



# Your Police or Mine?

Delivering local police leadership

An NLGN Paper by **Anthony Brand**



POLICE

New Local Government Network (NLGN) is an independent think tank that seeks to transform public services, revitalise local political leadership and empower local communities. NLGN is publishing this White Paper as part of its innovative policy projects, which we hope will be of use to policy makers and practitioners. The views expressed are however those of the authors and not necessarily those of NLGN.

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# 1 *Introduction*

**Locally elected councils, and through them communities, should be put back at the heart of an overly-centralised criminal justice system that is struggling to maintain the public trust. We argue that a more locally tailored and responsive criminal justice service would strengthen community ties, restore public faith in the criminal justice system and reduce fear of crime.**

Strengthening the role of local authorities in policing can deliver visible local police accountability, increase efficiency, improve service co-ordination, strengthen community engagement, target local crime more effectively and create a police force that is truly embedded within the local community it serves. Council Leaders, as the figureheads for local democracy and directly accountable to the public vote, should lead and support such a system.

To this end we recommend that:

- Police Authority and/or Basic Command Unit (BCU) boundaries be made coterminous with those of local authorities’.
- Chief Constables will be made directly accountable to Local leaders.
- Police Authorities be abolished and their functions taken on by upper-tier local authorities, led by local Leaders in consultation with community partners and a reformed Community Safety Partnership.
  - Council Leaders, in consultation with their CSP, set police budgets and hold police chiefs and commanders to account.
  - Local Leaders, with the CSP, set out police priorities, plans and targets for their area within a reformed Community Strategy that reports regularly to the communities it serves.

- The complex and disconnected network of existing community safety groups be streamlined and embedded within the CSP.

These changes could release millions for investment in frontline policing, better co-ordinate community safety related services, improve community engagement mechanisms and deliver the visible, democratic accountability necessary to increase public satisfaction and reduce fear of crime.

## 2 *Control and accountability*

### **Control**

Throughout the nineteenth century and part of the twentieth, policing was largely seen as a responsibility of local government. Localities decided whether a police force was even required in that area. Even much later, local watch committees remained firmly in control of the local force's budget, remit and operation.

*“The mid-to-late nineteenth century saw the heyday of independent borough policing. Watch committees, meeting weekly, had the power to hire and fire members of their forces and ...[inhabitants could put enough pressure on the watch committee to reverse policy].”*

**C.Williams (2003) *Britain's police forces: forever removed from democratic control?***

Today's framework of police accountability is almost unrecognisable from these early forms. A century of centralisation later, the desire for a national force and the force's own push for independence has reduced the role of local politics in policing. The modern system now operates within a 'tripartite' structure that attempts to create a balance of powers, checks and responsibilities between Chief Constables, Police Authorities and the Home Secretary.

In theory, the modern Police Authority:

- sets the strategic direction for the force;
- holds the chief constable to account on behalf of the local community;
- decides how much council tax should be raised for policing;
- appoints (and dismisses) the chief constable and senior police officers;
- consults with the community on local priorities;

- sets local targets for achievement;
- monitors progress; and
- publishes a 3 year and annual plan.<sup>1</sup>

In practice this structure has also been revisited and reformed over time. The influence of the modern Police Authority now varies from area to area but in general reform has resulted in a more centralised and top down system where:

- budget control has transferred from Police Authorities to Chief Constables;
- the Police Authority is commonly seen as having “no teeth” or leverage over the force;
- since 1994 Police Authorities have had a statutory requirement to publish a local policing plan that is consistent with the Home Secretary’s priorities in order to draw down Home Office funding; and
- there have been concerns about the top-slicing and ring fencing of grant funding for specific central Government policy objectives.<sup>2</sup>

There are now 43 Police Authorities in England and Wales (reduced from 117 in 1964) which broadly (though not exactly) match the boundaries of upper tier or old metropolitan councils. Ongoing suggestions to further merge and reduce the number of Police Authorities have been put on hold, at least in the short-term. The structure of these authorities has also been reformed. Following legislation in 1994, the membership of Police Authorities was reduced from around 35 to 17. The role of local authorities within Police Authorities has also been diluted. They now contain nine Councillors from relevant (upper tier) local authorities, three local Magistrates and five independent members.

The 2006 Police and Justice Act did little to tackle the issue of local control. It did delegate some powers on anti-social behaviour and parenting orders to local authorities and their partners. It also opened the way for

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<sup>1</sup> Association of Police Authorities website

<sup>2</sup> Politics.co.uk Police *Funding*

some delegation of responsibility and function to area committees, but for the most part it continued the centralising trend. For example, the Act allows the Home Secretary to change the role and membership of under-performing Police Authorities. The Association of Police Authorities (APA) stated, **“the Bill represents a fundamental shift of control over policing from local people to the Home Secretary.”**<sup>3</sup> This shift away from local control occurred despite local authorities, through Police Authorities, remaining responsible for a large proportion of local police funding. Over the last ten years the proportion of total police funding raised through precept on council tax has risen from 13% in 1997–98 to 21.5% in 2006–07.<sup>4</sup> Non-metropolitan areas contribute 29% of total police budgets, metropolitan areas 15%.<sup>5</sup> There is a disconnect here that needs to be addressed.

Critics argue that in its current form the modern police force has become detached from society, bogged down with bureaucracy and responsive to central policy rather than local need. Research has suggested that **“central Government crime targets and initiatives distort priorities and have little if any impact in altering the behaviour of policing on the ground.”**<sup>6</sup> This same research highlighted the fact that a key driver of crime in the capital was drugs and yet there were no targets for drug related crime.

Police officers themselves are the first to complain that the national performance framework sets targets that fail to take into account local needs and distort the focus of police activity in some areas.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the misuse and politicisation of crime statistics has also exacerbated the public’s distrust of policing and undermined the very real progress made on the ground.

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**3** Association of Police Authorities (Jan 25 2006) *Listen To Communities On Police Restructuring*

**4** House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (2007) *Police Funding, Fourth Report of Session 2006–07*

**5** B.Loveday (2006) *Size Isn’t Everything*

**6** M.MacGregor (2005) *Manifesto for the Met*

**7** P. Johnston (Sept 7 2007) *Police chief to attack crime target ‘shambles’* article in *Daily Telegraph*

***“[The assumption is]...that the police’s relations with the community need to be monitored from above: ....that the police’s relations with society can be assessed on the basis of statistical returns.”***

**Direct Democracy (June 5 2006) *The Politics of Crime***

This centralisation of control makes it difficult for a local authority to fulfil its duty to ‘do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area’. This is despite the fact that communities may continue to hold the council accountable in their own minds for the performance of the police in their area.

***“Even with the useful Best Value tool, authorities have limited ‘clout’ in challenging and holding the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the force against strategic objectives.”***

**Durham Police Authority (2004) *Response to consultation paper***

Absence of local accountability has had an impact on communities’ ability to get their voices heard. For example, despite representing the last bastion of local control, research has shown that the vast majority of people are not even aware of Police Authorities. Fewer still are aware of CDRPs.

A perceived lack of influence leads to dissatisfaction and disillusionment amongst the public. Crime is the number one issue in Britain for 40% of the population, up from 25% 10 years ago.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, only a third of people see the police performance as good or very good. One in five (20%) say they never go out alone after dark in their local area.<sup>9</sup> Even in London satisfaction with and confidence in the police sits at just over 50%.<sup>10</sup> A complaint too common among members of many communities is that the police are not responding to their concerns, targeting the wrong areas and failing to understand the needs of local areas.

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**8** *Political Monitor (2007) Long Term Trends: The Most Important Issues Facing Britain Today*

**9** *General Household Survey (2000)*

**10** *MPA (2006) Monthly performance information*

Some research has even suggested that the civil unrest seen in the 1980's to some extent resulted from the distancing of the police from the communities they serve and the passing of responsibility for policing styles and priorities to senior officers.<sup>11</sup>

Despite everything, policing remains essentially a local service. We may recognise the need for cross boundary working to tackle issues such as terrorism and organised crime, but to most people it is the way police deal with local crime and disorder that matters most. We must acknowledge that that we are moving, as in all policy areas, ***“from traditional notions of policing simply by consent or people’s passive acquiescence, to policing with the proactive engagement and co-operation of communities.”***<sup>12</sup> If this is the case, how can it be achieved?

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<sup>11</sup> B.Loveday (2006) *Size Isn't Everything*

<sup>12</sup> <sup>0</sup> *Building Communities, Beating Crime*

### 3 *Walking to a local beat*

Under-pinning the nine principles of policing is the proposition that the police are dependent on public co-operation and approval of their existence, actions and behaviour. In his recent review, Sir Ronnie Flanagan reported that to achieve this goal and tackle the challenges of the modern era, policing must:

***“[enhance] mechanisms for local accountability to enable local people to have a real role in setting policing priorities for their area and to have means to rigorously hold their local police to account for delivery.”<sup>13</sup>***

Some steps have been taken. Though doing little to increase local control of policing, the 2006 bill did attempt to address the issue of accountability. It places a duty on Police Authorities to make arrangements for obtaining the views of the community and the cooperation of the community in preventing crime. Most interestingly, in line with the local government white paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, the bill puts ward councillors under a duty to respond to a Community Call for Action (CCA) on a matter concerning crime and disorder in that area. If made, councillors must indicate what (if any) action is proposed to address the concerns.

The White Paper also extended the remit of local authorities to scrutinise the functioning Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), also known as Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). This includes a requirement for local authorities to have a committee to scrutinise the way in which persons and bodies responsible for tackling crime and disorder discharge their functions. CDRPs, introduced in 1998, ensure that the police, the council and other local agencies interact to develop and implement strategies targeting local crime and safety priorities. These may include anything from drug dealing, to abandoned cars, to alcohol abuse to hate crime. These

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**13** R.Flanagan (2007) *The Review of Policing Interim Report*

partnerships have a duty to produce crime and disorder strategies for their area which, as of this year, have a duty to report to the communities in which they are devised rather than to the Home Office.

Furthermore, several areas now have Community Police Consultative Groups (CPGPs), also known as Community Safety Boards, that provide the community and the police with an opportunity to share information and develop a common understanding around local issues of community safety and crime.

Another positive step was made with the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing. Introduced in 2005 and expected to be nationwide by 2008, *Safer Neighbourhoods* requires consistent and recognisable neighbourhood teams of police officers, Community Support Officers (CSOs) and Special Constables to be present in each neighbourhood. Working with local partners such as ward councillors, neighbourhood managers, youth workers and private security companies, these teams help identify neighbourhood priorities and tackle local issues. They work through local centres, pool local information and feedback to communities on progress. Safer Neighbourhood Panels are in development to support these teams by using available community intelligence to identify local priorities and then monitoring and reviewing progress.

Neighbourhood Policing is expected to provide visible, accessible and well-known local police officers, to promote community involvement and engagement, and to ensure that local problems are identified and targeted. These schemes are expected to increase police legitimacy and better engage with citizens on a daily basis in order to reducing both crime and the fear of crime.

In tandem with the Citizen Focussed Policing Programme and through local schemes such as Nottinghamshire Police's 'Getting Close' programme, Neighbourhood Policing has been successful in reducing fear of crime, improving perceptions of the prevalence of crime, increasing local satisfaction

with the police in dealing with local issues and increasing familiarity with local police officers.<sup>14</sup>

Several other policies due to be introduced will attempt to bring communities closer to their local police force. In 2008 Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) will be introduced. This new performance management framework will provide the Home Office and partners with the capability to monitor and assess performance by area, organisation, partnership and policy area.<sup>15</sup> This will provide greater flexibility and information to drive local accountability. By April 2008, local authorities will also be able to deal with local problems by making byelaws without the Secretary of State's confirmation and enforcing them by fixed penalty notices.

Finally, in her speech to this year's Labour conference, the Home Secretary announced the statutory publication and dissemination of Local Policing Summaries and the development of local community safety budgets shared between police, local authorities and other agencies.

The question is whether all this is enough and, if not, how it could be improved. Mainstreaming the community focus of policing is a recommendation of the recent police review. The review suggested greater cooperation between Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Home Office, including alignment of neighbourhood management delivery plans with policing plans supported by a national cross-departmental team. Aligning existing national with local policy would be beneficial but a more radical solution may be appropriate.

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**14** National Centre for Policing Excellence (2006) *Professionalising The Business Of Neighbourhood Policing*

**15** Home Office – Police website

## 4 *Local control, international impact*

One idea is to bring local accountability and responsiveness together through visible, locally accountable, police leadership. This could be achieved in several ways. One idea, suggested by the Conservatives in 2003 (A Fair Deal on Crime) stated that:

- in areas where a police force covers precisely the same area that is governed by a directly elected mayor, we propose the mayor should be the Police Authority, with an advisory board of elected representatives and membership from the magistracy;
- in areas where a police force covers precisely the same area that is governed by a single existing local authority, either the existing authority could become the Police Authority, or a new single purpose authority could be directly elected; and
- where there is no precise correlation between a single local authority and a single police force a single purpose, a directly elected Police Authority would be created.

In its initial form this policy shied away from a single, elected police representative as seen in the Unites States, but last year the policy re-emerged with the added proposition that areas may decide to introduce elected sheriffs.<sup>16</sup>

The idea of an elected police official borrows from the United States' system, itself imported from the old British system. In the US, criminal justice and public safety have long been a matter of state and local responsibility with a relatively modest federal role. The role and functions of the local police official vary from state to state and from county to county, but a sheriff is usually the highest law enforcement officer in a county. These figures are

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<sup>16</sup> D.Cameron (July 10 2006) *Cameron: Restoring public confidence in our criminal justice system*

usually elected (directly or indirectly) and are responsible for functions ranging from basic administrative duties and commissioning prison services in some areas, up to the management of all law-enforcement functions in others.

Several high profile local police leaders have now become examples across the world. Possibly the most well-known of these figures is Joe Arpaio, Sheriff of Maricopa County in Arizona. Arpaio is best known for his use of prisoners within chain gangs performing community service such as cleaning roadways.<sup>17</sup> He receives approval ratings of 75-85 per cent and has implemented several other innovative policies across sentencing, probation, prison services and policing.

Elsewhere in the US, locally accountable police leadership has already proved successful. New York's 'zero tolerance' policy of the 1990's was strongly associated with a fall in crime in the city. The perception is that the reforms introduced by the then Police Commissioner William J Bratton, with strong support from Mayor Guiliani, dramatically improved the area and restored public confidence in the system.

In many ways the New York strategy was actually a return to 'community policing' rather than an aggressive zero tolerance policy. The distancing of police from the general public, minimal interaction with local communities and a centralised control system were replaced by greater partnership, devolution of accountability to precinct commanders and a shift toward crime reduction as well as detection.

***“Precinct commanders were given new levels of freedom over how to deploy their officers and develop their own strategies for solving the complex but unique problems facing each precinct.”<sup>18</sup>***

It should be noted that the system has also had its critics. Some would argue that such a policy has gone too far, targeting otherwise law abiding citizens

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**17** Sheriff Joe Arpaio (June 14 2006) *Why they vote for America's Toughest Lawman* article in *Telegraph*

**18** Adam Smith Institute website *Cutting crime by fixing the broken windows*

for crimes such as kite-flying and not displaying sales licenses clearly.<sup>19</sup> Others claim that it has led to formalised police brutality and that this policy was not itself directly responsible for crime rates falling. Nevertheless, overall crime fell by 54 per cent between 1992 and 2000 including sharp falls in robbery and murder rates and this is generally perceived to be a direct result of local police leadership.

Similar leadership has been seen in the UK. Brian Paddick, one time commander of the London Borough of Lambeth and now Liberal Democrat candidate for Mayor of London, became a well known local figure for his attitudes and policy towards cannabis in Brixton. In 2002 the local police adopted a pilot scheme whereby they would not arrest or charge people found in possession of cannabis. Though some residents have criticised the perception that drug dealing receives a softer policing response than minor cycling offences, the scheme is generally seen to have improved community relations and boosted the popularity of Paddick himself. A MORI poll taken shortly after its introduction showed 83% of Brixton's residents backed the policy. Statistics suggest the policy also led to more arrests for hard drugs and a fall in street crime.

***“Different communities tolerate different types and levels of criminality. If you want community support for policing, you must concentrate on the crimes at the top of the community's list.”***

**Brian Paddick, (July 2 2002) *My drugs policy is working* article in *The Guardian***

At the same time, in 2002 former Detective Superintendent Ray Mallon was elected Mayor of Middlesbrough. He was re-elected this year with a huge majority. He initially came to prominence with a local policing strategy which he called “Here and Now”, based on the four principles of education, prevention, punishment and rehabilitation. He is credited with having cut crime as both a police officer and a politician and was twice voted ‘man of the year’ by his local BBC radio station. Some suggest he has shown that

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<sup>19</sup> NineMSN (1999) *Zero Tolerance New York Style*

effective local police leadership can be both politically powerful and effective in cutting crime.

Finally, in London the Mayor has been introduced as a fourth pillar of responsibility for the police. The Mayor has the power to appoint members of the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) and the MPA must submit a budget to the Mayor highlighting how it fits with the Annual Policing Plan and the Mayoral policies, priorities and strategies. There are some limits to this power – the Home Secretary appoints the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Mayor is not permitted to chair the Police Authority.

Some argue that this situation leaves blurred and confusing lines of accountability. Others state that the individual Boroughs should have greater influence. Nevertheless, few would disagree that placing a degree of accountability for policing with an elected official has improved public perceptions of the Metropolitan Police and its responsiveness to local people.

## **5** *This town ain't big enough for both of us*

There is an emerging view that the criminal justice system should re-explore opportunities to connect community concerns with the pursuit of justice and that some elements of the system are prime candidates for greater local accountability, scrutiny and involvement. Can we deliver a more locally responsive and accountable police force?

***“Research shows that people have a preference for their local police to be locally accountable, with Police Authorities set at as local a level as possible, with local people helping set those priorities.”***

**Sir Ronnie Flanagan (2007) *The Review of Policing***

The modern police force evolved from a locally accountable, funded and managed policing framework. Politicians and the public are now looking for a way of returning local communities to the centre of what the police does and stands for. As yet there is limited agreement on how this might be achieved.

As highlighted above, the elected Sheriff provides one potential policy solution. Each Police Authority could hold an election for the position of ‘Sheriff’ and this person could operate as a Mayoral figure, supported by the Police Authority as their executive cabinet. Alternatively, more power could be put in the hands of the Sheriff and they might operate on par with chief constables in designing and delivering on local police policy.

Other consultation on police reform has suggested increasing police accountability through such means as directly elected police boards, a new mix of elected councillors and citizens within Police Authorities supported by stronger scrutiny arrangements.

Conservative policy is now pushing for some form of elected Police Authority but this argument is not a new one, even in the UK. In 1992 Labour policy

suggested an elected Police Authority for the Greater London area.<sup>20</sup> Once in power, in 1998 the then Secretary of State for the Home Department, Jack Straw, drew upon his own Private Member's Bill from 1980. In this he stated:

***"I believe that experience has shown that in the Metropolitan area there is . . . insufficient accountability . . . through local representatives. That can be remedied only by having a Greater London police force responsible to a local and democratically elected Police Authority."***

Yet support for such a move is limited and in the current power structure it may not deliver the responsiveness and community-centred service we desire.

***"There is no support for directly elected Police Authorities..... directly elected authorities would be no more effective if they had to work within the constraints currently hampering the work of Police Authorities."***<sup>21</sup>  
**Durham Police Authority (2004) Response to consultation paper**

Others, including Conservative policy-makers, recognise that existing political leaders might be a more appropriate foundation for developing new forms of engagement and accountability within the police. In areas with a Mayoral system it is suggested that the Mayor could be an effective figurehead for the police. This may be relevant in the few areas with a strong, visible Mayor, but what about the rest of the country? Conservative policy has returned here to the idea of an elected Police Authority.

Whichever format is chosen, direct elections to CDRPs, elected Police Authorities or a directly elected 'Sheriff', there are unintended consequences that undermine each model. For one, the introduction of additional elections could test the patience of the public and we may not expect a high turnout. For another, it would introduce additional expense and most likely result in another layer of bureaucracy. More importantly still, it would:

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<sup>20</sup> T.Banks (Feb 20 1992) *House of commons records*

<sup>21</sup> Durham Police Authority (2004) *Response to consultation paper*

- empower new, mandated politicians with narrow sets of public policy foci that will not be pressured to consider the implications of their political decisions across the whole of the local public policy arena; and
- create over-lapping legitimate structures that may compete for influence in areas of shared public policy interest – thereby lessening the power local political representatives have to take wide ranging policy decisions based on a broader mandate for improving the area.

Other criticisms already levelled at elected police officials include fears that:

- it will lead to inappropriate, populist policies;
- the system may be abused by extremists; and
- it will undermine the police's independence and expertise in the field.

So is there an alternative?

## 6 *A Vision for the future*

The premise that ‘it makes sense to bring forces into line with local government boundaries, thus giving voters a clearer idea of where responsibility lies’ is sound. But rather than introduce a new layer of bureaucracy and potential political conflict, we can use existing agencies and models of accountability to strengthen the role of local authorities and local Leaders in policing.

NLGN works closely with the elected Mayors in England. We have seen first hand the role they can play in responding to and shaping communities, driving local responsiveness and accountability across a range of services. Research suggests a positive relationship between the number of powers afforded to local leaders and performance, particularly public satisfaction and (less directly) CPA scores.<sup>22</sup> In light of this success the Mayoral role could be significantly expanded. In our report, *Mayors making a difference*, the Mayor of Newham, Robin Wales, argued that **“so much more could be achieved ...if the police were made accountable to the people of Newham through their Mayor.”**

In areas without Mayors, local Council Leaders could assume responsibility for local policing. Leaders and local councils are directly accountable to their electorate and so their performance (or lack of it) has a tangible outcome – re-election. This ultimate accountability ensures that communities are consulted and that policy responses meet local concerns, something that the public feel is too often missing from the existing police structure. The 2007 Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act developed further the distinct and important role of Council Leaders within our legislative framework. We believe that enhancing their powers with policing responsibilities would be in line with this more high-profile series of reforms.

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<sup>22</sup> G.Stoker (2004) *Does Leadership Matter?*

This new framework would, where possible, match existing local authority boundaries and leadership with the Police Authorities'. Subsequently:

- Political accountability for policing in an area would lay with the Leader of the upper-tier local authority in that area.
- Where the Police Authority boundary overlaps with more than one upper-tier authority the boundaries should be adjusted to match those of the local authority.
- Where two or more councils share a Police Authority (such as the metropolitan areas of Manchester and Liverpool) responsibility would be devolved to the territorial division or Basic Command Unit (BCU) that more closely mirrors the local authority boundaries.
  - Where these divisions do not exist, they should be created.
- In two-tier areas, the Leader of the county council would be expected to take on this role (county councillors already stand as Police Authority members).
  - County Council Leaders would have a duty, with supporting engagement and governance mechanisms, to ensure districts (perhaps through CDRPs) were involved in and consulted on the Community Safety Strategy.
- In London, primary responsibility for strategy would remain with the Mayor but the Borough role (particularly over 'level one' crime) would be strengthened. Individual Boroughs would be given the opportunity to set their own policing strategy and where proposals were rejected by the London Mayor there should be a requirement that they explain their reasons with reasonable evidence, detailing where opportunity for negotiation was provided. The final decision on implementation should then lie with the Home Secretary.

- o Boroughs with a Mayor would see their own strategy implemented automatically following negotiation with the London Mayor.

In this way existing local Leaders, whose roles have already been strengthened by the *Strong and Prosperous Communities* White Paper, can provide an effective and intelligence led link between the police force and local communities.

New policy is about to provide local authority Leaders with four-year platforms and a clarified set of powers and responsibilities. Leaders will also be given the power to appoint their cabinet. This new improved leadership role supports greater stability and creates the political space in which longer-term strategies can be developed and implemented. This would further reduce the political upheaval, shifting policies and short-termism that might otherwise undermine effective local policing.

Several other concerns outlined previously can also be addressed by working within the existing political framework. Modern, place-shaping local authorities understand and respond to the full range of cross-cutting issues in their area. They develop balanced policy that integrates with and compliments a wider community strategy. Siloed thinking and single issue politics are no longer compatible with the long-term strategic thinking that drives the most successful and progressive councils. By ensuring that responsibility lies with council leaders we ensure that police strategy is also thought through and produced in conjunction with other local policy. Extremist or populist policy is less likely when the effects (financial, social, political) are weighed against other impacts on the local community.

**Working with their CSPs, council Leaders should replace Police Authorities as the third pillar of accountability in the tripartite power structure.**

**Police Authorities should be aligned with local authority areas and their role subsumed within CSPs.**

**Where Police Authorities currently cover more than one unitary or metropolitan council, Basic Command Unit (BCU) boundaries should match those of the individual authorities and local authority jurisdiction should be at BCU level. Wider strategic and budget decisions will be made by the Chief Constable and a new Strategic Area Police Board. This board should include the leaders of each authority in the area (or their representatives) in consultation with their CSPs.**

Deciding how the local police leadership role is developed and what specific responsibilities it might entail is more problematic. The Police have long fought any attempt to alter their own systems of control and management by strengthening outside influences. The almost military chain of command structure and the final accountability of the police to the law rather than the Government is rightly defended by the force. Despite improvements the role and influence of agencies such as CDRPs varies around the country and it is still sometimes said that the 'Police do not do partnership.' The integration of local community influence into this structure must be done sensitively.

There are also fears that that a single point of local control and accountability would dilute the broad range of skills and experience available within Police Authorities. Certainly these skills should not be lost. In parallel to a more influential role for local Leaders, the influence and support of other community safety groups should be emphasised, not diluted. This means ensuring that local Leaders are in tune with and responsive to the structures already in place.

Firstly, clarity must be had over the role of CDRPs, Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), LSPs etc. A recent review proposed that that CDRPs should work specifically as a strategic subgroup of the LSP. To ensure public engagement and understanding this relationship could be made clearer still.

**All upper-tier authority areas must have a Community Safety Partnership that functions as a strategic sub-group of their Local Strategic Partnership. They should be named as such.**

**Crime and Reduction Partnerships will only exist to deliver a similar function in lower-tier local authorities where the LSP decides it is appropriate.**

As detailed above, local authorities are now expected to scrutinise CSPs and the way in which crime and disorder related bodies discharge their functions. Community Safety Strategies must also now report to the communities in which they are devised rather than the Home Office. The strategic and operational elements of CSPs are to be split, with LSPs taking on the strategic role. This new CSP role could be strengthened and clarified. Strengthened CSPs must work with the police and the community to deliver the six-monthly strategic intelligence assessments and rolling three-year community safety plans. These plans should cover both policing and community safety. LSPs will support the CSP to set community priorities and integrate community safety policy with other strategies.

The missing link in this new structure is the introduction of clear local lines of accountability for the public supported by increased local powers. Placing the accountability for and strategic direction of the police with local authority Leaders would support more effective cross-agency working. It would allow the police to work more closely with local support services to create a more flexible, coherent and cohesive crime and disorder strategy.<sup>23</sup> Giving local Leaders ultimate responsibility for Crime and Disorder Strategies and Community Safety Plans and more direct influence over CDRPs and the Police completes circle of work already under way.

**CSPs will produce an authority-wide Community Safety Strategy that incorporates the existing Community Safety Strategy, the Policing Plan, Neighbourhood Policing policy and new LAA targets to replace the majority of national policing targets. These plans will be part of the LAA and will prescribe any additional powers necessary to meet these targets.**

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<sup>23</sup> B.Loveday (2003) *Police Reform and Local Government*

**Upper-tier authority Leaders must have sign-off on the Community Safety Strategy.**

Local operational level decisions could still be made with the input of lower-tier local leaders through Crime and Disorder Strategies. These would set broad local police priorities and have direct influence over the neighbourhood policing agenda. Upper-tier leaders would have an opportunity to suggest changes to ensure consistency with wider strategic Community Safety Plans and LAAs.

**The leader, in consultation with the CSP, should be given greater operational influence with direct control over neighbourhood policing and its budgets.**

**Lower-tier authority leaders should have an advisory role in developing CDRPs in their area but must ensure Crime and Disorder Strategies are both appropriate for the local area and in line with the wider Community Safety Strategy. They may also carry out consultation and engagement on behalf of the CSP but again this relationship must be made clear.**

Increased council responsibilities must be matched with increased local influence over the police. To ensure police cooperation there must be a clearer duty on the police to contribute to and abide by the aims and priorities outlined in Community Safety Plans and Crime and Disorder Strategies.

**The Chief Constable must work directly with the upper-tier local Leader and CSP to agree local priorities for the Community Safety Strategy. Where Police Authorities currently cover more than one unitary or metropolitan council, responsibility for this duty will pass to BCU Commanders.**

**Once agreed, the local police force have a duty to direct resource and operational focus toward such priorities as set out in the Strategy.**

**Local Policing Summaries must provide information outlining how they have done this.**

In order to wield this influence local authorities need increased control over the police's finances. Not only would this give Leaders the leverage necessary to ensure a responsive police force, it would also allow the police to benefit from the local authorities experience in commissioning, partnership working across authority boundaries, implementing shared services and getting value for money. This would improve efficiency and address some of the issues behind recent attempts at police reorganisation.

**The upper-tier local authority Leader should be given power to set the police budget in consultation with the CSP and lower-tier leaders, through the LAA. Basic Command Unit (BCU) Funds should be allocated directly through the 'Safer Stronger Communities Fund' element of the LAA.**

**Where Police Authorities cover more than one unitary or metropolitan council, BCU budget decision will be made at local authority level. Over-arching budget decisions will fall to the Strategic Area Police Board.**

**In London the budget will continue to be set by the Mayor but may be vetoed where two thirds of London's local authority Leaders vote against it.**

The police must see a parallel increase in direct accountability.

**Police Chief Constables in each area must be held accountable by Leaders and CSPs to explain any failure to deliver on Community Safety plans.**

### Two-Tier Areas

Upp-tier local leaders, in consultation with CSPs and lower-tier leaders, should have the power to dismiss the Chief Constable subject to Home Secretary agreement. New Chief Constables should be appointed by the upper-tier local Leader and the Home Secretary, in consultation with the CSP and lower-tier leaders.

### Multi-Council Areas

Where the Police Authority covers more than one metropolitan or unitary authority the BCU commander will be accountable to their relevant council. A review of the commander's position can be requested by the council Leader, following CSP consultation. The Chief Constable will remain responsible for conducting the review and appointing commanders.

The Chief Constable will be accountable to the Strategic Area Police Board (SAPB) consisting of the Leaders from each local authority (or their representatives). A two-thirds majority vote from the SAPB, with evidenced support from their CSPs, can lead to the Chief Constables dismissal - subject to Home Secretary approval.

### London

In London, the Chief Constable will be directly accountable to the Mayor and the Home Secretary but a review can be triggered by a majority vote from two-thirds of London's council Leaders. A review of a BCU commander's position can be requested by the council Leader, following CSP consultation.

Other steps could be taken to streamline and more effectively integrate each stage of the policy process. The streamlining and reduction in number of community safety agencies and strategies is necessary to focus points of control of accountability both internally and for the public. Community Police Consultative Groups and Community Safety Boards should be folded into the CSPs research and engagement role with the assurance of appropriate and comprehensive community engagement mechanisms. This improved

community engagement role will, through partnership working with the scrutiny committee, be the main conduit for the Community Call to Action.

Neighbourhood Policing Teams would be accountable and responsive to CSPs. The new Safer Neighbourhood Panels (SNPs) and their intelligence role would be subsumed within CSPs though the suggested scrutiny element of SNPs would pass to the strengthened overview and scrutiny framework.

The monitoring and reviewing of neighbourhood policing strategy would be a key part of the Community Safety Strategy. Access to and information from the Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) will be made available to local scrutiny committees as well as the CSP. APACS will be clearly designated as an informational, monitoring and strategic tool, not a target setting or control mechanism. The CSP itself will have a duty to incorporate this information into the review of progress within the local Community Safety Strategy.

**The expanded CSP role would incorporate all of the existing disparate committees and panels. In London, the independent expertise of the MPA should be incorporated into the GLA's own Community Safety function.**

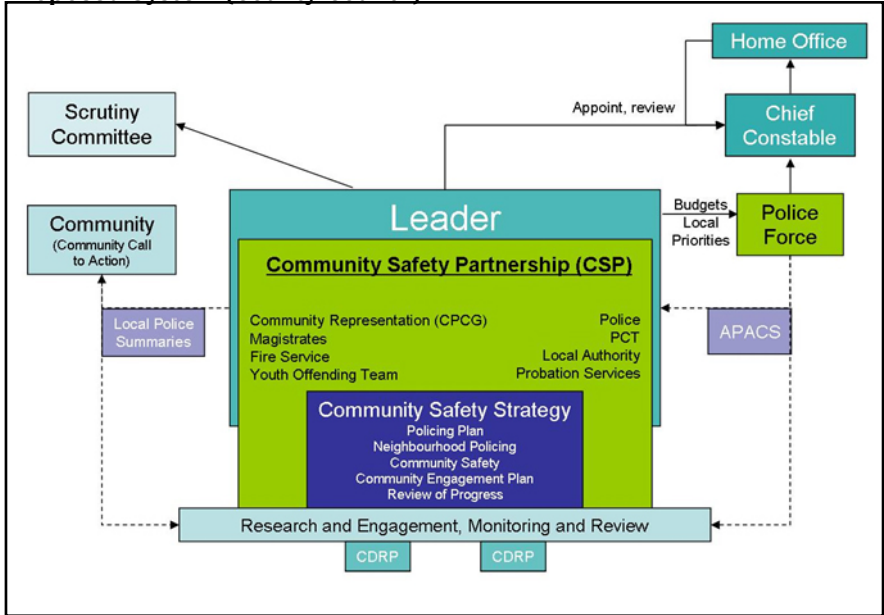
**The abolition of Police Authorities and the streamlining of other agencies and strategies could deliver savings in excess of £75 million. This could deliver up to 2,500 additional police officers.**

Once this new framework is in place it is vital to ensure that the public is fully aware of how it works and the importance of their own role within it. Without strong accountability, local consultation and input, the model cannot achieve its goals. More must be done to strengthen the community role within CSPs. The introduction of Local Policing Summaries must be supported by increased visibility and improved communications from the CSP.

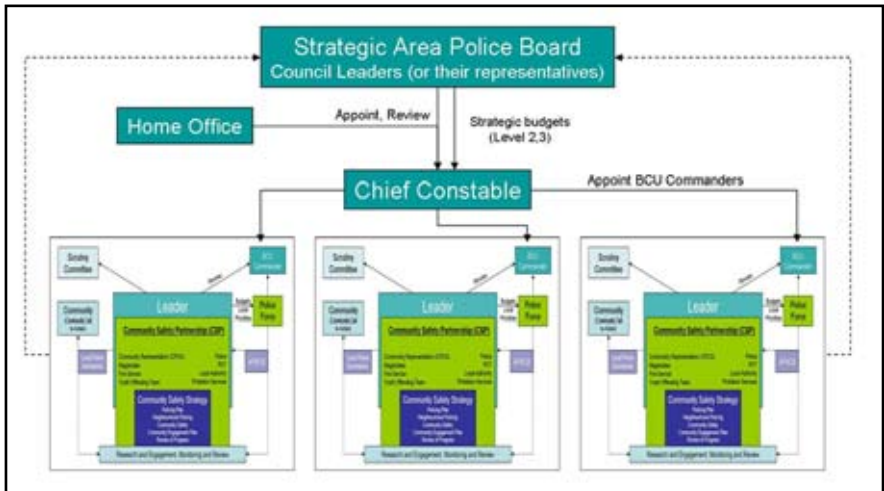
**A proportion of the savings made by reducing the number of community safety agencies and folding Police Authorities into CSPs**



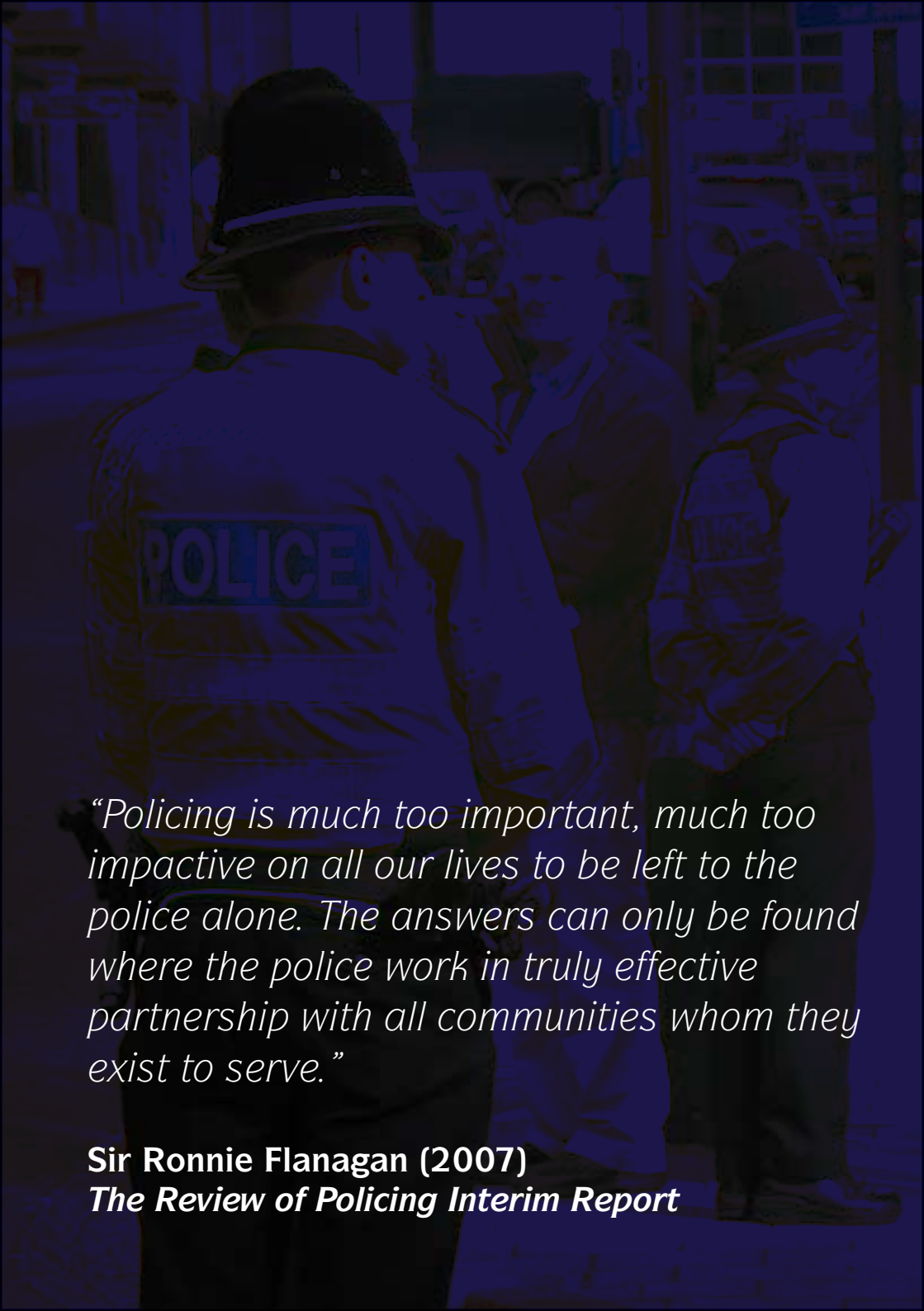
**Proposed System (County Council)**



**Proposed System (Multi-Council)**



It should be made clear that we are not advocating an outright politicisation of policing and criminal justice policy. Neither are we suggesting that the way in which the police force manages the treatment and detection of offenders should be unduly influenced by local authorities. Rather, we are asking that a modern Police Force be more closely attuned to local needs and that the relationship between communities and this arm of the state's apparatus be improved.



*“Policing is much too important, much too impactive on all our lives to be left to the police alone. The answers can only be found where the police work in truly effective partnership with all communities whom they exist to serve.”*

**Sir Ronnie Flanagan (2007)**  
***The Review of Policing Interim Report***