



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY



Policing: Building Safer Communities Together



Policing: Building safer communities together

Home Secretary Foreword



As a Government, we are working to build safer communities. The police service, together with a whole range of other agencies and partners, has a crucial role in delivering that goal.

This document raises critical questions relating to options for reform of the police service. No institution, be it a private business, voluntary association or public service, can be immune to the changes in British society. The pace and scope of change – to the way we work, to our family life, and to how we live – present a huge range of challenges to all public services. Added to these demographic and technological changes is a rise in people’s expectations and aspirations for their services. So the police service, as with all public agencies, has been and must carry on addressing the need for continuing modernisation and reform.

There have been significant achievements to date. Police numbers are historically high, and the chance of being a victim of crime is historically low. But we want to see a deeper, stronger connection between the police and communities. The police service grew out of communities. The position of constable – the citizen in uniform – is a key civic position. We want to strengthen that local connection and we are clear that communities must be at the heart of reform.

Our reforms must be driven by our broader objectives: we want a police service which is efficient, effective and value for money; which rewards the skills and experience of its personnel and can recruit the brightest and best. We want a police service which enjoys widespread public support and trust, in all parts of the community; which reflects the broad diversity of British society; and which has the latest equipment, technology and intelligence to detect, detain and convict criminals. Reform and any structural change will be judged on whether crime continues to fall, but also on whether people believe that they are being better policed, feel safe in their homes and streets, and are happy that their local law enforcers are truly visible and accessible.

We understand that public services, including the police, can no longer be seen as services ‘done unto’ people; they can only be successful if they are conducted *with* people. This means integrating policing activity into the daily life of every community. In short, we must transcend our traditional notions of policing by consent, and establish a new principle of policing through cooperation.

This new methodology will only work if we empower local communities to engage in the common endeavour of beating crime, and if we place the idea of citizenship at the centre of our reforms. Active citizenship means taking a shared responsibility to prevent crime and to tackle anti-social behaviour – the

community aiding the police and not condoning any form of criminality. Where productive relations between police and local people exist we must learn from them; where they do not, we must work to build mutual trust and engagement.

If we are to move towards policing through cooperation, we need a new culture, and where this leads to sensible structural change, we will be happy to facilitate this. As I meet police officers of all ranks and in all parts of England and Wales, I am increasingly convinced that there is a desire amongst the police for reforms which enable those in the job to do the job better – to tackle the range of problems facing our communities, from anti-social behaviour and disorder at one end of the spectrum to organised crime and terrorism at the other.

I know there will be a lively and positive response to this document. Consequent on this, we will publish firm proposals in 2004 on which further consultation will take place prior to legislation or substantial alteration to the present framework. This is an ambitious agenda but, as a Government, we are ambitious for the well-being of the people we serve. In this generation, I am convinced that we will seize our chance to create cohesive communities with substantially lower crime. In doing so, we are neither imposing solutions nor looking for a one-size-fits-all approach, and contributions to the debate are warmly welcomed. These should be sent to:

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Section 1 Introduction

This paper launches a major consultation exercise in thinking through how we can develop policing in our neighbourhoods and across our nation. We are seeking the views of all those who care about policing in this country. The paper explores a range of issues across four key themes: increasing community engagement, strengthening accountability arrangements, improving operational effectiveness and modernising the police service. The issues are inextricably linked.

1.2 Although this paper is primarily about policing, we recognise that community safety is not just a matter for the police service. Other partners have an important role to play too. Local councils have a crucial role as community leaders empowered to promote the well being of their communities. Many of their specific powers and functions make vital contributions to addressing community safety, anti-social and nuisance behaviour and wider issues affecting the quality of life in people's neighbourhoods. The voluntary, community and business sectors and emergency services have key roles to play too. Community safety must engage all local partners and draw on the arrangements that are already working in communities to achieve better outcomes.

1.3 We want to enable local people to have much greater involvement in local policing decisions and solutions – the development of a more 'bottom up' problem solving approach to community safety in local areas. As a Government, we want to make a positive difference to people's lives, and believe that Government can and should share the responsibility for improving community safety with local people. Removing central Government support for policing would leave

communities to fend for themselves – with the danger that the poorest communities, the ones that are so often beset by problems with crime and anti social behaviour, would suffer further.

1.4 The Government has a role in providing resources and setting national priorities for the police – which are contained in the National Policing Plan¹ – to deliver common standards of policing to all communities. These priorities are:

- Providing a citizen focused service to the public, especially victims and witnesses, which inspires confidence in the police and recognises the needs of minority ethnic communities.
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder.
- Continuing to reduce burglary, vehicle crime, robbery and drug-related crime in line with the Government's Public Service Agreement targets.
- Combating serious and organised crime, both across and within force boundaries.
- Narrowing the justice gap by increasing the number of offences brought to justice.

1.5 Underpinning these priorities are two themes which apply to the whole country and in which the Government expects all forces to engage as part of a national effort:

- Community engagement and civil renewal.
- Countering terrorism and the threat of terrorism.

1.6 This paper, and the National Policing Plan, are complementary. The Plan makes it clear that police forces should be responsive to local needs and priorities, within a framework for delivering key national targets. These priorities should be reflected

¹ *The National Policing Plan 2004-07*: published on 4 November 2003. Available at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

in local policing plans which forces are required to publish annually. We see this as an evolutionary process – for forces and for the National Policing Plan itself. We want to move towards the Plan setting out a national strategic framework for policing but reflecting what forces have developed at a local level – moving towards the development of locally tailored and delivered targets.

1.7 We remain committed to seeing the performance of all forces in England and Wales improve, for the benefit of all communities. The Government created the Police Standards Unit (see Annex I) to help achieve this goal – to help identify and spread best practice for example; and to

collate and make sense of crime and performance data. Truly effective accountability at all levels cannot happen if communities, their police forces, and those charged with holding them to account, do not have such information at their disposal.

1.8 We want a real debate on the options explored in this paper. But our direction of travel is clear – towards an engaged, responsive, accountable, truly representative local police service operating within clearly understood statutory and partnership arrangements.

1.9 There are some **key areas**, which we highlight below, where we are seeking views.

Community engagement

- Empowering local people to use information and networks to engage with their local police
- Ensuring a policing style which is both visible and accessible and helps local people to take action themselves
- Strengthening voluntary, community and business involvement in policing – especially through Special Constables, Neighbourhood Watch, a wider range of volunteers and local businesses

Accountability

- Strengthened accountability for delivering effective neighbourhood policing
- Enhancing the leadership capacity, process of accountability and responsiveness to communities of Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commanders in the context of their force wide obligations.
- Ensuring a responsive police service
- Development of a Community Advocate role
- Assessing the scope for radical change to police authorities and broader partnership arrangements

Operational effectiveness

- Ensuring there is sufficient capacity to combat crime at neighbourhood, BCU, force and national levels
- Opening the debate on structural change of police forces
- Delivering the right powers to maximise effectiveness

Service modernisation

- Rewarding good performance
- Delivering a more unified, representative police service with a better skills mix
- Bringing forward a transformational leadership agenda

Section 2 Police reform

– story so far

We are not starting from scratch on police reform. We published a policy paper in December 2001² which was followed by the Police Reform Act 2002. There is much good work underway³ and there have been real achievements.

Progress

- There are now record numbers of police officers in England and Wales – 136,386 together with over 63,000 police staff and a growing team of 1,900 Community Support Officers (see Annex I).
- There is record investment in policing. Government expenditure in 2003/04 totals £9,683 million – an increase of 6.2% on the previous year.
- The police service – together with its partners in central and local government, the voluntary and private sector – is ensuring that crime continues to fall. The chance of becoming a victim of crime is at its lowest for 20 years.
- Better use of scientific and technological improvements such as DNA is helping tackle more crime. In 2002-03, 21,000 crimes were detected in which a DNA match was available, a 145% increase since 2000.
- A stronger focus on performance is embedding itself in the police service. The complementary work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Police Standards Unit (see Annex I) is bearing fruit.

2.2 We are not complacent about these and other successes. We recognise that more needs to be done on crucial elements of the existing reform programme – such as the implementation of the major police pay and conditions package which is designed to provide a fairer, more flexible system of pay and rewards for officers. And we are conscious of the need really to deliver the Government's side of the bargain on things like reducing bureaucracy – to help ensure that officers spend their time tackling crime, not paperwork.

² *Policing a New Century – A Blueprint for Reform* (Cm 5326)

³ Details available at www.policereform.gov.uk

Wider community safety issues

2.3 Police reform is part of the Government's wider work to help build safer communities. We highlight some of this activity below.

Anti-Social Behaviour action plan: "Tackling anti-social behaviour together" was launched on 14 October 2003. This aims to increase the performance of agencies (police and local authorities for example) in dealing with anti-social behaviour, encourage less tolerance of anti-social behaviour, put victims and witnesses first, tackle nuisance neighbours, create safer town centres, and tackle environmental nuisance such as graffiti and abandoned cars. The plan forms part of our ongoing work which includes new measures contained in the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill currently before Parliament.

Victims and Witness Strategy: In July 2003, the first national strategy for victims and witnesses was published. We intend to introduce a code of practice for Criminal Justice agencies, create a Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses to act a national voice. This national framework will be complemented by local initiatives for victims and witnesses determined by local priorities and local needs.

Drugs Strategy: This aims to reduce the harm that drugs cause to society – communities, individuals and their families. It comprises four elements: preventing young people becoming problematic drug users, reducing the supply of illegal drugs, reducing drug related crime and its impact on communities, treatment and harm minimisation.

Criminal Justice System Reform: A reform programme is underway which involves a set of co-ordinated projects and initiatives to provide a joined-up approach to improving Criminal Justice. It covers a wide range of areas such as: victim and witness care, effective trial management, addressing persistent offenders, moving towards a unified courts administration and implementation of the measures in the Criminal Justice Bill⁴.

National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: To narrow the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest – by tackling unacceptably bad conditions in poor neighbourhoods. The strategy focuses on addressing crime, local economies and poor services.

⁴ Details of the Criminal Justice Bill are available at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

Section 3 Why further reform?

A stronger focus on performance is now firmly embedding itself in the police service and must continue to drive forward the delivery of policing. The requirements for improving overall policing performance and for closing the gap between the best performing forces and others is key to ensuring high standards of policing and consistent professionalism across the country. This is central to our sustained programme of police reform.

3.2 We want to see the crime and anti-social behaviour and disorder which blights the lives of so many in our communities tackled more effectively. We want to see detection rates increased and more offenders brought to justice. And we want to ensure that not only does crime continue to fall but that people feel safer too. The Prime Minister's four principles of public sector reform continue to provide the overall framework for our work.⁵

3.3 As we said at the time though, we did not see the proposals introduced by the December 2001 policy paper as a one off change to policing in England and Wales. We want to build on the achievements to date and move the reform programme forward – but push it further – to deliver sustainable improvements to community safety. We think that now is the time to explore options on how best to do so. There are a number of elements behind our thinking:

- **Civil renewal** – as a Government, we have a firm belief in strong, empowered and active communities. This underpins our wider programme of public service reform. We want people to have a stronger voice in shaping the services that affect the quality of life in their own local areas – education and transport for example, or the planning of our cities, towns

and public spaces. Specifically in terms of community safety, we want to see increased policing by active *cooperation* between the public and police, not just traditional notions of *consent*. We want people to be more than simply passive receivers of services. A recent public opinion survey⁶ showed that 79% of respondents thought that the police in their area should find better ways of finding out what local people think, and 67% said they should have more of a say in how their local police served them. People closest to the problems in their own neighbourhoods and areas have the best ideas about how they can be addressed. They should have a genuine opportunity to help shape and to be a part of the solutions.

But civil renewal is also about people recognising their responsibilities in terms of helping to tackle crime – not just their right to live in safer communities. Everyone can play a role in preventing crime and helping the police. By taking steps to protect themselves and their property for example, listening to personal safety advice, by not leaving items on the back seats of their vehicles to attract the opportunist thief; and, where possible, taking measures to protect their homes.

- **Responding to local needs** – we want to ensure that all communities benefit from more responsive policing – from the first contact people have with the police to their treatment as victims of or witnesses to crime. And to ensure that where people are not happy with the service they receive, they know who is responsible – and how they can make their feelings known.

⁵ – A national framework of standards and accountability.

– Within that framework, devolution of power to the local level with the ability to innovate and develop new services in the hands of local leaders.

– Better and more flexible rewards and conditions of employment for front line staff.

– More choice for the pupil, patient or customer and the ability, if provision is poor to have an alternative.

⁶ Home Office Survey conducted July-August 2003 using a sample of approximately 2000 respondents (age 18+) across the UK.

- **Accountability/Who is responsible for policing?** – research⁷ shows a concerning lack of understanding about current accountability arrangements for policing – what is known as the ‘tripartite’ arrangement (we describe the existing arrangements briefly in Annex I of this paper). For many people, the question of who is responsible for what in terms of keeping communities safe is simply unclear. We must rectify this. Strong, transparent accountability is vital for community confidence.
- **Serious crime** – whilst looking at the neighbourhood and local level we need, at the same time, to tackle, more effectively, the kind of serious organised crime which operates at a more regional and national/international level. This needs to be tackled not just for its own sake, but because serious organised crime can undermine communities by contributing to a climate of fear and violence. And it has a direct link with crime at the local level. The results of drug and people smuggling for example manifest themselves in people’s neighbourhoods through local drug dealing, robbery or prostitution. We must respond effectively to criminality everywhere there is an opportunity.
- **Modernising the police service** – we want to move towards a more unified police service with a better mix of skills at all levels, to help support and improve operational effectiveness and strengthen accountability of policing. We want the police service to be truly representative, where every layer of management has full responsibility for tackling racism and where the culture is such that racist attitudes are freely and openly challenged wherever they occur – and decisive action taken.
- **Investment** – we have invested heavily in policing and want to help the police and their partners make the best use of record policing resources.

3.4 Taken together, this is a challenging agenda. To meet it we believe that improvements need to be made in key areas, which are interlinked. This paper goes on to explore options for change – which concern fundamental issues for how policing

in England and Wales is carried out. We should not be afraid to look both within and outside our borders for ideas and improvements on which we can develop standards to which we might aspire.

The Durham way – Beat surgeries

The adoption of ‘beat surgeries’ has played an important part in the way Durham Constabulary communicates informally with the local community. They provide the opportunity for people to discuss with the police important issues affecting their quality of life.

The force operates a total of 28 beat surgeries, each unique to the particular community they serve and held in libraries, community halls, schools and local supermarkets. They provide a regular, friendly and convenient point of contact for the public. Staffed by designated neighbourhood officers, the surgeries provide an opportunity for local officers to forge lasting links with members of the communities they serve.

The Chicago way – “Together We Can”

In the 3rd largest city in the US, the Chicago Police Department has, for the past 10 years, adopted a policing strategy which has led to:

- sustained crime reduction;
- raised public confidence in policing including amongst key minority ethnic groups; and
- increased public participation in policing through monthly ‘beat meetings’ where local people get to decide policing priorities for their areas and get involved, with police and other civic authorities, in collaborating on solutions. 1 in 6 Chicagoans attended a beat meeting in the past year.

⁷ *The role of police authorities in public engagement*: published 4th November 2003 available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk

In the remainder of this paper, we explore options for change in four broad areas:

- increasing community engagement and involvement in policing (Section 4);
- increasing the accountability and responsiveness of policing (Section 5);
- improving operational effectiveness (Section 6);
- modernising the police service (Section 7).

Section 4 Increasing community engagement

We want to increase and strengthen community engagement in policing. And we want to see the development of a more visible and accessible police service. We explore options for achieving these goals below.

Better information

4.2 Better information about community safety in local areas is a necessary first step towards increasing local engagement, assisting locally accountable bodies to carry out their role in scrutinising performance, and holding those bodies more effectively to account.

4.3 Forces and police authorities are making improvements in distributing information to their communities. There are good examples now of accessible, locally tailored news-sheets with up to date information on crime and performance issues being distributed to neighbourhoods by forces. The Government has a role too. The Home Office has an important job in collating, analysing and publishing crime and police performance data, pulling together best practice and helping others learn from it for the benefit of communities across the country. We regularly publish information about crime levels for example.⁸ And we have recently published a second set of comparative data on the performance of all police forces in England and Wales⁹ in a form designed to show people how their force is performing compared to those in similar areas. Performance data¹⁰ on the workings of the wider Criminal Justice System is also published regularly which looks, amongst other things, at the numbers of offences brought to justice. The new Local Criminal Justice Boards (see Annex I) will also have

a role in publishing data¹¹ which will be important in increasing public confidence in the performance of the wider Criminal Justice System. Councils also collect and publish information about the general wellbeing of their areas which can provide a wider context for data about community safety.

4.4 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary also publishes information in the form of inspection reports of forces and Basic Command Units, or on particular 'themes' such as tackling street crime, which contain important information about how policing is being carried out in communities.

4.5 So information is available – but we believe that much more can and should be done to make it truly accessible for the public. But we also want to ensure that people can act on it to make a difference in their own communities. The public should be able to use performance information, crime and other data to better engage with and hold to account those responsible for community safety in their areas. Such information would help people challenge, if needs be, those who might claim that improvements in tackling crime in their areas could not be done. This might be through local people, having reliable data, questioning their local police leaders in community meetings about performance. Or it might be through the local media accurately informing people about the picture of crime in people's areas. This is not about the police suffering a trial by media. But the media does have a role in giving a voice to individuals, or parts of communities, who might not otherwise have one.

4.6 We want to explore with forces, police authorities and communities, improvements to the way in which people can access the kind of crime

⁸ Crime statistics are published quarterly and are available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds

⁹ Police Performance Monitoring 2002/3 published on 21 October 2003: available at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

¹⁰ CJS performance data available at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

¹¹ Local Criminal Justice Boards will produce annual reports on their performance and will make general information available to the public at www.cjsonline.gov.uk

and police performance data published by the Government. But we also want to consider whether the right *kind* of data is being published – whether it really resonates with people; and whether the frequency of such publications is right. We need to ensure that communities can access clear, timely and readily understood information.

4.7 We think that all forces and authorities could do more in terms of informing people about policing activity in their areas – explaining why particular actions are being taken, how things are done, how money is being spent, what happens once arrests have taken place and how offenders are punished. On a basic level, people should know who their local police are – who their beat officer is and who is in charge locally, what is being done to tackle crime in neighbourhoods and how well the force is doing it. And they should know who is ultimately in charge – who their chief constable is and who chairs their police authority. The public should also be clearer about who else locally is responsible for helping reduce crime and improving the quality of life in communities – and how they are performing. Better information will also help councils give effect to their overview and scrutiny functions in relation to the range of functions that affect the lives of local people.

4.8 We want to explore innovative ways of ensuring that information about policing reaches the public. This might be through better use of the internet for example, using libraries, supermarkets and community centres as central points of information, or using the local media to better effect. We want to look at ways of how we might best exploit the increasingly 24 hour patterns of living and working in terms of reaching into communities. The Home Office, police forces and authorities will also need to work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to explore innovative ways of ensuring that the important information and findings contained in their regular reports reach local communities in an accessible form.

- **We welcome thoughts on the kind of information about policing that communities would find most useful and how this information can be most usefully distributed.**

Visibility and accessibility

4.9 People knowing who their local neighbourhood officer is and who is in charge of policing in their areas is only a starting point. Officers need to be visible and truly accessible. This, again, is key to strengthening local engagement in policing.

4.10 We highlighted the importance of increasing the visibility of officers in our December 2001 policy paper. We remain committed to seeing the best use made of what are now historically high numbers of police officers. Increased use of Community Support Officers (CSOs – refer to Annex 1 for responsibilities/roles of CSOs) – and neighbourhood wardens are an effective way of ensuring that there are officers out on the streets who are visible and accessible. CSOs typically spend around 70% of their time on patrol – a key part of their job; wardens typically spend around 90% of their time patrolling.

Community Support Officers (CSOs) in Leicestershire

Leicestershire Constabulary positioned CSOs, backed up by CCTV, around a BMX track near Beaumont Leys shopping centre where there had been a number of robberies. The intention was to provide high visibility, to act as deterrent to potential offenders and to collect intelligence. This would not have been achievable without the CSOs because the local neighbourhood officer would not have been able to dedicate their time to just one area for a prolonged period. Leicestershire have reported that the feedback from parents and from young people around the track has been excellent and that the number of incidents has reduced.

4.11 We are continuing with a wide programme of measures to help increase the level of 'frontline policing'. New powers have been introduced to enhance the role of civilians working in the police – to act as detention, escort and investigating officers

– to help reduce the burden on frontline officers. We are continuing our drive to reduce the administrative burdens which keep police officers off our streets. Over 5,200 forms have been made obsolete in 17 forces with thousands more to follow. Forces are using mobile telephones and hand held computers to cut down on the amount of time officers spend returning to their station to fill out forms. By 2006, the Government will have paid for the infrastructure which will allow all forces to have a mobile data system. And we are committed to facilitating the extension of a video identification capability to all forces in England and Wales. We are conscious of the need really to deliver our side of the bargain on reducing bureaucracy. But more than this, we think that all forces should look at more ways of taking away the barriers that prevent officers at all levels being visible to their communities.

4.12 We have a target to significantly increase the proportion of time spent on frontline duties¹² – to drive up performance in this area and to demonstrate that police numbers are not, in themselves, enough. We must ensure that they have an impact across communities.

- **We welcome thoughts on what more can be done to ensure that police officers are more visible and more accessible.**

Volunteers, Community and Business sector

4.13 Crime reduction and community safety is not the sole responsibility of the police. We all have a responsibility for the communities in which we live. There are many ways that the public can become actively involved in making a difference to the safety of their communities – by serving as a Special Constable, acting as a lay visitor¹³, through membership of a community group such as Neighbourhood Watch, attending public meetings, calling Crimestoppers, following crime prevention advice, and many more.

Independent Advisers

Independent Advisers are members of the public who provide advice to the police either on an ad hoc basis or as part of recognised Advisory Group. Advisers monitor, observe or participate in police activity and are free to make observations both to the police and the wider community.

There are a number of criteria which independent advisers must fulfil. Amongst other things they must be able to critically appraise police policies and practices, they must be able to make dispassionate, measured and ethical assessments of what they experience, and they must be able to represent the views and command the respect of the communities policed.

Independent Advisers are used by numerous forces in England and Wales. Examples of specific recognised groups set up by the Metropolitan Police include a Race group formed in January 1999 in response to community/police relations issues and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Advisory Group formed in February 2000 following a pub bombing in Soho. There are 26 locally run advisory groups in London boroughs.

4.14 We need to encourage more effective use of the skills and knowledge within local communities and to encourage and enable more people to become involved – even the smallest contribution can make a difference. We want people to recognise problems in their area and be able to become part of the solution in partnership with the police, local businesses, public services and community groups.

4.15 Aside from helping to deliver policing services and providing information, volunteers and community groups can play a vital role in helping to identify priorities and solutions. Volunteers such as Neighbourhood Watch coordinators and others who are part of the local community can also

¹² Public Service Agreement 2 – “Improve the performance of all forces, and significantly reduce the performance gap between the best and worst performing forces; and significantly increase the proportion of time spent on front line duties.”

¹³ Independent Custody Visitors are volunteers from the local community who visit police stations unannounced to check on the welfare of people in police custody. Their efforts have made a real impact on the conditions of detention and provide local communities with reassurance about how the police treat those detained.

provide a valuable link between the police, public services and businesses. As an example, those volunteering in some way to fight crime (e.g. within the Special Constabulary, as a Police Staff volunteer or as a member of Neighbourhood Watch) who work as a retailer in the high street might be recognised by the police and their employer as a useful link in delivering information about shoplifting issues, ensuring that quicker attention can be paid to prevention and detection.

4.16 Local businesses and trade unions can also help by supporting the concept of volunteering with the police service. This might be by allowing people additional leave for volunteering, supporting local open days and events, or providing facilities for information about police volunteering opportunities to be displayed.

4.17 Local businesses and community groups involved in community safety work can also become more directly involved by seeking 'accredited status' for their employees in order to improve communications. Forces can set up community safety accreditation schemes to quality assure and coordinate community safety work in their areas. These schemes are set up in consultation with local authorities, and employees of any organisations engaged in patrols or community safety tasks can seek to be accredited under them. This two way system will mean that businesses can be actively engaged with the police in their area, aiding service delivery.

4.18 In considering the ideas contained in this section, it would be helpful if those responding to the consultation exercise could consider the benefits accruing from the proposals as well as possible impacts and cost implications.

Special Constables

4.19 In many ways, Special Constables are the embodiment of active community participation and engagement. Specials are members of the public who volunteer four or more hours a week helping their local police force and represent a real partnership of the police and community working together. They are different from other

volunteer/community groups in that they are trained officers with full police powers.

4.20 Work is already in hand, through good practice guidance for example, to improve the management, training and deployment of Special Constables. But we want to do more. The knowledge, skills and experience of Specials needs to be used more effectively to help deliver real differences to communities in terms of reducing local crime and anti-social behaviour. We believe that businesses could do more to support their employees who volunteer as Specials, and also encourage others to volunteer.

Specials in the community

Special of the Year 2003 and Ferrers Trophy winner is Borough Divisional Officer Farhad (Fred) Ahmed MBE from the Metropolitan Police Service. Fred won the award for his work in setting up a crime prevention and advice centre in the Tooting Islamic Centre in Balham, South London. The centre, the first of its kind anywhere in the country, is staffed by Special Constables and acts as a contact point for the community to liaise with the police. The innovation has helped strengthen relationships between the Metropolitan Police, the South London Asian community, the Islamic Centre, and the local population.

4.21 We want to widen the potential pool of recruits to the Special Constabulary. We think that more could be done by forces to use the specialist skills of people in communities (those with financial or IT expertise for example) in particular specialist capacities. Some people will be attracted by the neighbourhood patrol work of Specials. But others, with particular skills, might be attracted by a move straight to specialist jobs such as dealing with fraud cases. And there are people who work in neighbourhoods or in authority roles now who, we think, could be viewed as potential recruits. We are interested in exploring with the police and employers the scope for extending the role of Specials from a purely voluntary role outside work

to, where appropriate, use people 'inside' work. For example, the accreditation work being carried out by the Security Industry Authority¹⁴ could provide opportunities for recruits provided that the necessary training and professionalism had been secured through the accreditation process, and forces were happy to incorporate such recruits in particular policing operations, where their deployment might be appropriate.

- **How could the police make better use of the local knowledge, skills and experience of Special Constables; and what more can be done to increase the pool of potential recruits to the Special Constabulary?**

Voluntary Police Staff

4.22 There are other volunteers (without full police powers) who play an active role in assisting their local forces. Depending on local needs and opportunities, voluntary staff can be involved in a variety of roles – for example, helping with administration or organising events, extending opening hours of front counter services, staffing rural outstations, providing crime prevention advice and informal translation services and leading local police station tours for community groups. We would like to see more of such active volunteering.

- **How could the police make better use of the knowledge, skills and experience of members of the local community?**

Community Groups

4.23 Community groups play a different but vitally important role in improving community safety. Many local voluntary and community groups grow out of local people's concerns about their neighbourhood and attempt to improve community safety. This reflects what some call the 'liveability agenda' – the priority that communities attach to quality of life issues. New Deal for Communities areas, for example, where local people can influence how regeneration money is spent, can draw together community groups to work alongside the police to tackle crime.

4.24 Neighbourhood arrangements are already in place in many areas with street and neighbourhood wardens providing a highly visible, reassuring, semi-official presence in residential and public areas. Within a broad remit to help improve the quality of life in local areas, wardens often have specific aims of helping to reduce crime and the fear of crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and assist with environmental improvements.

4.25 More broadly, there is a range of other community groups, of which Neighbourhood Watch is probably the best known, which play an important part in helping improve community safety. But there are many others providing vital support to their communities such as Farm Watch, Schools Watch and local organisations which represent specific groups within a neighbourhood such as minority ethnic communities. Amongst other things, they can aid communication with the police, represent community views, provide information and commit resources.

4.26 We need to look at how the local knowledge and skills of all these groups can be harnessed and used more effectively, how they can work more closely with the police and how more people can be encouraged to become involved. Police forces might specifically encourage members of community groups to apply for staff vacancies, and to encourage existing staff to get involved with community groups outside of their work with the police service.

4.27 We think that more can be done to improve and systemise communications between the police, Neighbourhood Watch coordinators and others who play similar roles. New methods need to be found, for instance through improved use of technology such as email or text messages, to ensure that coordinators have all the latest information on crime reduction, are provided with good practice information so that they know what action they and their communities can take in terms of preventing and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, and create more direct links between coordinators and the local police.

¹⁴ The Security Industry Authority (SIA) is a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) established under the Private Security Industry Act 2001, responsible to the Home Secretary, which will have responsibility for licensing individuals within the private security industry, and for working towards maintaining and improving standards. More details can be obtained from the SIA website: www.the-sia.org.uk

- **How could community groups be better enabled to reduce crime and improve community safety?**

Southwark Street Leaders

Run by Southwark Council, this scheme invites volunteers (mainly young people) to work with officers from the council to improve their local environment. Volunteers are asked to perform a number of functions such as acting as “enviro-champions” in their neighbourhoods to set an example to other residents and giving statements to local enforcement teams.

Volunteers can report problems directly to the Council Environment call centre, and receive an automatic update on the action being taken. Schemes such as this are very useful in making people environmentally aware and encouraging volunteer activity to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in areas where Neighbourhood Watch-style schemes neither exist, nor are generally appropriate in their traditional form.

Business Sector

4.28 The business sector also has an important role to play in ensuring community safety. The Government recently conducted a consultation exercise on business related crime which looked at how businesses can be more closely involved in crime reduction work. The responses showed that the business community is generally supportive of closer working with the police to reduce crime and improve community safety – but sometimes felt that it was difficult to engage with the police.

4.29 We want to explore ways of closing this gap. There are already a variety of schemes between businesses and forces which have had very positive results – some examples are given below.

4.30 Partnerships have been established by businesses in major town and shopping centres across the country to help to deal with shop theft

and other elements of retail and town centre crime. These partnerships are aimed at reducing crime against business but, by working closely and sharing information with the police, they can also help to reduce crime against the wider community. The results of other schemes such as Business Watch and Taxi Watch have also been positive.

4.31 The Metropolitan Police and London First have developed a voluntary mentoring scheme where senior police officers in London are matched with senior business mentors who are Directors of substantial businesses and understand the challenges of a corporate environment. This helps to build links between the business and police, enables police officers to benefit from the knowledge and experience of their mentors and vice versa. We feel there is potential for schemes of this sort to be adopted in other forces.

4.32 We want to build on these and other successes, to encourage a better connection between the police and businesses, with more businesses recognising their own role in ensuring community safety and the police ensuring that they are accessible. The appointment of regional business crime advisers in each of the government offices in the regions will help to encourage businesses, the police and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (see Annex I) to work more closely together, but there is still more scope for collaboration with the police. Positive results can and have been achieved when this relationship is developed. Investing in crime reduction can result in lower crime rates and improve the quality of the local environment which, in turn, is good for business.

- **What more can be done to ensure that businesses and the police can work together to reduce crime and improve community safety?**

Section 5 Accountability of policing

Accountability is a key issue in strengthening community engagement in policing. The present arrangements are set out in Annex I to this paper. But there is widespread misunderstanding of who is responsible for what in terms of policing in England and Wales. We want to clarify and strengthen accountability arrangements in a number of areas – the police service itself, police authorities and the work of other partners involved in helping keep communities safe. In seeking improvements, we are conscious of the need to ensure that any changes do not leave policing in this country open to the possibility of being hijacked by inappropriate agendas – thus destroying community confidence in the police service.

5.2 We want to see the police service become more responsive. And to explore ways of ensuring that local people have a greater say in how their communities are policed – and can contribute to solutions to local problems.

5.3 Our wish to see greater local involvement in policing is not simply philosophical positioning. We believe there are real gains to be had. Increasing evidence from the performance monitoring system we are developing with the police service – the Policing Performance Assessment Framework¹⁵ – indicates that there is a link between performance improvement and improved perception of public safety in force areas. This is a logical conclusion. Improvements have been seen in forces with a strong performance management culture – which is used to *underpin* a strong neighbourhood policing philosophy. This is an important link. Further and better evidence will emerge over the next 12 months as the Policing Performance Assessment Framework comes fully into operation.

¹⁵ The Policing Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) is being developed in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) to provide an effective, fair framework for comparing police performance and provide a firm basis for effective performance management.

We believe that this and other work we are already doing with forces will lead to the development of a model for policing communities more effectively – and more in accordance with the needs and wishes of those communities. We are clear that we are not looking for quick fixes. We want to see sustainable solutions that improve the performance of police forces and increase public satisfaction in policing.

5.4 Good community policing is an intrinsic part of our wish to see a more responsive police service, with stronger accountability arrangements, as part of a wider goal of making public services better reflect the needs and aspirations of communities. Crucial to the success of improved policing at a local level are the relationships between local neighbourhood teams, Basic Command Units (see Annex I) and force HQs – and the need for strong, transparent accountability arrangements for policing at all these levels which also establish effective relationships with other bodies that have significant roles in relation to community safety. We explore the issues further below.

Police service

5.5 We would like to explore how accountability, and engagement with communities, can be strengthened at all levels within the police service.

5.6 Neighbourhood level – there are good examples now of strong, very local engagement in policing issues through, for example, neighbourhood panels set up by forces. These approaches can work very effectively as part of wider arrangements to engage the community in the way in which services are provided in local areas, so that community safety and policing are addressed as part of a joined up view of its needs.

Policing Priority Area (PPA)¹⁶ in Bradford

The PPA established in Little Horton, Bradford covered a deprived public housing estate and the surrounding area with a total population of just over 13,000 people. Through better communication between key local organisations and a more coordinated approach to tackling pressing local problems, it resulted in a reduction in most types of crime. A Neighbourhood Management Team (NMT) was established comprising key individuals from major statutory bodies (e.g. police, housing department, probation, primary healthcare trusts) and voluntary/community groups. They meet weekly to consider various crime related incidents, share community intelligence and establish a joined up approach to identified problems.

5.7 But we believe more can be done to make policing in our neighbourhoods more effective, particularly around tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder and crime prevention. We believe that the role of the neighbourhood officer is vital here – particularly in high crime areas where people may feel helpless and distant from those responsible for delivering community safety.

5.8 It is important that neighbourhood officers are known to, and earn the trust of, the people they serve. This can take time. So the post of neighbourhood officer should not be seen as one for the short term. It needs, and benefits from, longer-term investment. And it is important that forces have sufficient capacity in terms of resources to ensure that neighbourhood officers are not regularly taken away from their areas – ‘abstracted’ – to perform other duties. The role is also, today, very different from the *Dixon of Dock Green* image of the past. Society is very different. The demands are different. The role requires particular skills.

5.9 These factors should be recognised and supported by forces. This has been a continuing theme. Our December 2001 policy paper said that

the role of uniformed neighbourhood officer should be given the respect and status it deserved. We have subsequently implemented a major police pay and conditions package designed to provide a more flexible, modernised system of pay and rewards for officers – which includes extra money (known as Special Priority Payments) for officers in the most difficult and demanding jobs. We want to encourage forces to use these payments to reward their frontline officers such as neighbourhood officers.

5.10 Still at the neighbourhood level, the management and leadership role of sergeants and inspectors is vital in terms of delivering successful neighbourhood policing. They should be given the responsibility for, held accountable for, and seen to be held accountable for, the work of their local teams of officers.

Neighbourhood policing in Merseyside

Merseyside Police is following a new approach to neighbourhood policing – to tackling crimes such as burglary but also the anti-social behaviour which can beset local communities. The force has created 48 ‘neighbourhoods’ that are each policed by dedicated teams of around 20 officers, led by inspectors, who are expected to play a true leadership and engagement role for their staff and their communities. Special Priority Payments (see paragraph 5.9 above) are being used in a ground breaking way to support the force’s neighbourhood policing philosophy, through the introduction of ‘champion posts’. These are designed to raise public satisfaction, build community confidence and reward officers for performance and delivery rather than simply being there. Merseyside’s survey of local residents is showing an increase in the level of public satisfaction with what the force is doing.

¹⁶ Policing Priority Areas (PPAs) were floated as a concept in the December 2001 policy paper. There have been 10 PPAs to date and 2 Partnership Development Areas which are similar projects. Four more PPAs are due to start shortly.

5.11 BCU level – above people’s immediate neighbourhood level, we recognise the importance to effective and responsive local policing of what are known as Basic Command Units (BCUs) within police forces (see Annex I). We are keen to retain and develop visible leadership at this level. But we want to see increased accountability too.

5.12 We want to explore greater, effective delegation to police leaders at the BCU level – in terms of deploying resources and taking operational decisions for example – so that they can be more responsive to local needs. Home Office research has found that the delegation of resources and responsibilities can help increase responsiveness. We are already piloting direct funding, to the tune of £50m, to the BCU level. We want to explore the development of this kind of empowerment. And we are phasing in a £46.2m intensive package of measures to help treat and rehabilitate drugs offenders – which is centered on the 30 worst affected BCU areas. This programme will be expanded further in 2004/05. But the Police Standards Unit’s ongoing work with forces shows that delegation must take place within a framework of accountability and strong leadership at all levels within a force. The absence of such a framework can undermine performance at both force and BCU level.

5.13 BCU commanders and their staff could consider ways of ensuring better local engagement in discussing local priorities through visible and genuinely inclusive arrangements. We are aware that there are good examples now of community consultation and engagement carried out by BCU commanders. But we want this to develop into a process which genuinely helps shape local policing decisions – and a practice which is embedded in police forces across England and Wales. There might be a case for formalising arrangements through the introduction of a statutory requirement on forces to undertake this type of community consultation – in such a way that would leave room for them to tailor the process to local circumstances. Any such arrangements would need to have a clear relationship with wider consultative arrangements, for example those conducted by councils to look at the needs of an area.

5.14 Force level – policing at neighbourhood, BCU and force levels do not exist in isolation from each other. In examining ways of strengthening and making policing more responsive at the local level, we are conscious of the need to consider how this fits in with force level responsibilities and priorities. The leadership role of chief officers is crucial here – we talk about this further in Section 7.

5.15 In terms of officers ultimately in charge of their police forces, the Government is clear that in wanting to clarify and strengthen accountability arrangements, it is not seeking to interfere in operational decisions which are the right and duty of chief officers to take – a position which is enshrined in law. Police forces are under the ‘direction and control’ of their chief officer¹⁷ – not politicians. The political impartiality of the police is absolutely vital for public confidence.

5.16 But the Government is similarly clear that chief officers and their forces are accountable to the communities they serve. Like the authors of the 1999 Report on the future of policing in Northern Ireland¹⁸, we believe that the often-used term ‘operational independence’ is in fact a stumbling block in talking about accountability of the police service. We believe that instead we should begin focusing on the *operational responsibility* of chief officers – because to say ‘independence’ suggests a lack of accountability. Chief officers are in charge of, and have responsibility for, day to day operational decisions. The police exercise important powers and must be capable of being held to account for the way in which they are used. But more than this, chief officers should be accountable, and be seen to be accountable, for reform of the police service, the positive development of policing in general and working with police authorities in terms of the performance of their particular force. This is what we mean by *operational responsibility*.

- **We welcome comments on how best to enhance the leadership capacity, and process of accountability, at all levels within the police service.**

¹⁷ Section 10(1) of the Police Act 1996

¹⁸ *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland* – The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland: published September 1999.

Responsiveness of the police service

5.17 Along with other public services, we want to ensure that the police inspire public satisfaction and confidence. This is especially true in the case of victims and witnesses. We want to see the development of a more responsive and truly 'citizen-focused' service – which is given prominence as a priority in the National Policing Plan.

Commitment to standards of service

5.18 Raising levels of local engagement in policing matters and people's knowledge about community safety is likely to lead to increased demands and expectations on the police service. There are certain standards of service which all communities are entitled to expect. We are working with the police service to develop a common set of commitments to the public about the quality and accessibility of the services they provide. Members of the public should be able to expect the same high quality service when they have contact with the police, irrespective of where that contact takes place, or who they are dealing with. It is important – so as to avoid unrealistic expectations being raised – that these are set at a reasonable level. There may also be merit in forces further developing these national service standards at a local level to reach agreement with communities about the delivery and provision of services which reflect local needs and priorities. Importantly, the kind of new oversight bodies we explore in paragraphs 5.48-5.54 below and the Community Advocates we talk about in paragraphs 5.22–5.29 might have a role in ensuring compliance with these agreed standards of service. They would have important accountability roles.

- **We welcome comments on the possible development of local service level agreements.**

Single non-emergency number

5.19 In our December 2001 policy paper, we signalled that we were interested in exploring the introduction of a single non-emergency telephone

number for the police. The significant rise in 999 calls was a particular driver behind this proposal. We have been working with the police and industry on the best approach to this issue.

5.20 We want to press ahead with a system that will alleviate the pressure on 999 calls and help improve forces' responsiveness to the public. We have been discussing with OFTEL the feasibility of introducing a national three-digit number for non-emergency calls to the police. However, we are now considering the benefits of widening the scope of that access to other services. Such systems are at work in other countries – the '311' number in the US for example – which can access a range of local civic services.

5.21 We want to explore further how such a system might best operate in this country. The resource implications would need to be thought through. But we think that any system should, as a starting point, have an easily remembered national three-digit number for non-emergency calls. To be most effective, the system should be capable of allowing people to access a range of local services, not just the police. In the US, the 311 system works under local licensing arrangements with individual states. We are interested in exploring whether an approach like this might work in this country. But just introducing a single number would not be enough. Such a system would need to be underpinned by the development of robust call handling standards with the right training and infrastructure to deliver them. We are conscious that people calling such a national number will expect a swift, informed and helpful response.

- **We welcome views on the introduction of a single, three-digit non-emergency number for accessing local services.**

Community Advocates

5.22 The public's concerns about the service and response they receive from the police should be listened to and dealt with effectively and appropriately. This is vital for ensuring public confidence in the police service.

5.23 The Government has already reformed the way in which serious complaints against the police, about alleged misconduct of officers for example, are to be dealt with. From next April, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) established under the Police Reform Act 2002¹⁹ will provide a more robust system for dealing with such complaints. For those who are victims of crime, we are planning to introduce a new statutory code of practice which will set out the services that the police, and other criminal justice agencies, should be providing.

5.24 But we are keen to do more to ensure that people's concerns about policing which do not fall to be considered by the IPCC are considered effectively – where, for example, someone is dissatisfied about the standard of response they have received from their force or are concerned about operational decisions which have affected them. People may be unclear about how they can complain in these cases; how they go about making their feelings known and ensuring that the right person is listening to them.

5.25 We think that there could be a role for an independent body/service to help resolve complaints on people's behalf, not just victims, at a local level. This could take the form of a Community Advocacy Service, working on behalf of communities and individuals, acting as their voice. We want to avoid duplication of effort in terms of helping the public (recognising that some advocate roles already exist in some communities) or creating confusion. The resource implications need to be explored, but we think that Community Advocates could:

- at one level, be a source of independent advice, information and support to the public, building on a network of contacts (Citizens Advice Bureau, Neighbourhood Watch, Victim Support, Community Legal Service Partnerships²⁰);

- but more than this, Community Advocates could take responsibility for people's complaints and concerns and act on their behalf to resolve them, performing an active caseworking role.

5.26 To be most effective, we would see Community Advocates as being charged with dealing not only with the police service but also with other bodies/agencies which have a responsibility for ensuring community safety and more efficient and accountable delivery of justice. Because real life, and people's real problems, do not fit neatly into organisational boundaries. Advocates could have a role, for example, in issues involving anti-social behaviour (such as a breach of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or Parenting Order²¹), act as support to victims and witnesses or become involved in restorative justice²² schemes. It would be particularly important for Community Advocates to join up effectively with, for example, neighbourhood management schemes²³ where they exist within communities.

5.27 For the police particularly, Community Advocates might play a role in monitoring the performance of forces against the sort of local service level agreements we talk about in paragraph 5.18 above, in monitoring response times or pursuing substantive failures to follow up individual complaints. But we do not see Community Advocates taking on the role of the IPCC in dealing with cases which properly fall to that body to consider. Indeed we would see Community Advocates playing a helpful role in ensuring that the IPCC is not burdened with unnecessary and inappropriate casework.

5.28 There might be a variety of models for how a Community Advocacy Service might operate. Advocates might be volunteers. Or these could be full time positions. Advocates could operate at a neighbourhood level to get closer to individuals'

¹⁹ Part 2 of the Police Reform Act 2002 refers. Available at www.policereform.gov.uk.

²⁰ Community Legal Service Partnerships have grown out of a desire to see that people across England and Wales have equal access to basic information and advice on their rights and responsibilities e.g. on housing issues, welfare and debt. They aim to bring together all funders and providers of legal services.

²¹ Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) protect the public from behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. An Order contains conditions prohibiting the offender from specific anti-social acts or entering defined areas and is effective for a minimum of two years. Parenting Orders impose requirements on parents or guardians to help them prevent anti-social or offending behaviour by their child. The Order consists of a requirement that the parent or guardian attend counselling or guidance sessions and requirements encouraging them to exercise control over the child which can last up to 12 months.

²² Restorative justice is a process which gives people affected by crime the opportunity to communicate with their offender, and receive an apology, explanation or reparation.

²³ Neighbourhood management is an approach that involves residents and service providers working together in partnership, at the neighbourhood level, to improve and join up public services and to make them more responsive to local needs and priorities. There are around 190 neighbourhood management schemes currently operating in the country.

complaints and concerns. But they might also be involved in raising concerns, about levels of service for example, at a higher 'strategic' level within the kind of new accountability arrangements we explore in paragraphs 5.48-5.54 below, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Drug Action Teams. This would be a way of helping to hold these groups publicly to account.

5.29 As well as helping individuals, we see benefits for the police and other agencies in having Community Advocates. They could perform a helpful two-way role. Advocates could help the police prioritise complaints for example. And help improve community engagement – building links with communities through the 'hub' of a Community Advocacy Service which would have spokes connecting to various sources of advice. They might help in shaping where forces put their resources at a local level. And they could have a responsibility for helping to explain to the public some of the operational realities which the police face, every day, in serving their communities.

- **We welcome comments on the role Community Advocates could play, what form they might take and how to ensure they added value for communities and for the police.**

Accountability arrangements

5.30 We are committed to strengthening the existing accountability arrangements for policing; to building a more 'bottom up' approach – in which the public can engage and hold to account those responsible for community safety. This is vital for community confidence. We want to examine ways of strengthening arrangements at a neighbourhood level, in terms of the partnership work involving the police and other local agencies; and in terms of the role currently carried out by police authorities. We explore the issues below.

Neighbourhood panels

5.31 We think there could be a role for neighbourhood panels/forums or trusts to evolve which could play an effective role in helping develop a genuine 'bottom up' approach to

community safety issues – on the basis that people will feel more connected to their immediate local neighbourhoods. These panels might comprise volunteers from the local community, representatives from Neighbourhood Watch, Special Constables, neighbourhood wardens, representatives of local tenants' associations and other local voluntary bodies involved in community safety issues. We would not see such panels focusing purely on police business – rather we would see them looking at anti-social behaviour and crime problems, for example, as part of an examination of wider issues affecting the quality of life in local neighbourhoods.

5.32 The purpose of such very local panels would be to help give a voice to neighbourhoods by creating an administrative structure to focus people's efforts. In some areas, communities might be able to build on existing panel-type structures, where they already exist, such as the neighbourhood management schemes we mention in paragraph 5.26 above for example. We want to avoid a proliferation of groups and also consider the advantages of looking at policing and community safety issues in a wider context. But we think that any arrangement would need to provide an opportunity for people to genuinely get involved in helping improve their own communities – at a level which resonates most with them. There should be a process for such panels being able to feed their views to the police and other local bodies responsible for community safety, so that people could see their views being taken into account – and making a difference.

5.33 For example, we would see neighbourhood panels as feeding views upwards into the sort of Local Policing Partnership/Community Safety Boards at Basic Command Unit (BCU)/Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) level that we talk about in paragraph 5.53 below. There might be scope for seeing whether it would be appropriate for some resources to be made available at the neighbourhood panel level so that, if local people considered that the need was there, neighbourhoods could 'buy in' street wardens – or match-fund to obtain the services of Community Support Officers.

5.34 This should all be very much driven by local needs. We do not envisage a one-size-fits-all approach, nor do we want to impose solutions on communities. But we are interested in exploring what people think, and building capacity for them to exercise their influence.

- **We would welcome views on the role neighbourhood level panels or trusts might play in increasing local community engagement in community safety issues.**

Partnership work

5.35 Community safety is not just a matter for the police. Other bodies, such as local authorities and the emergency services, have an important role too. Effective partnership working between all the relevant bodies, with strong accountability mechanisms, are key to lasting, sustainable community safety.

5.36 The Government has already made a fundamental change to the way local bodies work in partnership through the creation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), sometimes called community safety partnerships, which are working together with Drug Action Teams (DATs) and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in a coordinated effort to improving community safety. These partnerships have a wide range of representation and complement police activity to deliver an integrated approach to tackling crime. At a higher level, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) set the wider vision for each area, looking at strategic priorities, engaging the communities they represent and making a real impact on community safety. An explanation for these bodies is given in Annex I.

5.37 Partnerships are crucial to the success of our overall policing agenda – they are key in terms of helping to hold the police to account, on behalf of communities. But they are also important in supporting the police and helping them do their job more effectively.

5.38 We want to ensure that partners with a responsibility for community safety are properly engaged with and accountable to the communities

they serve. We want to strengthen existing arrangements. We recognise that the potential changes to police authorities that we go on to discuss below, questions about the structure of police forces in England and Wales which we explore in Section 6 of this paper, and the idea of Community Advocates that we mention above, raise questions about how this might be achieved. We are also conscious of the need for this discussion to link, coherently, with wider arrangements for devolution of decision making both to the local level and to regions.

5.39 On one level, we want to explore ways of tying together more closely the police and other CDRP partners in delivering a truly coordinated approach to community safety. For example, seeing whether effective information sharing practices between partners are in place.

5.40 But we want to look at what more can be done to join up more effectively, and strengthen the accountability of, the full range of local services which impact on the quality of life in communities. It is unlikely that a one-size-fits-all approach will develop given the different local government and policing structures which exist across the country. But we consider it vital to the success of partnership work that effective relationships are in place between local police leaders – at Basic Command Unit level for example – and local chief executives and other key local authority figures. We question whether the constitutional arrangements underpinning these relationships are sufficient and whether there is a need for stronger connections with other local services – the emergency services and the health service for example – to get the best results possible in terms of ensuring community safety. The role and arrangements for partnerships to strengthen these linkages and to look more generally at issues in the locality should be a part of discussions about oversight arrangements to hold the police to account.

- **We welcome thoughts on how partnership work can be made more effective and accountable – especially in the light of the other issues being explored in this paper.**

Police Authorities

5.41 Effectively holding the police to account is vital for public confidence. Police authorities have a statutory responsibility for ensuring that all areas have an efficient and effective police force²⁴. They are free standing bodies made up of local councillors, magistrates and independent members. Police authorities have an important strategic role – in setting their forces' budgets, issuing three-year force strategy plans and publishing annual local policing plans. They are responsible for appointing the chief constable and senior officers of the force and have important functions in ensuring continued improvement of services under the Best Value process²⁵. Police authorities are now developing their annual plans to contribute to the National Policing Plan. They also have a key role in offering accountability to the residents of their force area. It is here that we are concentrating our attention. Further details of the current role of police authorities, and how they are presently structured, is given in Annex I.

5.42 The Government acknowledges the work which police authorities are doing to ensure effective scrutiny of their forces. We welcome the commitment of the Association of Police Authorities to driving up standards and their recognition of the need for effective engagement with policing below simply force level – at Basic Command Unit level and below – which should be used to enhance the strategic role of police authorities. We also welcome the fact that as they currently stand, police authorities are more representative of their communities than ever before – 9.2% of police authority members, and 21.5% of independent members, are now drawn from minority ethnic communities. Almost one third of police authority members are women.

5.43 We welcome the assistance the Association of Police Authorities has given on a range of issues, including the phasing in of the implementation of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report recommendation that all 'stops' as well as searches should be recorded by police officers (Recommendation 61) – we are working with forces and police authorities to ensure that this

²⁴ Police Act 1996 section 6(1) refers.

²⁵ As a result of the Best Value provisions of the Local Government Act 1999, police authorities are obliged to secure continuous improvements in the way their functions are exercised.

recommendation is implemented in a way that keeps bureaucratic burdens on officers to a minimum. And there are other examples of good practice on which we wish to build.

Community engagement in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire Police Authority produce a tabloid newspaper *Herts Beat*, in collaboration with their force, which will this year go to every household in Hertfordshire on two occasions. The last edition produced 1,000 responses on reply paid forms and 150 letters. The content covers policing style, effectiveness, costs and key local issues and feedback is given to those who responded to earlier editions. The most recent edition focused on community policing and the role of local voluntary groups including Neighbourhood Watch. The Authority also collaborates with the County Council on a Mori Citizen Panel, a representative cross section of the county's population, which is questioned on key policing issues.

5.44 The Association of Police Authorities established its own police authority improvement programme in 2001, and the Government is taking steps, within the current statutory structure, to help improve the effectiveness of police authorities. For example, we are working with the Association of Police Authorities to help authorities engage more effectively with local communities. We are equipping police authorities with the kind of up to date, reliable data about police performance which they can and should use to hold their forces to account, and compare their forces' performance with that of others. And we are currently reviewing the selection and appointments process of independent members to police authorities to explore ways of enhancing further the skills base and diversity of appointees.

5.45 But we are interested in exploring more radical changes to the existing system of police authorities, so that they work better. We want to

do this because we think that holding the police effectively to account, at all levels, is vital to the confidence of our communities and will strengthen community engagement in policing.

5.46 Home Office research undertaken with the Association of Police Authorities²⁶ indicates a general consensus that the public does not have a say in decisions about policing and that people want better communication, information and involvement. The vast majority of people involved in the research had not heard of police authorities. The few that had heard of them generally did not know what they were or what their role was. And the research found that about three quarters of police authorities relied on old style consultative public meetings as their principal formal consultation mechanism with communities – despite none considering them to be very effective (although the research did find a marked increase in authorities' use of other informal consultation mechanisms).

5.47 In exploring the options for future change, it is unlikely that uniform solutions will emerge. There will need to be flexibility to reflect local variations. But there are some clear parameters. The scrutiny and oversight role over the police on behalf of local communities is crucially important. People need to know who is performing this oversight role and have ways of engaging effectively with them. There need to be clear, tangible links. Those charged with holding the police to account must be representative of their communities (although as we say above, we recognise the strides that some police authorities have already made in this area). The oversight arrangements should reflect the way in which the police service is funded at the local level. They need to be effective in terms of holding the police to account for their performance at all levels: at neighbourhood, Basic Command Unit and force level. And they need to engage effectively with communities on the most efficient management of central and local resources in order to deliver the best possible policing service – financial accountability is important. In all this, there must be transparency.

Options for change

5.48 There might be new arrangements for the oversight of the **police service alone** (as police authorities do now). This might take the form of a 'police board' covering a force area – so similar to existing arrangements – but *constructed* differently, with members potentially being drawn from a variety of sources.

5.49 **One option** would be to have board members drawn from amongst some or all of the following categories:

- **some drawn from local government** – to maintain a single line of accountability through the local authority to the public for all of the issues that affect the wellbeing of the area, including community safety, and reflecting the responsibility of local government for raising income for local services, including the police, through the council tax.
- **some being directly elected** – to provide a direct, transparent link between communities and those charged with holding police forces to account.
- **some appointed by and representing magistrates** – to retain the links to the local criminal justice system.
- **some nominated by Basic Command Units or neighbourhood panels**, determined locally – to strengthen local engagement and a genuinely 'bottom up' approach to problem solving.
- **some locally identified and co-opted by the police board** – to maximise the potential pool of members from local communities; perhaps where it was felt that specific experience or skills were needed to add value to the work of the board, or representatives from specific parts of the community were needed.

5.50 **Another option** would be to have:

- **wholly (directly) elected police boards** – this would be a 'pure' form of local democracy – creating a direct, transparent link between communities and the police board.

²⁶ *The Role of Police Authorities in Public Engagement*: published 4 November 2003: available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/

5.51 We have no pre-determined view of what the best mix of police board members across these or other categories might be. We are conscious that the issue of directly elected members of police boards raises broader issues about the nature of local democracy, particularly about the role of local authorities. We welcome views on this.

5.52 But it may be that we should begin considering whether to broaden the current oversight arrangements beyond just the police service itself and look at **community safety in a wider sense** – to ensure that the performance of other partners and agencies, not just the police, can be properly scrutinised – since there are a range of agencies who, along with the police, are responsible for community safety. Establishing any new, wider oversight arrangement of this kind requires thinking through what this would mean for current partnership arrangements in communities – for example the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships – and how these can be best built on.

5.53 One model, starting at the very local level, might have a structure which involves:



5.54 The idea of this, or other similar models, would be to produce a genuinely 'bottom up' approach to decision making on community safety issues – with opportunities for direct input and engagement for communities together with

strong oversight mechanisms at a local level and a higher, 'strategic' level. At this overarching 'strategic' level, there would be a read across to the sort of 'strategic force' concept we talk about in paragraph 6.8 below.

- **We are interested in hearing views on the relative strengths of the new accountability options presented in this paper, or hearing about other possible formulations and models.**

Accountability for resources

5.55 Expenditure on policing has increased by 19% in real terms since t1997. This year, just under £10.8 bn of taxpayers money is being spent directly on policing in England and Wales. An explanation of where this money comes from and how it is spent is set out below.

Around £8.7 billion comes from central Government. Police authorities raise the remaining £2 billion themselves through a precept²⁷ on Council Tax. Councillors have the final say in setting the level of the precept and are responsible for wider decisions about council taxes.

£8.1 billion of central Government funding for policing is paid direct to police authorities as grants. £7.1 billion of this is paid as general grant but some grants are for specific uses. Around £0.3 billion is for capital projects. A further £0.7 billion is paid to fund specific initiatives. The largest of these grants has been used to increase the number of police officers to the current record level of over 136,000. Others are used, for example, to modernise the police workforce, support rural police forces, target funds on Basic Command Units in high crime areas and fund the introduction of new technology such as the DNA database.

²⁷ Police authorities have the power to set their own element of the council tax – this is known as the precept.

The remaining £0.6 billion is spent centrally by the Home Office, providing direct support to the police. This includes paying for the National Criminal Intelligence Service and National Crime Squad, funding some elements of police training, meeting the core costs of the police complaints system and further investment in new technology.

The general grants paid to police forces are calculated using a funding formula that assesses their need relative to one another.

5.56 People should have a clear sense of how their money is delivering local services and the extent to which efficiency and effectiveness have been maximised. The National Policing Plan – published alongside this consultation paper – sets out a system called ‘activity based costing’ now in use by all forces which will identify the relative costs of different aspects of policing. This information can be linked to the Policing Performance Assessment Framework, which we mention previously in paragraph 5.3, to enable judgements to be made about cost relative to performance.

- **We welcome views on how the links between resources and performance can be most clearly expressed so that people can make an informed assessment of their police service’s efficiency and effectiveness – and whether there are any other ways in which accountability for resources might be strengthened.**

Section 6 Operational effectiveness

Force structures

We want to look at how policing in England and Wales can be best organised and structured to meet, most effectively, the challenges posed by the current and future crime environment.

6.2 In our December 2001 policy paper, we took the view that rather than embarking on a widespread programme of restructuring, forces should first look at greater cooperation and collaboration, where necessary, to help their effectiveness. We reiterate that call here. And we will consider, on their merits, any approaches made by police authorities for the amalgamation of police forces under the Home Secretary's existing statutory powers²⁸.

6.3 The agenda, and our thinking, has moved on. As we say earlier in this paper – we want to see the police develop stronger engagement with communities in tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder at a local level. Effective and responsive policing by neighbourhood teams and at the Basic Command Unit level is vital here.

6.4 At the same time, we need to consider whether the right structures are in place to tackle, most effectively, serious organised crime and terrorism at a national and increasingly international level.

6.5 Crucially, we need to deal – better than we do now – with crime which falls somewhere between these ends of the spectrum. Crimes which, while often having their origins in and impacting on local communities, cannot be tackled successfully at a purely local level.

6.6 The Government is conscious that there are fundamental issues involved here, but we believe that we should now consider whether the current 43 force structure is able to truly deliver the safer communities that the Government and the public wants. We are clear that change should not be made simply for changes' sake. Any structural change will need to bring about the kind of improvements in police performance and delivery of service that the Government believes is essential in meeting current and future crime threats. And we are clear that any structural changes must ensure that policing connects to real people in their neighbourhoods. Remote and disconnected forces would undermine the kind of improved policing with the cooperation of communities that we are striving to achieve.

6.7 We have been greatly encouraged by recent responses we have received from the Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland on serious and organised crime and civil renewal/police reform, and from the Association of Police Authorities. We believe that there is now common ground between Government and the leadership of the police service in delivering the vision for policing set out in this paper and the potential structural consequences arising from it. We will work closely with those leaders, and police authorities, in taking the debate forward.

6.8 We are keen to explore thinking around the development of 'strategic forces' in England and Wales. Forces which would have sufficient capability (in terms of skills and knowledge) and capacity (in terms of resources) to deal effectively with neighbourhood and local level crime, anti-

²⁸ Section 32 of the Police Act 1996 refers. Available at www.legislation.hms.gov.uk

social behaviour and disorder on one hand – through stronger, empowered Basic Command Units covering effective neighbourhood teams who are closely engaged with their communities – and serious organised crime on the other. The capacity point is also important in terms of forces having sufficient flexible resources to deal with what can be considerable demands in terms of policing – for example, major public occasions (such as marches or sporting events) – without this meaning a reduction in the performance of neighbourhood level policing.

6.9 Any moves in the direction of such larger ‘strategic forces’ would inevitably raise questions about the most appropriate kind of accountability of such forces – such as we discuss in paragraph 5.54 of this paper.

6.10 Alongside the development of strategic forces, it might be that ‘lead’ forces could develop with particular specialisms – tackling resource intensive and complicated homicide or fraud cases for example, or online paedophilia and internet crime. Lead forces, by providing a focal point for intelligence and expertise, could provide a more effective policing response to these and other types of crimes which could have the potential to overwhelm a single local force. There are already examples of such specialism operating now (for example, the lead taken by the Metropolitan Police Service in countering terrorism). And there is ongoing work in this area which is relevant – such as the moves the police service is already making, which we support, towards the regionalisation of Special Branch work in the light of recommendations made in a Report from Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary earlier this year.²⁹

6.11 As part of this process, we also want to look at whether more should be done to rationalise the current number of small, specialist police forces which still exist in a number of areas of the country³⁰.

6.12 At a national level, we are already looking at whether, to improve our response to serious organised crime, there is the case for the

establishment of a dedicated organised crime agency – at the national level.

6.13 The Government recognises that any changes to the current structure of police forces in England and Wales would have an impact, for example, on the organisation of the emergency services, and on other areas of the Criminal Justice System – such as the recently created Local Criminal Justice Boards (see Annex I), the Crown Prosecution Service and the Courts Service which are organised now, or are moving towards, a structure which mirrors the present force structure in England and Wales. Any proposals to restructure police forces will need to have particular regard to their views. The different Criminal Justice organisations do not have to have identical structures and they have differing operational requirements. It is essential that they have overall alignment to ensure they work effectively together, but not necessarily arrangements that are exactly the same.

- **The Government believes that the time is right to consider whether the present 43 force structure in England and Wales is the right one for today’s and tomorrow’s policing needs. We welcome comments on how things might be structured differently, to improve the effectiveness of the police.**

Police powers

6.14 Police effectiveness is not just about structures. It is important that the police and other agencies responsible for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder in communities have appropriate and effective powers to do their jobs. These need to be balanced against the rights of the individual. But we need to address any imbalance which prevents the police acting effectively, which restricts their ability to prevent and investigate crime or which helps the criminal avoid detection and conviction.

6.15 We have already taken steps to modernise the powers of the police and other agencies. For example, our December 2001 policy paper

²⁹ *A Need to Know* – HMIC Report on Special Branch and Ports Policing: published January 2003

³⁰ There are a number of forces with powers to swear in constables outside the 43 force structure. For instance, there are several specialist forces within the Metropolitan police area responsible for Royal Parks, Borough Parks and the Royal Botanical Gardens.

proposed, and the Police Reform Act 2002 delivered, changes to make Anti Social Behaviour Orders more effective. The Act also provided new powers to allow the police to seize vehicles being used in an anti-social manner and, for example, made provisions to allow certain police powers to be exercised by specified police support staff or civilians – thus freeing up the time of frontline officers.

6.16 We have been continuing to review the effectiveness of police powers. We will shortly be consulting on options for modernising powers in a number of areas – to ensure that they meet the needs of the criminal justice system and the community to prevent, disrupt and investigate crime.

Central support

6.17 There are a number of bodies such as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Police Standards Unit and National Centre of Policing Excellence (see Annex I) who, together with the Home Office, play an important role in supporting and enabling greater operational effectiveness of the police service in England and Wales. Much has been achieved in the reform process to date. For example, the complementary work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Police Standards Unit and their ongoing collaborative work with forces is bearing fruit. But we are constantly assessing whether we, and the bodies mentioned above, are adding value and operating most effectively to support the police.

- **We welcome thoughts on enhancing central support for the police service.**

Section 7 Modernising the Police Service

We want to bring about further modernisation of the police service. As with other areas explored in this paper, this is not change for change's sake – but because we believe there are changes which can be made to support and improve the operational effectiveness of the police. And taking steps to further modernise the police service is important in discussing strengthened accountability of policing. If the police and those bodies charged with overseeing them are to be held accountable for the quality of service they deliver to the public, they need to have the best people possible within their ranks to deliver the best performance.

7.2 We want to see the development of a more unified, truly representative police service – with a better mix of skills at all levels, to ensure the best quality of service to communities. This means having forces which are truly flexible in terms of deploying their resources, and where there are real rewards for good performance.

Rewarding good performance

7.3 We are interested in seeing how the concept of 'earned autonomy' – more freedoms for good performing public services – might work in policing terms. We flagged this up in last year's National Policing Plan.³¹ This is not simply about financial freedoms. There could be other benefits which good performers might enjoy. But whatever form these freedoms take, we think that the starting points for the debate are that earned autonomy should:

- be used as a driver for improving police performance and efficiency;
- contribute to the delivery of both national and local targets;
- create opportunities for direct public involvement in policing in line with the Government's civil renewal agenda;
- involve a process which is robust and easy to understand.

7.4 A robust framework to judge performance is a prerequisite to any earned autonomy regime. We are developing just such a process – the Policing Performance Assessment Framework.

7.5 In exploring these issues, we are conscious of the need to think through, particularly, the link between resources and performance. We need to avoid being seen to reward poor performance. But we similarly want to avoid a situation where financial penalties are placed on poor performing forces – thus plunging them into a potentially destructive cycle.

7.6 What might earned autonomy mean in policing terms? It might mean that for good performers:

- certain specific (ring fenced) Home Office grants could be made non specific;
- they could be subject to a 'lighter touch' inspection regime by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) – we think that work already underway by HMIC to assess police forces' efficiency will mean pilots in 2004/05;
- or be pilot sites for new initiatives.

³¹ National Policing Plan for 2003/06 – paragraph 5.8 refers

- **We welcome thoughts on how the concept of earned autonomy could work in policing terms, what flexibilities might be introduced. And we welcome thoughts on which level should earn the freedoms – force/police authority level or below that (for example, at Basic Command Unit level).**

Workforce modernisation

7.7 We have already begun a process of modernising the police workforce – an intention we signalled very clearly in our December 2001 policy paper. We have made a good start with, for example:

- Pay and conditions: we are implementing a major package for police officers that includes the introduction of competence related pay, extra payments for the most difficult posts, and measures to reduce the service’s dependence on overtime.
- A healthy service – we are focusing on reducing sickness absence and ill health retirements and improving occupational health services.
- Diversity and equal opportunities – we are committed to achieving a truly representative service – improving the recruitment and retention of minority ethnic staff. We say more about this in paragraph 7.11 below.
- Civilianisation – there is a growing team of 1900 Community Support Officers on streets across the country and we provided new powers for police staff in the Police Reform Act 2002 – to act as detention or custody staff for example – thus helping to free up frontline officers’ time.

7.8 But as with other issues around police reform, we want to go further. There are now record numbers of police officers in England and Wales and record numbers of police staff. We want to ensure that as much of their time as possible is freed up for frontline duties.

7.9 But more than this, we want to see the development of a more unified police service – with a better mix of skills at all levels, to ensure

the best quality of service to communities. This means having forces which are truly flexible in terms of deploying their resources. We want to explore the scope for convergence between the pay and conditions for all police staff, so that we can develop the range of skills and expertise needed in the modern police service. And we want to explore how we can best move towards common performance, management and development systems.

7.10 We recognise that some of this will take time. Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary is undertaking a major ‘thematic’ inspection on non-uniformed staff which will report in May next year. This will report on visits to a wide range of forces and other comparable organisations, and comment on how the new powers we have introduced can be best used as part of the wider workforce modernisation agenda. The report will provide a major source of evidence to inform the step change required in terms of workforce flexibility. But in the meantime:

- **we welcome thoughts on developing the role of police staff further and achieving a more unified service; and on whether, in today’s dynamic work environment, there are sufficient flexibilities in the present system of police workforce regulations to allow forces to deliver the best standards of service to communities.**

A representative police service

7.11 We are committed to achieving a truly representative police service. Progress has been made but there is still some way to go to reach the 7% national target for minority ethnic officers by 2009. The Home Office and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary are working closely with the forces facing the biggest challenges to tackle this. Work is also underway to produce a new “Dismantling Barriers” action plan to improve the recruitment, retention and progression of minority ethnic staff – commissioned by a new sub group of the Lawrence Steering Group³². Following the implementation of the Lawrence Action Plan, the Steering Group is now focusing on the impact, on the ground, of the various recommendations.

³² The Lawrence Steering Group was set up to ensure a relentless focus on implementation of the action plan drawn up following the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report. It is chaired by the Home Secretary and has a wide independent membership. Most of the recommendations of the report have now been implemented and a series of sub groups have been set up to focus on five issues that were central to the report: racist incidents; stop and search; community and race relations training; recruitment, retention, progression of minority ethnic officers; trust and confidence of minority ethnic communities in the wider Criminal Justice System.

7.12 We know that the challenge of rooting out racism in the police service is still a substantial one. We will continue to work closely with police forces and authorities and with the Commission for Racial Equality to help address this issue. We want to ensure that the diversity of our communities is fully respected. Every layer of management within the service should be taking full responsibility for tackling racism. We must create an environment in which racist attitudes and behaviour are freely and openly challenged whenever they occur, and decisive action taken.

7.13 A new selection process for police recruitment has been designed to thoroughly test candidates' attitudes towards race and diversity – this officially commenced in 13 forces in May 2003 and the majority of other forces have now set implementation dates. Those who do not score sufficiently highly in respect for race and diversity fail – irrespective of how well they do in the rest of the selection process.

7.14 The Home Office is also encouraging every force to use members of local communities as assessors. This means communities being involved in the selection of their own police officers. A number of forces have trained or are in the process of training community assessors. Five central training courses have been run and forty people are already on a national database in addition to forces' own selected community assessors.

- **We welcome thoughts on what more can be done to achieve our goal of a truly representative police service.**

Leadership and management

7.15 Ensuring that the police service has the best possible leadership and management is critical to the success of the whole reform agenda. If we do not get this right, we put much of our other work in jeopardy. And when we talk about leaders and managers, we are not just talking about senior officers. Inspectors and sergeants often have management responsibilities for quite large numbers of people, and can have a very significant

impact on the culture of the service and the way in which it serves the public. Constables are increasingly exercising leadership functions with respect to police staff – including, for example, Community Support Officers – and have always had to provide leadership in certain situations to members of the communities they serve. And as more police staff are brought into the service at all levels, meeting their leadership and management development needs grows in importance.

7.16 Over the past two years, we have been developing a range of development programmes and other initiatives to increase leadership and management capacity at all levels of the service. The work we are doing to increase delegation of powers and resources to leaders at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level, that we talk about in paragraph 5.12 above is an important part of this process. The leadership programmes themselves focus primarily on generic skills, and are therefore open to both officers and police staff. Pilots of programmes for post-probationer constables, sergeants and inspectors – and staff at equivalent levels – are currently getting underway, and the programmes are due to be rolled out nationally from the end of April next year.

7.17 Two Senior Leadership Development Programmes – one for chief inspectors and superintendents and the other primarily for experienced superintendents aspiring to become chief officers – have also been developed. Both of these programmes will be especially useful to BCU commanders and other officers in leadership positions in BCUs. Again, police staff at equivalent levels may take advantage of these programmes.

7.18 It is vital that the style of policing in the 21st century is appropriate for today's increasingly complex environment. Both the communities the police serve and the officers and staff they need to attract are more diverse and have different needs and expectations from those which applied in the past. In these circumstances, the old style of 'command and control' leadership will be neither appropriate nor effective. That is why a focus of all our work on leadership and management is on

developing a sophisticated leadership style which is responsive to these changes, to ensure that officers and staff are able to lead and manage effectively. This should help ensure that this work makes a substantial contribution to securing a modern and professional service in which people want to work and in which all sections of local communities can have confidence.

7.19 A recent project on *Getting the Best Leaders to Take On the Most Demanding Challenges* has taken the leadership agenda a stage further. This project focused primarily on the 'Top 500' officers in the service – chief officers and superintendents with the potential to be chief officers within a few years – and on police staff at equivalent levels. The report from this project was the subject of a major consultation exercise.

7.20 We are now working towards creating a central advisory service to support these officers and staff in managing and developing their careers, with a special focus on expanding their experience. This will be an embryonic form of a completely new body, the Police Leadership Centre, which will bring all the strands of work on police leadership carried out at the centre within the remit of one organisation. A critical function of the Leadership Centre will be to secure stronger links with leadership development work in other parts of the public sector and other sectors, to ensure that the police benefit from the leadership experience of those in other contexts – through, for example, joint training initiatives, secondment opportunities, mentoring and coaching. The advisory service should be operational from April 2004, the Leadership Centre from April 2005.

7.21 We will also be opening up eligibility for chief officer posts to senior officers who have left the service but wish to return to it, and to senior officers from other police services internationally.

7.22 Together, all this work should lead to new ideas from different contexts being brought to bear on policing issues, helping to drive up standards across the board.

7.23 During 2004, we will be considering whether further reforms to the qualifications criteria, assessment, selection and appointments processes

for chief officers are needed, both to ensure the successful implementation of these new initiatives and to guarantee that the most senior people in the service are of the highest possible calibre and operating as dynamically and effectively as possible. In particular, it is important to have robust mechanisms in place so that everyone can have confidence that candidates for the most senior posts in the service – chief constables with statutory responsibility for the direction and control of their forces – have been assessed as suitable for holding these positions.

7.24 We attach great importance to getting both the structures and culture right to ensure the most sophisticated possible development of a large pool from which chief officers can be drawn. However, in doing all of this, we will have proper regard to the need to maintain stability and security within the existing and potential chief officer community. That is why – when considering what changes need to be made to the current fixed term appointment regulation for chief officers, for example – we will not be advocating that chief officers move on every three years.

7.25 We are also working through the Police Negotiating Board³⁴ on reforms to the pay and conditions of chief officers, with a view to better rewarding those whose take on the toughest jobs and those whose performance is best.

7.26 We want to take forward all of this work in a spirit of collaboration. The Police Leadership Development Board, on which all the key stakeholders are represented, will help with the production of an implementation plan which will set the new policies arising out of the project on *Getting the Best Leaders to Take On the Most Demanding Challenges* within the context of the leadership and management agenda as a whole. This will be issued by the end of 2003. The Board will also be involved in next year's consideration of what further reforms on leadership and management may be necessary.

- **We welcome comments on the approach to supporting and improving the leadership and management of the police service set out in this paper.**

³⁴ A Police Negotiating Board Working Party on Chief Officer's Pay and Conditions is taking forward work on a range of issues, with a view to concluding negotiations on reforms by the end of January 2004.

Section 8 Consultation

The key questions highlighted in this paper are as follows:

Increasing Community Engagement

- We welcome thoughts on the kind of information about policing that communities would find most useful; and how this information can be most usefully distributed.
- We welcome thoughts on what more can be done to ensure that police officers are more visible and more accessible.
- How could the police make better use of the local knowledge, skills and experience of Special Constables; and what more can be done to increase the pool of potential recruits to the Special Constabulary?
- How could the police make better use of the knowledge, skills and experience of members of the local community?
- How could community groups be better enabled to reduce crime and improve community safety?
- What more can be done to ensure that businesses and the police can work together to reduce crime and improve community safety?

Accountability of Policing

- We welcome comments on how best to enhance the leadership capacity, and process of accountability, at all levels within the police service.
- We welcome comments on the possible development of local service level agreements.
- We welcome views on the introduction of a single, three-digit non-emergency number for accessing local services.

- We welcome comments on the role Community Advocates could play, what form they might take and how to ensure they added value for communities and for the police.
- We would welcome views on the role neighbourhood level panels or trusts might play in increasing local community engagement in community safety issues.
- We welcome thoughts on how partnership work can be made more effective and accountable – especially in the light of the other issues being explored in this paper.
- We are interested in hearing views on the relative strengths of the new accountability options presented in this paper, or hearing about other possible formulations and models.
- We welcome views on how the links between resources and performance can be most clearly expressed so that people can make an informed assessment of their police service's efficiency and effectiveness – and whether there are any other ways in which accountability for resources might be strengthened.

Operational Effectiveness

- The Government believes that the time is right to consider whether the present 43 force structure in England and Wales is the right one for today's and tomorrow's policing needs. We welcome comments on how things might be structured differently, to improve the effectiveness of the police.
- We welcome thoughts on enhancing central support for the police service.

Modernising the Police service

- **We welcome thoughts on how the concept of earned autonomy could work in policing terms, what flexibilities might be introduced. And we welcome thoughts on which level should earn the freedoms – force/police authority level or below that (for example, at Basic Command Unit level).**
- **We welcome thoughts on developing the role of police staff further and achieving a more unified service; and on whether, in today’s dynamic work environment, there are sufficient flexibilities in the present system of police workforce regulations to allow forces deliver the best standards of service to communities.**
- **We welcome thoughts on what more can be done to achieve our goal of a truly representative police service.**
- **We welcome comments on the approach to supporting and improving the leadership and management of the police service set out in this paper.**

How to comment

Responses and comments on the issues raised in this paper are required by **Tuesday 27th January 2004**.

We want this to be a genuine consultation in which everybody – the public, the police, police authorities and all other organisations with an interest in community safety, have an opportunity to get involved in the debate.

There are a variety of ways in which you can provide us with your views:

You can email us at:
police.consultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

You can write to us at:
Policing: Building Safer Communities Together
Police Reform – Performance Delivery Unit
6th Floor, Open Plan
50 Queen Anne’s Gate
London
SW1H 9AT

You can contribute to our public online discussion forum available through www.policereform.gov.uk

The Home Office will also be running a series of workshops and conferences, some of which will be aimed at the public and some at professionals working in policing and community safety. Full details of all these events will be available on our website at www.policereform.gov.uk

The Government expects police forces, police authorities and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to consult with the communities they serve to represent their views on the issues raised in this paper. For details on how people can contact their local police force, authority or Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, see “useful links” below.

This consultation is being conducted in line with the Code of Practice on Written Consultation issued by the Cabinet Office. The Code criteria are set out in Annex II.

What happens then?

The responses we receive to this consultation will help to shape the future police reform programme. Some changes may require legislation and we will seek to introduce these when parliamentary time allows. Others, not requiring legislation, could potentially be put into place sooner. It is possible that some issues may require further discussion and consultation.

We will publish results of this consultation exercise as quickly as possible after 27th January 2004.

Useful links

Home Office: www.homeoffice.gov.uk
Police Reform: www.policereform.gov.uk
Crime Reduction: www.crimereduction.gov.uk
Police forces: www.police.uk
Association of Police Authorities:
www.apa.police.uk
Association of Chief Police Officers:
www.acpo.police.gov.uk

Annex I

Policing in England and Wales

Governance

No one person is in overall control of policing in England and Wales. The current governance arrangement which involves chief officers of police, police authorities and the Home Secretary - what is known as the 'tripartite arrangement' - has evolved over time, based on the broad principles of political impartiality of the police, policing by consent of the public, the Government's overall responsibility for ensuring a safe society in which to live, and the need for the expenditure of public money to be properly accounted for.

The current arrangement is not the product of a single change in the law. But recent milestones include the findings of a Royal Commission in 1962, the Police Act 1964 which flowed from this, the Police Act 1996 and the Police Reform Act 2002.

Briefly, the roles of each element of the tripartite arrangement are as follows:

- **Chief officers of police** – are, by law, responsible for the direction and control of their force. They are responsible for operational decisions and the day to day running of their force. Chief officers are required to submit a report to their police authority at the end of each financial year on the policing of their area.
- **Police authorities** – are free standing bodies, usually comprised of 17 members – 9 councillors, 3 magistrates and 5 independent members. Police authorities are responsible for ensuring there is an efficient and effective police force for their area and holding the chief officer and force to account for how well they deliver local policing services. They are

responsible for appointing senior officers of the force and have specific responsibilities including consulting with communities, publishing three year force strategy plans and annual local policing plans and setting the budget for the force.

- **The Home Secretary** – is answerable to Parliament and the public for the provision of an efficient and effective police service. The Home Secretary sets out the Government's strategic priorities for policing in the National Policing Plan and has a role in helping to drive up police performance and addressing poor performance. It is the Home Secretary's job to determine the total level of grant for policing and its allocation to police authorities, using a funding formula.

Structure

There are presently 43 police forces in England and Wales. Each one is headed by a chief constable (commissioner in Metropolitan and City of London Police). The size and make up of individual forces varies considerably but in general terms, they usually have the following internal structure:

Police force: each force has a headquarters which will contain the chief constable's office and other senior staff, central services and units with a force wide or specialist remit e.g. the control room for 999 calls, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for major criminal investigations, Special Branch, air support/ helicopters and many more. The geographical areas covered by forces usually follow the divisions of the English counties or Welsh local authority areas.

Basic Command Unit (BCU): below 'force' level, there are usually between three and ten BCUs depending on their size (in the Metropolitan Police they are called "boroughs" and there are thirty-two). These cover smaller geographical areas within a force such as a town or district. They are usually commanded by a superintendent or chief superintendent and consist of several hundred police officers and staff. Most of the officers will be involved in tackling local crime and disorder problems and responding to the varied demands made on them by the public. They will also usually have some specialist units such as a Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and officers dealing with community liaison and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

Police Sectors: Each BCU will usually be divided into smaller sectors or districts based around one or more police stations, usually under the leadership of an inspector.

Apart from the 43 forces in England and Wales covering substantial geographical areas, there are a number of other, usually very much smaller, forces in existence whose duties are either specialist or very local. For example, policing the railway network and London Underground system is the responsibility of the British Transport Police; the Royal Parks Constabulary is responsible for policing London's major parks; and the UK Atomic Energy Authority Constabulary is responsible for the security of nuclear power installations.

Police ranks

Police officers and police staff: Police officers are by far the largest pool of employees in a force although no individual police service could operate today without the significant contribution of police staff who carry out many functions which enable police officers to patrol, tackle crime and disorder and perform all the other tasks that are expected of them.

Community Support Officers (CSOs): CSOs are police authority employed support staff who can perform a high visibility, patrolling role. They complement

the work of police officers by focusing predominantly on lower level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, providing reassurance to the communities they serve.

Constables, sergeants and inspectors: The majority of police officers in a force will be constables who may work in uniform or in plain clothes usually as specialist crime investigators (e.g. CID). Officers at this level are directly supervised and managed by sergeants and inspectors.

Chief inspectors, superintendents and chief superintendents: These police ranks represent a significantly smaller managerial band of officers who would typically be engaged in the day-to-day management of a Basic Command Unit or a centralised force department. Superintendents and chief superintendents in particular have a key role in responding to the policing needs of a community. They therefore have important links with others with a shared interest and responsibility for community safety, such as local authorities.

Chief officers: Consisting of the ranks of assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable these are the most senior positions attainable in the police service. These officers are responsible for the overall management of an entire force. The chief constable has direction and control of his or her own police force. In London, which is policed by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the City of London Police, the most senior ranks are slightly different, reflecting the special factors of policing the country's largest city and capital. These positions are commander, deputy assistant commissioner (MPS), assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner (MPS) and, at their head, a commissioner.

National bodies

National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS): NCIS provides actionable intelligence to law enforcement agencies at home and abroad in order to combat and prevent serious and organised crime that impacts on the UK.

National Crime Squad (NCS): The National Crime Squad targets criminal organisations committing serious and organised crime which transcends national and international boundaries, typically drug trafficking, immigration crime, illegal arms trafficking, money laundering, counterfeit currency, kidnap and extortion. While NCIS gathers intelligence on these issues, NCS deals with the investigation of such crimes.

Partnerships and other local bodies

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs): CDRPs are led by the police and local authorities but involve a range of other partners. They develop strategies in consultation with local communities to tackle their priority crime and disorder problems. There are 376 CDRPs in England and Wales.

Drug Action Teams (DATs): DATs bring together representatives of all the local agencies involved in tackling the misuse of drugs. DATs work with CDRPs to help the police and communities tackle local drug problems and associated crime.

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs): LSPs are obligatory in 88 designated neighbourhood renewal areas but have also been formed in many other areas. They are convened by local authorities to produce their community strategies. LSPs can provide an overarching framework within which other, more specific partnerships (e.g. CDRPs and DATs) can operate.

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs): YOTs are responsible for coordinating the work of the youth justice services. There is one in each local authority in England and Wales. They assess the needs of youth offenders and identify suitable programmes to address those needs with the intention of preventing re-offending.

Local Criminal Justice Boards(LCJBs): There are 42 LCJBs. They comprise the chief officers of key criminal justice agencies in each area – police, crown prosecution service, the courts, probation, prisons and YOTs. They ensure a joined up approach to the key criminal justice targets to bring more offenders to justice and improve public confidence in the system.

Other relevant organisations

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC): HMIC is an independent inspectorate established over a century ago. It is responsible for promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England, Wales and Northern Ireland through inspection of police organisations and functions to ensure: agreed standards are achieved and maintained, good practice is spread and performance is improved. It also provides professional advice and support to the tripartite partners (Home Secretary, police authorities and forces) and plays an important role in the development of future leaders.

Police Standards Unit (PSU): The Police Standards Unit, within the Home Office, was set up to help deliver the Government's commitment to raise standards and improve operational performance of the police in order to maintain and enhance public satisfaction with policing in their areas. It does this through, for example, performance monitoring and targeted support for police forces and Basic Command Units.

National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE): The NCPE was established in April 2003 to increase the professional capacity of the police by identifying and disseminating evidence-based best practice. As well as its role in issuing codes of practice and guidance, the NCPE is also improving its ability to provide active, on-site operational support to major crime cases and major incidents.

Annex II

Consultation criteria

The Code of Practice on Written Consultation issued by the Cabinet Office recommends the following criteria:

- A Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.
- B It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.
- C A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.
- D Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.
- E Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.
- F Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.
- G Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.

The full code of practice is available at:

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/ConsultationCode.htm

Consultation Coordinator

If you have any complaints or comments about the consultation process, you should contact the Home Office consultation coordinator Bruce Bebbington by email at:

bruce.bebbington@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Alternatively, you may wish to write to:

Bruce Bebbington
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