

FABIAN POLICY REPORT

LETTING IN THE LIGHT

*Lessons from Labour's police and crime
commissioners, edited by Vera Baird*

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Bob Jones
(1955–2014)

This collection is dedicated to Bob Jones, who sadly passed away in July this year. Bob was born and bred in Wolverhampton, serving as a Labour councillor for Blakenhall from 1980 to 2013, and chair of both the West Midlands Police Authority and nationally the Association of Police Authorities culminating with the award of a CBE in recognition of such outstanding public service. Bob was elected the first West Midlands police and crime commissioner in 2012. He will be remembered as a hugely influential and passionate figure in policing who devoted his life to keeping the local communities of West Midlands safe. He was a great friend and colleague who was an exceptional representative for the people of Wolverhampton and the West Midlands. He will be sorely missed and remembered fondly by many.

EDITORIAL

This report highlights policies currently being implemented by the 13 Labour police and crime commissioners, who are responsible for all the Metropolitan Police forces in England and Wales (bar London). It is opportune, 18 months after the elections of November 2012, to describe what progress Labour commissioners have made.

This is not a paean of praise for the role but an account of the hands-on experience of policing governance which the commissioners intend to contribute as the party formulates its manifesto for the 2015 general election.

Each Labour commissioner has worked hard to get the most benefit for the public from the role, even as funding for police and community safety has been cut further and further.

In two main ways Labour PCCs are attempting to cope with the very tight public finances. The first is to find new sources of money. For instance, Mark Burns-Williamson describes his campaign to give the communities who have suffered the effects of crime a fairer share of the proceeds recovered from criminals and to modernise the 2002 legislation to bring in a wider range of ill-gotten gains.

The second is to get more out of limited resources. The broad range of early intervention schemes being driven in Lancashire by Clive Grunshaw is already producing, in particular, a 13.9 per cent reduction in young people's reoffending. South Yorkshire's Shaun Wright is commissioning the voluntary and community

sector to tackle offenders with complex needs. He champions restorative justice for its therapeutic potential for victims as much as for its impact on crime figures.

In Northumbria, as elsewhere, we are improving access to support by co-location of services in strategic hubs, called MASHs. One specialist variant of such a hub is a 'navigation centre', which Tony Lloyd shows keep people with mental health issues out of the criminal justice system to which they all too often default. Paddy Tipping argues that vast public funds spent by police and health organisations on mending the effects of alcohol misuse are targeted at the wrong end of the cycle and describes how he is redirecting partners in Nottinghamshire towards prevention. While other commissioners have written on policies they are currently implementing, Ron Hogg's first year has made him acutely aware of the impact that the illegality of some drugs is having on the crime they generate and he writes to open up debate.

Alun Michael, writing in South Wales, is working with local A&E departments to share information that can give intelligent focus to police work on violence in public places. He intends to pilot the transfer of highly successful methods used by youth offending teams into cutting reoffending amongst the 18–25 age group.

Barry Coppinger has reached far into his native Cleveland through a Criminal Justice Volunteers Fair, more than doubling the number of special constables and restructuring Neighbourhood Watch to a single standard. Perhaps the widest

outreach of all has been that of the late Bob Jones who last November launched a three year plan to combat crime on West Midlands public transport system with Centro, National Express, London Midland and the British Transport Police. Immensely experienced as the former Chair of the Association of Police Authorities, his ambitions as police commissioner, prior to his tragic death in July, notoriously included the imminent abolition of his role. Derbyshire police and crime commissioner Alan Charles has been lobbied more about the wildlife crime in his lovely county than about anything else. He is tackling 'netting' of wild birds, the evil pastime of badger baiting and has championed the 2004 Hunting Act to deter unlawful pursuit of foxes with hounds.

We come back to core policing with the contribution from Bedfordshire's Olly Martins. He is working, cross-party and cross-county with Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire on a tri-force collaboration, of a kind already a tenet of Labour policing policy. He writes that joint units make a higher level of capacity and capability available to all three small forces as well as saving money.

A little more than a year into their term of office and a little less than two years before the next PCC elections, these articles offer some pointers towards how Labour's future stance on these and other issues can be fed by the experience of the commissioners who have been leading policy on the ground.

Vera Baird QC is police and crime commissioner for Northumbria



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How the light gets in

Lack of trust in the police force can be repaired by shaking off institutional defensiveness and embracing democratic oversight of policing, argues *Vera Baird*



Vera Baird QC is police and crime commissioner for Northumbria

IT HAS BEEN 18 MONTHS since the election of the first police and crime commissioners. It's a role that was initially barely understood and little supported, and all political parties are still engaged in a debate about its future. Theresa May, the home secretary, delivered a first anniversary 'warts and all' assessment last November, admitting disappointment at the low turnout in the elections and acknowledging the uneven inevitability of localism, whilst remaining broadly positive about their overall impact. Labour, for its part, has vowed to reform the system following Lord Stevens independent review of policing.

In the midst of this lie the commissioners themselves; in governance, with budgets and power, delivering policy and services which deeply affect the wellbeing of communities. As we engage in the process of reform and policy reviews turn into manifestos, there is a chance to consider how the Labour commissioners have used the role in practice and how we can bring their learning to bear on lessons for the future of our policing policy.

Each Labour commissioner determined to use the power we were entrusted with to develop better partnership models of crime prevention and control, to enhance community safety and to improve the criminal justice system. Commissioners are the elected voice of the people. We are required to consult our communities to ascertain what they want from the police and then to use this to formulate police and crime plans. Those plans are intended to give strategic direction to our chief constables and we are then to step back and join with the public to scrutinise and evaluate how the plan is being delivered. Our control of the local policing budget ensures that what the people want does happen and represents a significant shift of power towards the public. At the same time, the police are, for the first time, being overseen intrusively at command level by an elected figure who can challenge any tendency, in such a powerful organisation, to prefer institutional self-interest over popular need.

The range of responsibilities and the reach of the role are wide. The 'and crime' part of our job title takes us beyond policing and requires us to work with the fire and rescue service, local authorities, directors of public health and clinical commissioning groups to improve the safety of our com-

munities. Similarly we must work with the courts, probation, the youth offender teams, prisons and Crown Prosecution Service to help to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system. We are asked to collaborate with other police forces and encouraged to do so with the other blue light agencies. We are shortly to have the additional power and resource to commission some victims' support services and we lead on the local development of restorative justice.

Each Labour commissioner determined to use the power we were entrusted with to develop better partnership models of crime prevention and control, to enhance community safety and to improve the criminal justice system

This breadth enables us to offer strong leadership and coordination, but means that the role lacks definition. We have, to some extent, defined it individually as we drive change in our own ways. But all of us have used it to showcase ethical Labour policies, such as becoming living wage employers, recruiting modern apprentices and procuring goods and services essentially from the public sector.

Funding cuts have got worse. While the coalition has retreated on the wholesale privatisation of the police and the introduction of G4S facsimile cops, police numbers have sunk critically low. 80 per cent of the cost of every force is its people. Last December saw extra reductions to police budgets and the removal of cash to the Independent Police Complaints Commission without, so far, any transfer of work. So often it is the most vulnerable victims of crime who suffer most from cuts to police and from the equally swingeing cuts to supportive services.

No one is under any illusions that a Labour government will be able to reverse

the cuts wholesale and we have developed some ways of providing alternative funding. For instance, speed awareness courses for people convicted of exceeding by a small amount local speed limits can spread positive learning, limit penalty points to higher speeds and, importantly, are paid for directly to local police, whereas fines go to the exchequer. Similarly, an alcohol behaviour course, just begun in Northumbria as an alternative to a penalty notice for being drunk and disorderly, returns some of the cost of policing to the local community whilst teaching people how to better manage alcohol in future. Forces who have to clear up after high profile football matches and profitable night-time concerts will soon be looking for better recompense from the private sector. And there are also attempts to increase police funding by returning a fairer share of the proceeds of crime to the communities who suffered from the offences.

However, there is still a need to do more for less, pointing towards expanding partnership sources of crime reduction and in particular further boosting neighbourhood policing. These small teams of police officers dedicated to policing a certain community are the bedrock of modern policing delivery – well defined as the 'social role of policing' in Lord Stevens' Independent Police Commission last year. Officers and police community support officers on the ground are working with the public and with partners to solve problems together, often before they occur. They find longer term resolutions that help safeguard stability and community safety.

The effect of neighbourhood policing has not only been overwhelmingly positive for communities, but it has helped to model a new kind of police officer. Often remote from hierarchical management, they are accountable to the local communities they serve and work on the frontline exercising initiative and discretion. Because they are loyal to the public as well as to the police force, the trust they evoke contrasts with the distrust with which the national policing hierarchy is regarded for having too often defended its own sectional self-interest. The Hillsborough conspiracy and the clash between miners and police at Orgreave occurred within the career spans of many current leaders of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Contemporary



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of ways but all with the aim of getting police to admit minor bad behaviour where it has occurred and to trust the public to understand. In Northumbria, three civilians based in my office telephone complainants within 24 hours and, using a customer satisfaction approach, speedily settle 35 per cent of what could otherwise have been festering low-level complaints that take months to resolve, causing further aggravation.

Wider loss of trust can similarly be repaired by involving the public as closely as possible in operational police work like the neighbourhood teams and through a strong elected public presence in governance to force openness and accountability. Whether this is through police and crime commissioners or any variation, we agree with Lord Stevens that the next Labour government should not row back on democracy in policing.

There are many challenges still ahead. Although collaboration is now widespread and can be very effective, full-blown police mergers may return to the agenda as funding continues to fall. Partnership working with health service agencies is not so well-developed and officers can spend scarce duty hours substituting for ambulances at significant risk or safeguarding people with mental illness who have defaulted into the justice world. Splitting the probation service to sell part of it off could undermine the police role in cutting crime by unsettling Integrated Offender Management. As restorative resolutions develop, the role of the courts may recede and the problem-solving skills of officers come further into play. And harsh reductions in legal aid will mean fewer defence lawyers, perhaps heralding a matching return to police officer prosecutions. This could move the judiciary towards an inquisitorial model, where courts actively investigate facts, and away from a focus on the impartial referee model adversarial justice, with the potential for profound changes in how cases are investigated and prepared.

These are all emerging features of the changing police and justice landscape we occupy. In a time of upheaval as well as innovation, Labour police and crime commissioners will continue to navigate pathways to change policing in their local communities for the better. **F**

Vera Baird QC is police and crime commissioner for Northumbria

examples are also well-known: they include the inaccuracies around the deaths of Jean Charles de Menezes, Ian Tomlinson and Mark Duggan. Police officers have also infiltrated climate change protesters to gather intelligence and, when it showed them innocent of crime, hidden this fact. There is also the shameful sexual abuse, sanctioned to improve police cover, of women protesters who would never knowingly have involved themselves with police.

Recent reforms, seen by many as attacks on the service, such as civilian direct entry at management rank; appointing the rail regulator to lead HMIC and the end to Home

Office funding for the Association of Chief Police Officer and the Police Federation were enabled, if not necessitated, by these scandals.

In the same vein, police complaints have long been on a hit list of what members of the public consider untrustworthy, in particular since an often typical Professional Standards Department response is that the police can do no wrong. They can be bastions of institutional defensiveness, who exacerbate rather than mitigate small grievances and lose the police friends as surely as national scandals can. Labour commissioners are tackling this in a range



Doing more with less

Despite the fragility caused by deep financial cuts, South Wales police are in better contact with the communities they serve than ever before, writes *Alun Michael*

THE POLITICAL IMPERATIVE to create safe, confident communities is usually discussed using entirely different rhetoric to the debate about ‘law and order’, but they are intrinsically connected. In his principles for establishing the police service in London, Sir Robert Peel recognised that the first responsibility of the police is to prevent crime by cutting offending and reoffending; and that success in policing is the absence of crime, not the presence of activity.

But there’s a conundrum. Society requires of police officers immediate reaction and delivery. Equally, media portrayal of policing is about responsive activity; prevention doesn’t make good pictures. Frankly, the police do not prevent crime because it’s not what they are designed to do. So when the Justice Select Committee, under the leadership of Alan Beith, undertook a major investigation in 2010 into the concept of ‘justice reinvestment’, we found that the levers that affect crime lie outside the criminal justice system, never mind outside policing. Crime levels are influenced minimally by the courts, but are greatly influenced by mental health, alcohol and substance misuse, unemployment, housing, violence within relationships and how we bring up our children.

The report was embraced by incoming ministers, while police leaders fully accept that Sir Robert Peel’s ideal of reducing reoffending can only be delivered through partnership working. However, that’s not understood throughout the system, particular in sentencing.

For example, the Sentencing Council’s responsibility to compare the effectiveness

of different sentences on reducing offending is minimal. When asked about this, Lord Leveson said there might be merit in comparing the effectiveness of community sentences, but not in asking the same questions about custodial sentences and other court disposals. In contrast, the Justice Select Committee’s report *Cutting Crime: The case for justice reinvestment* bluntly says: “Prison is a relatively ineffective way of reducing crime for other than serious offenders who need to be physically contained for the protection of the public. For others, prison is a very expensive way of dispensing justice and seeking reform.” So we need to start taking an intelligent approach to sentencing that is tough but evidence-based.

I’m impressed by the enthusiasm for interventions that will reduce reoffending when a prisoner is released – ranging from managers within the prisons of South Wales and the prison chaplaincy, to civil society organisations such as the St Giles Trust and the Muslim Council of Wales. Prison can act as a way of making bad people worse. Ending that cycle of despair requires well-motivated staff in well-resourced organisations, but severe cuts now threaten the effectiveness of many public services and the probation services are undergoing complex and confusing reorganisation.

Society requires of police officers immediate reaction and delivery

That brings me to another key recommendation of the Justice Select Committee’s report, which says that a genuinely victim-based approach to crime should “go wider and deeper than providing supportive and responsive services for the victims of crime, and be focused on crime reduction and prevention as well as justice.”

In terms of crime prevention, youth offending teams are one of the biggest success stories. Taking a partnership approach and working together to tackle the needs and behaviour of young offenders, they have dramatically brought reoffending down amongst those under 18 years old. So a key element in my police and crime plan for South Wales is to apply the same principles of joint evidence-based action to

the 18 to 25 age group, where offending is now prolific.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (Community Safety Partnerships) are also paving the way for an evidence-based approach to tackling crime. The best example is the current focus on violence in Cardiff, which is measured by the number who have treatment in A&E rather than reports to the police. The partnership involves the NHS in South Wales and is being led by a research-focused surgeon, Professor Jonathan Shepherd. Many of his findings – which range from using glasses made of injury-reducing toughened glass, to encouraging partnership work in the night-time economy – have been imitated elsewhere, but his method of analysing what type of crime happens where and why must also become the starting point for all the agencies who share responsibility for public spaces and public safety. And the good news is that the NHS Trusts in South Wales and Welsh government ministers are co-operating with us to make the city safer.

Many policymakers pay lip service to localism and the truism that ‘prevention is better than cure’, while ignoring both in practice. But to be ‘tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime’, we need practical, evidence-based strategies that draw on the strengths of local partnerships. That’s why the fashionable but crazy idea of creating large regional police forces is completely redundant. The Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Tom Winsor, has rightly pointed out that “there is nothing that can be achieved through mergers than cannot be achieved by collaboration”.

My assessment in South Wales is that despite deep financial cuts and wholesale reorganisation of policing, the police are not only doing more with less but are in better contact with the communities they serve than at any time in my 40 years in public life. That’s been helped immeasurably by delivery of the Labour commitment at the last Assembly elections in the shape of 206 additional community support officers paid for by the Welsh government. With due care, we can maintain those local relationships and continue the downward trajectory of crime – as long as we don’t take them for granted. **F**

Alun Michael is police and crime Commissioner for South Wales



Commission possible

Commissioning innovative strategies to reduce reoffending should be the cornerstone of a police and crime commissioner's role, writes *Shaun Wright*

POLICE AND CRIME commissioners are elected to be the voice of the people. To do this, we need to understand what citizens would like to happen in the unlucky event of being a victim of crime.

For instance, Victim Support provides fantastic services to anyone who has the misfortune to be affected by criminal activity. In South Yorkshire, they are able to do even more thanks to additional grant funding I provided for the specific provision of a Young Witness Service. This service will

help young people and their families prepare for the criminal justice process before, during and after any court proceedings. The scheme helps young witnesses, in all categories of crime, at youth, magistrates and crown courts, with priority being given to young victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE) or abuse.

Often, perpetrators of crime are unaware of the distress they have caused and victims can feel that, whilst the criminal has been punished, they have not been able to properly come to terms with what they have experienced

As a result of the funding, Victim Support have also been able to recruit and train a dedicated team of victim case workers and volunteers. The aim is to provide a partnership service that will help young victims and witnesses to deal with the process of bringing perpetrators to justice and to help them rebuild their lives after they have experienced traumatic events.

Often, perpetrators of crime are unaware of the distress they have caused and victims can feel that, whilst the criminal has been punished, they have not been able to properly come to terms with what they have experienced. In some cases, restorative justice – which brings victims and offenders into communication, can enable everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in finding a positive way forward. Through funding a joint operation between the South Yorkshire Probation Trust, Victim Support and Remedi (a specialist organisation working to promote the use of restorative justice), we have been able to make restorative justice a viable option for more victims of crime.

There is strong evidence to support the use of restorative justice in reducing reoffending. This partnership has enabled easier access to restorative justice, for those victims who wish to participate in pursuing it as part of the outcome for their crime.

If we are to make a greater impact on crime rates, we must look at strategies

that reduce reoffending. It allows police officers to do more work on enforcement and intelligence, rather than chasing after the same group of individuals who consistently reoffend.

One of the more innovative commissioned activities I have funded has been another partnership with the South Yorkshire Probation Trust to fund additional probation officers. Now we offer support to all offenders released from prison, not just those classed as serious acquisitive crime offenders – those who commit domestic burglary, car crime and robbery – who receive it under statutory entitlement.

This has enabled the trust to work with offenders they would not usually be able to, such as shoplifters, who have been on the increase in recent months. Non-statutory offenders have no mandatory offender management when they are released from prison and this leaves them at a higher risk of reoffending.

As well as reducing reoffending, this work also allows greater scope for probation officers to deliver outreach work, direct offenders with complex issues to rehabilitation programmes for addiction and support services for healthy living, literacy and education, as well as housing and employment.

The trust has also seen an increase in engagement of offenders with the programme, as they have seen the benefits it has given to others. During a time of increases in some types of crime, this work has seen a reduction in reoffending.

It is a sad fact that, occasionally, some people find themselves in a situation they cannot control, or they may make a bad choice that has terrible, long-term consequences for them. But if these individuals are helped to recognise that there is an alternative path they can follow, they can make a great difference to their own lives, the lives of those around them, and to their communities.

That is the whole point of what I do: to make a difference to the communities of South Yorkshire. By starting with the victim, and ensuring that the commissioning and grants element of my work are focused on their needs, we can continue to have a positive effect on the communities we serve. **F**

Shaun Wright is police and crime commissioner for South Yorkshire



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Closer together

Vulnerable people with mental health issues are often let down by public services. Reform is necessary to ensure they get the support they need, writes *Tony Lloyd*

POLICE OFFICERS ARE not social workers. They do not have the training to act as mental health professionals. But they deal with tens of thousands of incidents each year where mental health is a factor. It is absolutely right that police are the agency of first response, but all too often they are also the agency of last resort. I have been shocked at some of the stories I have been told about police officers having to take mentally ill people from hospital to hospital who, due to a lack of either capacity or will, frequently refuse to take the patient. Often, police are left with no choice but to take the individual to custody. They have broken no laws, they have done nothing wrong and they are unlikely to be a danger to anyone but themselves – they are merely unwell. That is not the intention of section 136 of the Mental Health Act, but it is the result.

This ties up hours and hours of police time but, more importantly, it means that someone who is in crisis is not getting the help and support they need. The police are used as a sticking plaster and the underlying problems are left unaddressed or made worse.

In the age of austerity this problem is intensifying. In particular, mental health services provided or funded by local authorities, are facing severe financial pressure as a result of the government's reckless programme of cuts. The help available to people is lessening, and often the police are left to pick up the pieces.

This is, of course, a deeply unsatisfactory state of affairs, but agencies have no choice but to work within the confines of the cuts. And I believe that the great strength of police and crime commissioners is that they

work across the many different agencies that are part of making our communities safer. It is about strengthening partnerships where they exist and building them where they do not.

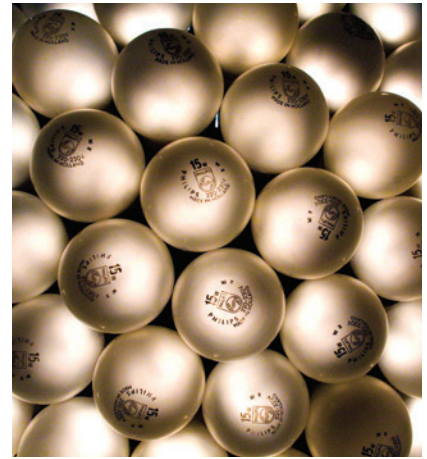
Austerity should bring us closer together, not drive us apart. The challenge is to redesign how we work. As police and crime commissioner, I have been embedding partnership working in our strategy and ensuring that there is a practical output which will benefit the people we serve.

Austerity should bring us closer together, not drive us apart. The challenge is to redesign how we work.

For example, I have brought mental health practitioners, police and other agencies together to develop a strategic framework within which we can operate. After an evidence-gathering session bringing professionals together to discuss the scale of the problem, we founded a mental health oversight group, whose membership comprises representatives from police, local authorities, health and staff from my office, which will work together to develop solutions.

It is important that strategic principles have relevance on the ground, however. Last year I set aside funding to facilitate imaginative thinking on the subject of mental health services. As a result, in December I launched an innovative pilot scheme in Oldham in partnership with the NHS, which is simple but is proving to be very effective. It means that when officers attend an incident in which mental health is a factor, they can ring a dedicated number where a mental health professional is able to triage the situation and provide advice support and assistance. The specialist has access to NHS medical records and is usually able to provide specific advice on the individual concerned.

It has already had remarkable results, saving hundreds of hours of police time and reducing the number of people being sectioned by police by two thirds. But most importantly of all, vulnerable people are getting more targeted support which treats them as a person rather than an inconvenience.



© Thomas Hawk

A similar project is now being set up in Wigan following the success of the Oldham pilot. But our ultimate ambition is to extend the triage service to the entire region so that any officer who attends an incident where mental health is a factor will be able to use it.

We also want to further build on the success of this pilot and are currently working with the NHS to design a bespoke 'navigation centre' where people with mental health issues will be taken to receive support, care and advice. It will also operate as a 'place of safety' to detain people under section 136 of the Mental Health Act instead of a police cell. Funding will be provided by both police and the NHS, demonstrating a financial as well as strategic commitment to problem-solving in partnership.

Other initiatives and projects which have been established in partnership with the NHS include the training of police community support officers by mental health trust staff in Salford, which is being reciprocated by Greater Manchester Police providing training to NHS staff to build skills, experience and mutual understanding.

Of course, these innovations do not represent the whole solution. Mental illness is too broad and too complex an issue for there to be a universal panacea. But, by moving these pilot schemes into the mainstream under a robust strategic framework, we are ensuring that the public service reform agenda is being used effectively to drive better outcomes for those who suffer from mental health issues. **F**

Tony Lloyd is police and crime commissioner for Greater Manchester



To prevent and serve

We can transform public services through a wholesale commitment to early intervention, writes

Clive Grunshaw

THE APPALLING LIVING conditions of the working poor in the 1830s were behind a social revolution in which the actions of public bodies played a huge part. The introduction of clean water, sanitation and standards for housing changed the life chances for millions of people. In modern Britain – an era of ideologically-driven attacks on the public sector, rising demand for services and shrinking resources – I believe that we now have an opportunity to drive through a change to public services which could equally revolutionise the life chances of the most vulnerable.

We can transform public services through a fundamental reappraisal of how we deliver services, particularly by investing in prevention – which means a wholesale commitment to early intervention. We know that what happens at the early stages of a child's life or a young person's first entry into the criminal justice system strongly determines their ability to make the right choices and flourish. It impacts on their emotional wellbeing, self-confidence, response to difficult situations; educational attainment; job opportunities and ultimately, where they end up in life.

Early intervention requires focusing on individuals and the unique problems that they have, working across the organisational boundaries that have defined public sector services until this point. It changes the way that 'task driven' emergency services are designed to operate, focusing on the causes rather than the symptoms of the problems. Services will become problem-oriented, making effective and timely interventions that are backed up with clear evidence of what works. This

reduces demand for specialist services in the long term.

I was one of only two police and crime commissioners to secure support from the Early Intervention Foundation for their area, leading to Lancashire's new status as an Early Intervention Pioneering Place. To make early intervention a reality for our services, securing strategic partnerships with key delivery bodies is imperative. I am meeting that challenge by creating 'Public Services Lancashire'. Bringing together a range of delivery organisations to invest collectively in a programme benefits multiple organisations. We can develop dynamic, affordable and sustainable solutions to the problems facing the most vulnerable in our community by agreeing to shared priorities, joint planning and smarter data sharing. Combining workforce teams brings in expertise from the voluntary and third sector and the opportunity to pool budgets.

There are some great examples of how designing and delivering services differently saves money and provides better results. For instance, joint working between Lancashire county council and Lancashire constabulary has brought £6 million into the county through the linking of resources. This will see three teams of early action response officers work together in three high-demand areas of the county. We will create 27 full time equivalent posts, including qualified social workers and specialists in youth work, youth offending and approved mental health workers.

Partnership working has also been a key strategy to reduce the number of entrants into the criminal justice system. AVERT is a women offender triage scheme set up in conjunction with my office, Lancashire women's centres and Lancashire constabulary. Offering women offenders a dynamic assessment by a trained worker whilst in custody, it identifies issues or vulnerabilities which contribute to offending behaviour as well as the needs presented by women offenders as carers. Early intervention such as this can divert women offenders from the criminal justice system.

With regards to reducing youth reoffending, in my first year I commissioned the youth triage scheme. This contributed to a 32 per cent reduction in final warnings and a 26 per cent reduction in reprimands for young people across the pan-Lancashire area in the first half of 2012–13 when com-



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pared to the same period in the previous year. It has also contributed to a 21 per cent reduction in the number of cases brought to the youth court in the same period.

There is also a big role for the third sector in early intervention. I am working with Lancashire Sport Partnership and Groundwork to deliver a range of early intervention programmes, and have supported the Prince's Trust to work with a group of teenagers and young adults in Blackpool who are disengaged from education, training and employment and lack the confidence, motivation or skills to move forward. These young people are either already engaged or vulnerable to antisocial behaviour and criminal activity.

I want to cut through hierarchies of funding from central government, where departments jealously guard their resources, and challenge artificial management distinctions that stop people developing sensible solutions. By allowing multi-agency working, pooling budgets and sharing priorities, we can listen to what people really need and want, and re-design services to allow that to happen. If we can address unmet needs with specialist resources at an early stage, we can avoid using the criminal justice system to tackle problems down the line. Early intervention is an ambitious and bold idea that improves levels of community confidence and safety, working with people to deliver real improvements to their lives. **F**

Clive Grunshaw is police and crime commissioner for Lancashire



Decriminalising addicts

Current drugs legislation is not working, but treating drug addiction as an illness could signpost the way to socially responsible policing, writes *Ron Hogg*

AS THE STEVENS' Commission – the independent inquiry on the future of policing, commissioned by the Labour party – has made quite clear, there would be no additional money for policing under a Labour government. So police and crime commissioners must plan for a future based upon the assumption that efficiency must be improved, costs and demands on the police service must be driven down, and service delivery must be redefined. And although the home secretary, Theresa May, recognises that we need to create “a policing landscape in which everyone has a clear and complementary role in fighting crime,” this is probably the closest she has come to articulating the social role of policing. It is within this operating environment that my chief constable and I are seeking to reignite the debate on what constitutes an effective drug strategy.

Current drugs legislation, based upon the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, has led to a police strategy that focuses upon drug prevention through education, limiting supply, and enforcement. But despite all efforts to educate against the misuse of drugs, misuse has continued to increase – and we must ask why.

Enforcement agencies have been singularly unsuccessful at limiting supply. Indeed, there is an ever growing market thriving on the internet as criminals exploit technological developments to further their illicit enterprises. As a PCC, I have lost count of the number of large scale early morning raids that I have participated in. Yet the simple truth is that these activities – which take months, sometimes years

in the planning – do no more than disrupt the supply market for the very shortest of periods. Remember the key NATO objective upon entry into Afghanistan to eliminate opium production? Its output in Afghanistan today has never been higher. Thus, while we ought not to diminish our efforts to control supply lines, over-emphasis upon this as a determinant of success is misplaced.

We need to move away from custodial solutions for addicts, except in the most extreme cases, and deliver community-based solutions that are proven to deliver better outcomes in the long term

Indeed, the present government's evaluation framework for its drugs strategy estimates that as a nation we spend £1bn on drug treatment and £1.5bn on enforcement annually – not to mention the cost of criminal justice services and the loss of taxes from addicts who are unable to contribute to the state. We must question if this is achieving the optimal benefit from the public spend.

The former president of Brazil, and chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, has said: “Policy makers often say drugs are harmful and must be kept illegal. What they fail to consider is, as ... research suggest[s], that drugs are more harmful – to society, individuals and the taxpayer – precisely because they are illegal. Some European countries have taken steps to decriminalise various drugs, and these policies should be explored.” It is clear that consumption continues, predicated upon the ongoing illegality of proscribed drugs. Whilst not advocating legalisation, we must consider decriminalisation of addicts.

We need to take a different approach that reduces reoffending and lessens the pressure on policing services. Integrated offender management units have been a most effective partnership tool here. Research clearly shows that the drug of choice of prolific offenders is heroin; one reforming offender and heroin addict

that I recently spoke with recounted his 194 convictions. It is for this reason that I have advocated providing safe heroin in controlled ‘drug consumption’ facilities to those who find conventional treatment difficult. This is why I also support the use of drug testing at the point of arrest of criminals as well as the diversion of the criminal into a suitable programme that will reduce the risk of reoffending.

These strategies are proven to reduce the number of victims and protect our communities. Between 2006–2011, drug consumption facilities were trialled in Brighton, Darlington and London. The trial was critically evaluated by King's College, London, who concluded that they provided “robust evidence to support the expansion of this treatment so that more patients can benefit.”

Rather than treat addiction as purely a matter for the criminal justice system, it ought to be viewed as a health and community safety issue. Addicts would be supplied the drugs through the NHS, obviating the need for them to commit crime to feed their habit and preventing more money ending up in the pockets of organised crime groups.

The individuals participating in the drug consumption room trials also derived clear benefits: recovery rates from addiction were increased, which is better than using costly methadone maintenance programmes which don't always work. Individuals' health outcomes were also enhanced, with a measurable reduction in blood borne diseases such as hepatitis C and HIV. It was also noticeable that our communities became safer as dirty needles were removed from the streets.

This proposal will not resolve all of our problems on its own, but it speaks to a wider set of values which ought to be at the heart of effective and affordable policymaking. To help pay for it, processes under the Proceeds of Crime Act need to be streamlined and more money made available for these services.

In redefining our service delivery we need to move away from custodial solutions for addicts, except in the most extreme cases, and deliver community-based solutions that are proven to deliver better outcomes in the long term. **F**

Ron Hogg is police and crime commissioner for Durham



The path to permanent recovery

A fresh approach to tackling alcohol crime in Nottinghamshire requires targeting the root causes of offending, writes *Paddy Tipping*

EACH YEAR, POLICE forces, health organisations and emergency service providers spend vast sums of public funds repairing the harm caused by alcohol misuse. The extent to which excessive alcohol consumption impacts on police budgets is immeasurable – even when it’s not the direct cause, it can play a contributing factor in a number of crimes, from antisocial behaviour to domestic abuse. But because the role of alcohol in a crime is not always immediately obvious, it is very difficult to capture within statistics.

To some extent, alcohol abuse has lived in the shadow of drug abuse. The relationship between drug use and acquisitive crime is well-documented and strategies for tackling it are very sophisticated. Police have prioritised the latter issue, largely in response to public fears, which has perhaps been at the expense of tackling crimes related to alcohol addiction. But the tide is turning, and in the face of tighter funding and fewer resources, police forces across the country are recognising there is a more pressing need to target the root causes of offending to reduce policing

demand, release funds and make our streets safer.

We continue to see the devastation and destruction wreaked by alcohol crime on individuals, families and children despite the huge volumes of taxpayers’ money being spent on policing and justice. More than 10 million adults in England now drink more than the recommended daily limit, with 2.6 million of them drinking more than twice that. The number of hospital admissions due to alcohol misuse was 1.1 million in 2009/10 – a rise of 100 per cent since 2002/03. With policing addressing alcohol-related crime, it has become quite clear that we are targeting our efforts at the wrong end of the cycle and would be better off investing funds in prevention programmes to address the reasons why people have sought solace in alcohol.

We found that 80 per cent of residents agreed that education was key to helping to steer young people towards a healthy, law-abiding lifestyle

In Nottinghamshire, we have shaken off the idea that alcohol crime is only a police issue. Our partners are all facing the same pressures on their funds and resources as a result of alcohol misuse and share a common interest to reduce it. How we might progress from good intentions to resolute action is through passion, discussion and partnership working, and this is something that has very much coloured our efforts to reduce alcohol crime in Nottinghamshire.

Understanding how local residents wanted us to manage alcohol abuse in the future was important, so we asked them for feedback on a broad range of issues. We found that 80 per cent of residents agreed that education was key to helping to steer young people towards a healthy, law-abiding lifestyle. However, they also recognised that tough enforcement which targeted underage drinking and drinking in public needed to accompany any holistic strategies.

The result of all of this work has been the birth of a new alcohol strategy, which focuses on both prevention and cure.

Together with our partners, we have embraced all sides of the issue to deliver a multifaceted programme of action that will expand treatment and support services, step up enforcement, provide early intervention and make it harder for young people to purchase alcohol. In the future, we will all jointly support each other to lessen the impact of problem drinking on the health service, public safety, individuals, families and local taxpayers while also protecting the prosperity of the night-time economy. For this to be successful, we recognise a need to improve information-sharing and I’m pleased to say that this is already underway.

We have agreed a range of new procedures to ensure all frontline services have training in alcohol-related harm and its links to domestic abuse to better identify risks within families. This includes plans for implementing routine screening by treatment providers and early years professionals, cross-sector training of domestic and sexual and alcohol counsellors, and the launch of a diversionary programme in secondary schools (which attempt to guide young offenders out of the criminal justice system). We’re also pursuing plans to test new enforcement approaches such as increasing the number of licensing officers employed to carry out spot checks of premises.

Public sector, voluntary and community service providers have been independently seeking solutions to reduce alcohol harm for many years. As commissioners, however, we are in the unique position of being able to pull together all these strands and facilitate improved communication so that all our efforts are targeted towards a wider purpose. Our community safety partners have a valuable role to play in the new criminal justice landscape and are receiving the funding and support they need to deliver results.

PCCs have the ability to assist operational policing by drawing on the expertise of a host of external experts and service providers. None of us are sitting back and waiting for someone else to take remedial action; we’re initiating it. The unified goals we are prioritising in our police and crime plans will be crucial to future prosperity in our local areas. **F**

Paddy Tipping is police and crime commissioner for Nottinghamshire



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Domestic survivors

Following cuts to essential services for domestic violence victims, the local police force and their partners are working to avert a human disaster, writes *Jane Kennedy*

SINCE APRIL 2010, Merseyside Police has lost over 1,200 police officers, police community support officers and police staff from a total of 7,101. The local police force continue to work even harder with their partners in the criminal justice and community safety fields to prevent crime and to protect the public. However, I'm often reminded of the human consequences of these drastic cuts.

After a packed public meeting at one of our local colleges, Tina (not her real name), a 20 year-old student with two young children, explained to me why she doesn't think we have enough police officers. After her partner beat her badly one night she left home the following morning, taking their children with her, and walked through the rain to the nearest telephone box to call 999. As she was considered to be no longer in immediate danger, she was not categorised as needing a serious response. Although the call centre kept in touch with her for several hours they eventually asked her to go to her mum's home to save her waiting any longer for a patrol car to be directed to her.

Later that afternoon, her partner called her to threaten that he had decided to kill himself and had taken an overdose. With great courage, she returned to her flat to find he had indeed harmed himself. She called 999 and in less than five minutes a police car and ambulance were in attendance, but no one even asked to speak to her or take her statement.

Even with the most careful policy and procedures in place, things can go wrong. Tina told me that she simply wants there to be enough police officers to respond to



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domestic violence cases like hers with the same degree of urgency that was shown to her sick partner.

As a Labour police and crime commissioner, I am not going to use the coalition's cuts to excuse a situation in which a better decision could have been made by the call centre and a better service provided for Tina. Both my chief constable and I are committed to constantly quality checking the service provided by his force and maintaining its excellence. So a detailed review of the call centres is under way as they prepare to move to a new centralised location and I am anticipating more support and guidance will be given to the staff that provide this important first point of contact to the public.

However, I am also not going to stand by silently whilst an ideologically inspired attack upon precious public services is dressed up as an economic necessity. Despite our best efforts, fewer police officers will no doubt affect the call centre's ability to direct a response team to a family in serious trouble.

Worse, from next year our local authorities will no longer be able to provide any service that is not a statutory requirement upon them. Consider a case like Tina's. What if the police had decided to help her and her children move to a place of refuge out of danger? Domestic violence refuges are not a statutory service and no one is required to provide them. Local authorities fund them, often jointly with housing associations, charities and the health service because they are a life-saving service. What would my police force do in a future where such services were not available?

In addition, our Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences could no longer rely upon the support of local Independ-

ent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs). These advocates are organised through the voluntary sector and funded through another cobbling together of grants which rely on council support. They represent the interests of the victims of domestic abuse and help them to become survivors. But they are not a statutory service. Who would speak for the victims of this crime if there were no independent advocates? These public services are worth investing in, especially because they repay dividends by preventing crime and protecting the vulnerable from harm.

I like to imagine occasionally that every decision I make is not coloured by a backdrop of cuts. For example, I would like to expand the help available to families where domestic violence is a cause of trouble, including providing comfort and support to children who are outside the safety net. If we are going to break the cycle of abuse, children need counselling too. But as it stands, a large part of my time and effort is committed to working with my colleagues in local government (who are all Labour, thankfully) to avert the human disaster which will happen if these savage cuts to our public services continue. For this next year, at least, I am pleased to be able to report that the local authorities with whom I work are actually committing more resources to helping the police tackle the scourge of domestic abuse in our community. More IDVAs will be employed and some will be dedicated to working with young people amongst whom this crime is a growing problem. But how long we will be able to keep this up depends upon either a change of policy or a change of government. **F**

Jane Kennedy is police and crime commissioner for Merseyside



Community payback

More of the confiscated proceeds of crime should be spent on the communities who suffered from criminality in the first place, writes *Mark Burns-Williamson*

IN BRADFORD, DEPRIVED young people are now being provided with the equipment they need to participate in sport and divert them away from antisocial behaviour; in Leeds, women and their families, especially girls from a South Asian background, have improved access to support networks and other services; and in Wakefield, young people are now able to access education workshops to help them make positive choices in their lives.

These projects and many like them will soon be up and running across West Yorkshire after the first round of the new Safer Communities Fund saw grants awarded to 45 successful bidders. These grants invest the recovered proceeds of crime back into the communities that suffered in the first place. 50 per cent of the total amount of the proceeds of crime that get returned to the police from the Treasury have gone into the fund. Thanks to the hard work of the police and partners, it is hoped over half a million pounds will be available this year, with the same amount made available for West Yorkshire police to invest in police operations and crime prevention in our communities.

Widely considered to be an innovative piece of legislation, the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) was introduced by a Labour government in 2002. It gives police the powers to seize and confiscate cash and property, takes the financial incentive out of criminal behaviour and enables the criminal justice system to work more effectively – in particular to tackle serious and organised crime.

Currently, however, only half of the money recovered here comes back to West

Yorkshire with the Treasury keeping the other half to invest in a way that is not always entirely clear. The ill-gotten gains recovered from criminals who profit from causing serious harm to our communities should not, in my view, be seen to belong to the state but as the rightful property of all those victims and witnesses whose lives have been blighted by crime. It should be spent in an open, transparent and accountable way.

I have long been campaigning for all of the money seized and confiscated here to be spent here and 85 per cent of local people agree. Thousands have signed my petitions calling on the government to give us all our money back. In these times of unprecedented cuts to our public services – in West Yorkshire, the police budget is being cut by almost a third – it would be a welcome boost to those working hard in our communities keeping people safe.

I have long been campaigning for all of the money seized and confiscated here to be spent here and 85 per cent of local people agree. Thousands have signed my petitions calling on the government to give us all our money back.

Here in West Yorkshire, the police, the crown prosecution service and the courts have worked together to make existing practices more effective and efficient but also to innovate and test the boundaries of the legislation so the police and partners can do more to capitalise on their successes and hit criminals even harder where it hurts. But updating the legislation would mean we could go further. By granting royal assent to Part 5 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, financial investigators and constables would be given increased powers to search premises, people and vehicles and the power to seize and retain property in relation to a confiscation investigation. The amount of time that offenders have to pay confiscation orders should be reduced; and the legislation needs changing to allow money that is held in bank accounts to be classed as cash under POCA, to give



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enforcement agencies the power to seize or confiscate these funds with a confiscation order. In West Yorkshire it is estimated that more than one million is currently sitting inaccessible in the bank accounts of criminals.

Information sharing between government agencies (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the Department of Work and Pensions) is too bureaucratic for effective partnership working. Pressure put on the HMRC has recently considerably improved practices with a new gateway process enabling the police to receive information within weeks rather than months. However, obtaining information from government agencies quickly is key to any financial investigation and current practices need to be further improved to achieve effective and efficient tackling of serious and organized crime. I welcome the announcement in the Queen's speech that the government will introduce a Serious Crime Bill to improve the powers to seize more proceeds of crime and will continue to lobby for more joined-up practices and all the legislative changes we need to make a real difference.

There were 236 individuals and organisations that bid into the Safer Communities Fund in the first quarter. It would have been fantastic to be able to fund all the projects so that we could do more to divert our young people away from crime and antisocial behavior and improve their life chances. That's why I will continue to campaign to get all of our money back, working with the government to update the legislation so that we can invest all the money seized here in preventing crime, instead of picking up the pieces. **F**

Mark Burns-Williamson is police and crime commissioner for West Yorkshire



Ending violence against women

A variety of strategies are being used in the north east to improve support for vulnerable women and bring about a culture change, writes *Vera Baird*

A KEY PRIORITY in all three of the police and crime plans in the north east – Northumbria, Durham and Cleveland – is domestic and sexual abuse. As the three police and crime commissioners have made a point of working together and sharing expertise, we determined to launch a joint regional strategy to tackle violence against women and girls. The strategy has 20 priorities and three separate delivery plans that reflect the different geographical areas. We are working co-operatively and sharing learning at our regular meetings together. In November 2014, one year on from the launch, we have told the public that we will evaluate the progress we have made.

Some of our new ideas are around core policing, such as a pilot scheme

where outreach workers from the refuge, Wearside Women in Need (WWIN), attend every domestic violence callout with police. They connect with the victim and make clear that help is available in any way they wish. Compared with officers giving the refuge number to victims, which led to one per cent of them calling in, 55 per cent of people who have met an outreach worker in this way, get in touch with WWIN again. We have a bid in to the Home Office for funding so we can spread this practice into other areas.

At this time of strict financial restraint, we had to look at how the public could help with our aims. We think that we should focus heavily on ensuring access to support when it is needed and ultimately on awareness and culture change. This reflects what was raised in the consultation that shaped the strategy.

We are encouraging private and public sector employers to adopt a 'domestic and sexual abuse in the workplace' strategy. Bearing in mind that for some victims work will be their only safe haven from domestic abuse, employers can provide a supportive environment, make help available and, if necessary, can take steps such as allowing time off to go to a solicitor or even transferring the victim to another branch.

An integral part of this will be 'domestic and sexual violence champions'. These are people in the workplace, perhaps trade unionists or other staff with a popular profile who agree to be trained as champions, to be badged in that way, to raise awareness around domestic and sexual violence and abuse and, particularly, to be available for

any disclosure from a colleague, to provide a sympathetic point of help and to guide them safely into more professional support. Recently over 150 of our champions from the public, private and voluntary employment attended an event run by the charity Karma Nirvana to increase their awareness of honour-based abuse and forced marriage.

In Northumbria, we have established safeguarding work in our city night time economies, following a serious rape in Newcastle. In some true multi-agency working, the police, the council, the security industry and the voluntary sector together drew up a course to encourage door staff to see themselves as having a duty of care for anyone in the night time economy, not confined to protecting their own pub or club. They now recognise that alcohol makes people vulnerable, not just a nuisance, and that resources such as Street Pastors, a safe haven run by the ambulance service, and the ability to call a safe taxi company to get the person home can prevent tragedy. Police were also trained to work in a complementary way; co-operation between police and door-staff has not always been easy.

I had the chance to ask the home secretary whether she was aware that there was no safeguarding training for door-staff and I told her the story of how we had responded to the Newcastle rape. This led to the inclusion of our safeguarding training in the National Security Industry Authority compulsory curriculum so it must now be completed by 100,000 door staff nationwide and is being passed on to taxi drivers, bar staff and public transport staff on our metros and buses. The police training is being driven nationally by the College of Policing.

We need renewed funding if we are to maintain good police services but hardship has meant that we have asked local people to help the police in more ways than ever before. Two of these examples of innovation, in connection with violence against women, show that the public is ready to help. However, the police rarely acknowledge that they need the public's help and this two-way process has been assisted by having an elected accountable figure with a public profile to make these links. **F**

Vera Baird is police and crime commissioner for Northumbria





The nature of policing

During the police and crime commissioner elections in Derbyshire, *Alan Charles* was lobbied more about wildlife crime than any other issue

AS ONE OF the UK's most beautiful natural landscapes, Derbyshire is home to an abundance of wildlife – from wild orchids and butterflies through to kingfishers, buzzards and endangered birds of prey. The diversity of landscape which encompasses the rolling Derbyshire Dales and the idyllic Peak District has given life to a wealth of wildlife. However, their welfare is under increasing threat from a criminal minority who are intent on inflicting irreversible damage to our natural heritage.

During the elections for the first generation of police and crime commissioners, I was lobbied more about wildlife crime than any other single issue. In response, I made a firm manifesto pledge to prioritise this area of crime alongside six other key areas.

Fortunately, Derbyshire's badgers have remained undisturbed throughout the government's disastrous cull following loudly voiced opposition, although they remain susceptible to badger baiting and gassing of setts. As far as wild birds are concerned, it's a grim picture with the practice of illegal 'netting' very much active in the county. Once captured, these birds are being kept in appalling conditions before being sold on by criminals, one of whom was jailed for 18 weeks and banned from keeping any animals for 12 years.

Areas which were once alive with wildlife are now deserted. Breeding pairs of goshawks and peregrine falcons are virtually extinct over the Peak District grouse moors but thrive in similar habitats in nearby areas. The most likely cause is

persecution by unscrupulous criminals like the Derbyshire gamekeeper who was convicted of a variety of offences under the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981 and Animal Welfare Act 2010, following the taking of a sparrow hawk and the operation of a trap with a live pigeon as bait.

Despite the 2004 Hunting Act some people still believe it is acceptable to break the law and hunt foxes with hounds. A successful prosecution in August 2012 saw the Master of the Meynell and South Staffordshire Hunt, alongside a member of his staff, convicted and fined.

The more reports we receive, the richer the intelligence we can develop. It is becoming clear that there are links between those wildlife criminals and serious organised crime, so we need to develop the information necessary to tackle them.

Derbyshire's natural beauty and picturesque villages draw more than 10 million visitors every year – ten times the number of people who actually live here. Visitors travel from all over the globe for the privilege and contribute significantly to our local economy. Whether they come to walk, fell run, cycle, eat or relax, the tourist experience is heavily reliant on the fantastic wildlife within reach. It's important this remains so both now and in the long-term.

Other priorities for my region include expanding support to victims of domestic abuse, child sex exploitation and human trafficking. I have been asked if wildlife crime is a higher priority than these very serious crimes: the clear and obvious answer is no. There are varying levels of priority in policing but just because an offence isn't the highest on the list this doesn't mean we will ignore it. A serious sexual assault, for instance, will always receive a priority response but that doesn't mean we won't bother to deal with an offence of shoplifting. Wildlife crime has far-reaching implications for our county and the police are committed to investigating it.

In Derbyshire, we are very fortunate to have several police officers who are passionate about dealing with wildlife crime. Previously, there was no formal structure for wildlife crime investigation but this has evolved since my election, as the chief constable and I have worked closely together to create a dedicated wildlife team comprising wildlife crime officers and special constables in each of the county's three policing divisions. Another essential part of the structure will be the recruitment of volunteers who will act as the 'eyes and ears' across the hundreds of square miles of land.

We will also be 'recruiting' the millions of visitors we welcome annually, with awareness campaigns throughout Derbyshire. Additionally, we want our rural communities to have the confidence to report any concerns they have about offences in their local area including theft of agricultural machinery and diesel as well as wildlife crime. The more reports we receive, the richer the intelligence we can develop. It is becoming clear that there are links between those wildlife criminals and serious organised crime, so we need to develop the information necessary to tackle them.

In the future, I will be working with local and national wildlife organisations and MPs, including Derby MP Chris Williamson, to bring about changes to legislation to further protect our endangered species. One specific piece of legislation is that of vicarious liability, introduced in Scotland in 2012, which places the same legal liability on landowners and employers for illegal actions such as the persecution of birds of prey as the primary perpetrator.

Raising the profile of wildlife crime in Derbyshire has sent a very clear message to those criminals intent on destroying our wildlife that Derbyshire police and its partners are taking this extremely seriously. This is an issue that matters deeply to the people of Derbyshire, and my role is to represent their concerns regarding policing and community safety. My focus on the eradication of wildlife crime – in Derbyshire and beyond – is a perfect example of listening followed by delivery. Locally and nationally, my aspirations have been warmly met. **F**

Alan Charles is police and crime commissioner for Derbyshire



The journey towards safer transport

The safer people feel, the more we can encourage use of public transport. West Midlands shows a partnership approach is the most effective way to tackle transport crime, writes *Bob Jones*

THE INTRODUCTION OF police and crime commissioners was accompanied by suggestions that they could 'bang the table' to get partners working together, with the legitimacy of being the 'voice of the people'. I reject both suggestions. It would not be possible to be the voice of the people of the West Midlands, not only because it has a population of nearly three million, but because no one actually considers themselves a 'West Midlander'. I see my role as facilitating the public's voices – not presuming to speak on their behalf.

There are seven distinct unitary local authorities in the West Midlands. Each has to be dealt with on its own terms; I do not see partnership working as one person coercing others into line, but comprising of agencies and the public coming together to recognise their respective roles and act on their shared responsibilities and objectives.

One area where partnership working is essential relates to transport. Not only does this cross boundaries, but it involves agencies and organisations across the public and private sectors. Safer public transport is also a key priority for the public who rely on it and a driver for economic development, which in turn brings jobs and reduced crime.

Our three year plan to combat crime and antisocial behaviour on the West Midlands' public transport system is a joint initiative between the police and crime commissioner, local passenger transport body Centro and the British Transport Police Authority.

Actions in the plan will be channelled through the existing Safer Travel Partnership – a taskforce dedicated to combating and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour on the transport network. The partnership includes West Midlands Police (WMP), British Transport Police (BTP), Centro, bus company National Express West Midlands and train operator London Midland, with Centro funding approximately half of the £1.5 million staffing costs. The scheme has already helped cut crime on the network by more than 67 per cent over the last six years.

The benefits of cross-organisational co-operation are wide-ranging. For instance, the partnership has two dedicated intelligence analysts who provide crime and antisocial behaviour data on a monthly basis and prepare problem profiles which are used to direct resources to particular routes where crime and antisocial behaviour are an issue. Overt and covert patrols are conducted in risk areas and proactive use is made of CCTV to allow real time response to crimes in action. West Midlands Police and British Transport Police work together, with patrols criss-crossing the rail, tram and bus networks, ignoring the old 'modal' boundaries.

The policing plan also has a variety of tactics at its disposal to address crime and nuisance behaviour. These include increasing the use of CCTV and other technology, monitored 24/7 within the safer travel command centre; increasing the presence of uniformed officers on the network to enhance the feeling of safety amongst passengers; expanding the use of special constables within the safer travel police team; providing greater support for crime victims; and educating young people about appropriate behaviour on public transport.

Another key element includes asking the government to give Centro the same powers to tackle antisocial behaviour enjoyed by Transport for London. These include being able to impose antisocial behaviour orders directly, allowing a swift response to be taken on behalf of passengers. There is also a restorative justice project underway in Birmingham which sees perpetrators of crime on public transport 'making good', by cleaning buses.

Finally, the wider community have been able to determine the priorities that will help deliver improvements in the coming period. Our policing plan will continue to give passengers the opportunity to play



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their part by anonymously sending details of any incidents through the existing 'See Something Say Something' service. The information sent helps police pinpoint nuisance behaviour hotspots and take appropriate action including undercover operations. Supporting this is a programme of 'designing out crime' reviews that are being carried out at every bus station, rail station, Metro stop and park and ride site in the West Midlands. Wolverhampton Bus Station has been identified as the first in the country to be assessed against new 'safer bus station award' criteria.

Latest figures show that the partnership approach is working. There has been an 11 per cent increase in passenger satisfaction with safety on the West Midlands transport network, and the percentage of passengers who felt the behaviour of others caused them to worry or feel uncomfortable has reduced from 17 per cent to 10 per cent.

However, our work is not finished yet. This year has seen the partnership move significantly toward more effective cross-modal policing with the creation of three mixed force teams each led by a sergeant. Moving forward, and subject to BTP approval, BTP staff will become associate WMP staff to allow for more effective cross-force management.

Ensuring the safety of public transport is a win-win. The safer people feel, the more we can encourage greater use of public transport, which both itself deters crime and ensures that our public transport services remain sustainable. This in turn supports economic growth and employment. **F**

Bob Jones was police and crime commissioner for the West Midlands. He sadly passed away in July this year.



The magic number

A tri-force collaboration between different police forces enables them to share resources and protects frontline services, writes
Olly Martins

WHAT DO OUR public want from our police service and commissioners? Most importantly they want their local police visibility and responsiveness maintained and protected. They want threats to be dealt with by the most appropriate resources, informed by local knowledge. Although there is widespread public opposition to wholesale outsourcing in policing, people are less concerned with how the supporting back office services are delivered as long as they offer value for money and protect the frontline in times of austerity.

The 'tri-force' collaboration between Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire provides a model of police joint working that achieves the majority of the advantages of full blown merger, in terms of cost-efficiency and resilience, whilst minimising organisational turmoil and protecting the level of local accountability.

In effect, the police and crime commissioners of each county are able to maximise the resources available for neighbourhood policing by minimising the cost of all the other activities that support the visible frontline. The existing tri-force Joint Protective Services (JPS) directorate includes armed police, dogs, roads policing, major crime, counter terrorism and scientific services. The collaborated units working across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire consist of 550 officers and 650 police staff with budgets totaling some £68 million. In bringing these services together over £12 million of cash savings have been delivered, with further savings of £2.5 million anticipated this year.

However, saving money is not the only benefit. The joint units bring a far higher level of additional capacity and capability, as well as the protection of local policing resources in each of the three forces. This also assists the three forces in meeting their national commitments in areas of significant threat, harm and risk.

Modern policing needs to strike the right balance between effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and responsiveness to the communities it serves

When Bedfordshire first created a major crime unit with Hertfordshire in 2008, Bedfordshire was abstracting approximately 65 officers on a daily basis investigating major crime issues, such as homicide and rape. The creation of a joint unit allowed Bedfordshire to release the equivalent of 30 officers back to frontline policing. Bedfordshire has not had to remove any officers from local policing to assist in major crime investigations since then. The addition of Cambridgeshire to make the current tri-force alliance has further benefited capacity and capability.

An important operational example of this is the murder of 15 year old Megan-Leigh Peat. Stoke City academy footballer, Andrew Hall, 18, pleaded guilty to the murder of Megan-Leigh Peat at Luton Crown Court in September 2012. Megan-Leigh died after being stabbed more than 60 times with two different knives at her friend's house in Bedfordshire during the early hours of 9 June 2012.

Whereas previously an investigation of this nature would have pulled a great number of officers away from their normal duties, in effect having a collaborated major crime unit meant the combined resources of three forces could be directed at the inquiry without a knock-on effect. Fortunately, local knowledge of staff could still be deployed; a Bedfordshire officer was able to take the initial lead, and when Andrew Hall spent several days in Lister Hospital in Stevenage, Hertfordshire officers who were familiar with the hospital were able to facilitate smooth relations with its staff.

Equally when Luton was hit by a spike in serious violence in spring 2013 we could deploy the resources of the three collaborated forces using high visibility patrols and other counter-measures. In addition, collaborated units could provide extra armed response vehicles (ARVs). Luton usually has 2 ARVs, one of which is permanently deployed at the airport, but now this can rise to up to six for a period of time if needed.

With the signing of a further memorandum of understanding between the police and crime commissioners and chief constables for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, the next chapter in the tri-force collaboration has begun. This will involve operational and organisational support functions, such as control rooms, custody, finance, estates and facilities, human resources, training, ICT, firearms licencing, and recording crime. Anticipated savings are conservatively estimated at £25 million across the three forces.

Although tri-force collaboration was in operation before the election of police and crime commissioners, the three PCCs have been able to drive forward the agenda in a far more dynamic way than the old police authorities. For example, despite having inherited a plan to outsource operational and organisational support to G4S, we concluded this did not offer the best option for our respective police forces and the general public. In the past, recovering from such a change of direction would probably have taken years. But instead of the long drawn-out process necessitated by the collective decision making structure of several police authorities, with reports being presented to committees and debates taking place through long cycles of meetings before a conclusion is reached, full-time commissioners have been able to negotiate a way forward in a matter of months.

Modern policing needs to strike the right balance between effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and responsiveness to the communities it serves. Directly accountable to the public, PCCs are proving to be ideally placed to mediate this balance, facilitating collaboration in an organic way that puts communities first. **F**

Olly Martins is police and crime commissioner for Bedfordshire



Planning for success

Reducing young people's offending, responding to the needs of victims and witnesses, and improving neighbourhood policing are just some of the priorities for Cleveland, writes *Barry Coppinger*

IT'S A REAL achievement that the Cleveland police force, our partners and our local communities have reduced crime in the face of severe budget cuts and the loss of staff. In financially difficult times, it has been crucial to identify five priorities for the Cleveland police and crime plan – and they have remained unchanged since my election campaign. Rather than focusing on one or two issues facing policing, this is an overview of the tremendously wide scope of the police and crime planning process in Cleveland.

First, we are focusing on maintaining and developing neighbourhood policing. Over 18 months I've attended over 180 community meetings across Cleveland. Responding to residents' concerns, we are transferring detectives to neighbourhood teams; mapping resources to match demand; and making sure the police force takes more immediate action on intelligence received and improves its targeting of crime hotspots.

To promote our work in neighbourhoods, we encourage police teams to use social media. We aim to increase the number of special constables in Cleveland from just over 80 to 200 and are also restructuring Neighbourhood Watch to a single standard, involving partners in messaging and encouraging more residents to become involved. We recently organised Cleveland's first criminal justice volunteers fair, which resulted in over 900 expressions of interest in voluntary positions such as custody visiting, mediation services, and helping tackle domestic and sexual

violence. In addition, over 50 community projects are being supported by the Property Act fund which I introduced, which makes use of proceeds of assets recovered from criminals which can't be returned to their owners.

We are working towards a better deal for victims and witnesses which builds their confidence in the police force and makes sure their voices are heard. Our new multi-agency victims strategic planning group consults victims of crime to inform commissioning of services and implementation of new antisocial behaviour legislation. A strategy to tackle violence against women and girls has been developed by the three north east police and crime commissioners and our Cleveland delivery plan is also helping drive implementation of a new victims' code of practice.

In particular, we have used media campaigns and training to raise awareness about disability hate crime. Multi-agency work has produced Cleveland-wide standards for crime reporting centres, supported by media campaigns to raise awareness of this type of crime. On top of this, a Cleveland-wide 'safe places' scheme supports vulnerable people and enables them to live more independent lives by establishing venues such as libraries or local businesses as places where they can go if they need help.

We are working towards a better deal for victims and witnesses which builds their confidence in the police force and makes sure their voices are heard

I am committed to diverting people from offending and prevent reoffending. We are especially focused on young people's offending, with more than 700 young offenders diverted from the criminal justice process. Last year we secured Ministry of Justice funding for a 'restorative justice champion' post. We've promoted community payback schemes encouraging the public to submit ideas for projects undertaken by offenders. Reducing reoffending requires targeted action, so we've rolled out a screening model throughout Cleveland that engages with young people

entering custody and diverts them from reoffending.

I am also prioritising better coordination, communication and partnership between agencies to make the best use of resources. Last year, I made the process for assessing people in police custody more collaborative, drawing on the expertise of different agencies to support people with issues which can often lead to offending, such as addictive behaviour. We support the Safer Future Communities Network for the voluntary and community sector in order to encourage future collaboration. To help partnership working, I'm now an executive member and chair of the Cleveland & Durham Local Criminal Justice Board. I've supported the Board by improving the use of victim personal statements. As a result, Crown Prosecution Service now presents victim personal statements at court hearings for domestic and sexual violence cases to inform sentencing.

Finally, a key goal is to improve industrial and community relations. I have commissioned an independent piece of work on the culture of leadership within Cleveland police, to ensure it is public-facing and accountable. In addition, our newly appointed chief constable leads nationally on ethics and professional standards. An external audit report of the 2012/13 accounts confirmed I have reduced the budget of the office of the PCC by 23 per cent (£270,000) when compared to the former Cleveland police authority, which has allowed more money to be focused on frontline services. Over 99 per cent of our overall budget is currently spent on supporting policing and community safety. I also regularly meet with trade unions and staff associations. One of our main priorities has been to support the living wage; the PCC and Cleveland police became a living wage accredited employer last year.

The PCC role is somewhat misunderstood both in terms of range of activities we're involved in, and the good practice and ground-breaking work undertaken beyond previous limitations of police authorities. Hopefully one day a meaningful and objective evaluation will be carried out to show the range of activity involved in this multifaceted role. **F**

Barry Coppinger is police and crime commissioner for Cleveland

