



Home Office

BUILDING A SAFE, JUST
AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

POLICING FOR THE 21st CENTURY

A Speech by the Home Secretary to the
Police Superintendents' Conference

11 September 2001

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1. This is a time of great change in policing. From the challenges of leadership to new technologies, the police service is changing quickly.
2. Over the past year, that process of change has been given concrete direction by the discussions set in motion by the Lancaster House seminar last October. Police reform is now in the process of substantive negotiations. It is a challenging time, and there is a lot for us all to play for.
3. I want to put on record the way in which I appreciate the work that has already taken place. My own predecessors laid the foundation on which myself and Ministers and officials are building. The police service at local level, through some difficult times over the past decade, has worked on delivering whilst engaging in developing the agenda. I know that the Superintendents' Association has played a valuable role in this process.
4. Superintendents are at the forefront of the process of change. It is you who are at the sharp end of driving up performance where it matters – at local level.
5. Police reform is a means to an end. The outcome we are striving for is a reduction in crime and a reduction in the fear of crime to improve the quality of people's lives. Crime will only be reduced by combining better policing with the work

of the Crime Reduction Partnerships, police authorities, local authorities and others.

Aims of police reform

6. So what I want to do today is build on the vision of policing I set out in my speech to the Chief Constables on 12 July. It is a vision for policing which understands that fighting of crime through prevention and better detection, providing for order and tackling anti-social behaviour is the tradition of our police service and is what the public expect.
7. The priorities are clear. It is the established role – public protection, prevention (of disorder and anti-social behaviour), as well as tackling head on violent, sexual, dangerous and drug related crime – that we are looking to fulfil through modern working practices, better detection and investigation. It will only be possible to reach our goals if all stakeholders work together, integrating public reassurance with tackling criminality and regenerating communities.
8. Progress is being made. The police service deserves significant credit for the falls in crime which have been delivered. Domestic burglary fell by 9% in the 12 months to March 2001 and has fallen over 30% since 1997. We are on track to meet the demanding target of a 25% reduction by March 2005 compared with 1999. Targeted projects have covered more than 2 million homes, and over 25,000 households occupied by low-income pensioners have been referred for improved security. The Reducing Burglary Initiative will provide important lessons for all partnerships seeking to improve their anti-burglary strategies.
9. Vehicle crime fell by 7% in the 12 months to March 2001 and we are also on track to meet that PSA target – a 30% reduction over the 5 years ending March 2004. Key measures have included exerting pressure on and working with other

stakeholders in the industry and elsewhere to improve security in cars and in car parks, to improve awareness of crime reduction issues amongst motorists and to take important steps against ‘ringing’. These steps, along with the work of VCRAT and the development of the appropriate legislation, have required both significant financial investment and – just as importantly – real co-operation amongst partners.

10. Reducing the incidence of crime is vital. But unless the fall in crime is accompanied by people feeling safer and considering themselves to be less at risk of becoming a victim, then progress may be undermined. This is why we are giving such emphasis to reducing anti-social behaviour and the kind of disorder that bedevils people day in day out in their neighbourhood. The public will begin to feel safer by a visible presence of authority and by the ability of the police to tackle disorder and crime effectively.
11. I believe that the hard work that all the stakeholders have put in over the summer means that we are now on the brink of embarking on rapid change and in shifting outmoded attitudes and regulations. We are all working to raise standards and improve performance.
12. And that is key. Levering up standards is at the heart of reform. I am looking at how proven good practice can be used appropriately in all forces. And where policing is below acceptable levels and proven methods are not being used, what powers are necessary to ensure that they are. I want all forces to use the same basic equipment, where it has been proven to work.
13. There is still more to be debated and negotiated. I have always approached police reform in a spirit of dialogue not dictat. I want to continue to work in partnership with the police service and police authorities so that we develop the reform programme together – as indeed we have so far.

14. That is why we are launching a police reform website – www.policereform.gov.uk. I am conscious that there is not enough direct dialogue between Ministers and police officers. This website will inform all stakeholders on what is really being proposed and enable them to comment.
15. As the Prime Minister has spelt out at the Trade Union Congress and elsewhere, public service reform is part of a wider agenda. To ensure not only confidence in the individual service but support for investment in providing to everyone, wherever they live and whoever they are, the highest possible quality provision. In the case of the police service – to ensure that people feel confident of being secure in their own home and on the streets.
16. In this way, reform can be seen as being for a purpose. Crucial to the well being of the community as whole – because we are interdependent – but vital in terms of supporting the individual in living their life in peace and being able to contribute more widely to the neighbourhood and society in which they live. In other words, we are modernising public services in order to win support for building what is there and providing for the future.
17. That is why increasing the numbers working in the service, improving the technology available and mobilising the wider community as part of the solution is vital.
18. Increasing police numbers means that the backdrop to the debate has changed from fear to confidence, that reform is not instead of more police officers and investment but a necessary path to reducing crime and the fear of crime. This is a wholly new conversation: a positive experience of complementing and adding to what is there rather than threatening its replacement.
19. Following the introduction of the crime fighting fund, there has already been a significant rise in police recruitment. Forces

recruited 7,415 officers during the year to 31 March 2001, 64% more than the previous year. I have already given a commitment that we expect police strength to reach 130,000 officers by March 2004. I also believe we need to recognise the vital role police support staff increasingly play. This is manifested by the growth in their numbers by over 1,500 since 1997.

20. The increase in police numbers will lead to public reassurance and crime reduction if extra officers are being deployed on the basis of analysis and intelligence.

Need for change

21. But there can be no argument about the *need* for change and for modernisation of our criminal justice system – including the police. This was illustrated very clearly in the *The Way Ahead* paper published earlier this year.
22. We are catching and convicting fewer and fewer criminals. Over the past 20 years, the conviction rate has fallen by half, to just 9%. The latest available ‘attrition’ figures for 1999–2000 put the percentage of recorded crimes brought to justice (that is, resulting in a conviction, a caution, or being taken into consideration) at 20.8%.
23. Violent crime in particular has proved stubbornly high, fuelling the public’s fear of crime. It increased by 4% in the 12 months to March 2001 and accounted for 14% of all recorded crime. Although we are seeing a fall in the overall rate of increase in violent crime (down from 16% the previous year), the robbery figures continue to give real cause for concern – up by 12.9% in the 12 months to March 2001.
24. There are unacceptable variations in police performance. Clear-up rates, for example, vary from 15% to 63% between forces and 15% to 41% between the regions. Reform is about raising all in the service to the level of the best.

25. Public fear of crime, as indicated by the British Crime Survey, has remained fairly static despite the falling crime rate. For vehicle crime and domestic burglary, which have seen significant decreases in both recorded crime and BCS responses, the levels of concern showed no statistically significant decrease.
26. The public's faith in the ability to combat crime risks being eroded and this has to be a major cause for concern. Public approval of the police remains high compared with other parts of the criminal justice system – but it has declined. I am sure we all share the wish to see confidence increase.
27. There is a huge demand for a more visible police presence on the streets. I want to see more uniformed officers working with others reassuring the public.
28. Reform is to strengthen the ability to fight crime, to protect the public, to improve detection and to engage others in crime reduction. This must be matched with other aspects of radical change which will lift morale and make it possible for all ranks to do their job effectively.

Vision for policing

29. The police service we all want to see in the future will be a professional, effective service enjoying the full confidence of the public. Its workforce will be well resourced, well trained and well equipped, make the best use of modern technology, and enjoy strong leadership and effective management.
30. In order to be effective, the police service must also reflect the community that it serves. To this end, we have a target of ethnic minority representation within the service of at least 7% nationally, with local targets reflecting the make-up of your local communities. I know these targets are challenging but I believe they are achievable. We are already seeing good progress in some areas but there is still a lot of work to be done.

31. Minority ethnic officers still represent less than 3% of total police numbers. We also need to address the level of representation of female officers. Although women make up 27% of recruits in the police, they form only 17% of forces' strength, indicating a disproportionately high wastage rate compared with male officers. The number of women progressing through the ranks also gives cause for concern with only three women Chief Constables currently in post. The review of the research undertaken on women's career development and the work done by the British Association of Women Police, including the recently published 'Gender Agenda', will form the basis of future policy in this area.

32. Our vision is for a police service where:

- More uniformed officers and special constables are seen on the streets working with others such as street wardens – engaging with the community and identifying and targeting problems on the basis of intelligence.
- Civilian staff are properly trained and rewarded, and are able to provide proper, professional back up freeing police officers to do the job they are trained to do.
- BCU-level commanders, and indeed all other managers, can make much more flexible use of staff, with local shift patterns that adapt to meet the changing demands of the service as well as the diverse needs of the workforce, getting better access to specialist expertise and making best use of operational support staff. Changes in shift patterns are backed up by research into what works best. Out of date regulations no longer constrain the effective use of police officers. Officers reaching retirement are encouraged to stay on in service without jeopardising their pension arrangements. Sickness levels and medical retirement are brought down to acceptable levels.

- Criminology at all levels is being tackled effectively by professional methods and agreed best practice. There is effective sharing of intelligence within and between forces through the use of the National Intelligence Model, allowing better targeting of offenders. An investigative doctrine covering the skills and knowledge needed to investigate all forms of modern crime is owned and developed by the service. All forces contribute to this doctrine which provides a basis for training. The use of intelligence models for tackling criminality is firmly embedded in reassurance strategies.
- Where specialist capabilities are required within forces to tackle complex issues involving for example financial or technical knowledge, these can be provided. Either by allowing officers to develop and maintain specialist skills or by bringing in civilians with the necessary expertise. To provide an effective service it will be essential that these officers are not part of a separate elite, that is not our intention. We must ensure that within a single service there is the means to provide the skills we need and make the best use of resources and training.
- Supervision, leadership and selection for the most senior posts are more professional.
- The police have access to the best developments in technical and scientific support, and where ITC systems will be adopted on a common basis across the service, enabling forces to communicate with each other and the wider Criminal Justice System – to meet agreed needs.

33. Training will clearly be crucial in achieving this vision. We are on course for National Police Training to be established as the Central Police Training and Development Authority in April 2002, so it can respond better to the needs of the

service. The Police Skills and Standards Organisation is up and running, to promote high quality training and development across the police sector. It will lead on the development of occupational standards.

34. In the coming weeks we will continue to address the role of training. We must ensure that the National Competency Framework – which will provide a sound basis for training, development, selection, promotion and appraisal – reflects the needs of modern policing and the reform process. We need to ensure that we meet the challenge of change through training our police, new recruits as well as serving officers, and civilian staff for the modernised approach to policing.

Improving performance – leadership

35. So how do we make that vision a reality through the reform process? One of the key elements will be improving leadership in the service, which is central to delivering improvements in performance. This is particularly important at Superintendent level where effective leadership plays a key role in driving up performance at local level. We are already making progress.
36. I am committed to improving your ability to lead. Yet there are still wide differences of approach between forces in nurturing and developing leadership skills.
37. So we are in the process of implementing a series of long-term reforms, in partnership with the Superintendent's Association and other key stakeholders. Our aim is to produce a systematic, end-to-end process for getting the best people into the police service, for developing individuals to the full, and enhancing their ability to achieve.
38. We have put the means in place to set and drive a coherent strategy. The police leadership development board will oversee all aspects of identifying and developing those with potential.

The board, chaired by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, will take forward work focused on attracting talent into the service, and bringing individuals on to achieve their maximum potential.

39. The board's work embraces a wide range of inter-related issues concerning the recruitment, selection and development of senior officers. We are, in partnership with all stakeholders, reviewing the extended interview programme. This will ensure that assessment centre processes are fully suitable to select candidates who have the appropriate skills and experience for senior rank.
40. A review of senior officer training and development needs has been commissioned. Its aim is to establish a systematic approach to identifying and meeting leadership training needs and thus strengthen leadership in the police service. This project, to report later in the year, will inform our decisions about what further provision is needed to meet our long term aims for bringing on the best and most able officers.
41. We are already starting to see changes. The senior appointments panel has been created to ensure that there is a better process to co-ordinate senior appointments, succession planning and career development for the senior levels. It is also chaired by HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary. The appointment decision will remain with the police authority, but I believe the panel will play a major role in future in matching people to posts, and identifying and developing those with genuine potential.
42. The old, rigid accelerated promotion schemes are being replaced by a new leadership development programme, open to high fliers inside and outside the service. We will be launching this in the autumn. It will allow the most able to progress as rapidly as their talents allow – if people have the ability they could go from constable to BCU commander in 5 years.

43. The new programme will aim to combine personal, professional and academic development to enable successful candidates to fully meet the future demands of the police service. The Strategic Command Course, which trains officers for ACPO rank, will be changing – from the spring it will be an individually tailored development programme – not a ‘one size fits all’ approach.
44. I look forward to these reforms playing a major part in maximising the talent pool in the police service and in removing unnecessary barriers to advancement of the most able. Its goal will be to ensure that the police service is equipped with the most able, most talented and best-prepared leaders it is possible to have.

Public Confidence/Reassurance

45. Six of the last seven years have seen a reduction in levels of what is known as volume crime. This has been reflected in the British crime survey over the last four – there was a 10% fall in all the crimes BCS measures between 1997 and 1999. Yet, as I mentioned before, there has not been a corresponding fall in the fear of crime amongst the public, where figures have remained fairly static.
46. Many members of the public perceive that crime and disorder are increasing. These feelings of insecurity are real and do have a significant impact on quality of life. The 2000 BCS reported that over 30% of respondents felt unsafe walking after dark and fear of being insulted or pestered in public had risen to one-third from one-quarter in 1994.
47. So, the reform programme must go wider than improving leadership. It must enhance the accessibility of police services and improve communication between the police and the public to deliver a consistently high level of service. It can only make real progress in driving up public confidence by

increasing the visible presence of police officers and authority figures on the basis of a proper analysis of the problems a community or town centre is experiencing.

48. The public wish to see more police officers on the beat – and so do I. But only on the basis of a coherent response to the problems of an area. The police officer on the beat should be one strand of a wider strategy to reduce crime. They should be deployed on the basis of intelligence of an area, and should be working with the other agencies which have a role in reducing crime.
49. The police are not able to deal with anti-social behaviour and disorder in isolation. They have to be able to co-ordinate their response with local authorities, schools, health services and others. In Islington, for example, the police are working with the housing department to deal with anti-social behaviour.
50. We have made good progress in discussing with the service how we might do this. I am particularly grateful to the Superintendents' Association for the constructive contribution you have made.
51. We have identified some important areas where big gains can be made in terms of increasing public confidence and driving forward this agenda.
52. A great deal of innovative good practice relating to increased visibility and accessibility has been developed across the country – police shops in town and city centres.
53. There has been a lot of speculation about the issue of whether detectives should be 'back on the street'. Let me make it clear that what I want is a common sense approach. Stories about the Sussex police putting all their detectives back in uniform proved as unfounded as some of the stories that I have read that refer to my intention to undertake a similar exercise.

What I am interested in is ensuring visibility, that there is equality of treatment and a common-sense approach, so that on some occasions officers will be in uniform and other occasions in plain clothes – the decision on how this is applied rests with the BCU.

54. What is essential is that there is equity and high status and recognition for all activities. Disciplining someone by putting them back in uniform is tantamount to degrading the bobby on the beat to second class status.
55. Intelligence and detection is a function of all those working within the police service, but some will specialise at a particular moment more intensively than others, and will develop particular forms of specialism, which in some cases can be drawn in from outside the service.
56. What is certain is that all of us wish to see more of those who are on duty available to undertake that duty, out of the station rather than captured in it, and old fashioned demarcation lines (reminiscent of the 1950s), a thing of the past.
57. We need to ensure that good practice is rolled out to all forces. Obviously no single solution will fit all, but there is much more that we must do to ensure that forces learn from each other and adopt proven solutions to difficult problems. The Standards Unit will have a crucial role in supporting the police service to do this.
58. We need to work out how to guarantee the quality and integrity of those who are able to work with the police – neighbourhood wardens and security staff, so that their work is co-ordinated by the police and trusted by the public.
59. Members of what could become an extended police family can do a vital job – working with the police to reassure the public that there is an additional official presence on their streets and in their neighbourhoods.

60. But they will only make a difference if they are properly co-ordinated by the police and deployed on the basis of intelligence. They should be working at the centre of a wider strategy for reducing anti-social behaviour, disorder and increasing public confidence in their individual safety and security of their neighbourhood.
61. We are looking to extend some further limited powers to non-police personnel. This is not policing on the cheap but a realistic, hard headed approach to deploying and co ordinating the people – such as traffic wardens and street wardens – who are already working in this area.
62. Let me give you an example. Off road motorcyclists – untrained, unlicensed and uncontrolled – creating misery and danger in a public park or open space, calls for action. Police availability and pressures make it impossible to respond or cope – so should we do nothing? Or should we as common sense would tell us, take action to provide as part of the ‘police family’, a sensible and continuous response that deals with the problem and reassures the public that someone gives a damn.
63. Making a difference and giving a damn is what tackling anti social behaviour and disorder is about and it is also the foundation for ensuring that other ‘cocking a snook’ attitudes to the police can be nipped in the bud.
64. This can be the way forward in tackling the disorder which blights so many neighbourhoods and works as a barrier to reducing crime and regenerating communities. But it will only be the way forward if we can get all partners to link together, targeting their work.
65. I want to use this work – the reassurance strand of police reform – to maximise the use of police officer time. I believe that we must boost the recruitment and retention of specials

and free up officers through empowering civilians to carry out, for example, some custody tasks.

Modern Policing for the 21st Century

66. Our reform agenda is not just about challenging the service to change. We have to support the service in changing to meet modern ways of working and modern crime.
67. Tackling bureaucracy and paperwork is vital if we are to achieve our aim of putting more police officers back on the beat. For example, last November, we issued a revised ‘Manual of Guidance for the Preparation, Processing and Submission of Files’. This reduced considerably the number of forms officers have to complete when they pass cases to the Crown Prosecution Service. But more needs to be done.
68. I also hope that advances in technology, including Airwave, will allow police officers to spend more time on operational duty. We have commissioned a study of police officer time which will feed into the work on reform – I hope that it will come up with concrete proposals of where we can free up police officer time.
69. The report will enable us to strip away those blockages in the system which prevent targeted policing in the community – the time wasted in the Criminal Justice System and the lack of coherent IT systems. The increased use of appropriate civilians will cut the time wasted in the police station. This is about improving the working day for constables and enabling them to do what they do best – fight crime.
70. But the variations in sickness levels across forces means that even if we do resolve the blockages in the system around paperwork and the courts we may still not achieve the increase in police time on operational duties we are aiming for. At force level, the annual rate of days off sick per officer varies

from 8.6 days to 15.4, with one force having a rate 80% higher than another.

71. If today, there was a one percentage point improvement in sickness absence for the uniformed staff there would be 1,200 extra officers available for duty. 1,200 officers is not just good for the public, it is good for their colleagues as well – it lifts the strain.
72. I believe that we must draw on the best of what has already been done in developing an occupational health service, which would be co-ordinated nationally and delivered locally. The issue is how we can improve the fitness, the readiness and the availability of the police service through an effective personnel policy. I believe that if we get the support systems right we can ensure that medical retirement will not be as common as it is now and that the enormous variations will be a thing of the past.
73. Reform means giving the police service, managers and officers, the support and flexibility it needs. Managers should not be constrained by outmoded regulations. It is not acceptable in today's world that managers cannot employ people for less than 16 hours a week just because we have outmoded regulations; or that we must (under the regulations) set out a year's work in advance.
74. We have to be honest about arcane practices and unnecessary regulations that are holding back the development of a modern police service. But we must also accept that police officers need to have the security of knowing that the modernisation of employment will be matched by modern management and reward systems.
75. I believe that there is a middle way on rostering that gives officers protection and the ability to plan their private lives without straitjacketing managers into unworkable rotas and unnecessary expense.

76. We will be presenting the Police Negotiating Board with the clear outcomes we wish to achieve so that they can make recommendations on how this can best be done to remove the barriers which stand in the way. The PNB will be given a clear timetable for delivery.
77. We are also looking at how we can encourage good officers who have reached retirement age to continue in service. During the summer consultation period rumours have been spread about what we are intending to do. One of the more bizarre rumours I have heard is that we might be consider taxing the pension lump sum payment. Let me make this absolutely clear. Such tales are totally without foundation. My task is to encourage officers to stay in service longer not to make any changes which mean that they will leave earlier.
78. As you recognise only too well, police officers should also expect to work in modern settings and with modern technology – morale is too often lowered when the workplace is outdated and in bad repair.
79. This is an ambitious agenda. But there is no point in starting with a timid list of ideas for tackling some of the problems I highlighted earlier. We will need to continue to work together with staff associations and police authorities. This is a shared mission to raise standards and drive up public confidence in the police service, increase feelings of public safety and reduce the often disproportionate fear of crime.

Driving up performance

Performance Indicators

80. Underpinning much of the work of the reform programme is the need to drive up performance at the level which you deal with every day – in basic command units (BCUs).

81. As we put a greater emphasis on performance and standards it is only fair and right that we give you and the public a clearer idea of what is we really want the police service to achieve. I know many police officers feel there are too many performance indicators; and that if everything is a priority, nothing is. Of course, a great deal of information should be collected and made available. It is important for good management; it is important for good accountability. But when we publish official performance indicators we need to concentrate on those things that really make a difference.
82. So as part of police reform, I am asking for a radical change in the way we construct performance indicators. Firstly, for the coming year, I am looking to reduce the number of Best Value Performance Indicators for the police by nearly a half.
83. Secondly, for the following year I want to see if we can composite the indicators further so that we have a simple measure for each of the key activities: how successful you are in reducing crime; how good you are at tackling criminality; how safe the public feel; how accessible and efficient the service is.
84. Thirdly, I will ask the Standards Unit, HMIC and the Audit Commission to rationalise all the management information collected to avoid unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy.

The Standards Unit

85. Clearly, I will want the Standards Unit to have a pivotal role in improving performance. The Unit will – with HMIC, National Police Training, the Home Office and the Crime Reduction College – identify where good practice is working. And work out where and how standards can be raised by spreading this best practice.
86. The heart of the Unit's task will be to identify and remove the barriers to success and identify solutions. Training will be

crucial. The Unit will have to examine whether training is readily available and whether it is effective for the task of modern policing.

87. This is not about publishing league tables, and nor is it about ‘naming and shaming’. Rather, it is about providing real, practical help based on what works, through tailored and targeted operational training. That help will be available at every level – from force HQ right down to neighbourhoods and estates where you are struggling, for whatever reason, to police effectively.
88. We can see the most effective performance best at BCU level. There are BCUs across the country which are performing excellently – developing and using best practice to reduce crime, reassure the public, maintain public order and enhance community safety. In doing so, they are delivering the best possible service to their local communities. And they are a credit to the superintendents leading them.
89. But some other BCUs, we all know, could be doing much better. As I have already indicated, clear-up rates vary. Whilst acknowledging the many valid reasons for variations, we must address that unevenness of performance so that no matter where they live, the public can expect the same quality of service. The Unit will have a key role in making this happen. The public do not have the capacity to express a preference or exercise a choice when it comes to policing (even the rich have to leave enclaves or protected apartments).
90. This means that we must ensure that **all** BCUs in **all** areas of the country are working to their full capacity, using the very best and most effective practice.
91. The Unit will be focusing on variations in performance in tackling crime – clear up and detection rates, the differences in reducing different categories of crime, repeat offending and repeat victimisation.

92. I want the Standards Unit to look at the success stories in forces, like that in Merseyside which has reduced the number of robberies when numbers have increased in the other metropolitan areas, and in the individual BCUs within the other forces who also achieved reductions. I want to use what we learn to teach other forces and BCUs how they can turn this trend around. If we do not know why Merseyside have done so well, then let us find out and get everyone understanding why their approach works and how they can learn the lessons.
93. The Unit will look at the problem of repeat victimisation. Key figures here paint a worrying picture: 20% of those burgled in 1999 were burgled again within a year; over one third of victims of violent crime were repeat victims within a year; and the rate of repeat victimisation for domestic violence is 57% – higher than for any other type of crime. Reducing repeat victimisation not only helps those who have suffered disproportionately but also helps to target persistent crime.
94. The Unit will also be examining repeat offending, high levels of sickness absence, disorder, anti-social behaviour, and the unnecessary layers of bureaucracy which take highly trained officers off the streets and tie them up in excessive red tape.
95. In some areas, effective policing will depend on building partnerships with the community that do not exist at present. Crime reduction is often dependent on strategic improvements in security measures, housing, street lighting or drug treatment services. I understand that the pressure on the police to reach demanding targets has to be joined up with support for the police in communities and neighbourhoods.
96. At a strategic level, we now have the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. But, at a more local level, for example in certain deprived estates, neighbourhoods or in some town centres, the police may need to take the lead in working with

the Crime Reduction Partnerships to set up the machinery and finding the solutions with the local community to effect change. Without this, in what we will call policing priority areas, the police will struggle to tackle not just significant crime but also the sort of persistent nuisance and anti-social behaviour which can lower the quality of day to day life.

97. The Standards Unit will work with the police to identify the policing priority areas where the machinery for engaging with the local community does not exist or is not working effectively. Where this is a barrier to effective policing and reducing crime, the Unit will offer support to the police and Crime Reduction Directors, local authorities and others. The aim will be to support the police to promote a real partnership, in this way removing a significant barrier to reducing crime and disorder. Neighbourhoods and town centres will be turned round through community targeted policing measures.
98. And the Unit will work with success. Where it is clear that a BCU is getting it right, it will support it in showing others the route to improvement, if partner agencies are failing to work effectively with you to deliver on local priorities, the Unit will work with regional crime directors to bang heads together locally.
99. I know that you want to do the best possible job, and the Unit will be there to help you do this. In my book the only thing that is unacceptable is to fail to provide a good service. I look to you to engage with the Unit and the support that it will provide.
100. If standards are not raised and a BCU continues to fall below a reasonable level of performance and if there is a refusal to follow accepted good practice to put things right I will feel entitled to look to the chief constable and the authority to take whatever steps are necessary. As a last resort I will

want to require that remedial action is taken. I have already indicated that we are considering what powers it will be necessary to take through the Police Bill.

101. The Standards Unit will be there to support you – the operational commanders on the ground – and your staff, as well as your chief constables. So this is in no way a threat to hard-working, imaginative chiefs and commanders. We are not meddling in your operational autonomy and we are not seeking to undermine your strong local knowledge and understanding. We aim to supplement that with a strong body of world-class research into what works and what doesn't.

Partnerships

102. I have already indicated that the police alone cannot win the fight against crime and disorder. It requires the community as a whole and its agencies – especially local authorities – to work in partnership with the police to develop and implement local crime and disorder reduction strategies. All agencies need to raise their game.
103. The local partnerships, established in law in 1998, have now made routine something that was only seen on a voluntary basis before then.
104. They, working alongside the police, have made a real contribution to the fall in crime. For example authorities are designing out crime in street and building schemes, hospitals are participating in violent crime reduction schemes, the retail sector is contributing to their own protection through anti-shop lifting schemes, schools are participating by providing opportunities for personal safety education for young people and tackling low educational achievement and truancy.
105. We are committed to the principle of local partnership working. But more needs to be done to ensure that all

partnerships are working effectively and using best practice. We intend to ensure that other crime reduction agencies, such as Drug Action Teams and Youth Offending Teams, work more closely and efficiently together.

106. All of this must however be supported by co-operation at a national strategic level. Central Government has to ensure that it also works in partnership, with the clear aim of building safer communities through empowering individuals and communities to find solutions to crime and disorder and drug abuse and related crime. The New Deal for Communities and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund will give high priority to tackling crime.
107. Safer communities enhanced by links to regeneration and community capacity building are essential. Reducing the opportunity and the inclination for crime is as important in terms of what happens on our streets as it is in protecting our homes or our cars.
108. Early intervention through Sure Start for pre-school children, the Children's Fund for children aged between 5 and 13 and the Connexions service for teenagers are crucial for building safer communities. They all work to empowering individuals, ensuring that they flourish at school, find work and become active citizens. The work of the Youth Justice Board and the very good work taking place through community initiatives and inclusion programmes across the country for young and old alike offer a real way forward.
109. We recognise the importance of engaging the private sector at a national level. I am convinced that we have made real progress here, not least through groups such as the vehicle crime reduction action team and the property crime reduction action team, and through increasing levels of consultation beyond the public sector when looking at problems such as how to counter increasing mobile phone theft. But more needs to be done.

110. We are committed to ensuring that **all** partners, across government and the private sector, play their proper role in helping to create social conditions in which criminality is less likely and in reducing the opportunity for crime.

Conclusion

111. I have touched today on the major goals of police reform, and on some of the ways in which we can drive up performance.
112. There is still a lot to be negotiated and agreed. And we must do so within a very tight timetable – we aim to publish a White Paper by the end of the year. I will wish to introduce a bill which will provide the legislative underpinning to the negotiated agreement.
113. But I am confident that we can work out a way ahead because we share clear goals for the police service: to catch and convict more criminals and to reduce the fear of crime.
114. The best way for me to help you achieve those goals is to help you do your job better. And that is the goal of the police Standards Unit, and indeed of all the reforms I have set out today.

Police Standards Unit

Terms of reference

The Standards Unit exists to deliver the Government's commitment to raise standards and improve operational performance in the police and in crime reduction generally in order to maintain and enhance public satisfaction with policing in their area.

Its core objective will be to identify and disseminate best practice in the prevention, detection and apprehension of crime in all forces in order to reduce crime and disorder as well as the fear of crime.

The Unit will:

- Work with forces and BCUs to ensure the most effective use of intelligence, detection and successful prosecution procedures;
- Identify BCUs or forces performing below their best based on HMIC reports, statistical information, or particular cases of concern;
- Engage directly with the BCU or force to establish the nature of the problems, the extent to which best practice may be lacking, and the remedial action required;
- Engage similarly with other local agencies to ensure their effective contribution, including through Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, where it is apparent that this is the key to police success in tackling crime and disorder at force level and below;
- Identify where, in exceptional circumstances, combined cross-cutting measures engaging other agencies are required to focus on and achieve early change within a specific geographic area or BCU boundary;

- Draw validated best practice from HMIC, National Police Training, the Crime Reduction College and other agencies, spread its use through local engagement, and identify for professional evaluation any new examples or techniques it comes across;
- Have a capacity to provide short-term funding to support the remedial action it has identified and which could not otherwise be undertaken;
- Identify cases in which the Home Secretary should consider the use of powers under the Police Act (1996), the Local Government Act (1999), or other relevant legislation;
- Identify issues which raise policy, technical or legal questions for the Home Office to address.

