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Chiefs and Chairs
Police Federation
Police Superintendents Association
Unison

27 March 2007

Dear Colleagues

Today the Prime Minister and I published the results of a Cabinet wide policy review of the government's long-term strategy on security, crime, immigration and community cohesion - one of a number of reviews the Cabinet has been undertaking across the whole range of government policy.

The review points to the progress we have made, with your help, in reducing crime and the public's fear of crime and in bringing more offenders to justice.

The review has also identified three key elements which should underpin our our future approach to crime and disorder.

First, a renewed cross-government focus on prevention so that we identify and intervene with at-risk youngsters as early as possible, target and grip the most prolific offenders and, work with business to design out crime wherever possible.

Second, continuing the excellent progress that has been made on improving detection and enforcement. We will make sure that the police service, courts and CPS have the powers they need to punish crimes and enforce sentences as rapidly as possible – with seizure of criminal assets a particular priority.

And third, a commitment to further reform of the criminal justice system so it works for the law abiding citizen and is responsive to the priorities of local people.

The police service will be crucial to delivering all of the above. We have a positive story to tell across the full range of police work – from falling crime and increasing neighbourhood policing to tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing volume crime. The Police Service itself has never been bigger or better resourced. But, as I identified in my recent statement of Common Values, the challenges facing you are significant and fast moving.

That is why I want to ask those who know policing best – officers at every level of the service and other key stakeholders – to come together to harness your energy and ideas for reforming the service in a review of 4 key areas:

- a) How we reduce bureaucracy and red tape so frontline officers can get on with their job
- b) Embedding the excellent progress we've made on neighbourhood policing so it becomes a permanent part of the policing landscape
- c) How we ensure that the public are driving local police priorities
- d) How the police service can best manage its resources to deliver on all the challenges facing it.

I have asked Sir Ronnie Flanagan, in his capacity as my senior professional adviser on policing, to think about these issues – and the likely landscape of policing for the coming years – through a review that I have announced today.

I have asked Sir Ronnie for a report on what can be done to reduce bureaucracy and mainstream neighbourhood policing by August and then for ideas on local involvement and accountability and on resource management by the end of the year.

The review is only one element of the continuing work that the government and the police service are carrying out to deliver a service to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Nonetheless, these are significant and pressing issues where Sir Ronnie's report will have a real impact.

We will be working over the next few days to further develop the details of the review. I am clear that its success will require the engagement and support of all the key stakeholders and partners.

I will of course make sure that you are all kept up to date with this work as it develops.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Reid', with a horizontal line underneath.

JOHN REID