DEMOS

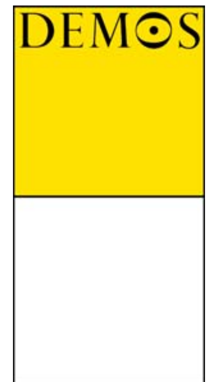
Final report

A Force for Change

Policing 2020

Charlie Edwards
Paul Skidmore

April 2006
www.demos.co.uk



Contents

Foreword 2

Preface 3

1. A force for the future? 5

2. Thinking about the 'public value' of policing 8

3. The current policy context for UK policing 12

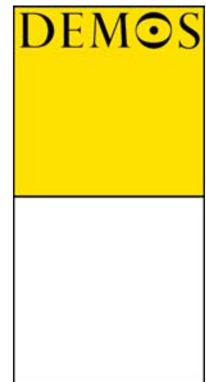
4. The public value of UK policing today 14

5. A challenging and changing environment: seven dilemmas for policing 20

6. Scenarios for the future of policing 26

7. Building public value in policing: an agenda for the next 15 years 33

Notes 39

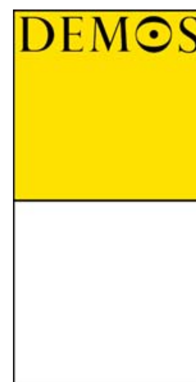


Foreword

It is over 40 years since the 1962 *Royal Commission on Policing*. That report led to a major shake-up in policing, reducing the number of police forces, bringing new technology into policing and new developments in local policing through the Unit Beat Policing Scheme. It was probably the biggest reform to policing in the UK since Robert Peel's creation of the 'New Police' in the 1820s. Peel's settlement lasted over a hundred years. The 1962 settlement has had to confront a much faster set of changes in society and the challenges facing policing. This is not just an issue for the UK. Internationally, police forces are confronting multiple challenges: a heightened concern about terrorism; transnational or cross-border crime; demands from the citizen and government for much better performance and better basic services. For the police forces of England and Wales this had led to rapid change. The professional development of new approaches to neighbourhood policing, supported by Home Office research, has led the government to commit to a national programme, with a significant investment in 'community support officers' – one obvious sign that the police workforce is evolving rapidly. A national inspection of 'protective services' (including the capability of forces to tackle serious and organised crime) has triggered a major review of the post-1962 police force structure, while a new Serious and Organised Crime Agency started work in April 2006. Finally, in response to the clear need for the police service to develop a more effective national capability to change itself, the National Policing Improvement Agency is in the process of being set up to support and enable change and assist policing to develop its people and its professional practice. All of this hardly describes the last 'unreformed public service'. However, as this pamphlet sets out, there are significant challenges for policing as these changes are made in engaging the public and building public confidence. As Sir Ian Blair said in his Dimbleby lecture, a proper debate about policing is healthy and is vital to help both the police service and public's understanding of the choices for making our communities safer.

Chief Constable Peter Neyroud,
Chief Executive (Designate)
National Policing Improvement Agency

Preface



British governments routinely discover that the gap between policy and practice – between what is decided in Whitehall and what happens on the ground – is one of the hardest to bridge. This government has been no exception.

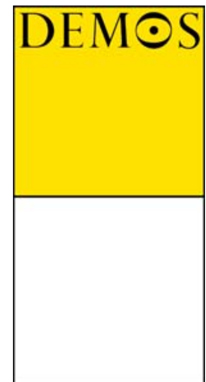
But Demos recognises that this puzzle also poses problems for think tanks. Inserting clever ideas into the policy mix is not enough if they are divorced from an analysis of how the rest of the world operates. Our answer has been to try to develop a way of generating ideas by linking policy to practice; to complement the traditional repertoire of research and analysis with an approach that grows out of more direct, long-term collaborations with particular institutions.

This pamphlet is the latest example of that approach. It is based on Demos's experience over the last couple of years in guiding groups of senior police officers through a 'futures thinking' exercise, using four scenarios designed to help them think about the strategic context for policing in 2020. The scenarios were originally developed by participants on the Strategic Command Course in December 2003. These ideas have subsequently been tested and refined by more than 150 officers who have since taken part in the 'Policing Contexts and Futures' module of the Senior Leadership Development Programme II run by Centrex, the police training and development organisation. Engaging with tomorrow's 'top cops' has been a hugely rewarding way to gather and test out ideas.

The reasons for trying to capture the knowledge that has emerged from these sessions in a more public format is fourfold.

First, the future of our police service is, once more, at the top of the political agenda. David Cameron's rejuvenated Conservatives have identified the police as 'the last great unreformed public service', and demanded greater local accountability and performance-related pay. The government, for its part, continues to press forward with a reform programme aimed at transforming the structure of the police, to make it at once more local (through neighbourhood policing teams) and more strategic (through consolidation of smaller forces into larger, regional units). Both sets of proposals have attracted controversy. Yet viewed over the kind of timescale we entertain in this pamphlet, neither seems particularly radical. Our contention is that embracing the wider range of reform trajectories visible for the next 15–20 years promises to deliver a more ambitious and intelligent debate than the one currently available.

Second, the quality and rigour of much of the thinking and debate from police officers that we have been privy to behind closed doors deserves to reach a wider audience, both within the police service and beyond. This does not mean that we have simply accepted the views we have heard uncritically; where we think they deserve to be challenged we have done so. But by privileging knowledge generated



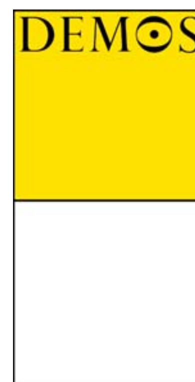
through experience rather than conventional research, we recognise that sound policy-making can emerge from practice, and not just the other way round.

Third, there appears to be a striking degree of honesty and unanimity among senior police officers about many of the challenges they face, a unanimity which they often find surprising. By capturing and reflecting some of this back to a wider audience, this pamphlet is intended to act as a stimulus and focal point around which a more public debate, and perhaps a consensus for action, might be constructed.

Fourth, our experience has been overwhelmingly that most officers find the futures thinking process helpful and want to know how it can generate additional value for them back in their own forces or on the national stage. A common lament we have often heard from officers is that as much as they sometimes feel like victims of political games, they believe the police service itself is partly to blame for not being coherent or constructive enough in engaging with tough questions about the long-term trajectory of policing. This creates a vacuum of thought leadership into which the more myopic concerns of politicians or the media inevitably dominate. Whether they support or oppose the ideas in this pamphlet, we hope it serves as a rallying point around which a more coherent view may coalesce.

We are grateful to colleagues at Demos who have been involved in this work, including Duncan O'Leary, Kirsten Bound, Rachel Briggs, Tom Bentley and especially Matthew Horne. Finally, while we have learnt an enormous amount from the officers we have had the good fortune to work with over the last couple of years, any mistakes or omissions remain our own.

Charlie Edwards
Paul Skidmore
April 2006



1. A force for the future?

> *There are restrictive practices that prevent police forces from delivering the kind of policing people want. We should be more aggressive in breaking down the barriers in the way of a professional, twenty-first-century police force, whether it's political correctness from above, or ploddishness from below.*
>
> David Cameron MP

> *The 43 force structure is no longer fit for purpose. In the interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing it should change.*
>
> HM Inspector of Constabulary Denis O'Connor CBE, QPM[1]

The future of our police service has, once more, moved to the centre of the political battleground. The Conservatives, revitalised under the leadership of David Cameron, have chosen to make reform of the police service both an emblem of their commitment to public services and a signal of their willingness to depart from traditional Tory law-and-order rhetoric. For the Labour government, reforms designed to ensure the return of very local policing are needed to respond to the 'cleaner, safer, greener' issues which voters routinely report as mattering most to their quality of life, and to Tony Blair's crusade to tackle anti-social behaviour and restore 'respect'.

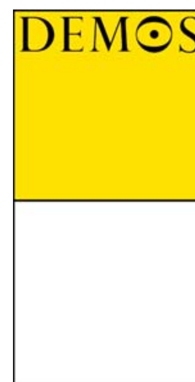
Whichever party is in power, then, it seems the police can look forward to a further period of reform. Yet there is a paradox here. On the one hand, as the police themselves are quick to point out, the service has been subjected to numerous reform programmes throughout the last decade, many of them designed to tighten central government's oversight of police performance. On the other hand, neither these initiatives nor those being offered by the parties today seem to offer a distinctive answer to the question 'what kind of police service do we want and need for the future?'

That is the question this pamphlet seeks to address. To do so, it seeks to do three things:

- to outline the challenges facing the police service over the next two decades
- to develop a common framework in which these responses can be weighed and compared
- to present a more divergent set of choices for policy-makers and the police about how they respond to these challenges than is typically presented.

The challenges

The next two decades present a set of challenges to policing and to the police service which are both compelling and disruptive. Without the capacity to take a



long view, something that has been missing from criminal justice policy in recent and not so recent history,[2] adapting to these challenges will be very difficult. The challenges include:

- more sophisticated, ruthless and global serious and organised crime, growing evidence of terrorists' willingness and capability to strike soft targets in cities across the world, including in the UK
- a perception that the civility of neighbourhood life is threatened by spiralling anti-social behaviour
- stubbornly high levels of fear of crime, which have been slow to respond to falling levels of actual crime
- the risk of overstretch that comes with responding to all these challenges, and the possible implications for the police's status as a genuinely universal public service.

The clearest manifestation of the difficulty in coping with these demands is the deteriorating relationship between the police, the public and politicians, increasingly characterised by mutual suspicion of each other's motives and legitimacy. Politicians and the public expect more influence in framing policing priorities at the local and national level, while police officers resist what they see as unreasonable interference in matters that are properly operational concerns.

The framework

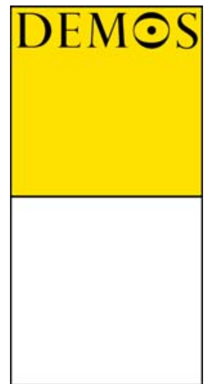
The pamphlet proposes that the concept of 'public value',[3] which has been gaining currency in policy circles in recent years, offers the potential to act as a shared framework for the police, the public and politicians to deliberate over the long-term decisions and trade-offs the police service needs to make over the next two decades. Each side has a perspective which is valid and which needs to be part of the solution. But it is only by finding a way to share and accept all the perspectives that the whole solution comes into view.

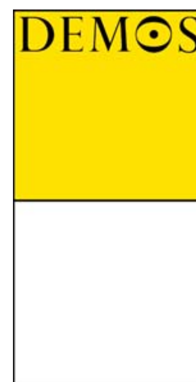
The choices

The pamphlet then uses a series of scenarios – stories about the future of policing – to show the range of ways in which the public value that policing creates could change over the next 15 years. These scenarios have been generated and refined in partnership with police officers themselves, so that they represent an authentic picture of where they see policing going over the next decades. The purpose of using these scenarios is to help police leaders and policy-makers:

- to think about their preferred future for policing in 2020, within the likely parameters we explore in this pamphlet
- to think about how they can best make that future happen, and the key points of leverage they have

- to think about the decisions they can make in the here and now which will put them in the best place to deal with whatever the future holds.





2. Thinking about the 'public value' of policing

When Robert Peel founded the police service in the nineteenth century, he finally won a long and bitter battle with opponents who said that such a move threatened the essential liberties of the British people.

The debate between Peel and his critics goes to the heart of questions about how we think about the value of our public services. Peel's critics argued that it was not in individuals' self-interest to give up their freedom, in the form of extra powers for the state and higher taxes, to support the creation of a police force. Maybe so, said Peel, but it was still in their *collective* interest to do so. As he is reported to have told Wellington, 'I want to teach people that liberty does not consist in having your house robbed by organised gangs of thieves, and in leaving the principal streets of London in the nightly possession of drunken women and vagabonds.'[4]

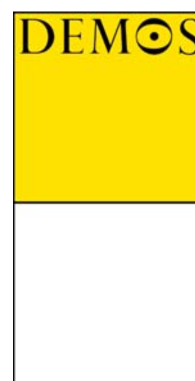
For Peel, legislating for a police service entailed a pretty straightforward exchange: the public would sacrifice some of their freedom by giving the state more coercive power and the right to demand higher taxes, and in return their other freedoms would be better protected by having an effective and honest police force to keep the peace, detect and prevent crime and punish offenders. But to win the argument he had to show that it did not make sense to think about the value of a public service from the point of view of any one individual; you had to look at it from the perspective of the citizenry as a whole. In the market, as Adam Smith had fairly recently shown, individual self-interest was enough to generate a definition of the value of a good or service – it was the price at which a customer was prepared to pay for it and a producer was prepared to sell it. But for policing or other goods and services produced by the state,[5] you needed a different account of their value.

Today, more than 150 years after Peel, the argument about the status of policing and many other services as public goods has of course been secured. The UK now spends £10.8bn of public money a year on its policing.[6]

But we are not necessarily any closer to a shared account of the value that policing creates for the public who pay for it.

A wave of thinking in the 1980s under the banner of New Public Management (NPM) approached this challenge by borrowing from efficiency techniques imported wholesale from the private sector. Emphasising cost-effectiveness for the 'consumers' of public services – taxpayers – these approaches challenged traditional approaches to public management in which the priorities of professionals and public service institutions dominated.

However, as well as relying on less than sophisticated techniques for calculating efficiency, NPM leaned heavily on the consumerist economic conception of value that Peel had rejected as inappropriate 150 years earlier. What was measured was



what mattered, and this led to a narrowed emphasis on measurable inputs and outputs, which did not take sufficient account of the other things that citizens cared about, and which were not so easy to measure: service quality and experience, trust, fairness, and a proper say in how decisions were made, for example.[7]

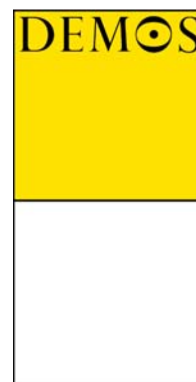
Public value developed as a way of remedying some of these defects. It improves on earlier theories of public administration (see table 1) by drawing attention to a wider range of ways in which public services such as the police create value for the public in what they do, how they do it, and the relationships they build with citizens in the process.

Table 1 Theories of public administration

	Traditional public management	**'New public management'**	**Public value**
Public interest	Defined by politicians / experts	Aggregation of individual preferences, demonstrated by customer choice	Individual and public preferences (resulting from public deliberation)
Performance objective	Managing inputs	Managing inputs and outputs	Multiple objectives - Service outputs - Satisfaction - Outcomes - Maintaining trust/legitimacy
Dominant model of accountability	Upwards through departments to politicians and through them to Parliament	Upwards through performance contracts; sometimes outwards to customers through market mechanisms	Multiple - citizens as overseers of govt - customers as users - taxpayers as funders
Preferred system for delivery	Hierarchical department or self-regulating profession	Private sector or tightly defined arms-length public agency	Menu of alternatives selected pragmatically (public sector agencies, private companies, JVCs, Community Interest Companies, community groups as well as increasing role for user choice)
Approach to public service ethos	Public sector has monopoly on service ethos, and all public bodies have it.	Sceptical of public sector ethos (leads to inefficiency and empire building) – favours customer service	No one sector has a monopoly on ethos, and no one ethos always appropriate. As a valuable resource it needs to be carefully managed
Role for public participation	Limited to voting in elections and pressure on elected representatives	Limited – apart from use of customer satisfaction surveys	Crucial – multi-faceted (customers, citizens, key stakeholders)
Goal of managers	Respond to political direction	Meet agreed performance targets	Respond to citizen/user preferences, renew mandate and trust through guaranteeing quality services.

Source: G Kelly, G Mulgan and S Muers, *Creating Public Value* (London: Strategy Unit, 2002).

In particular, it draws attention to the role of public service leaders in actively seeking new forms of direct engagement, dialogue and deliberation with their



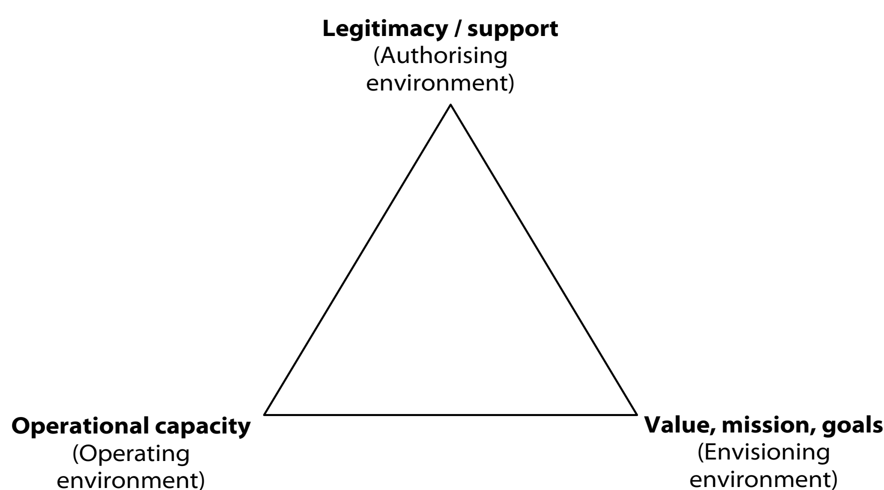
communities and with politicians about what they should be doing, rather than relying on the channels of formal politics to define their goals and confer legitimacy on their actions.

Public value takes as its starting point the idea that leaders in the police and other public services cannot take the underlying purpose of their institution, its legitimacy, or the value it creates for citizens to be self-evident, simply because they are public institutions whose mandate has been supplied by democratically elected governments. Instead they need to be more proactive and flexible in three key respects:

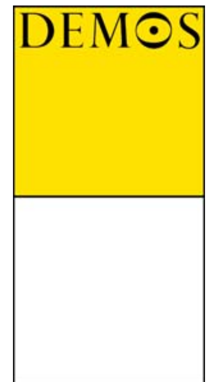
- in searching for valued purposes for their organisation (through activities that meet the changing needs of citizens)
- in providing opportunities for citizens and other stakeholders to authorise these purposes (through processes of local accountability and deliberation)
- and by doing more to identify and represent the value their work creates (through evaluating and communicating their performance more effectively).

This gives rise to Mark Moore's concept of the 'strategic triangle' (see figure 1) as a way of describing the full range of ways by which, and the full range of arenas in which, public service leaders can create value for citizens.

Figure 1 Strategic triangle



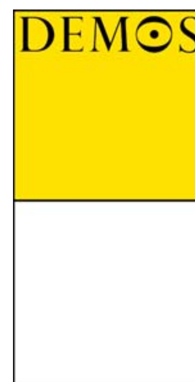
Source: MH Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic management in government* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995)



For example, in the authorising environment, police leaders create public value by building more open and transparent ways for citizens to influence what the police do and affirm what they think is valuable about their work. In the operating environment, police leaders create public value by searching for things their force can do to meet people's needs, responding to changing circumstances and looking for new, more efficient and more effective ways to bring the resources at their disposal to bear on solving citizen's problems. In the envisioning environment, police leaders create public value by working to identify and capture the value their institution creates.

This pamphlet uses public value and the strategic triangle framework to shed light on the key priorities facing the police and policing over the next two decades. It focuses on three:

- *Authorising environment*: creating open, transparent and democratic settings in which to manage relationships – including political relationships – between the police, politicians and the public
- *Operating environment*: reshaping the 'market' in policing services to deploy public resources more efficiently and effectively
- *Envisioning environment*: reasserting the values, legitimacy and independence of the police service by proactively searching for new, practical ways to express them, rather than fending off any attempt by others to challenge or scrutinise them.



3. The current policy context for UK policing

A new logic has taken root in government thinking about public service reform. After more than a decade of trying to improve the performance of schools, hospitals, police forces and other services from the centre through performance management, targets and inspection, the focus has shifted to engaging citizens and users themselves in the design and delivery of services. Thus, 'at the core of developing any adequate measure of police performance is for citizens and their elected representatives to decide what it is that is intrinsically valuable, or what it is that we as a political community value in the activities and operations of a public police department.'[8]

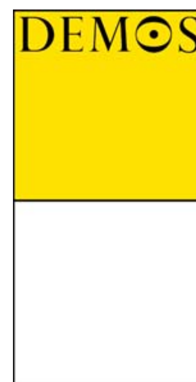
According to David Miliband MP, one of the current government's leading thinkers on public service reform, 'the key lies in the engagement of users of services, not treating them simply as passive recipients but engaging them as active partners in the creation and development of high quality services; call it empowerment or engagement, putting the public back into public services is the key to their transformation.'[9]

In policing, the new mantra is 'citizen-focused policing'. As Home Secretary Charles Clarke told a conference in January 2005: 'It must seem sometimes that there is a process of perpetual change but society is changing fast around us. We have to find the right way to change in order to meet those challenges. That's why the Citizen-Focused Policing relationship is central to everything we do.'[10] The key implication of this principle is a new – or perhaps more accurately, renewed – focus on neighbourhood policing. The Police Reform white paper, *Building Communities, Beating Crime: A better police service for the 21st century* states:

> *The Government believes that, as a starting point, we need revitalised neighbourhood policing for today's world. Our clear view is that increasing public trust and confidence in policing – while important in its own right – will also be a real benefit for the police service itself. It will help make policing more effective.*[11]

But in a sense, this emphasis on citizens and communities as partners in policing harks back to the founding ethos of the police force as set out in Sir Robert Peel's nine principles of policing more than 150 years ago.[12] However, it is clear that the level of community engagement envisaged goes well beyond that to which the police service has historically been accustomed. According to the white paper it means a step change:

> *from traditional notions of policing simply by consent or people's passive acquiescence, to policing with the proactive engagement and co-operation of communities. But if people are to engage, they need to be confident that they will be treated well, and their voices heard and acted upon.*[13]



The key elements of this new agenda for policing are fivefold.

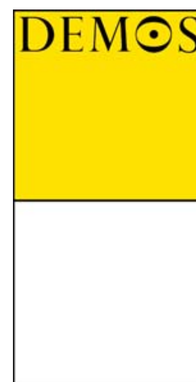
First, neighbourhood policing teams comprising a sergeant, two constables and three community support officers (CSOs) will operate in every neighbourhood to deliver the public reassurance and community safety functions people say they want prioritised.

Second, this commitment will be made possible both through recruitment – police numbers have increased dramatically from 127,158 police officers in March 1997 to 140,135, a record high, by February 2005 – and through workforce remodelling, with a focus on a more diverse and flexible mix of skills. Teams of uniformed officers will work alongside a panoply of para-professionals (CSOs, wardens, special constables) and specialist support. There are now also 12,500 special constables, and 4,599 CSOs working alongside the police. The number of CSOs will rise to 20,000 by 2008.

Third, local priorities will be developed through a more responsive approach to customer service and community engagement, including new approaches to public participation in setting local priorities rather than relying on ineffective public meetings.

Fourth, this local focus will be embedded in clearer lines of accountability and greater powers for local councillors in community advocacy, including the right to 'trigger' certain actions from local forces where the community feels they are not responding to their needs.

Fifth, cost-efficiencies and more effective coordination on a regional and national scale will be achieved by consolidating some smaller forces into larger units.



4. The public value of UK policing today

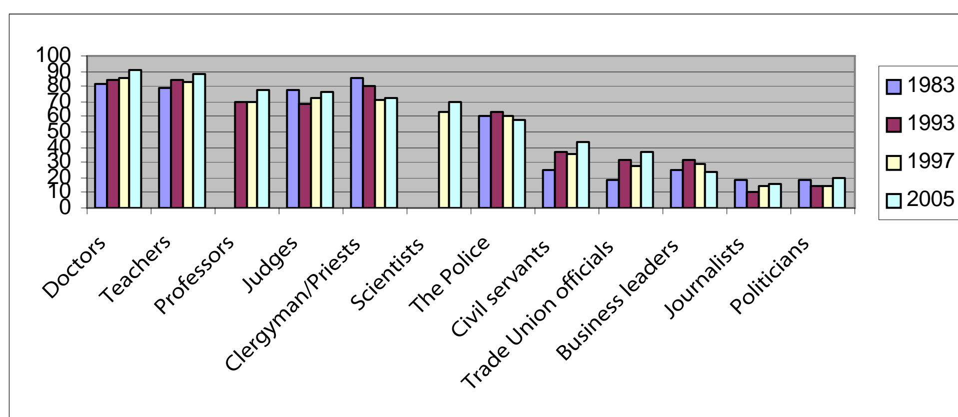
In chapter 2 we argued that public value captures a broader range of ways by which public services, such as the police, can create value for the public than is described by traditional theories of public administration. The 'strategic triangle' shown in figure 1 – authorising environment, operating environment and envisioning environment – gives us a multidimensional framework with which we can think about the public value being created by the police service today.

The authorising environment

The first place we can look for evidence of the public value the police create is in their relationship with the public, from which such publicly valued outcomes as trust and accountability emerge.

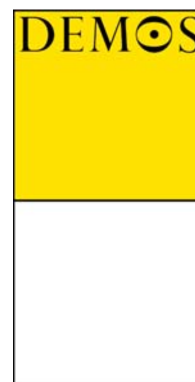
Trust in policing as measured by survey responses has been largely steady for the last two decades, although it is below that of some other public service professionals (doctors and teachers) and other parts of the criminal justice system (judges) (see figure 2).[14]

Figure 2 Proportion saying they generally trust a particular profession to tell the truth



Source: MORI presentation to Demos, 7 Feb 2006

Others, however, have argued that an 'accountability gap' has opened up between the police and the public, citing as evidence the 'growing numbers of victims [who] fail to report crimes, in the belief that the police are either unwilling or unable to do anything about them: 35% of violent attacks by strangers, 38% of burglaries, 42% of thefts from vehicles and 58% of muggings went unreported in 2001.'[15]



The Police Reform white paper was critical of the quality of much of the community engagement work carried out by police forces, with too heavy a reliance on traditional consultation methods like public meetings:

> *Research has shown [formal public meetings] to be ineffective for strategic consultation on priority setting. While these groups can sometimes be effective as a local problem solving forum, they are often poorly attended and not representative of the whole community. Many authorities have constituted, abandoned or supplemented such groups with other forms of engagement, but progress has been variable within and between authorities. Moving beyond relying on public meetings as a sole form of engagement is a key aim of our reforms.*[16]

This critical perspective is shared by Dr Sohail Husain, Deputy Chief Executive of Crime Concern:

> *The police do not always engage with the community as effectively as they might. This partly reflects a lack of understanding of the scope, methods and potential of engagement, which may still be seen to be only about consultation. But it also reflects their training and ethos, which equips them to take control of situations, as a result of which they can find it hard to 'let go' and enable local people to play an active role that includes the shaping and delivering of solutions.*[17]

The operating environment

The second area we need to look for evidence about the public value being created by the police is in the operating environment: how good have police forces been at creating organisations that meet public needs? The obvious place to start is with levels of crime, which for many people remains the key test of policing effectiveness. According to the British Crime Survey (BCS), levels of crime in the UK peaked in 1995 and have been falling steadily since then (see figure 3).

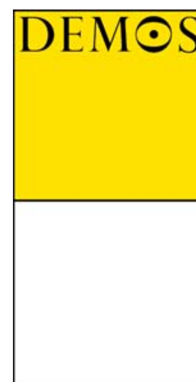
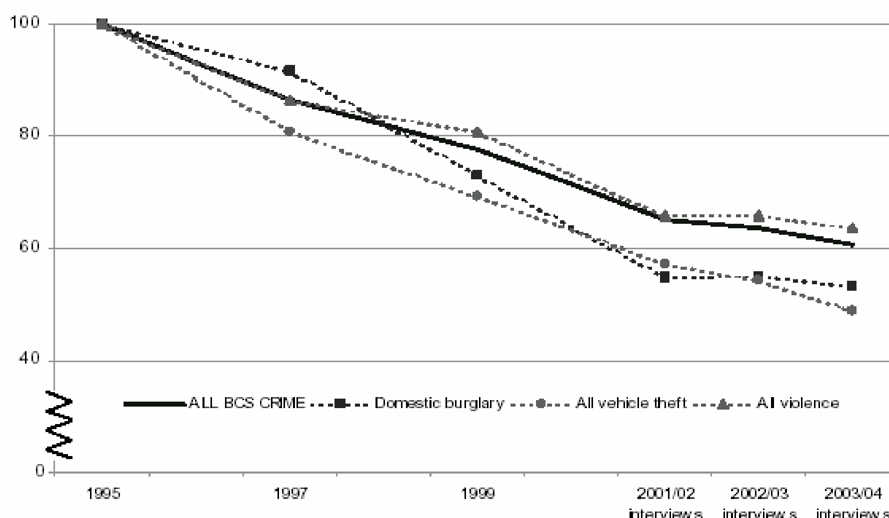


Figure 3 Trends in BCS crime, 1995 to 2003/04 (indexed 1995)



Source: T Dodd et al, *Crime in England and Wales 2003/2004*, Home Office Statistical Bulletin (London: Office for National Statistics, July 2004); see www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb1004.pdf (accessed 27 Feb 2006)

The BCS also suggests that the risk of becoming a victim of crime has fallen from 40 per cent in 1995 to 26 per cent, the lowest level recorded since the BCS began in 1981.[18] This masks variations between offences, however. Even taking into account changes in recording practices, *violent crime* increased between 1998 and 2004. Gun crime almost doubled in the same period.

Public concern about prevalent anti-social and nuisance behaviour and its impact on quality of life also mounted during the 1990s, creating a demand for the police to focus on local issues and 'level 1' crime.[19] Although people perceive that specific types of behaviour have fallen from their peak a few years ago (see figure 4), their overall perception of anti-social behaviour is that it is still getting worse.[20]

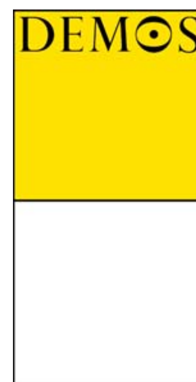
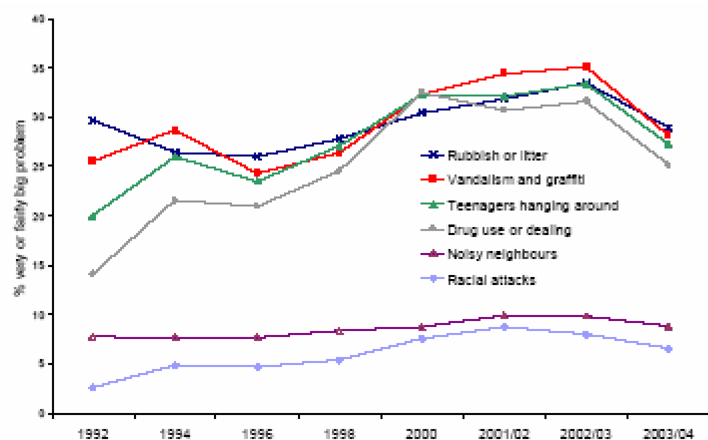


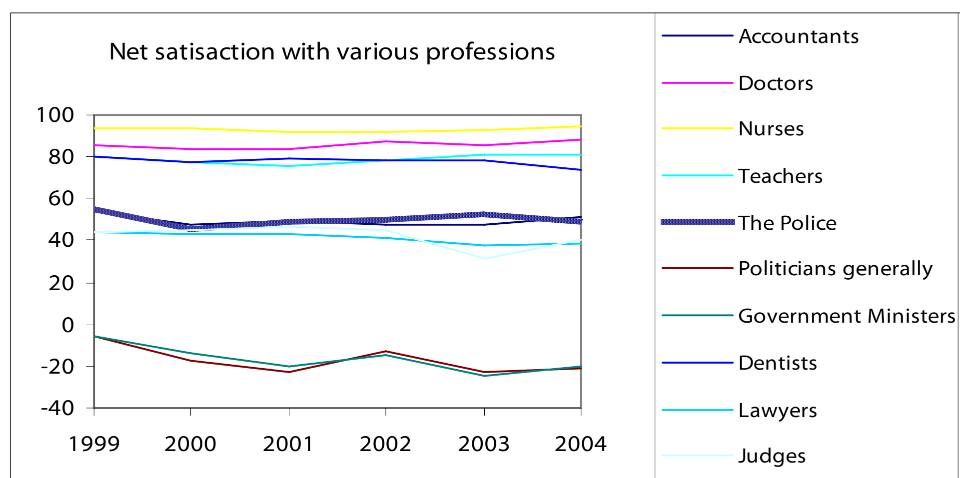
Figure 4 Proportion perceiving very or fairly big problems with anti-social behaviour 1992 to 2003/04 BCS (all behaviours measured by the BCS since 1992)



Source: T Dodd et al, *Crime in England and Wales 2003/2004* (ONS)

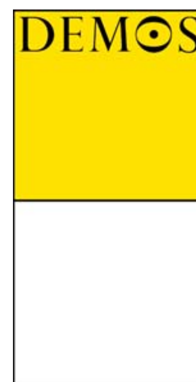
This mixed picture probably helps to explain levels of public satisfaction with the police, which lie below those of other public servants but well above politicians and government ministers, as seen in figure 5.[21]

Figure 5 Net satisfaction with various professions



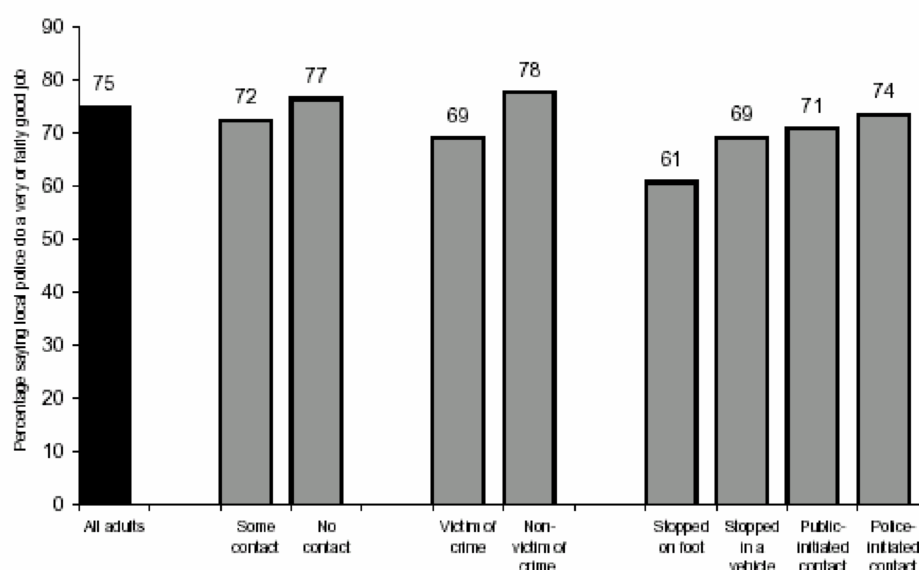
Source: MORI presentation to Demos (7 Feb 2006)

Lastly, within the operating environment, we can look at evidence about the public's experience of interacting with the police as an organisation. Here the picture is very gloomy. In contrast to other public services where 'familiarity breeds favourability', personal interaction with the police has a negative impact on citizens' perceptions of it. The police were more likely to be rated as doing a good



job by people who had had no contact with them over the previous year (77%) than by those who had been in contact with them over the previous year (72%) (see figure 6).[22] According to figures from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, the number of victims very or fairly satisfied with the police response to their experience fell from 68 per cent in 1994 to 58 per cent in 2003/04.[23] In other words, the poor performance of many police forces in their engagements with citizens and in satisfying the expectations of victims over the last decade has destroyed public value.

Figure 6 Police performance: engaging with citizens



Source: *HMCIC Annual Report 2003–2004*

The envisioning environment

The third place we can look at the public value the police create is in the envisioning environment: how good have police forces been at representing and communicating the value of their work to the public?

Here the BCS shows that there is a great deal of work to be done, because the public's fear of crime has been slow to respond to falling levels of actual crime. Although for some specific issues it is beginning to shift,[24] around two-thirds of people still believe that overall the national crime rate over the last two years has risen a 'lot' or 'a little more' (see figure 7). In a pattern that is reflected in other public services, people tend to have a more positive view of the situation locally than of the national picture. Only half believe crime in their area has risen 'a lot' or 'a little more'. The stubbornness of fear of crime helps to explain the political emphasis being placed on the 'reassurance agenda' in policing.

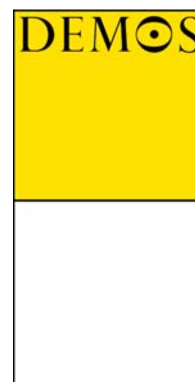
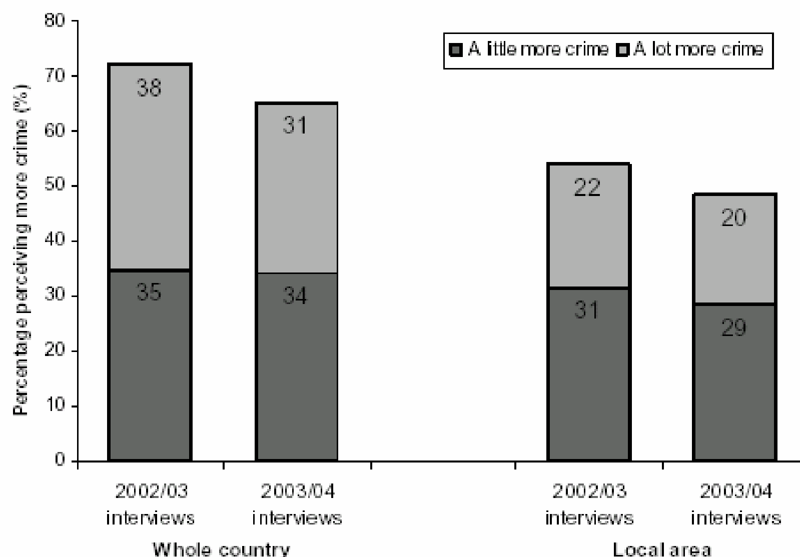


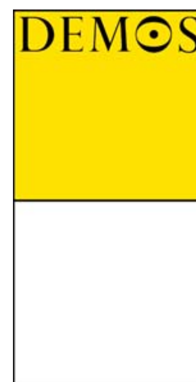
Figure 7 Public perceptions of changing crime levels, BCS 2002/03 to 2003/04



Source: T Dodd et al, *Crime in England and Wales 2003/2004* (ONS)

However 'reassurance policing' will only be successful if it is part of a broader and long-term community policing strategy that seeks to respond to neighbourhood priorities and involves the wider policing family.

For example, in a recent study on policing reassurance in Milton Keynes, at the top of the residents' list in one estate was increasing the number of police officers on the beat. While the introduction of area beat officers (ABOs) met the resident's expectations and helped to increase public confidence, the role of the police was focused on delivering reassurance 'through deterring would be criminals or preventing crime' while parish crime and community support officers (PCCSOs) complemented the police's work by addressing the 'physical and social disorders prevalent on the estates'.[25]



5. A challenging and changing environment: seven dilemmas for policing

The ability of the police to create public value in the future in each of these environments – authorising, operating and envisioning – depends on its ability to respond to a series of new demands, which call into question traditional assumptions and create new uncertainties and dilemmas. This chapter concentrates on seven of these dilemmas:

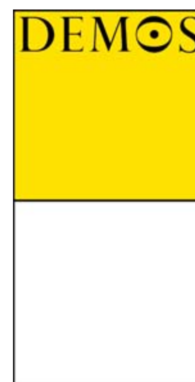
1. Democratic accountability without politicised interference
2. Building downwards accountability
3. Overstretch: can the police do it all?
4. The end of police monopoly on policing
5. Performance measurement: transparency vs micro-management
6. Defining success
7. Measuring value across silos

The authorising environment

Key dilemmas:
1. Democratic accountability without politicised interference
2. Building downwards accountability

The first key dilemma is about the proper role for politics and democracy in the shaping of police priorities. Operational independence and political impartiality have been live concerns ever since the jurisdiction of municipal authorities over police forces was diluted a century ago. Back then, central government's desire for a nationalised police service and the desire of local forces to be free from interference by local watch committees combined to drive growing independence from local political accountability. The 1919 Police Act strengthened the chief constable's powers. In 1930 the *Fisher v Oldham Corporation* case declared that a police constable was the servant of the Crown, not the local authority. And if the constable was ultimately accountable to the law, so should be the chief constable, a principle enshrined in the 1964 Police Act.

Concerns about political interference re-emerged on the *national* scene in the 1980s. The Thatcher government's mass mobilisation of the police service in its conflict with the National Union of Mineworkers during the Miners' Strike was hugely divisive, particularly in the northern areas most affected by the strike. Many viewed it as politicisation, with the police becoming an arm of the state rather than a servant of the law. For a number of serving senior police officers today, the Miners' Strike was a key formative moment in their early careers that entrenched a deep hostility to political interference.



Views from senior officers 1

'How do you involve local councillors in neighbourhood policing when they're only elected by 30 per cent of the population, and anyway it's the other 70 per cent that most need policing?'

'The model we've got now is absolutely fantastic. We're responsive as BCU [Base Command Unit] commanders but we're not puppets that can have their strings pulled.'

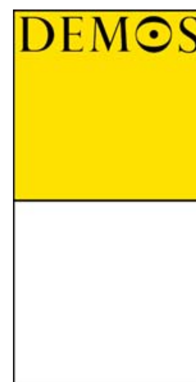
'Impartiality sometimes means we don't engage with politics and we're not able to fight our corner.'

Today the sticking point is performance management and accountability. Police officers complain that national performance management frameworks cannot take sufficient account of local circumstances and distort the setting of priorities around local people's needs. They claim that they are in a much better position to judge what local people want than government is. But as we argued in the last chapter, approaches to community engagement are underdeveloped in many police forces, which rely too heavily on the tired format of public meetings.

This highlights a lack of clarity about how to create institutional processes that balance operational independence with democratic accountability to local communities and representatives. But if this is to happen then communities must be made aware of their role in helping to define those accountability mechanisms. One suggestion is that communities should 'develop their own ideas about the values they want to see both achieved by the police and reflected in their operation. Communities could then get on with the challenging task of capturing real information about the degree to which the police live up to our expectations and/or are improving in their efforts to do so.'[26]

Engaging with local communities presents a number of challenges, not least the challenge of who in the community police should actively engage with. During his research Singer found that engaging with residents closely resembled a 'pyramid of participation', comprising a small number of parish councillors at the apex elected to govern, through interest group leaders negotiating issues and services to volunteers, loyal residents and disengaged residents at the base interested in consulting, listening or ignoring, respectively.[27]

So the second key dilemma is how to choreograph the devolution of power, so that upwards accountability to government can be steadily replaced by greater downwards accountability to users and communities. The Police Reform white paper proposes a new duty on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to create a menu of opportunities for engagement, and proposes a mechanism to enable local communities to trigger action by police to tackle a



problem in their neighbourhood that is not being addressed.[28] This development is welcome, but there is a mountain to climb. A 2000 survey of Londoners found that only 9 per cent of respondents had even heard of CDRPs. CDRPs need to go much further in reinventing themselves as democratic entities.

The operating environment

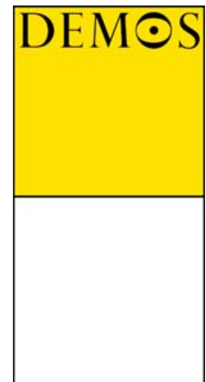
Key dilemmas:
3. Overstretch: can the police do it all?
4. The end of the police monopoly on policing

The third key dilemma is whether it is feasible for the police to continue to cover such a wide terrain. We saw in the last chapter that concern about 'level 1' issues such as anti-social behaviour have risen. But at the other end of the scale, the need for the police to tackle 'level 3' threats – terrorist networks, organised crime, drugs and people-trafficking – has been vividly brought home by a number of incidents over the last year, from the deaths of the Morecambe cocklers, illegal migrant workers killed by the negligence of their gangmaster, to the 52 men and women murdered in the July 7 bombings on the London transport system.

Many within the service argue that it simply has to be feasible, because 'omni-competence' is integral to the values of the police service. Others claim that omni-competence is a dangerous and unsustainable fiction, and that more work should be hived off to other (and more specialised) agencies at every level, from local authorities at the neighbourhood level to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) at the national level.

The London bombings appear to lend weight to both camps. On the one hand, they have shown that in the age of the home-grown suicide bomber, effective national intelligence needs strong local roots into communities. On the other, the targeting of particular ethnic minorities makes cooperative, high-trust relationships with local communities (and particularly the British Muslim community) seem both more necessary and less feasible than ever.

One of the difficulties is an engrained ambivalence about partnership working, with the police reluctant to let other agencies take more of the strain. Since 1984, the police have been expected to operate through multi-agency partnerships, particularly in the delivery of crime prevention activity.[29] The 'joining-up' agenda gathered pace after the election of the Labour government in 1997. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a duty on local authorities 'to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area.' CDRPs, linking the police to local authorities, other statutory agencies,



the private sector and community and voluntary groups, are now an important focus for policing activities.

Views from senior officers 2

'We bring it [overstretch] on ourselves. . . . We don't trust anyone else to do anything but us.'

'The question is: if we can't do all this, what do we shelve?'

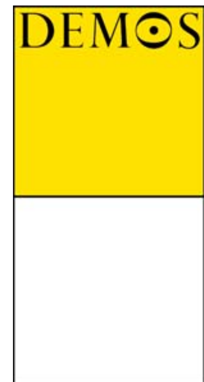
'If what really matters is fear of crime and reassurance, and that agenda is too broad for us to manage by ourselves, we need to work in partnership and be evaluated as such'.

But many Basic Command Unit (BCU) commanders are sceptical about CDRPs, suggesting that they are little more than talking shops unless the police really take responsibility for driving them forward. Some senior officers profess concern that the police's 'can-do attitude', an asset in so many operational settings, is actually damaging for long-term strategy. It breeds a 'mission creep', often not formally recognised or accompanied by additional resources, leaving the police's operational capacity spread ever more thinly across an expanding range of priorities, and clarity about the core purposes of policing is lost. Other officers believe the police themselves must share some of the responsibility for their reluctance to trust other agencies and refusal to compromise any of their operational independence, even if ultimately it would increase the capability to get the job done. Finally, some officers believe that the only way forwards is to create 'local accountability frameworks' that allow the public to see which agencies are involved at any one time.

The fourth key dilemma surrounds the end of the police 'monopoly' on policing. A number of actors from the wider 'policing family' are beginning to encroach on to traditional police turf. Security companies, voluntary organisations and local authorities increasingly provide reassurance services such as neighbourhood wardens. Specialist services such as forensics, divers, helicopters, the management of custody suites, cyber-crime and other high-value investigation services are or could soon be offered by private providers.

For some police officers this presents a profound threat to the police service's fundamental values and ethos as a universal, impartial public service. For others it is not only inevitable – not least given the emergence of contestability in other public services – but desirable, provided it delivers more efficient and effective services.

The key questions over the next decade or so are likely to be about where the boundaries of a reshaped market in policing services should be drawn, and what



role the police service might play as quality assurers, brokers, commissioners and coordinators in this more diverse market.

The envisioning environment

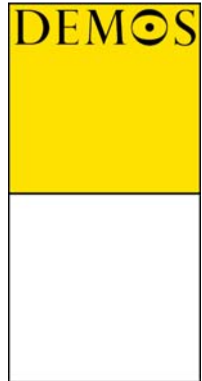
Key dilemmas:

5. Performance measurement: transparency vs micro-management
6. Defining success
7. Measuring value across silos

As in other public services, approaches to measuring the value of policing such as the Police Performance and Assessment Framework (PPAF) have undergone a slow and rather painful transition from crude input and output measures towards a more sophisticated focus on outcomes. Chris Fox, President of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), described the exercise as 'a very good idea because it measures police forces across a whole range of things, not just counting numbers, so it gives a much fairer view. . . . It enables both Her Majesty's Inspectorate and the Chief Constable to take stock of what's working in the force and what's not and over the long-term the next time this is done they'll be able to see whether they're making progress or not.'[30] But many areas of contention remain.

The fifth dilemma then is about striking a balance between healthy transparency and unhelpful micro-management from the centre. Police officers complain that national performance management frameworks cannot take sufficient account of local circumstances and distort the setting of priorities around local people's needs. They claim that they are in a much better position to judge what local people want than government is. Politicians respond, with some justification, that the police's community engagement infrastructure is weak and that in regard to one or two salient issues recently the police have been demonstrably less in touch with public attitudes than the government – notably on the deployment of CSOs, resisted by the police but hugely popular with the public. Stories of centrally set quantitative targets and standards distorting effective practice by professionals have been documented right across the public services,[31] but by resisting the development of performance management frameworks without having a compelling story about how transparency and accountability can be promoted in their stead, the police service is in danger of looking resistant to change.

The sixth dilemma is the familiar problem of people not believing information that shows performance to be positive, a phenomenon observed across the public services, regardless of whether the institution itself is seen as trustworthy.[32] As we saw in chapter 4, this is most visibly illustrated by fear of crime. Despite solid evidence that real crime rates are falling and have been doing so for 10 years, around two-thirds of people think it is rising. The operating environment and the envisioning environment come together in raising real questions about how the



police service should measure success: by making people safer or by making them feel safer? Is reassurance the essence of policing, or is it a distraction from the real job of catching criminals?

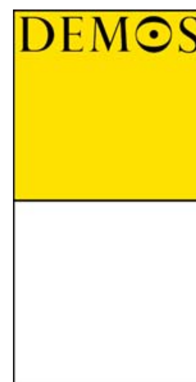
Finally, the seventh dilemma is about how to understand the specific contribution of the police service to the achievement of publicly valued goals that other agencies (local authorities, health, youth offending teams) also help to deliver. The risk is that the police take responsibility for something which they depend on others to achieve and which they have no guarantee they can affect, no matter how much resource they throw at it. For example, the reassurance/fear of crime agenda might involve local authorities, neighbourhood renewal agencies and housing associations working alongside the police. As one officer put it: 'Fear of crime is such a big responsibility. We've got to be careful about trying to manage it.' Particular problems arise when the administrative boundaries of different partners (local authorities, health, police) are not coterminous, with different bodies working to different sets of goals and priorities. While we have suggested that one way of solving this complex issue might be through a local accountability framework, coterminosity is a goal that all agencies must strive for.

Views from senior officers 3

'Do we police what we count? We took our eye off the ball on anti-social behaviour in the past because it wasn't measured and you don't focus on what you're not held to account for.'

'What is success for us? Is it detection rates? Is it social trust? Is it quality of life?'

6. Scenarios for the future of policing



Taken together, the dilemmas highlighted in the last chapter point towards three strategic priorities for the police service in creating public value over the next 15 years:

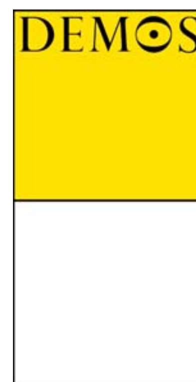
- *Authorising environment:* Creating open, transparent and democratic settings in which to manage relationships – including political relationships – between the police, politicians and the public. Finding new ways to manage and balance the competing expectations of different stakeholders – and being prepared for these decisions to be made, scrutinised and validated in more public settings.
- *Operating environment:* Reshaping the 'market' in policing services to deploy public resources more efficiently and effectively; searching for smarter and more efficient ways to deploy resources so that the police service can sustain its commitment to tackling both very local and national priorities. This includes slimming down the middle tier of police forces to create fewer, larger forces, encouraging greater collaboration between forces with different specialisms, and embracing a role for a more diverse range of providers of policing services – including the private sector – where it brings benefits.
- *Envisioning environment:* Reasserting the values, legitimacy and independence of the police service by proactively searching for new, practical ways to express them, rather than fending off any attempt by others to challenge or scrutinise them. Publicly looking for processes, relationships or metrics that communicate the value of policing more on terms of its choosing.

This chapter examines how these priorities might be addressed over the coming years by exploring a series of scenarios for policing in 2020. The purpose is to challenge the assumption that there is one linear direction for policing, and to show that there are a number of entirely distinct ways in which policy-makers and police leaders might seek to create public value through policing in the future.

Why use scenarios?

Over the last 50 years scenarios have become an increasingly important tool for helping decision-makers from all walks of life to take a long-term and rational view of a future that is inherently unpredictable. From the military to corporate strategy to government policy, scenarios can be a powerful discipline for cutting through the uncertainty and inertia that thinking about the future sometimes provokes, and helping organisations to make better decisions in the present no matter what the future holds in store.

As an organisation the police service is heavily focused on the short term – the operational here-and-now. It therefore tends to be very deterministic about the long term, believing that what police officers do will not make any difference because the future will be decided by political decisions over which they have no



control. One reason why the police officers we have worked with have found scenarios helpful is that it helps to overcome this defensive mentality and restore a sense that they do have at least some control over their own destiny. As scenario planner Adam Kahane explains:

> *One of the premises of scenario thinking is that the future is not predetermined and cannot be predicted, which means, therefore, that the choices we make can influence what happens. In a situation where people feel swept along by overwhelming, inevitable currents, this is an empowering world view.*[33]

The scenarios presented here come from futures thinking exercises Demos conducted with participants on the Strategic Command Course (SCC) in 2003 and subsequently with groups of BCU commanders on a module called 'Policing Contexts and Futures', part of the Centrex Senior Leadership Development Programme II. It is worth emphasising that while Demos have adapted and refined these scenarios, they were created by the SCC participants and have now been tested against and validated by the experience of more than 150 senior officers.

These scenarios are not predictions but a series of different stories about what policing might look like in 2020. The point is not to guess the future more effectively, since neither we nor the police officers we have worked with come armed with a reliable crystal ball or tea leaves. Rather, it is to be better prepared for whatever future might unfold – to think about ways in which the police service can create public value whatever happens.

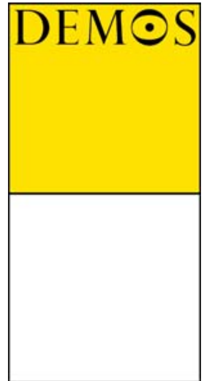
To be effective scenarios have to be plausible and internally coherent. Each scenario borrows elements from the contemporary landscape, but extends them further than we might presently imagine. None is either wholly good or wholly bad – one of the reasons for using them is to challenge assumptions about the right way of doing things.

Scenario 1: Fortress UK

With the public increasingly believing that elected politicians are unable to deal with drugs, human trafficking and mass migration, a reforming government is swept to power.

Terror and other threats to national security remain at a high level, and the incoming government creates a 'homeland security agency' encompassing border control, immigration, customs, coast guard, disaster response, counter-terrorism and the security services.

The other parts of the criminal justice system including the police service, prosecution service, prison service and probation service are merged nationally and made directly accountably to a new 'ministry of justice'.



The focus of all police work is now exclusively on law enforcement and bringing offenders to justice. Crime prevention, public reassurance and concerns relating to the fear of crime are ignored or left to local authority services. Experiments with public and community involvement have long been abandoned and priorities are determined according to strict national criteria set by politicians. Performance management frameworks focus resources on high-profile priorities such as arrests, clear-up rates and conviction rates.

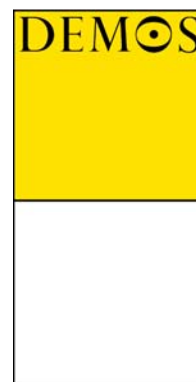
A single national 'director of the police service' is accountable to the 'ministry of justice'. Following public disputes between ministers and chief constables, local police forces were swept away and replaced with a national command structure and a 'national police plan', updated annually to reflect changing political priorities.

Under this plan, Basic Command Units (BCU) are the dominant unit of delivery within a national framework, operating in a competitive performance culture and required to meet national targets. BCU performance is measured in performance league tables, with BCU commanders who fail to perform facing the sack. By contrast, high-performing BCUs are given much higher levels of autonomy in relation to funding and staffing.

The old 'middle tier' of police forces and authorities has been drastically reduced. Some of the responsibility for policing 'level 2' crime has been devolved down to BCUs, but most responsibilities have been centralised to national police functions focusing on specific aspects of criminality. Teams of specialists run the new national-level functions from different locations in England and Wales. They operate through a national network of offices, many of which are located within BCUs. The 'homeland security agency' and international law enforcement agencies now deal with all remaining aspects of 'level 3' crime.

Following a substantial increase in migration from eastern to western Europe, the prevailing public sentiment has taken a highly anti-European turn. While the 'ministry of justice' seeks international cooperation in tackling terrorism, it seeks to operate unilaterally – especially on issues relating to border control and managing migration. This places strain on relations with other national police forces in the EU. Increasing numbers of foreign citizens are deported and the numbers of successful asylum applications dries to a trickle. Over-zealous attempts to identify and deport illegal immigrants creates tensions in some local communities in the UK.

To combat identity crime newly born babies can be voluntarily fitted with radio frequency ID chips that permit their movement to be easily tracked. All other citizens already carry biometric identity cards. The national biometric ID database greatly aids crime detection and clear-up rates.



Scenario 2: Metropolis policing

Public confidence in the US-led 'war against terrorism' collapses following disastrous interventions in Iran and North Korea, and Britain takes a decisive turn towards Europe. It joins the Euro, ratifies a radical new European Constitution and is a major player in the EU Space Exploration Programme. Serious threats from international terrorism, illegal migration and drug trafficking provide a further incentive for cooperation.

After the breakdown of the EU constitution in 2005, years of behind-the-scenes negotiation and incremental reform have led to the gradual emergence of a unified European legal framework and a European criminal justice system. Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy has released resources which are allocated across the EU according to levels of crime in the same way that structural funds were allocated on the basis of deprivation.

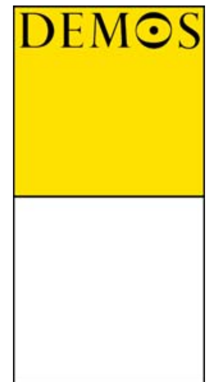
In Britain, disputes over performance management and who should take the blame for a series of high-profile local controversies create a fractious relationship between government and police leaders, culminating in the sacking of some outspoken chief constables. The resultant breakdown of working relationships prompts the recognition that police governance needs a radical overhaul.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) responds by proposing a twin strategy for strengthening the autonomy of the police service: first, by adopting a regional model of policing proposed by the European Union; second, by rolling back national performance frameworks and granting more powers of direction, accountability and funding to local communities through a new layer of local governance: the city-region.

City-regional authorities including London, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle, Nottingham and other major conurbations have financial autonomy and a powerful directly elected mayor to give strategic direction to regional policies for economic development, transport, the environment and public services. This new tier of government is eager to demonstrate its value and purpose to a sceptical public.

The British government acquiesces, privately relieved that it is no longer responsible for the performance of a public service that it had never been able to control fully. Publicly it uses the policy as an indication of its pro-European credentials and its willingness to tackle national security issues with radical solutions.

City-region police forces are the new primary unit of delivery in Britain, bringing it into line with the model emerging across Europe. They are given a high degree of autonomy in coordinating policing at a local level. Resources, intelligence and expertise in combating 'level 2/3' criminal activity are shared across forces and across member states. The economies of scale (such as lower headquarters costs) from merging small forces also release extra resources for local policing.



City-region police forces are held to account by elected mayors who have the power to hire and fire chief constables. Seeing that local politicians finally have the power to influence an issue that matters to them, local people regain their trust in local government and turnout at elections greatly improves.

Scenario 3: Policing plc

Following success in the education, health, transport and prison sectors, British and multinational companies enter the UK market providing 'policing services'. Evaluations demonstrate overall cost-effectiveness, and contestability or the competitive threat from private providers increases the performance of the state police service.

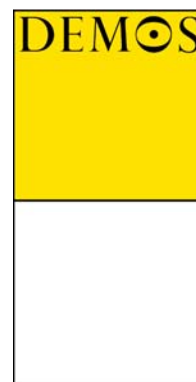
Budgets are devolved to BCU commanders, who develop a commissioning expertise that enables them to increase the quality of the service they provide. They purchase from a range of public and private providers of specialised services including forensics, cyber-crime, divers, helicopters, high-value fraud, armed surveillance, media relations and investigative services. Performance quality standards are written into contracts, giving BCU commanders much more power to hold those providing services to account.

Growing numbers of UK senior police officers are attracted to work for private companies by the competitive pay and conditions. Recruitment and retention difficulties in UK policing are resolved partly through aggressive recruitment of police officers from other parts of the world, especially Commonwealth countries.

With the growth of neighbourhood governance, local communities now have the power to choose from a range of providers of neighbourhood foot and car patrols, including local community groups and small businesses. This high visibility public reassurance work is increasingly done by members of the local community for their local community. All community support officers (CSOs) now work for these contracted providers and many more people are given powers as special constables. Most workplaces, public spaces and public buildings have staff trained and equipped to perform these roles. Crime prevention strategies are now funded through these multiple contracts.

Evaluations show that this network of provision builds stronger communities, leads to better intelligence collection and is also cheaper. However, the media exposes some extensive abuses of power due to some poorly regulated contracts.

Affluent individuals and communities purchase premium branded security services, further exacerbating existing social divisions, and accelerating community tensions, both urban and rural. Policing remains free at the point of use for disadvantaged communities but the state police service struggles to retain its historic identity as a universal service. Some forces are criticised for developing a popular 'no-frills'



policing offer, which gives local residents a no-claims discount on their local tax bill if they do not use police time.

The outsourcing of community policing and public reassurance work leaves the state police service to focus on improving its response times to crime scenes and combating more serious criminality. A more entrepreneurial culture also takes hold, and some forces reconstitute themselves as not-for-profit organisations. They compete with private firms in the market for policing services, ploughing surpluses back into the organisational coffers. The traditional state police 'brand' provides competitive advantage in a complex marketplace.

The introduction of compulsory biometric ID cards aids the UK police service in bringing offenders to justice. The national computer database is built and managed by a private consortium of financial and retail service companies raising public concerns over privacy and the use of data.

Scenario 4: Policing in partnership

Global instability produces a series of high-profile threats related to terrorism, migration and public health. These produce a renewed demand from the domestic population that the police help to protect them from the local consequences of global insecurity.

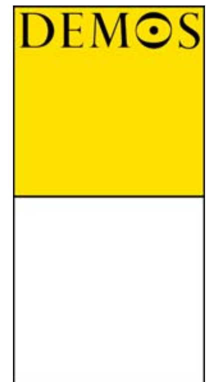
This newly strengthened demand combines with a growing pressure on funding formulae for local police forces. The result is the decision by a critical mass of police forces to experiment with new organisational forms and working practices.

Partnership structures put in place to encourage 'joint working' between police forces, local authorities and other agencies evolve into formally integrated services, with merged decision-making, coterminous boundaries, pooled budgets and common accountability structures.

'Community safety commissioners' are directly elected by members of the public to give strategic direction to these partnerships.

Within the police service, there is much more freedom to abandon regional affiliations and assemble networks of BCUs with common interests in addressing particular problems. The early success of a network involving BCUs in Cornwall, Liverpool, London and Glasgow in cracking a multimillion pound heroin-smuggling operation leads to the creation of a wide range of partnerships and collaborations. These networks are made possible by highly sophisticated and integrated systems for knowledge management and intelligence sharing, which partially help to offset concerns about corporacy.

The new integrated arrangements produce a strong shift of emphasis towards crime prevention. The police provide a one-stop mobile shop for a wide range of local



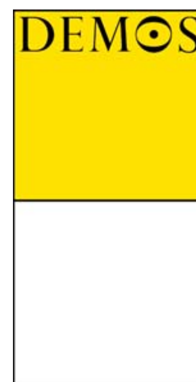
services ranging from addiction and mental health services to education and employment opportunities. Key performance targets are now primarily focused on neighbourhood and community regeneration and improving individual life chances among high-risk groups that are strongly associated with criminality. There is a strong focus on sharing information and data between different services to identify individuals in these groups and put in place preventative strategies.

Local policing varies widely in shape and style from one area to another. BCUs develop different practices and cultures while individual police forces develop 'recognised specialisms', which they make available to other forces.

National policing functions are progressively merged with international collaborative partnerships, sharing intelligence and planning joint operations to tackle crime on an international level.

Recruiting sufficient numbers to the police service remains a challenge but extra money for salaries, released by more effective early intervention and preventative work, helps prevent a fall in numbers. Targeted incentives create a range of ways in which officers working in difficult or demanding circumstances receive differential rewards. Leaders of BCUs in challenging areas often command higher salaries than leading officers working at a national level, although the pay of all senior officers is linked to performance.

7. Building public value in policing: an agenda for the next 15 years



> *We need to do more than the traditional re-organisation of roles, function and structure. If we merely design something that is monitored, regulated, performance managed to satisfy accountabilities to local, regional and national institutions we miss the trick of responding to the market and the people who live in it.*
>
> Sir Chris Fox, President of Association of Chief Police Officers[34]

This pamphlet has shown how the concept of public value helps to illuminate some of the key challenges facing policing over the next 15 years. The last chapter argued that a number of different futures for the police service are possible. In reality, no one of the scenarios we have outlined will come to pass; the future will combine elements of all four. But which elements and in what proportion cannot be said with certainty – partly, to reiterate the earlier point, because the future is not predetermined and what police leaders and policy-makers choose to do and not do over the next 15 years will be crucially important in shaping that future.

What police leaders and politicians need to navigate this uncertainty, we have suggested, is a shared framework for thinking about what they are trying to do with policing now and in the future. We have suggested that public value offers this framework.

By way of conclusion, we offer seven 'propositions' about how police leaders and policy-makers can create the most public value no matter what the future unfolds. We then connect these to some practical decisions and policy implications which might flow from them for the here and now.

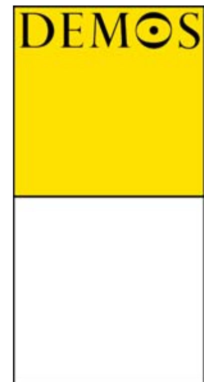
Seven propositions

1. The choice for the police service is not between democracy or not but between more or less democracy, and what kind.

2. Transparency is a non-negotiable for the public, but it does not lie in league tables.

3. Independence is a non-negotiable for the police, but it does not lie in 'splendid isolation'. Impartiality cannot mean the police always know best.

4. Public engagement needs to be expressed in practical relationships between the police and the community, not abstract structures. Done properly, community participation can help solve problems for police officers; it need not be seen simply as a way of causing them.



5. The capacity of policing to create public value is greater than the capacity of the police to create public value. Rather than resist the growth of the 'policing family', the police should harness and shape it.

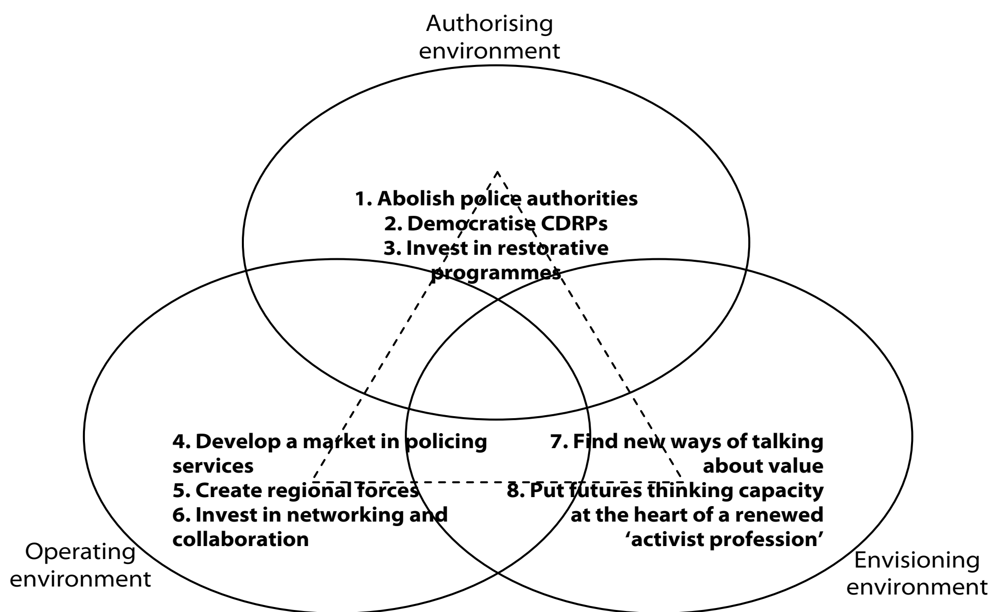
6. The exact number of forces is less important than the capacity to work across silos and boundaries at every level.

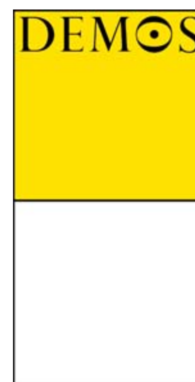
7. The bases on which the police's status as a profession were once seen to rest are increasingly vulnerable. Rather than a defensive profession trying to shore them up, the police need to become an 'activist profession' capable of forging new ones.

Recommendations

In framing some of the possible implications that flow from this, we return to the Moore's strategic triangle as the basis for our own recommendations (see figure 8).

Figure 8 Linking the strategic triangle with our recommendations





Creating public value in the authorising environment

1. Police authorities are an anachronism and should be abolished

Police authorities are the product of an unholy alliance between national governments and local forces trying to resist giving police forces the local direction and accountability they need. While they exist as a smokescreen for proper local control, a proper debate about how to balance democratic accountability and operational independence is not possible. It may be right for the police to resist a move towards majoritarian institutions – eg elected sheriffs – but that cannot be the same as saying that the police resist local accountability. The police must take the lead in initiating a wave of experiments in building democratic legitimacy, from new forms of practical community engagement and consultation at the very local level to innovative forms of co-governance at the force level. The proliferation of community participation initiatives in public services over the last decade means there is a wealth of examples to learn from, including SureStart, New Deal for Communities Boards and Foundation Hospitals.[35]

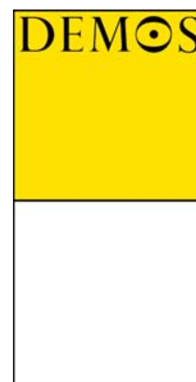
2. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships should be democratised

The 373 CDRPs (also known as community safety partnerships) in England and Wales are a particularly promising avenue for deeper democratic involvement, because it is much easier to monitor and judge their performance against local rather than national standards, and because they operate at a sufficiently strategic level for local people to actually exercise real influence over what happens in their area. Community safety partnerships should do more to engage with local communities and allow them to influence CDRP strategies. This means moving away from the tired format of public meetings and questionnaires to more dynamic ways of engaging with citizens. One approach might be to mandate that at least half the members of CDRPs should be community representatives, selected by a mix of three methods:

- *ex officio*, for local councillors to help join up CDRPs with other local authority priorities
- *direct election*, to give activist local residents or service users an opportunity to influence the public service they care about, as with foundation hospital boards
- *by lot*, so that 'average' members of the public are involved and it is not just the usual suspects that get a chance to have their say.

3. The police should work with other agencies to invest in restorative and other community-based justice programmes

Although better customer relations may help to improve the public's experience of interacting with the police, a more visible attempt to take the wants and needs of victims and communities into account may be needed. For all the talk of rebalancing the system in favour of victims, only a tiny percentage of the criminal justice budget is actually spent directly on them. Building on the pioneering work of Thames Valley Police in the 1990s[36] and more recent innovations like the Red Hook Community Court in New York, now being piloted in Liverpool,[37] the police



and their partners should invest further in restorative justice programmes and other initiatives which give local communities a more direct and meaningful voice in the administration of justice in their area.

Creating public value in the operating environment

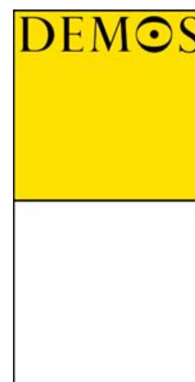
4. Government should encourage the development of a market in policing services

Contestability and diversity of provision is a feature of public services in many developed countries. It has been used with some success across UK public services – including policing, through the management of custody suites. In the long term a more diverse supply-side seems highly likely, if not inevitable. Rather than try to resist this, the police service should proactively collaborate with government to ensure that a reshaped market in policing services preserves the things that are important to the police: reduce costs to free up resources for the front line; increase quality; tighten accountability for those commissioning services; retain a connection with local communities; and preserve policing as a universal service. To this end, consideration needs to be given to:

- the shape of the market, in terms of the size, number and type of provider (public, private, not-for-profit)
- the boundaries of the market, and areas which should remain off-limits
- the skills, experience and expertise needed within the police service to make it work
- the diversity of people involved in the provision of policing services
- regulation, including the reconstitution of HM Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC) as an 'OfPol' capable of providing quality *and* economic regulation
- the levels to which budgets and commissioning should be delegated
- the powers that should be given to regional or local authorities and to communities through neighbourhood governance to commission policing services.

5. Instead of the incremental change being envisaged, the 43 forces should be scrapped and replaced with no more than a dozen regional forces

Consolidation is another irresistible force, given the benefits in economies of scale and strategic overview that emerge from having fewer, larger forces. Rather than slim down to 30 forces, as is currently envisaged, only to face a further upheaval down the line, policy-makers should have the courage of their convictions and move to regional forces. Regional commissioners of police accountable to city-region mayors would enable other forces to benefit from the advantages currently available only to the Metropolitan Police. Other ACPO ranks should be reinvented, providing regional strategic and commissioning expertise, helping to develop regional specialisms, or returned to the front line at the head of project teams tasked to address particular issues of concern within the region.



6. The police should invest in networking and collaboration

Police leaders should make clear their commitment to partnership working by building on the best practices of existing arrangements. They should push for coterminous boundaries with other partners, pooled budgets, common targets and accountability frameworks and a shared leadership under a 'director of community safety', who might be a police officer or from another agency.

The procurement and investment in IT for the police should emphasise the capability for sharing knowledge among partners including local communities themselves. One provocative idea might be to design the next iteration of the police's 'Holmes' investigations software (computer system for major incidents) on 'open source' principles, so that members of the public can contribute directly to police investigations and intelligence gathering.

Creating public value in the envisioning environment

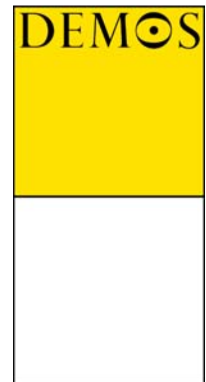
7. Find new ways of talking about the public value of the police

However sophisticated they get, performance management frameworks will never be able to communicate the value of policing adequately. It is incumbent on the police not to resist the league table culture and other excesses of performance management but to make them obsolete, by investing in alternative ways of promoting transparency and quality assurance, and communicating performance. For example, one BCU has created 'street champions', people on each street in the area who are a conduit for more effective two-way communication, relaying public concerns to the police but also acting as a trusted source for local people to find out what the police are up to and how well they are doing. Government should incentivise forces by shifting to a risk-based approach to regulation, in which those forces with more sophisticated systems for measuring and communicating performance face ever lower burdens of inspection and regulation.

8. Put futures thinking capacity at the heart of a renewed 'activist profession'

Whatever happens over the next 15 years, policing as a profession cannot stand still. From the growth of para-professional support to the rise of more specialist roles to demands for greater accountability from communities and politicians, the traditional bases on which it bound itself together and claimed legitimacy are being undermined. Rather than resist these pressures, police officers should embrace change as an opportunity to renew policing as what Judyth Sachs calls an 'activist profession':

> *An activist profession is one that is open to ideas and influence from the communities it serves, actively seeks to build trust with those communities, has a clear vision of the society it is trying to create in the future, and which recognises the importance of engaging in political forums to help realise that future. Such a culture exists in pockets of the police service, but it is far from widespread.*[38]



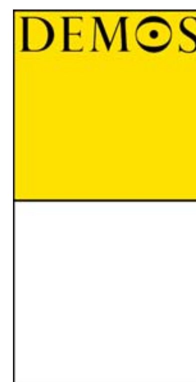
One way to embed it more deeply would be to build the practice of scenario building and futures thinking more systematically into the professional development of police officers at every level, so that they are constantly asked to reflect on where they want their profession to be in 15–20 years' time. As well as enabling officers to participate in these exercises, they should also be trained to conduct themselves, so that they can run them with the membership of their local CDRP, or with a group of residents in a particular neighbourhood.

Conclusion

When Robert Peel set out his nine principles of policing, he affirmed the requirement:

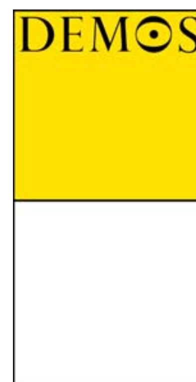
> *To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.*[39]

That historic idea remains just as powerful an animating ideal today as it did more than 150 years ago. It makes it incumbent on the police to break down barriers between its institutions and the public they serve. It makes it incumbent on the police to give the public a stronger voice in assessing and directing its performance. And it makes it incumbent on the police to make the creation of public value, in all the multifaceted ways that can be achieved, the central goal of a renewed, activist policing profession over the next decade and beyond.

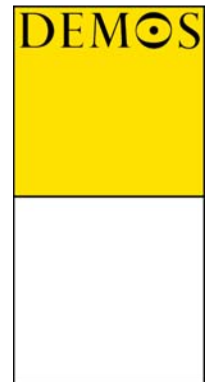


Notes

1 D O'Connor, HM Inspector of Constabulary, *Closing the Gap: A review of the 'fitness for purpose' of the current structure policing in England & Wales.* (London, HMIC, 2005); available at www.crimereduction.gov.uk/policing16.htm (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
2 As Geoff Mulgan, a key former adviser to the Prime Minister, recently admitted: 'The area of public policy which has probably been most prone to initiative is crime and punishment, and that's partly because it is very prominent in the public agenda, and partly because the Home Office, the police force, the prisons, did not have a tradition of consistent, strategic, evidence-based action.' *Look Back at Power*, BBC Radio 4, aired 5 and 12 Sep 2005; see www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/news/look_back_at_power.shtml (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
3 MH Moore, *Creating Public Value: Strategic management in government* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
4 See www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/laworder/police.htm (accessed 25 Feb 2006).
5 In economics this is the classic justification for public goods. Economists describe two characteristics of public goods. First, they are 'non-excludable', in that once they are produced it's impossible to stop others getting access to them. A national defence, for example, doesn't just protect those citizens who actively wanted to pay for it. It protects all of us, irrespective of how much we want it. Second, they are 'non-rivalrous', so that everyone benefits from them without diminishing other's enjoyment. Safe, clean streets for one person are just as safe and clean for his or her neighbour.
6 Figures for 2003/04, available at http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-publications/publication/national-policing-plan/natpolplan2004_7.pdf (accessed 16 Feb 2006).
7 G Kelly, G Mulgan and S Muers, *Creating Public Value* (London: Strategy Unit, 2002).
8 MH Moore and AA Braga, 'Police performance measurement: a normative framework', *Criminal Justice Ethics* (Winter 2004).
9 D Miliband MP, Minister of State, Cabinet Office, 'Putting the public back into public services', speech to Guardian Public Services Summit, 2 Feb 2005; see www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/about_the_cabinet_office/speeches/miliband/html/index.asp (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
10 'Citizen-Focused Policing Conference', London, Jan 2005; see www.communityengagement.police.uk/news/346CFP_conference%20report-71.pdf (accessed 16 Feb 2006).
11 Police Reform white paper, *Building Communities, Beating Crime: A better police service for the 21st century* (London: Home Office, 2004).
12 See www.nwpolice.org/peel.html (accessed 25 Feb 2006).
13 Police Reform white paper, *Building Communities, Beating Crime.*
14 Data from MORI presentation to Demos; 7 Feb 2006.
15 M Macgregor, *A Manifesto for the Met* (London: Policy Exchange, 2005).



16 Police Reform white paper, *Building Communities, Beating Crime*.
17 Quoted in Macgregor, *A Manifesto for the Met*.
18 See www.crimereduction.gov.uk (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
19 Levels 1, 2 and 3 refer to the National Intelligence Model (NIM). The NIM was designed by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) in 2000 to professionalise the intelligence discipline within law enforcement by planning and working in cooperation with partners to secure community safety, to manage performance and risk, and to account for budgets.
20 M Wood, *Perceptions and Experience of Antisocial Behaviour: Findings from the 2003/2004 British Crime Survey*; see www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr4904.pdf (accessed 16 Feb 2006).
21 MORI data; see www.mori.com (accessed 27 Feb 2006).
22 S Nicholas and A Walker (eds), *Crime in England and Wales 2002/2003, Supplementary Volume 2: Crime, disorder and the criminal justice system – public attitudes and perceptions* (London: Office of National Statistics, 2004); see www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb0204.pdf (accessed 13 Feb 2006). See also MORI, *Contacting the Police: Customer satisfaction survey research study conducted for Office of Public Services Reform*; available at www.mori.com/pubinfo/aea/contacting-the-police.pdf (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
23 K Povey, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, *HMCIC Annual Report 2003–2004* (London: The Stationery Office, 2004); see www.archive2.official-documents.co.uk/document/deps/hc/hc171/171.pdf (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
24 Ibid, eg burglary, vehicle and car crime.
25 L Singer, *Reassurance Policing: An evaluation of the local management of community safety*, Home Office Research Study 288 (London: Home Office, 2004).
26 Moore and Braga, 'Police performance measurement'.
27 Singer, *Reassurance Policing*.
28 Police Reform white paper, *Building Communities, Beating Crime*.
29 Home Office, *Crime Prevention*, interdepartmental circular 8/84 (London: Home Office, 1984), cited in J Bright, *Turning the Tide* (London: Demos, 1997).
30 See www.politics.co.uk/public-services/police-performance-data-not-league-table-says-hmic-$2824350.htm (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
31 Compare with J Chapman, *System Failure: Why governments must learn to think differently* (London: Demos, 2002); P Skidmore, *Beyond Measure: Why educational assessment is failing the test* (London: Demos, 2003).
32 Interestingly the most trusted institution (the NHS) is also responsible for the least trusted performance information; see www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/pco0905.pdf (accessed 16 Feb 2006).
33 See www.arlingtoninstitute.org/future/Mont_Fleur.pdf (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
34 C Fox, 'John Harris Memorial lecture', Police Foundation, 22 Jun 2004.
35 J Craig and P Skidmore, *Start with People: How community organisations put citizens in the driving seat* (London: Demos, 2005).



36 Thames Valley Partnership, *Restoring the Balance: A handbook on restorative approaches in community safety* (Aylesbury: TVP, 1999).
37 A Gillan, 'Late arrivals and no-shows – but new court's friendly judge keeps smiling'; see www.guardian.co.uk/crime/article/0,2763,1370666,00.html (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
38 See S Groundwater Smith and J Sachs, 'The activist professional and the reinstatement of trust'; available at www.acij.uts.edu.au/archives/profprac/activist.pdf (accessed 13 Feb 2006).
39 For Sir Robert Peel's nine principles, see www.nwpolice.org/peel.html (accessed 25 Feb 2006).