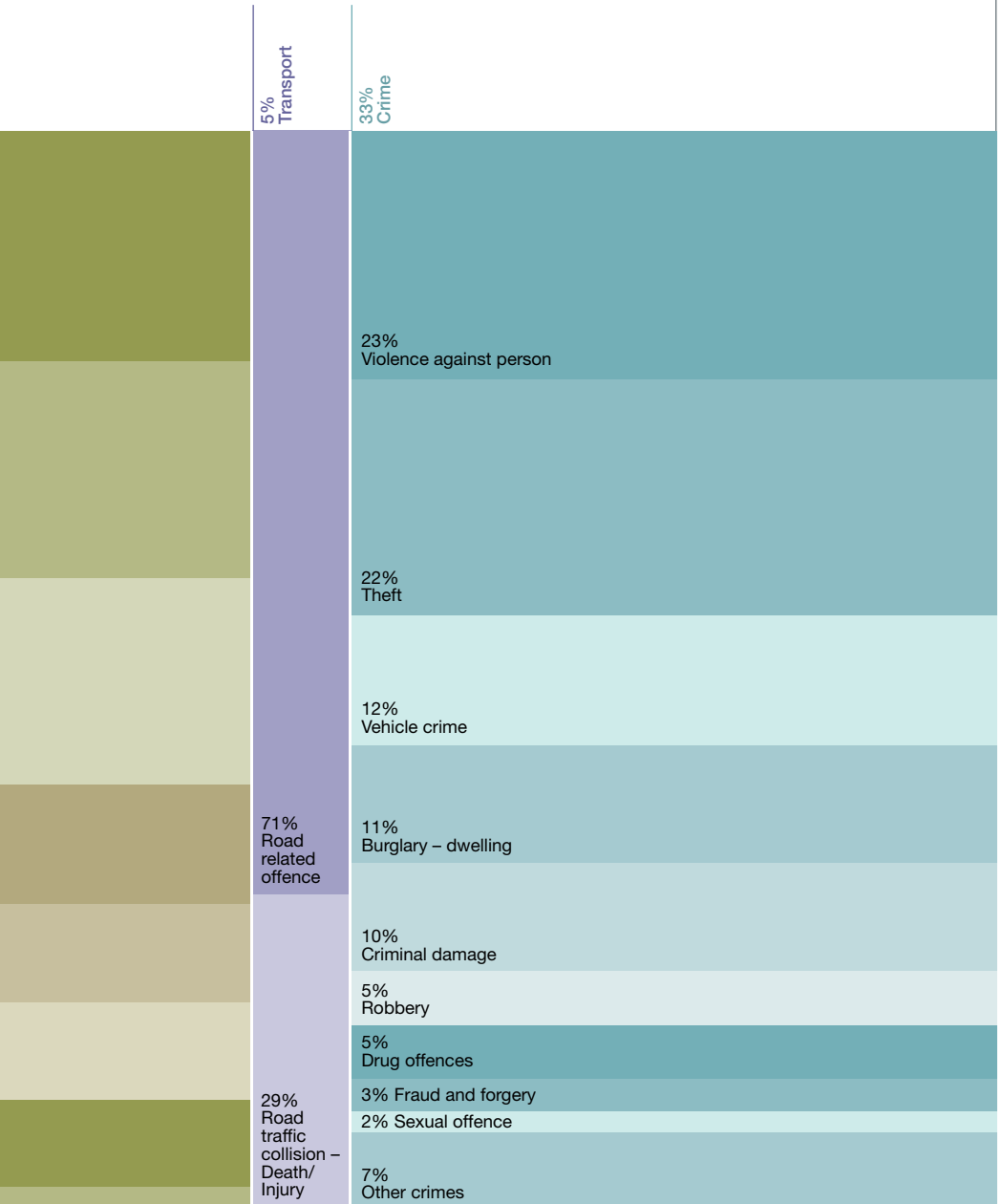
¹² Estimate by Dr Karen Shalev of Portsmouth University.

¹³ MPS briefing supplied to MOPAC (2014).

Figure 1: Incidents the police deal with (Metropolitan Police Service)

Source: HMIC, *Taking Time for Crime: a study of how police officers prevent crime in the field* (2012).





A snapshot of just one type of so-called “MISPER” caseload – runaway children – illustrates the demand. In three adjoining London boroughs over a period of 3 months in summer 2013, a total of 175 children under the age of 18 were reported as missing, triggering a report and a police response. In this period, 36 children went missing more than once, and 21 children went missing three or more times. The majority were missing for less than 48 hours and most returned home voluntarily. However, 42 children had been reported missing from care homes or hostels, not private residences, and as many were deemed vulnerable due to their age, the police response was not optional – the safeguarding duty took over. In addition to staff resources devoted to Missing Persons Units, frontline officers are required to search for MISPERs and conduct return interviews.¹⁴

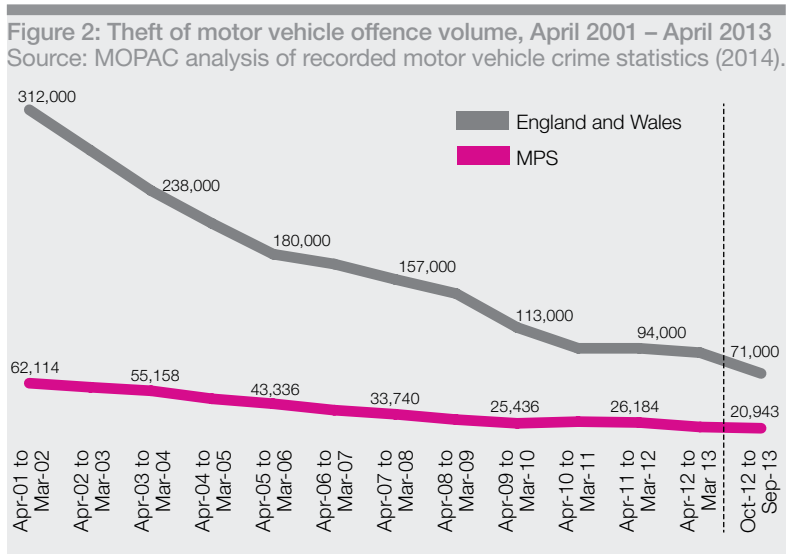
The public order component features less clearly in the HMIC analysis because so many of these commitments are pre-planned and proactive deployments, not based on incoming public demand.

The decline of conventional crimes

The HMIC data proves that a substantial amount of policing time is devoted to crime, and chiefly the response to reports about crime, and of all places, there is a greater share of crime in the Met Police’s demand profile. This is against a backdrop where since the early 1990s across much of the developed world, crime overall has been in steady decline. Subject to some major caveats, this trend now means voters enjoy greater personal safety – especially in cities – than they have for decades.

Debate rages among criminologists about who and what to credit for this major advance – although too rarely is it the police and almost never the criminal justice system – but many accept that the progress could not have happened at the rate it did without new technology, new design and new approaches to crime control. The collapse in vehicle crime rates illustrate the seismic shift that has taken place.

14 Tri-borough MPS case study supplied to MOPAC (2014).



The big decline in vehicle crime began in the 1990s, but even based on the earliest comparable figures, the drop over the last decade was remarkable. Vehicle crime rose from almost a third of a million offences in 2001/02 to a little over 70,000 in the year up to September 2013. In fact over the period April 2001-March 2002 to April 2012-March 2013 total volume dropped by 64 per cent within London and by 71 per cent throughout England and Wales. There were almost as many cars reported stolen in London in 2002 as there were in the whole of England and Wales in 2013.¹⁵

Other types of conventional acquisitive crime like theft and burglary saw similar reductions, and meant that overall rates of victimisation dropped dramatically in a relatively short space of time. Some “traditional” crime demand may continue to go down. Improvements in vehicle security will make cars increasingly difficult to steal and developments in traceable liquid technology – being pioneered in a London pilot in burglary hotspots – should help reduce acquisitive crime by increasing the risk of detection. But for every conventional crime that technology helps us to prevent, offenders are exploiting new crime opportunities in different realms.

¹⁵ MOPAC analysis of recorded motor vehicle crime statistics (2014).

The changing crime demand

Since the early 1990s, the very nature of volume crime – driven by the same mass expansion of technology and the internet – has been shifting away from conventional modes, towards offending that is harder to detect, harder to deter and harder to prevent.

Sometimes the emerging crime types are old forms of criminality like trafficking that have taken advantage of new opportunities provided by the globalised economy and open borders. Other emerging threats are entirely new – made possible by the migration of trade online and the growth of web trading and databases of personal information. Some categories of crime that are rising are those like mobile phone theft, where we have yet to adapt to the problem with a robust industry response – like the response to car theft – that makes devices more secure and kills the illicit secondary market.

There is no academic consensus as to what extent traditional crimes have migrated onto the internet, but it is clear that cyberspace poses a huge new demand challenge for the police, as they attempt to detect crime occurring online. These new digital channels for old-fashioned crimes like fraud and theft are multiplying, and the police acknowledge that we have barely begun to grapple with the explosion of low-risk, high reward criminality conducted in cyberspace by those based at home and abroad, a huge share of which goes unreported. Because this sort of crime is much harder to measure, it is difficult to identify threats quickly and to know if they are being properly resourced and countered. The pace of technological change is accelerating, which makes the threats even harder to keep pace with.

This demand on policing from new crime threats is already large, complex and forecast to grow significantly. Against a backdrop of success against most traditional crimes, the rules of the game are changing and the police and others need to adapt in order win against the new crime types that threaten the public.

The widening crime remit

A significant proportion of contemporary crime demand on the police relates to offences that occur in the private sphere, away from the street, or involves new offence types that seek to tackle incitement that were not treated as crimes in earlier generations. Such calls are a familiar feature of modern policing, and reflect changing social expectations about what the police must respond to. Domestic violence is a clear example.

For a category of crime that is significantly under-reported, it still generated almost 800,000 recorded incidents in 2011/12, with almost 120,000 domestic abuse cases handled by the Met alone – up 40 per cent since 2007/08.¹⁶ Growing confidence amongst women to report domestic abuse is welcome and will increase demand for policing in this realm for some time to come – both to prosecute offenders and also to reduce repeat victimisation. So even as the streets become safer, the public will rightly demand that homes become safer too, and that already involves a police response which would not have been conceived of in earlier generations.

After a long period of neglect, the police response to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has improved in recent years. Following highly-publicised failures like that of the repeat victimisation in the Fiona Pilkington case, the expectation has grown that the police must treat ASB more seriously. As HMIC rightly concluded, the public draw no distinction between ASB and crime, and many calls for service relate to harassment or neighbour disputes that are deemed by the complainant to be criminal and worthy of police attendance, if not a sanction against the accused. Research has also confirmed that tackling ASB effectively is one of four key drivers for public confidence.¹⁷ As a result, the police role to maintain social order in response to a high frequency of ASB cases has continued to absorb police time and resources, even as the volume of traditional crime reports has fallen.

16 Pat Strickland, *Domestic Violence – Commons Library Standard Note* (House of Commons 2013).

17 Martin Innes and Nicola Weston, *Rethinking the policing of Anti-Social Behaviour* (HMIC 2010).

Some reported crimes are tracking up because we are steadily challenging social stigmas and building a climate where victims can have confidence to report crimes, such as hate crime, which before went routinely unreported. The number of people proceeded against in magistrates courts for racially or religiously aggravated offences in London has doubled in ten years, from 1,006 cases in 2002 to 2,099 in 2012.¹⁸

Today's crime challenges

In London today, crime overall is falling at a faster rate than in the past thirty years, although the capital still has more crime per capita than other large UK cities. Like all urban centres, there remain high crime pockets and significant under-reporting and there are still too many repeat victims. In the last year, although the homicide rate remains at levels not seen since the 1960s the proportion of domestic homicides has increased in London.¹⁹ This growth of violence in the home is seen across other parts of the country and is now a major source of demand on the police. To be tackled effectively it depends on victims having the confidence to report, and the ability of the police and other agencies to adopt a more preventative posture and to reduce repeat-victimisation.

Some familiar problems remain – reoffending is stubbornly high and has not reduced despite all the billions spent on rehabilitation programmes. The allure of youth gangs in cities has not been reversed, even if the harm they cause has been drastically cut in recent years. Crime fuelled by drink and drugs is still too common. Overall however, the good news story is real, and as a result, crime has dropped down the list of voter priorities.

The operational crime challenge in the next decade will be to keep rates of violent and property crime falling, whilst driving up reporting of sensitive crimes in the private sphere, so as to close the gap between recorded and unreported offences. The growth of new crime types that exploit the internet must be tackled in a way that

18 HMCTS figures from MOPAC presentation at Challenge Board, available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/how-we-work/mopac-challenge/2014/13-february-2014-challenge-board-hate-crime> (February 2014).

19 MPS Homicide statistics, available at: <http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/>.

empowers local constabularies to get results for the victims in their communities, even if the perpetrators are thousands of miles away. The crimes that go unreported against businesses demand more effective prevention and a better understanding of the true crime picture and the costs to the economy.

Ultimately, the police are not short of work in the crime business and they will have to work harder and smarter to stay ahead of the crime curve in the years ahead. So long as police forces need to cope with having fewer resources for the foreseeable future, and yet demand for policing remains high, the debate about their role and mission will become even more critical.

3

The police mission today

The police mission has always been complex, and the role of the police was never simply to catch criminals. A vintage Metropolitan Police recruitment poster made the point well:

Figure 3: Vintage Metropolitan Police recruitment poster

Source: Archives, Metropolitan Police Service



The upfront declaration that the constable's role is diverse, with policing duties starting with crime and extending to traffic, and then “everything”, was a reflection of the reality of the job, but it was less true then that it seems to be now. Today we still need police officers for crime, but we also rely on them for a whole host of social order and safeguarding tasks that constables in the Fifties simply did not encounter, or were permitted to actively avoid. The “everything” then did not include frequently transporting mental health patients or guarding suspects in hospital. The “crime” demand back then would be familiar to an officer today, but for its narrow remit – rarely extending to the domestic violence behind closed doors, let alone harassment, stalking or hate crime.

During the first phase of police reform between 2010 and 2013, more political leadership on this question was needed, and the tendency to simplify the police role to that of “crime-fighting” did not really cut it.

The message from the new Home Secretary in 2010 was deliberately blunt – “I couldn’t be any clearer about your mission: it isn’t a thirty-point plan; it is to cut crime. No more, and no less.”²⁰ This was meant as a direct challenge to some police leaders and commentators who appeared to suggest that there was not really much the police could do about crime, and that they were best off devoting their efforts to a sort of harm minimisation social work. That complacent view needed confronting because the best current research now proves that the police can indeed cut crime, contrary to some earlier views.

But this did not make the message any more helpful for the wider debate about the police role. Urging them to be “crime-fighters” did not help ordinary officers make sense of the complex demands that they faced, even if much of that demand – as HMIC showed – was crime or crime-related. Nor did it help the police get better at prevention instead of being reactive. They needed more mission clarity but instead the debate got side-tracked by claims from the service that politicians did not really understand the job that the police did on a daily basis.

Components of the police role

In considering how the role has changed, it is nonetheless true that the components of that police mission – both then and now – are all tasks that the public would expect the police (if not only the police) to be doing. One main role is crime reduction, which the much vaunted Peelian principles rightly describe in terms of prevention of crime being the highest goal. Once a crime has occurred, the detection and arrest of those responsible is clearly part of this conventional crime role and must chiefly be the function of warranted officers.

Another role is public order or “maintaining the Queen’s Peace”, which includes quelling riots but also the wider public order duties that constables have always undertaken, such as policing marches and static demonstrations, that are a fundamental component of our democracy. The third distinct role of the police – safeguarding life and protecting the citizen – involves officers at one extreme caring for the

20 Home Office, “Police reform: Theresa May’s speech to the National Policing Conference,” 29 June, 2010.

vulnerable and at the other, risking their own lives to save others who are in harm's way.

All police officers exercise each of these roles throughout their careers and it is a tribute to officers that unlike most forms of employment, they know they may be called upon for any of these roles at short notice, whether at work or otherwise. The sheer variety of tasks involved in policing is what makes it such a rewarding career for many people, but it can also make the job more difficult than most on a human level. A discussion about the police's role would benefit from more research about the health effects of the stresses of the job and what impact this has on culture, and what it is reasonable to expect of ordinary police officers.

There are areas of core policing work today that have been a response to rising national and international threats posed by terrorism that absorb significant resources. No one would contest that counter-terrorism policing is not a core role or that it did not need to grow and adapt to the post-9/11 context with the rise of asymmetric threats to democratic states and their citizens.

But the span of the police's role has succumbed to a kind of mission creep in recent decades – stretching into spheres of social protection and health and safety (or the “policification of social work” as Andrew Millie dubbed it)²¹ that have eaten into the available time that the police can devote to their core function of crime prevention. As a result the balance has shifted in favour of a reactive emergency response posture, made worse by a risk-averse culture of “safeguarding”, which arose from growing social pressure to protect the citizen and institutional pressure to avoid costly litigation and media criticism.

Mission creep

Two elements drove the expansion of the policing role over the post-war period – the first was what society, including politicians, imposed on the police, and second was what the police took upon themselves.

21 Andrew Millie, “The policing task and the expansion (and contraction) of British policing,” *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 13, no.2 (2012):143.

Rising crime and the breakdown of traditional families and other forms of conventional social control demanded more from policing as agents of social order in increasingly chaotic social settings. These demands were not alien to beat officers, but as an organisation, the police in turn started to become the fall back for a less responsible society, called upon to resolve a problem not as the last resort, but often as the first response. Herman Goldstein first defined this “problem-solving” function of everyday policing that earlier practitioners and politicians had failed to appreciate, and the solving of people’s problems – not usually arising from crime itself – became a mainstay of the police vocation in the post-war era, although it had always existed in some shape since the Victorian police.

That job of solving problems and as Professor Martin Innes has argued, this social control (rather than “crime-fighting”) mission, is key to understanding where demand on the police now comes from:

“Police are engaged in the delivery of formal social control services. They are not the only institution who do this, but they are among the most important given their capacity to range across a diversity of settings and situations, and for the way they can intervene using coercive force in both private and public troubles. It is important, however, to recognise that in so doing, they augment and supplement more organic, informal social controls.”²²

Where these informal social controls are weak, then the demand on the police, and on other public services, can be higher.

Rising rates of conventional crime after the 1970s had necessitated greater investment in policing, and in response to this and to wider social changes, successive governments increased police budgets and officer numbers almost continuously for forty years. However, as crime began to fall in the late 1990s, demand on the police did not fall to the same degree but did appear to shift towards safeguarding life and social protection. There was public and media pressure to bring offenders to justice wherever they operate, and the police’s remit also deepened in response, to help safeguard victims whose

22 Martin Innes, “Reinventing the office of constable: Progressive policing in an age of austerity” In *The future of policing* (Routledge, 2013).

crimes may go unseen, especially those involving domestic abuse and hidden violence in the “private realm”. Today, other State agencies like social services, mental health providers and the NHS, have grown accustomed to police support for their own client population, and so less crime has not meant less busy police officers.

Along with what society demanded of the police came extra guidance and new legal obligations like constant watches in custody suites and guarding duties in hospitals – all designed to minimise risk, but leaving less time for conventional crime prevention and detection. Legislation under the Blair and Brown Governments (1997-2010) reinforced the partnership emphasis, but it did not relieve the police of any duties. The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act gave local authorities a key role in crime reduction and powers to spend resources to reduce crime, but not with the effect of limiting the obligations on the police to fill gaps when partners did not play their role.

This trend conspired with the policing culture itself – known to be assertive, can-do, and impatient in the face of problems – that led police leaders to assume that where there was a need that was not being met, then they had to fill it. The same institutional response occurred in North America. As the renowned American criminologist Professor George Kelling remarked: “Police have been too willing to accept ownership of problems that actually require partners.”²³ Having assumed a role in new areas, the police have found it hard to relinquish it.

The mission creep that has kept police busy, even as their numbers grew and crime fell, is most evident in the realms of social protection and public order. The safeguarding role in relation to mental health has become a much greater burden on ordinary officers, stretching them beyond what many might regard as their core duties. Today we are near to a consensus that mental health demand is not being met and in recent years has been unduly burdening police officers who are not best placed to respond to the complex needs of mental health patients. This has led to recent initiatives like the street triage pilots²⁴ and the Government’s new Mental Health Crisis Care

23 BlueLine, “Criminologist George Kelling talks with BlueLine”, (16 December, 2013).

24 Department of Health, *Extending the street triage scheme: New patrols with nurses and the police*, (20 August, 2013).

Concordat²⁵, which aim to improve how mental health crises are responded to on the ground and take demand off the police.

Protecting citizens from harm has also been allowed to be stretched so that abusive or offensive behaviour that occurs online is potentially subject to a police response, even where the same would rarely be true of the same impulsive behaviour in more traditional public spaces. The former Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Denis O'Connor QPM, has said that an “expansive approach to the mission cannot endure.”²⁶ He cited cyber-bullying as a realm of activity that could engulf policing resources if limits were not set because the commitment “cannot be absolute prevention”.

Even the formal public order role has grown, so at times it seems to have morphed into a generalised duty to keep crowds under control and traffic flowing smoothly. The policing of many large scale sporting and cultural events in London – from Premiership football matches to the annual Notting Hill Carnival – looks less like the police are there to prevent crime and disorder (though they are), and more like they are being used as event marshals. Stewarding should really be a civil burden on event organisers not a legitimate demand on a scarce public good. Even where that level of policing presence is needed, the resourcing impact is rarely compensated for by the financial contribution of partners.

The result of the police being pushed and pulled (and sometimes jumping) towards new tasks, was a generation of police officers, as Peter Neyroud has argued²⁷, who were asked to do much more, but were not adequately trained or prepared for such roles – even if getting it wrong could be so damaging to the service. HMIC had reached the same conclusion, arguing that the widened police mission was not being met with adequate support for frontline staff:

“Over time the police service has experienced an increasing regulatory burden, a widening mission into “risky” off-street aspects of people’s lives such as sex offender management, child abuse and domestic abuse. As it has interpreted these

25 Department of Health and Home Office, *Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat*, (2014).

26 Sir Denis O'Connor, “Valedictory Lecture: The Importance of a Plan to Win”, (11 September, 2012).

27 Peter Neyroud *Review of Police Leadership and Training*, (Home Office, 2011).

new demands, it has not adapted rapidly enough to enable the individual professional to operate independently and effectively in the field.”²⁸

A further question might be: to what extent is it reasonable to expect the police to adapt to these demands, and how much should the new demands be managed or diverted away? Where the expectations of the job are not more clearly stated, there is a risk that the proliferation of duties will become too much for regular officers and put the policing offer to the public under strain.

In advance of the coming fiscal squeeze and with new crime demands on the horizon, it is time to imagine a rebalanced policing role that is conscious of the mission and the legal duties determined by Parliament, but is also more realistic about what in practice the police can reasonably be expected to do. A rebalanced policing role that prioritised crime prevention and public order, but one that devoted less police time and resource to non-crime issues, because in those spheres other players took more responsibility for social protection. Such a shift will depend on ensuring that the myriad of demands the police face can be better managed and addressed, whilst continuing to meet public expectations by the police collaborating more effectively with others.

28 HMIC, *Taking Time for Crime – a study of how police officers prevent crime in the field*, (2012).

4

Public expectations

What do the public expect the police to do? What functions the police should fulfil is not just a policymaking exercise for the policing establishment. The public should be able to inform the debate about what the police mission should be. Without that involvement, there is a risk that public confidence will suffer when the police change how they work, or withdraw from certain activities. As David Gorby has written, the “Police cannot effectively determine their mission, values, or vision if community input is not involved in developing the overall philosophies.”²⁹

The fact that domestic violence is now a routine aspect of police work and seen as a priority by police leaders demonstrates the principle that the police have come to accept – their duties flow not just from the law, but from the public’s priorities, and that these priorities shift and evolve. In future, the police will need to respond to the demand for action in other realms, because that is what the public, who after all pay for the police, will expect.

Which new responsibilities on the police might emerge in future is unclear, but it is likely that there will be more pressure for policing duties to extend to the online realm, as an increasing amount of social and economic exchange takes place on the internet. Again the question will return: what is the public service offer for the policing of, for example, cyber-enabled fraud, or abuse on social media, or hate crime, that can be realistically met within available police resources?

Public views on the police role

On the question of what the limits of the police role should be, the service does not yet know enough about what the public priorities are, and what they might therefore accept. However a new Populus opinion poll gives an indication of what functions the public believe should be the highest priorities for the police.

29 David M. Gorby, “The Failure of Traditional Measures of Police Performance and the Rise of Broader Measures of Performance,” *Policing* 7 no. 4 (2013): 392-400.

For this pamphlet, *Reform* commissioned a series of questions to test public attitudes to the police role and what they regarded as priority tasks.³⁰

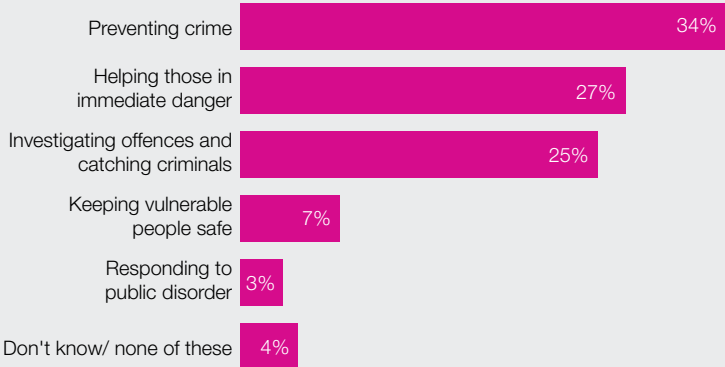
When asked about the role of the police, and which should be the most important part of the police's role, the majority of respondents are divided between the core roles of the police, with a third (34 per cent) opting for "preventing crime" as the most important, followed by "helping those in immediate danger" (27 per cent) and "investigating offences and catching criminals" (25 per cent). Only "responding to public disorder" – a core police role – is seen as much less important. "Keeping vulnerable people safe" was chosen as the most important part of the police role by just 7 per cent of respondents.

Respondents in London were most likely to say that "preventing crime" was the most important part of the police's role (40 per cent). Cumulatively, the preferences for the most important roles stretch from helping those in danger (76 per cent named this in their top three), investigating offences (73 per cent) and preventing crime (70 per cent) to keeping vulnerable people safe (42 per cent) and lastly responding to public disorder (27 per cent). In London, preventing crime (75 per cent) comes above investigating offences (62 per cent), showing a stronger preference in the capital for the original Peelian concept that the mission for which the police exist is the *prevention* of crime and disorder.

30 Populus survey on Police Role for *Reform* – survey of 2,008 GB adults interviewed online between 28-30 March 2014. Results have been weighted to be representative of all GB adults.

Figure 4: Responses to the question “When thinking about the role of the police, which of the following roles should be the most important part of the police’s role?”

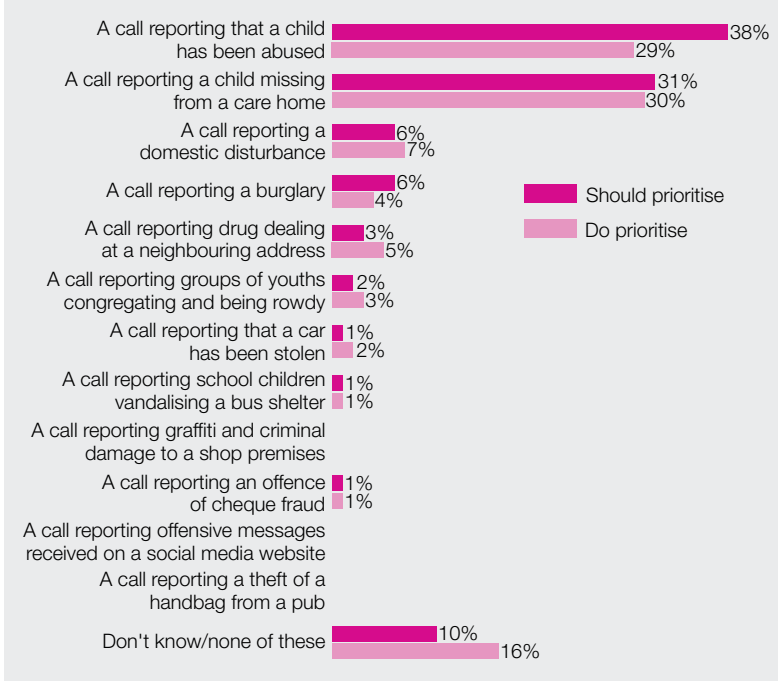
Source: Populus polling data commissioned by *Reform*.



It is notable that younger respondents aged 18-24 saw keeping vulnerable people safe as more important (55 per cent named this in their top 3, versus just 36 per cent of older respondents aged 65 and older), which may speak to changing social expectations in younger generations about what the police ought to be doing in the realm of social protection.

The same Populus survey also asked the public their views on a range of police calls for service: how they think the police currently do prioritise them; and how the police ought to prioritise them.

Figure 5: Responses to the question “Which of the following tasks do you think the police currently/should prioritise as the most important?”
Source: Populus polling data commissioned by Reform.

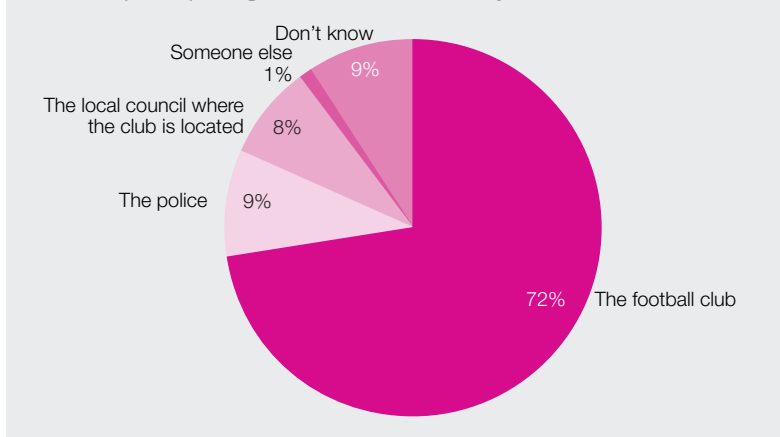


Crimes or threats to safety involving children understandably score highly as a priority for the police, and the public think these should be top priorities. However, in stark contrast to earlier generations, domestic disturbance scores highly as a priority with 44 per cent putting it in their top 3 most important priorities for the police, above burglary (30 per cent) and far above car theft (6 per cent). On its own, 6 per cent of respondents thought domestic disturbance should be the most important priority – the same proportion who thought burglary should be.

The tasks that are deemed to be both a low priority, and rightly ought to be a lower priority, cover not just certain traditional crimes like theft, fraud and vandalism, but also modern crimes like reports of abuse on social media. This would indicate that the public are not keen for the police to pursue these offences as a priority, when faced with the kind

of crime and social protection demands that they deem to be much more serious.

Figure 6: Responses to the question “Who do you think should pay for the extra policing outside of the grounds (of large sporting events)?”
Source: Populus polling data commissioned by *Reform*.



When asked about one type of burden on the police – that of the policing of private sporting events – the public show a clear preference for the police to be given more support. Almost three quarters of respondents (72 per cent) thought that the costs of policing match crowds outside of a stadium should fall on the football club themselves, and only 9 per cent thought the police should pick up the costs, which is the current position and one recently restated by a Court of Appeal judgement.³¹ These proportions are broadly similar across social grade and geographical region.

There was strong agreement (54 per cent against 19 per cent) that the policing of large events like football matches and carnivals was “an unnecessary burden on the police’s time”, against a third (36 per cent) who agreed that such events were “a core part of the police’s role” (30 per cent disagreed). More than half (59 per cent) agreed that event organisers should “find alternative forms of support to avoid wasting police time” and the vast majority agreed with the statement that “event organisers should pay more of the cost of policing events”, with 43 per cent agreeing strongly. Just 4 per cent disagreed with this notion.

³¹ England and Wales High Court (Queen’s Bench Division) Decisions, www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/QB/2012/2113.html.

Some functions are now a common policing task, but it is not clear whether the public would lose confidence in the police if they stopped doing them. In the past, some discreet policing functions have been divested, without a public backlash. The impact of the Posen Review in the 1990s led to the hiving off of only a single ancillary duty around roads policing to the Highways Agency, although it also advocated private sector involvement in police custody for the first time. In future, fringe activities like the collection and storage of lost property, or firearms licensing, or the registration of overseas students, could be entirely conducted by other agencies or external partners. If that happened, would the public really notice that the police were no longer directly involved, least of all, object?

Cutting crime is not enough

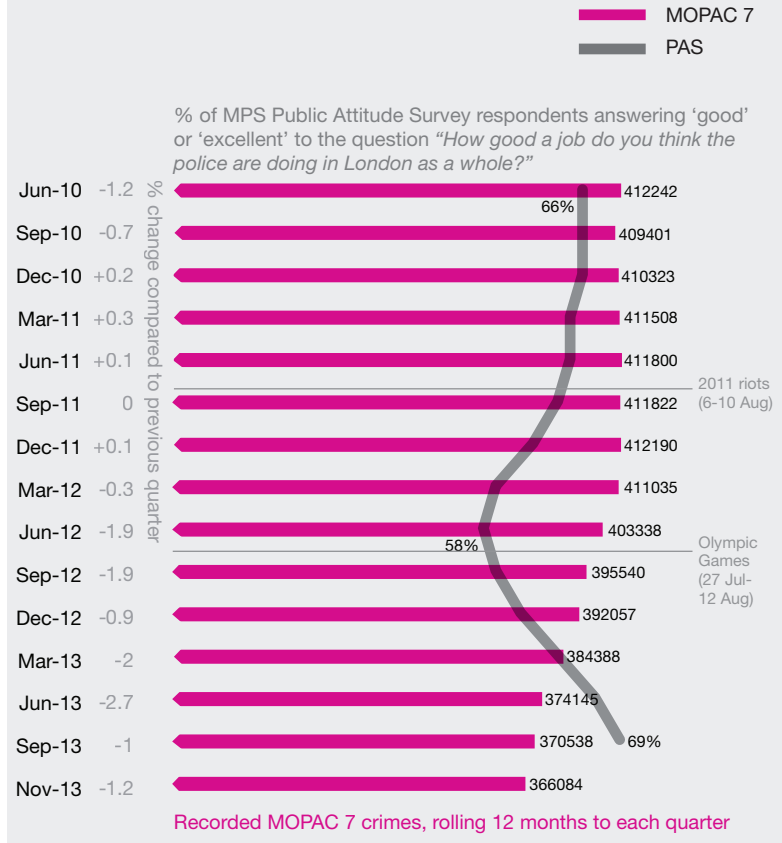
Some functions that the public expect the police to discharge are non-negotiable – if the police did not do them, then people would suffer and the public would lose faith in the uniform. The best examples of this are the duties to arrest offenders and detain them. Perhaps as important, is the police's core order maintenance function – to restore peace on the streets and to suppress disorder on those rare occasions every generation when rioting erupts.

People of all backgrounds depend upon the police at times of crisis and quite rightly demand the first public service – even crave it – when it seems momentarily to disappear, as it did for the residents of Clapham and Croydon for several hours in August 2011. Credit for good performance on crime can be erased if order is not maintained. In London, the impact of the riots on public confidence in the police was stark. The following chart shows the general crime picture for victim-based MOPAC 7³² offences, alongside the score for Londoners' confidence in policing overall:

32 Mopac 7 offences: Violence with injury, Robbery, Burglary, Vandalism, Theft from the person, Theft of a motor vehicle, Theft from a motor vehicle

Figure 7: Victim-based MOPAC 7 offences and Londoners' confidence in policing overall

Source: MOPAC analysis based on MPS crime figures and PAS data.



The Public Attitude Survey (PAS) is a robust and long-established opinion poll that charts public confidence in the police in London, surveying over 12,000 people annually. No other UK force has recourse to such a detailed and robust survey of public attitudes to the police, and it is a good way to assess the impact of police activity on public confidence. The confidence score for how Londoners felt overall about policing in London has fluctuated since 2005/6 (a date when comparisons are valid from), but this “Met-brand” score was typically higher than local policing, in contrast to many forces. After the score nose-dived, it took a full 18 months to recover and has only now exceeded pre-riot levels. Confidence in the Met now stands at 69 per cent – up 11 points since the nadir of June 2012, some of which has been attributed to an improved impression of the Met Police after the successful delivery of the policing for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Crime rates impact on confidence, but the reduction in victim-based crimes in London accelerated after the arrival of the current Met Police Commissioner, Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, in September 2011 and the reforms he instigated after MOPAC’s mission and priorities were set down. Confidence was flat or falling slightly before the summer of 2011, but we can clearly attribute the collapse in public confidence to those four days in August when the Metropolitan Police lost control of the streets. Even with crime falling, the public do not forgive the police for failing to maintain order.

A rebalanced policing role in future must recognise those things that only the police can do – functions like public order policing – and how vital it is to ensure that they can always do what the public really expect of them. Maintaining confidence in the police, and with it the consent that underpins our policing model, depends upon it – cutting crime is not enough.

5

A rebalanced policing role

To argue for an explicit rebalancing of the policing role is not to naively assume that the police could stop doing certain things overnight. Some activities that are outside a narrow crime mission have always been done by the police, and would still be the duty of a constable in future.

There are some activities that the police cannot contemplate stopping, even if they are expensive – like tracing missing persons – although even here, other agencies could take more responsibility and the active support of specialist charities like Missing People is often critical to success. However, where the police have a lead role, but also rely on other agencies, the move to cost-sharing will be a major trend in future years. Businesses will be expected to pay more for security, and local authorities and even other statutory partner agencies may need to contribute financially if they want a claim on policing assets.

Crime – accounting for the largest share of policing demand – will continue to dominate, but even in this sphere, the policing role needs to be rebalanced. We need to be smarter about crime in the digital era, and get better at dealing with crimes we do not find easy to measure. We need to marshal more effectively the wider resources in society to safeguard the public rather than just rely on the core policing resources of the State. This means leveraging the private and community sectors to help prevent crime and grow the policing family, so we can give the police the wider support they need. Where others can help maintain order, prevent crime, or safeguard life, they should be encouraged to do so, and given permission by Government to play that supporting role.

What only the police can do

The expectation of the core police role in the twenty-first century should start with what only the police can do. Public order is a special duty that relies upon the police having a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, both as a deterrent and as a means to stop violence and quell civil unrest. It is hard to conceive of any sharing of this function beyond policing (and in a civil emergency, the armed forces), and so it has to remain a core element of a rebalanced policing mission.

In future the obligation on the police to respond to disorder will not change, even if the nature of disorder does. To discharge that duty effectively, the police will need to continue to adapt and up-skill – leveraging a range of tactics and technology to detect and pre-empt disorder, including social media analytics and forensic surveillance techniques, and also become more flexible so they can respond more quickly to quell riots that do occur.

By contrast, crime prevention and safeguarding life – whilst both critical to policing – are not duties that only the police alone can discharge, but are part of that wider Peelian notion that they are “duties incumbent upon all citizens”. While police may have the best tools and most information to help them prevent crime and react quickly in emergencies, there are many others who could be called upon to do more in these areas. For example, beyond police activity, there are the wider societal efforts to prevent crime that can be highly effective – like limiting the density of licensed premises in urban areas – and complementary to what the police do.

Prioritising prevention

The same HMIC report from 2012 that examined demand on the police lamented the “absence of clarity around a single mission for policing” and argued that a range of barriers existed to the police adopting a more preventative approach, which would be both more efficient, and more in tune with their founding Peelian principles.³³

As part of a rebalanced policing mission, a bigger emphasis is needed on preventative policing techniques and a wider role for the public and businesses in the sphere of crime prevention. Too often prevention is assumed to mean wider social policy, but crime prevention has a hard edge – backed up by a growing body of evidence that it is possible to prevent crime and the best interventions do not simply displace offending.

Where it makes sense for the police to invest heavily in prevention, is where only the police have the tools and capability to assess the intelligence picture and act quickly – sifting data and mapping risks,

33 HMIC, *Taking Time for Crime – a study of how police officers prevent crime in the field*, (2012).

so that they can target crime hotspots or pre-empt likely future criminality. So investment in analytics and predictive policing tools is a modern expression of the Peelian duty of the police to prevent crime – being in the right place at the right time to deter offending.

Viewed this way prevention is not some soft generalised plea for more welfare spending and improved education, or in policing terms, simply random daytime reassurance patrols conducted by PCSOs. Hard prevention is about doing what works: increasing civic ownership of public spaces by identifying and training capable guardians, improving the risk of detection, designing out opportunities for crime, cocooning locations to avoid repeat victimisation and intervening early with swift and sure sanctions that deter harmful behaviour.

The level of involvement by people and businesses in preventing crime is critical to any police activity. Two main areas where the police can be aided in the crime prevention mission would include:

- > **More public participation in policing.** We must strengthen the capacity of communities of all types to police themselves by forming voluntary associations with local police teams through established schemes like Neighbourhood Watch, Street Pastors and Street Watch. This approach of more direct enlistment of the public through volunteering extends to expanding the policing family itself, especially with volunteer police cadets, civilian volunteers, and Special Constables.
- > **Growing local business collaborations.** The police should further develop Business Crime Reduction Partnerships to offer more targeted support to help companies reduce business crime themselves, including the sharing of intelligence where appropriate. The quid pro quo is to require more of businesses who may be drivers of policing demand locally – especially licensed premises and retail malls.

From partnership to collaboration

There is a need for the wider public sector to re-assess how it goes about working with other agencies and third parties, recognising which types of association add value and which do not. The Blairite partnership agenda that dominated local government in the 1990s and 2000s began to bring agencies together, particularly around issues like youth offending and licensing. However it was in an era where agencies were supported by more spending, and so often it allowed the approach to degenerate into a culture of endless meetings with the growth of boards and committees that were long on strategy and short on action.

Equally, while the police may have grown impatient of setups that appear self-serving, they have not always played their proper part either. As Kelling has said of the police: “You’re not going to be able to solve virtually any problem on your own”³⁴ – and yet that is often how the police approach partnership, as the way for getting others to do what the police have taken on already, or to follow their lead. Too often the police view collaborative working as a means to corral other agencies to join their project where often the police may not be the most important partner or the one best placed to lead. “Data-sharing” for the police often amounts to the police telling partners to give them their data.

We need to move from a loose aspiration for partnership to a hard notion of collaboration. As Bill Bratton and Zach Tumin have argued, the advance of information and networks will demand that all organisations collaborate with the public and other agencies more and more in future.³⁵ Where partnership implies a balance between a small number of players, collaboration invokes the need to involve multiple players in solving a problem, but not all would exercise an equal share. In some areas, the police may collaborate and at the same time not lead that collaboration.

34 BlueLine, “Criminologist George Kelling talks with BlueLine” (16 December, 2013).

35 William Bratton and Zachary Tumin, “Collaborate or Perish!: Reaching Across Boundaries in a Networked World” (Crown Business, 2012).

The approach embodied in Integrated Offender Management (IOM), or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) is a good exemplar: a clear focus on the problems, and the right players in the room, where partners share data, have mutual agendas and a practical, operational mission. The same is true of the best Business Crime Reduction Partnerships, where problems are shared and the forum acts as a way of collective ownership of the problem. Often, shared practices around information and financial investment – be it in CCTV, or radio links for licensed premises or retail stores, or hotspot data on shoplifting offences – aid the prevention of business crime.

The police do not always need to hold the ring. In the realm of offender management and IOM, the police role is at risk of becoming increasingly stretched to become a downstream obligation of the police after an offender has left prison, as part of a host of judicial supervisions that did not exist in previous decades. Crime control and effective crime prevention necessitate police involvement in offender management, not least to safeguard the public when the most dangerous offenders are under licence. That does not mean that probation or even local authorities are not better placed to hold the ring, even if the police feel they know where and from whom the problem stems.

When the police take the right attitude, they can drive real improvements and other agencies engage when they can see how to share in the benefits. All public sector agencies have less people and resources to allow them to sustain weak partnership structures and attendance at feel-good forums. Yet at the same time they are actually more reliant now on the problem-solving that hard, effective collaboration can deliver. Simply choosing to work with others is not a panacea – joint protocols, shared teams and even co-location of agencies are important – but these do not create effective collaboration by themselves. The approach relies on senior leadership buy-in and integration of data and ICT to solve problems with as many players as necessary.

Managing demand better

There is no question that the police can get better at meeting the core demand that already confronts them. Often the police find themselves returning to the same addresses multiple times for the same reason. Similarly, these repeat contacts often highlight a bigger failure of public services to address the root causes of social problems, which Louise Casey's "Troubled Families" programme is seeking to tackle holistically across Whitehall for the first time.³⁶

Despite this, the police still have a productivity problem with repeat contacts a common aspect of their routine business. Much of this duplication of effort and waste of resource is down to inadequate information and poor ICT systems that mean control room staff – let alone frontline officers – have poor knowledge of the demand they are responding to and cannot do enough preventative tasking. With nearly a third of burglaries involving repeat victims, it is clear that the policing response to even the most conventional volume crimes does not yet do enough to prevent future recurrences.

The police need to recognise that the system in which they operate is driving demand and there are usually always ways of changing the response of the police and crucially other agencies, that can stem the demand and save the police time and effort. The police should always call other statutory agencies to order, where they are not fulfilling their responsibilities. Where the police identify demand failure – for instance around runaway children and care homes – they need to be more vocal in highlighting it to partner agencies and politicians, rather than just accept the consequences of it and become disgruntled.

Even if the police get better at managing their core crime demand, the wider demand on the service needs managing better too, and the best types of collaboration can help the police to do that in a range of ways:

- **Share the problem, prevent the demand.** The policing demand in town centres that is fuelled by the alcohol disorder linked to licensed premises is a familiar complaint, but this demand can be addressed if the problem is shared. The police

³⁶ DCLG, Troubled Families programme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-troubled-families-turn-their-lives-around>.

control the best data on the impact of crime and disorder arising from problem premises and can use that to win allies in local authorities to make the right licensing decisions and impose proper controls. Equally the licensees can be encouraged to join trade associations and business groups, to train and invest in private security. The Met Police in Sutton involve their senior security managers and door staff in police briefings before late shifts on a Friday and Saturday to share intelligence and prevent crime linked to serial offenders.

- **Share the demand, reduce the costs.** In the face of new policing demands imposed by online activity, the public will expect anti-social behaviour on the internet – especially involving under-18s – to be challenged, and crimes to be pursued. However to prevent a further mission creep into the online realm, where the policing offer becomes undeliverable, some limits need to be imposed. The Attorney General, Dominic Grieve QC MP, has recognised this, and has overseen the creation of the first social media guidelines³⁷ which set very high thresholds for police or prosecution agencies to intervene in online activity. Clear limits and high thresholds for police activity in social media realm will help to set public expectations. Equally, however, more could be done to require the internet companies running these mass social media platforms to police their own cyber domains, and for companies like Twitter and Facebook to restrict users who bully and abuse the vulnerable. The obligation should be spelled out that these providers should be intervening to ban users who breach their rules proactively, instead of waiting for a formal crime report and a police intervention to do so. The online behaviour of a minority needs controlling if the social media domain is going to remain safe in the eyes of the public, but that is best achieved by sharing the responsibility with the operators of the platform itself, not by relying solely on intrusive and expensive police intervention. This will ultimately prove futile in affecting behaviour and is anyway impractical for a uniformed agency under so many other offline obligations.

37 Crown Prosecution Service, *Guidelines on prosecuting cases involving communications sent via social media* (2013).

- **Divert the demand, shift the burden.** Not all demand on the police is legitimate, and the misuse of a critical resource like 999 is still a frustration for control centre staff. There are examples where other public contact is still required, but new channels and new partners can be marshalled to help divert the demand on the police and shift the burden. In tackling mental health, an example would be the borough police in East London who are part of a ten-site joint trial by the Home Office and Department of Health to run a mental health street triage service. Here trained healthcare professionals are on the ground with police response units and able to help treat and diagnose cases that present themselves, instead of the untrained constable having to decide the best response. The pilot aims to improve outcomes and prevent the demand on the police, who are frequently responding to such cases and using their own police vehicles as a taxi-service for the mentally ill.

Some policing activity is an inefficient hang-over from a bygone age when police stations were key institutions for a host of transactions that once needed police authorisation in person. As demand has shifted, and people have chosen to use other channels, police counters have become poorly-visited. Over a 5 year period in London, crime reporting in person at a front counter collapsed – down 45 per cent between 2006/07 and 2011/12, meaning over 100,000 fewer crime reports taken at a front desk, as people have chosen to use phone and online channels.³⁸ As visits have declined, demand has grown elsewhere, seen in the popularity of the single non-emergency number 101. It has also enabled the Met to release police staff and officers from under-used and often antiquated buildings back into neighbourhood policing roles. A host of transactions will gradually migrate online in the medium-term and this requires police forces to invest in online customer services and mobile apps. For those transactions that remain face-to-face, MOPAC is now exploring which other counter transactions – small in number but costly for the police to administer – could be diverted away from police stations so the burden falls elsewhere. MOPAC is pursuing a pilot with the Post Office to test just that, so that the Overseas Student Registration requirement – which is currently administered for some overseas

38 MOPAC and MPS, *Policing and Public Access in London*, (2013).

(non-EU) students studying in London from a police office in Southwark – could be contracted out to security-cleared Post Office staff. If successful, the model could be adopted across London and even expanded in future to include lost property reporting or the presentation of motoring documents. This approach would utilise the skills, footprint and trusted community brand of a commercial partner to pick up some traditional non-crime related policing demand – and deliver long-term staff savings for the Met Police.

Who pays and for what?

The practical effect of a rebalanced policing role and a greater shift towards meaningful collaboration often boils down to money – if it is not the police paying, then who pays and for what?

There are already some well-established schemes to determine how external partners, either public or private, can contribute to policing efforts financially, whilst not undermining the independence of the police. Police officer posts externally funded by public sector partners are one example, and these have become an important element of local policing in London. In 2011, the Mayor of London established a match-funding offer to local boroughs in the capital to buy additional policing assets and this was renewed in 2014.³⁹

39 Greater London Authority News Release, “Mayor launches ‘buy one get one free’ scheme to fund more police officers”, (26 February, 2011).

Under section 92 of the 1996 Police Act the Buy One Get One Free (BOGOF) offer for neighbourhood policing is a three-year deal that funds the Met Police to hire an additional officer to match the one funded by local authorities. The current scheme costs boroughs £58,000 in 2014/15 for a neighbourhood police constable, so funding an extra town-centre policing team of one sergeant and five PCs would cost a borough £186,000 – and these extra officers are over and above the boost that the Local Policing Model provides. Boroughs who have taken up the scheme recognise the tangible policing benefit they receive from their investment, and the Met Police gets extra income to support the policing of some of the most demanding locations. Under the Met Patrol Plus scheme, going live this year, all previous cost-sharing agreements negotiated at a local level will be phased out and replaced by a single, fair match-funding BOGOF rate for all boroughs. This offers London's local authorities a simple way to invest in policing.

The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) is an accreditation scheme under which staff of non-police organisations are trained and given a limited range of enforcement powers. CSAS therefore provides additional reassurance for the public, bolsters local policing on sites such as universities and hospitals, and improves the working relationship between the police and partners. There are currently 13 CSAS schemes in operation across the capital and MOPAC is supporting their expansion.⁴⁰

The CSAS scheme compliments other arrangements that permit external parties to fund policing assets, typically an investigation or analytical capability in for example a council's licensing department, or a local uniformed patrol presence on private land, like commercial centres with high footfall. The two major shopping malls run by Westfield in White City and Stratford both operate with private funding for local policing assets to patrol the malls, in addition to their own private security staff. This has helped to cut crime and reassure visitors, whilst maintaining links with neighbourhood policing teams in the boroughs where the shopping malls are located.

40 MOPAC *Police and Crime Plan 2013-16*, (2013).

This trend towards leveraging private sector investment to augment frontline policing is welcome and could go further. Where new commercial growth and development brings homes, jobs and investment, but also opportunities for crime, we should be working with planners and developers to capture some of the investment to support public safety. Sir Clive Loader, the PCC for Leicestershire, has argued for this in his judicial review case against Blaby district council and their plans for a development of over 4,000 new homes.⁴¹

At present Section 106 agreements demand a contribution from developers to support local amenities and infrastructure, however policing is usually excluded. In future local politicians and police leaders should make a stronger claim for a part of future policing resources in those areas to be paid for by developers whose schemes will increase population density and often impact on crime rates and grow the police demand as a result.

In the arena of public order policing for private events, a collaborative approach should increasingly look to share the demand, and recover the costs, to help reduce the financial impact on policing. At present, the “polluter pays” principle is barely recognised in the realm of sporting events, in particular with the costs associated with major football matches and the policing demand they impose. In cost-recovery terms, wealthy premiership clubs pay only what the law currently requires – extra policing assets inside their grounds. The current 2013 case law judgement is worthy of further challenge, in that it fails to address quite how costly the impact on policing can be, as West Yorkshire Police have argued in the most recent unsuccessful test case in the Court of Appeal.⁴² The Populus survey commissioned by *Reform* shows strong public support for private clubs paying more of the policing costs for their events, and the burden imposed by extra crowds that would not be in the areas around stadiums but for the matches that the clubs were hosting.

In London, this demand is about the resource burden that can come from three major league matches in the same part of West London on a Saturday for example involving in excess of 100,000 fans, not to

41 BBC News, “PCC Sir Clive Loader seeks judicial review over Lubbesthorpe housing plan”, (5 March, 2014).

42 Court of Appeal (Civil Division) Judgement, “Leeds United Football Club -v- The Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police” EWCA Civ 115, (2013).

mention the impact on neighbourhood policing and wider resilience of diverting resources on that scale. The Met police should be entitled to recover the costs of policing outside football grounds on match days, where the local policing plan requires the marshalling of thousands of visitors between stadiums and transport interchanges. Safeguards would be needed to avoid perverse incentives and to ensure equity when smaller clubs were involved. Here is one example where the law itself is ripe for reform to better reflect the demand imposed on the police, where those responsible are wealthy corporate players with a wider social responsibility and the public expectation is clear that the private sector, and not the police, should play a bigger role.

6

Making it a reality in London

The mission of the police is not simply a conceptual debate, it should have a real effect in terms of policy and budgetary choices, and it has in London. The very role of the police is now being affected in new and important ways as the elected politicians who oversee policing come to grips with their responsibilities and the policy and budgetary choices that confront them.

In London MOPAC is taking decisions that will effect not just how services are configured, but what the policing offer is, and what it is not. MOPAC has decided to prioritise the core preventative role of the police, whilst recognising that the police mission is wider than simply fighting crime and public order duties cannot be neglected.

In the face of a budget challenge to make £500 million of savings by 2015/16, the Met Police together with MOPAC, has begun to implement reforms and a new operating model that will create a leaner, smarter, more effective policing service, despite a smaller budget, and one that places greater emphasis on prevention to reduce costs in the long-term.

Enhancing the public order function

There are some unique demands on the Met Police that have always existed as a consequence of London's position as a capital city. Compared to other major cities, police in London respond to more demonstrations and public order events – an average of over 1,500 a year⁴³ – and many more large-scale sporting and entertainment fixtures. The Met Police must also discharge diplomatic protection duties that do not exist for forces elsewhere.

After the experience of the August 2011 riots and the failure of the early police response, the Met Police reviewed their public order tactics and preparedness and as a result, moved to enhance resilience.⁴⁴ They increased the number of public order trained officers and revised shift patterns to allow faster mobilisation, which was a major handicap in 2011 when officers were needed on duty

43 MPS, Water Cannon Presentation, available at: http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/140131%20-%20MPS%20Water%20cannon%20Presentation%20FINAL_0.pdf (February 2014).

44 MPS, "Four Days in August – Strategic Review into the Disorder of August 2011", (March 2012).

quickly but took too long to deploy. Despite the high costs of some specialist functions, mounted units have been retained and training expanded for public order officers.

The March 2014 decision by the Mayor to support the Met Police request to procure water cannon – subject to national licensing by the Home Secretary – is another important step.⁴⁵ By helping to close the gap in the public order toolkit, water cannon will also support the police to discharge their core public order duty. Water cannon will aid them in confronting extreme disorder in rare cases where dispersing crowds is a priority to protect life and prevent widespread destruction to property. The core public order role will therefore remain vital in policing the capital.

A return to the core prevention role

The most important shift is for the police to start reshaping their own operating model to be much more preventative, and less reactive. This will help ensure the police are the principal agent for crime prevention – and not just a reactive emergency service. The preventative element of the policing mission is being enhanced by the Met Police in three major ways – by reshaping local policing, by restructuring the police workforce, and by redirecting resources into technology to enable mobility.

The first changes, and arguably the most important, are in local policing, and the shift away from a flawed one-size-fits-all neighbourhood policing model which had operated from 2002-2013.

⁴⁵ Greater London Authority, “Water cannon”, available at:<http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/mission-priorities/water-cannon>

Back in the early 2000s, Sir Denis O'Connor and Professor Martin Innes led a team that pioneered the revival of neighbourhood policing in Surrey Police. This restored the named local officers that had been the essence of British policing in the foot-patrol era before police radios and motor cars. When the revived approach was taken up in London in 2002, the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) model – as it was branded – was designed so that all wards got the same allocation of officers – a sergeant, two PCs and three PCSOs – regardless of their crime rate. The result was a model that was symbolically popular, but also very far from the original vision for neighbourhood policing and not as effective as it could have been at fighting crime or building confidence.

Londoners understand the diversity and complexity of the capital which is in part reflected in vastly different crime rates. The West End is a microcosm of what makes policing the capital so challenging; Tachbrook ward had just 199 victim-based crimes in 2013, whereas Soho ward recorded 2,329 crimes over the same period.⁴⁶ The old SNT model denied the reality of this variable crime demand on the police.

The old model was ineffective with its over-reliance on daytime reassurance using Police Community Support Officers who had no powers of arrest and did not even help investigate crimes in their wards. Instead local crimes were immediately passed off to dozens of specialist units to trace criminals after the event, and left neighbourhood officers without a crime-fighting role.

The old model was also inefficient with shift patterns that put more officers on duty on Monday morning than Friday evening. Is it any wonder the public complained about never seeing their police? The old teams clocked off in the early evening just when most criminals were heading out. This might explain why victim satisfaction in the Met Police was the lowest in the country at less than 75 per cent in the years before 2013.

Finally, the old model was often complained about, because it treated all wards equally but only by making an offer that the police could not

46 MPS statics supplied to MOPAC (2014).

fulfil, because they inevitably had to redeploy officers from safe and quiet areas to tackle crime elsewhere. This abstraction happened routinely and meant that the team was there on paper but not in practice, and the public noticed.

So last year MOPAC agreed to make important and long-overdue changes to help the police get better at fighting crime, without retreating to a reactive policing model. Following extensive consultation, MOPAC took tough decisions on the budget that involved closing police stations that the police did not need and the public did not visit, and invested instead in frontline policing so we could keep police numbers high. That approach was supported by eight in ten Londoners who wanted us to put bobbies before buildings.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Opinion survey conducted by TNS for MOPAC, available at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/media/mayor-press-releases/2013/03/mayor-s-policing-plan-puts-thousands-more-officers-in>

In summer 2013, the Met rolled-out the new Local Policing Model (LPM). This was the biggest overhaul to Territorial Policing for over a decade. The LPM involved the redeployment of thousands of officers from back and middle-office roles into local policing functions, centralising of pan-London services like custody, and a major realignment of local teams to allow greater flexibility. Each ward retains a named officer and PCSO as the face of policing in every ward, but there are larger teams behind them – a total of 2,600 extra police officers compared to 2011 when the restructure began. The new Local Policing Model also demands more of local neighbourhood officers, who along with visible reassurance, are now responsible – as the traditional police officer had been in the past – for the investigation of so-called “beat crimes”, rather than the previous SNT model that involved the handing off of all crime investigation into another team. These teams are now given a crime role beyond simply daytime reassurance, so these officers are expected to problem-solve and get to know local offenders and crime patterns. Now neighbourhood police officers get to own a problem, resolve a case and help the victim. New shift patterns have officers working harder than ever, which means neighbourhood teams are on duty later into the evenings and at weekends when the public need them. The model has a higher number and proportion of officers in neighbourhood teams, and fewer PCSOs. HMIC has recognised that the changes will enhance the share of the Met workforce who are in frontline roles as well as increasing visibility, despite a reduction in PCSOs.

London tended to lag the rest of country when it came to crime trends. Crime began to fall nationally in the late 1990s but continued to rise in the capital until 2002. The next ten years has seen crime fall in London but at a slower rate than the rest of England, which is remarkable given how much the Met Police resources increased over this period.

Today crime in the capital is falling like a stone – down 11 per cent in the year to January 2013, which is the biggest annual reduction for

thirty years.⁴⁸ In fact London appears to be propping up the national figures as crime begins to rise in some other parts of the country. This sharp drop in crime is happening at precisely the time when the Met Police are making £500 million worth of savings, and much of the explanation must lie in the shift away from the old local policing approach.

One London borough illustrates why London could not continue with the status quo for neighbourhood policing. In Southwark last year – one of the high crime inner boroughs – there were 16,572 victim-based crimes like burglary, robbery and violent assault. Like all boroughs, crime in Southwark is not, however, spread evenly. Almost one in ten crimes occurred in just one ward – around the Elephant and Castle – and this ward experienced almost four times as much crime as Southwark's lowest crime ward. So the old model was deploying the same number of neighbourhood officers to the ward that had 32 victim-based crimes every week, as to the ward that had less than 9. After the launch of the Local Policing Model, the crime performance for neighbourhood teams has improved. In Southwark, this now means on a typical Friday night, the borough commander has 60 officers on-duty, compared to 18 before the changes. Local Inspectors can now deploy their teams more effectively, putting the police officers where the crime is and at times when offending is more likely to occur. A snapshot from July-August 2013 in Southwark suggests that neighbourhood officers are making 50 per cent more arrests than under the old model, and many of these are proactive arrests for State-based crimes like knife possession and going equipped, which are helping to prevent future offending.⁴⁶

Some have sought to glorify a policing model from another era but even they are starting to recognise that today's Met Police is a much leaner and more effective force. Local policing is now more visible, more accessible and more accountable.

By actively shifting resources and putting officers out there in neighbourhoods to maximise visibility and increase public contact,

48 Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe QPM, Speech to the Criminal Justice Management Conference (26 September, 2013).

49 Analysis supplied to MOPAC by Southwark MPS (2013).

the expectation is that this will improve the intelligence picture and boost public confidence. Because the real operational benefit from a viable and visible neighbourhood policing model is not crime prevention – which is also done in other ways, like putting cops on dots, “cocooning” for burglary, and using new hotspot mapping tools – but rather legitimacy.

The reforms to local policing are about more than just crime – increasing the proportion of the frontline workforce in neighbourhood policing keeps officers in communities and helps the police and the public stay connected. They are one way that London can begin to reverse the post-war trend of declining public contact with the police and falling rates of confidence, especially among older people. Over the longer-term, MOPAC plans to encourage more officers to live in London – including removing incentives for new recruits to live outside the capital – will also help enhance the value of a reinvigorated neighbourhood policing approach with more officers living in the boroughs they police.

The second change that will help prioritise prevention is the investment in technology that will make frontline officers more productive. The Mayor’s *Police and Crime Plan 2013-16* set the ambition – “MOPAC’s long-term objective must be to reinvigorate the policing tradition that London began, with a new focus on training and equipping a new generation of police officers to be world-leading examples of our proud policing tradition, with policies that support the concept of the twenty-first century beat bobby.”⁵⁰

By investing in new technology and supporting innovation, the police can get better at knowing and understanding their demand and get good, timely information to make better decisions. Modern techniques like predictive analytics and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) are creating real opportunities to focus resources and prevent offending, and the Mayor is supporting the expansion of ANPR in London.⁵¹ The growth of technology and big data to assist the police – not just in specialist functions like counter-terrorism – but in other specialist functions like the Trident Command tackling gang

50 MOPAC *Police and Crime Plan 2013-16* (2013).

51 Greater London Authority, “Cutting crime with road cameras”, available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/policing-crime/consultations/cutting-crime-with-road-cameras>

crime, is a huge opportunity to leverage the capacity of the police in crime prevention.

To aid local Neighbourhood Inspectors to use their resources effectively, the Met Police are trialling predictive crime mapping – first pioneered in Los Angeles – with the aim to use it in all boroughs by 2015 to tackle acquisitive crime, and also potentially to prevent gang crime in future. Two boroughs – Southwark and Waltham Forest – are testing the approach to get ahead of the crime curve, helping to understand crime patterns and enabling borough resources to be targeted. Investment is also being made to focus crime prevention efforts for certain high-impact crime types, with new technology like traceable liquids in London's worst burglary hotspots to help target-harden properties and boost sanction detection rates, following a successful evaluation in Brent.

Off the back of this, the police need kit and technology to make best use of the vast quantities of information they and their partners hold. The public expect the police to have accurate information on-the-go, and police officers deserve the best kit to help them cut crime and serve the public. Police in London should have access to a host of modern technology, from mobile finger-print scanners and DNA kits, body-worn cameras, smartphones and tablets, and mobile ANPR.

The Met Police's new *Total Technology Strategy 2014-17* is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernise the Met and ensure it is fully equipped for the demands of twenty-first century policing. As part of this, a large-scale pilot of mobility technology will be launched across Hammersmith and Fulham in spring 2014 and the lessons learnt from this trial will feed directly into an anticipated force-wide roll-out from the autumn 2014.⁴⁹

Body-worn video is another component of this drive to modernise frontline policing and the Met Police, supported by MOPAC and with additional funding from the Home Office, is embarking on what is the world's largest urban trial of body-worn video cameras for the police. Up to 1,000 body-worn cameras will be tested across 11 boroughs as part of a robust randomised-control trial – and in the training unit of the Firearms Command. The evaluation, overseen by the College of Policing, will evaluate impact on police and public behaviour and outcomes, and the wider cost-benefits to the whole criminal justice system. Findings will help MOPAC decide any future investment case for full-scale roll-out across London.

For this shift towards a preventative posture to work, it requires empowering and enabling frontline officers – even those without specialist skills – to be more agile and flexible in responding to the scenarios they face. The Mayor's Police and Crime Plan 2013-16 was clear – “[W]e need to invest in skills and training so that the shift in focus towards street policing, as planned in the new Local Policing Model, is backed up by a workforce that is properly supported to make the best use of information and modern technology.”⁵³

Networked police officers may not have specialist skills, but they will need ready access to timely, accurate information about the situation that confronts them, so they can use their discretion, anticipate threats and weigh up risks. The potential of mobile information is to both make for smarter policing and safer police officers.

Giving the police mobile technology is about making them more efficient, but also more effective, both in terms of crime prevention and service to the public. The whole thrust of the mobility drive is to

52 MPS, *Total Technology Strategy 2014-17* (2014).

53 MOPAC *Police and Crime Plan 2013-16* (2013).

boost productivity and to enhance the role of the police as smart preventers – not to give officers more kit to make them fast responders. With mobile technology and more information at their fingertips, the police should use it to anticipate problems and then call upon the best intervention, including from partners who may be better placed to respond.

Technology is a force multiplier but it should be used by the police to free up officers so they can take time to prevent crime, as HMIC have argued.⁵⁴ There is no advantage in keeping the police mobile and on visible patrol to prevent crime and build confidence if they just become more in demand by other agencies, soaking up unmet need. The huge opportunities on offer from new technology must be seized to serve the crime prevention purpose of the police, and not to make them more effective social workers who make the job easier for less technologically capable partner agencies.

Reforming the Met

The final major change that is driving a shift towards prevention involves reshaping the Met Police workforce. For decades the structure of the police in London had been top-heavy, with HMIC noting the above-average supervisory rates for officers at all ranks of the service. By reducing the number of senior officers and supervisors – including the number of ACPO rank commanding officers from 39 to 26 by March 2016 – the Met Police can afford to invest in more frontline officers to populate the Local Policing Model. The *Police and Crime Plan* set out an ambition to increase the supervision ratio from 4.4 to 6 constables for every Sergeant, delivering £29 million savings by 2015/16 while increasing the number of constables from 24,000 to 26,000.

The Met Police, which over decades had grown a plethora of units and specialisms, is being stream-lined and centralised under the “One Met Model” to drive efficiencies as part of a general shift to reduce top-heavy supervision. With fewer specialist units and fewer supervisors, it requires the Met Police to invest more in up-skilling frontline officers. With the support of the College of Policing, there is

⁵⁴ HMIC, *Taking Time for Crime: a study of how police officers prevent crime in the field* (2012).

more training for staff and recruits in evidence-based practices and “what works” policing doctrine.

By reshaping the workforce in this way, the whole organisation will depend more – and invest more – in the regular police constables who deliver the lion’s share of the Met Police’s crime reduction efforts. With more PCs in neighbourhoods and fewer specialist units where the crime-fighting response had often been siloed, the whole tempo of the organisation will be geared to the shared challenge of preventing crime. The challenge will be to ensure that local policing and specialist functions, once reorganised, properly prioritise prevention whenever possible, and avoid slipping into a reactive mode. More officers in local policing and out of these, more constables in neighbourhood roles should mean more crimes in public spaces can be prevented, rather than more of these offences can be detected.

The streamlining of the Met Police in this way is also enabling a shift from silos to services. The Met Police are now devising a comprehensive service catalogue to define and cost all the policing activity that they undertake, either proactively or reactively, and the whole costs associated with those tasks. With this in place, it enables a corporate understanding of where efficiencies can be found and also allows these services to be commissioned properly.

In future, many of these services could be co-commissioned with third parties and costs shared more equitably. This will be the first time that the country’s largest force will have a clear idea of what it costs to do what it does, right across the organisation and in every area of policing. This will help the police and their partner agencies to collaborate more effectively and determine where the police can add value, and where others can help to manage demand and reduce costs for all concerned.

A shift towards services rather than silos, will enable place-based commissioning for the first time in public safety settings. It will encourage creative models for pooling budgets that allow the police and others to collaborate at an appropriately local level to get real value, instead of seeing partners withdraw as budget cuts continue. A natural partner for the police is local authorities, where good

examples already exist of effective collaboration based on pooling resources. In Hammersmith and Fulham since 2006, the council have worked with the police to invest in additional town centre policing teams to help police the night-time economy, and crime has fallen significantly. In Hackney, the council have invested heavily in an Integrated Gangs Unit to pool resources with the Met and other partners to tackle gang violence. Other approaches for co-commissioning of community safety funding include CCTV. In future the police should explore the potential to co-commission CCTV to improve and expand coverage, instead of letting councils turn off cameras just to save money.

Reform in London is working

In all these ways, MOPAC is supporting the Met to reform their business model, move to a more preventative posture, and improve their service to the public. The results are beginning to bear fruit – with crime down 11 per cent compared to March 2012 and confidence rising, against a backdrop of major cost savings and a run of negative media headlines. However there is much more to do.

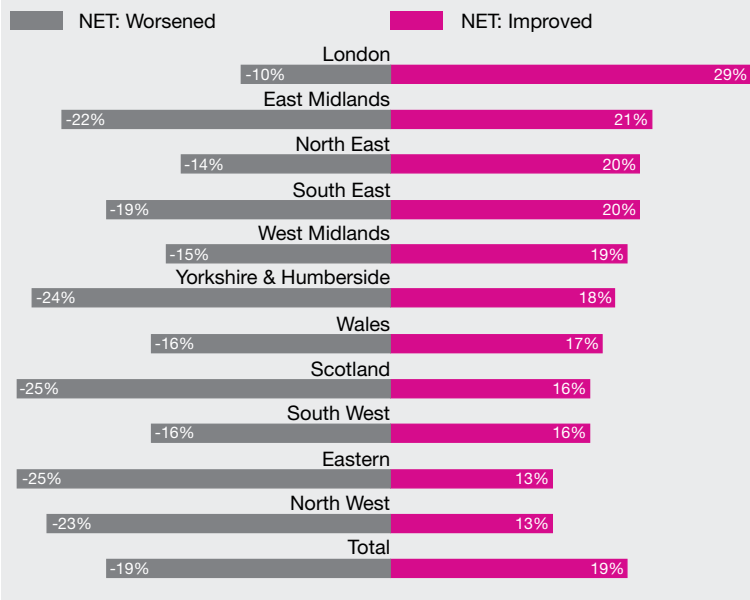
Furthermore the Populus survey⁵⁵ conducted for *Reform* shows that the public are noticing the improvements in London. Despite the budget cuts, the reduction in staff and the closure of police stations, Londoners do not think the policing service is deteriorating, in fact quite the opposite. When asked to consider the performance of the police in their area since 2010, on average half (48 per cent) of all respondents nationally said it had stayed the same, and equal numbers (19 per cent) said police performance had improved since 2010 as said it had worsened.

On its own this is significant given how severe the funding reductions have been and the dire predictions that were made in many quarters in 2010. However in London, the results are even more striking. Respondents in the capital were significantly more likely to say police performance had improved (29 per cent), with 40 per cent saying it had stayed the same and only 10 per cent saying it had worsened.

55 Populus survey on Police Role for *Reform* – survey of 2,008 GB adults interviewed online between 28-30 March 2014. Results have been weighted to be representative of all GB adults.

This survey suggests that despite difficult decisions, the changes underway are making a difference to people and reform is working.

Figure 8: Responses to the question “Thinking about the performance of the police since 2010, to what extent do you feel that policing has improved, stayed the same or worsened in the area where you live?”
Source: Populus polling data commissioned by *Reform*.



Conclusion

The next phase of police reform is about addressing not the form of our policing structures, but rather the function that we want the police to discharge in the twenty-first century, conscious that they have no choice but to confront the ongoing squeeze which will see resources decline, but not policing demand.

The policing role cannot be altered just by declaration – it will only be rebalanced by tangible policies that dictate what the police will and will not do, and what costs are imposed on partners who continue to place unreasonable demands on the police. Some policy options to rebalance the policing role – like examining the role of other agencies around the demand failure of missing persons, as well as the costs imposed by private companies arising from their events – are worthy of wider debate both in and outside policing.

This pamphlet has outlined where policing in London is already developing to address this challenge, with a return to the core Peelian mission to prioritise prevention. In reforming local policing and reshaping the workforce, MOPAC aspires to have a capital city that is the safest global city in the world, policed by twenty-first century beat bobbies who are not just problem-solvers with a strong link to the people they serve, but are also equipped with the skills and technology to actively prevent crime, not simply react more efficiently to it.

In summary, MOPAC believes that in addressing the proper function of the police, there is an urgent need to achieve three objectives:

- Greater clarity of the police mission which draws some boundaries and gives officers a clearer sense of their role and where they really add value;
- A rebalancing of the time and effort of the police back towards crime prevention in line with public expectations, and aided by technology;
- An active pursuit by the police of collaboration, to aid them in managing demand better and reducing it in the long-term.

It then follows that the responsibilities the police will still have – primarily those duties that only the police can do – requires people with the skills to discharge them effectively.

The Future Constable

A debate about what this future constable looks like, and what skills he or she would need to have, is a whole separate subject, but elements of the first phase of police reform are critical to this question. The reforms to police pay and conditions – initiated by the Winsor Review – combined with the creation of the College of Policing, have instigated a shift towards a new professionalism, with a focus on performance in a given role, acquisition of skills, emphasis on professional service to the public and victims, and a commitment to the best evidence-based practice in what the police do, and how they do it.

As each of these reforms bed down, the people agenda in policing will become increasingly important. Even as police staff numbers reduce, the national policy emphasis is already shifting towards the skills and professional training of officers, and the recruitment of new personnel into policing to open up the service to fresh talent – for the first time through new direct entry routes.

More important is who is recruited as constables and how a diversity of talent is attracted to policing, how they are trained and equipped, and how their performance is measured in the future against clearly defined competencies. Getting this right will require not just an appreciation of the current demands on policing, but the future pressures that new technology, and social change will load onto the profession.

The frontline officer will remain the most important asset and delivery agent for the first public service, but the skills and competencies of the future constable – especially those expected to police diverse, urban centres – will change and evolve from what we have previously looked for in new recruits. How best to equip policing with the means to attract, train, retain and promote the right people is critical to the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of policing.

The shift in focus away from institutions to individuals, from top-down reform to bottom-up innovation, from a police-led conversation about their role to one that really involves the public, is where the police reform agenda is heading. In London MOPAC has begun to chart a new course in that landscape, and organisations like *Reform* have a key voice in the debate.

Localists should welcome the fact that this next stage of police reform will be driven less by the Home Office, and more by elected PCCs, who in future are the ones who have to make the hard choices and will want to use their mandate to influence the debate about the role that the police can and should play. In creating direct democratic oversight of the police, that is a debate that is being spearheaded by the Mayor's Office in London, and by extension, one that can and should now involve the public too.

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