

Making Time:

Freeing Up Front-Line Policing

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Contents

Preface	1
Summary	3

1. Midshire Constabulary: A Case Study	7
2. The Drivers of Change	15
3. UK Police Reform	23
3.1. Support Services	25
3.2. Specialist Services	36
3.3. Physical Facilities	41
3.4. Criminal Investigation	47
3.5. Crime Prevention	52

Endnotes	55
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Preface

The Northcote-Trevelyan Report (1854) is widely recognised as having laid the foundations of the modern British Civil Service, and it had a profound influence on the structure of the public services in other countries that adopted the Westminster system of government. Today the report is best remembered for its advocacy of competitive examinations and merit appointment, but Sir Charles Trevelyan, then head of Her Majesty's Treasury, was interested with the efficiency of government more broadly.

Among the principles laid down in the report, Trevelyan argued for 'economy of labour' in public service – government should employ supplementary clerks to undertake the mechanical tasks of public administration, freeing up superior officers to pursue those higher order activities for which they had been recruited. It was false economy to have highly-trained officials performing basic administrative tasks, rather than using them (and paying them) to undertake the professional duties for which they were retained: 'economy is dearly purchased by the sacrifice of efficiency'.¹

A century and a half later, we are still struggling to make sense of 'economy of labour' in the management of public services. Nowhere has this challenge been greater than in policing, where the procedural demands of the criminal justice system place immense administrative burdens on front-line officers.

This report investigates a range of initiatives that have been explored by British policing agencies over the past decade, in their attempt to free up front-line policing. Making time is just as important in the pursuit of value-for-money as saving money, and yet it has been largely overlooked in the public debate. In 'Making Time', the Institute looks at policing reform with a particular focus on the pursuit of greater economy of labour on the part of front-line public servants.

Gary L Sturgess
Executive Director

Summary

It has been said that Germany lost the desert war in 1942 because its tanks ran out of fuel. Field Marshal Rommel later wrote:

The bravest men can do nothing without guns; the guns nothing without plenty of ammunition; and neither guns nor ammunition are of much use in mobile warfare unless there are vehicles with sufficient petrol to haul them around.²

Front-line public servants are heavily dependent on those who provide back-office support. And while the media rightly give most of their attention to warranted police officers who are on the cutting edge of the fight against crime, these men and women would be incapable of undertaking their duties if they were not supported by reliable information systems, state-of-the-art technology and well-serviced motor vehicles.

There are good reasons why police officers should not be used to provide these support services. They joined the police service to work with the community and chase criminals, not to grapple with paperwork and bureaucracy. It is not a wise use of social resources to have highly-trained police officers engaged in administrative tasks. And it makes more sense to employ civilian specialists to provide services that demand technical skills that do not require a constable's warrant.

With rising public expectations about community safety, wave after wave of technological innovation, and increasing standards of public accountability, police forces have struggled to keep warranted police officers on the street, free of the growing administrative burden.

'Making Time' explores some of the ways in which police forces have addressed this challenge over the past decade, striving to give front-line police officers more time in their working day.

Midshire Constabulary

It begins with the history of a fictional constabulary, 'Midshire Police', which brings together practical case studies from across the United Kingdom, demonstrating what

has already been achieved in civilianisation and contracting and what more might be achieved if police forces were to embrace best practice. It concludes that innovative policing agencies have increased the effectiveness of front-line police officers in a variety of ways:

- (i) Delivering value-for-money efficiencies in corporate support, and shifting resources from the back office to the front line. In the defence sector, this has been described as changing the 'tooth-to-tail' ratio;
- (ii) Modernising the physical and technological infrastructure that supports front-line policing, and professionalising the associated support services; and
- (iii) Reassessing the nature of policing itself, identifying those activities that do not need to be undertaken by highly-trained and warranted officers, and taking advantage of changes in the law to redefine the boundary between core and non-core services.

Drivers of Change

The report then explores some of the underlying social, political and organisational currents that have driven police reform over the past decade. While the optimisation of the time of valued personnel has itself been one of those drivers, other factors have reinforced this trend – centralisation, rationalisation and collaboration in administration, the widespread adoption of performance management, reform of police powers particularly those directed to public accountability, a programme of asset renewal driven by central government, the ongoing demands of technological renewal, and the ever-present need to deliver more for less.

The Evidence

The third section of the report looks at how different police forces have embraced new approaches to service delivery directed at increasing the effectiveness and the efficiency of front-line policing. It explores the leading edge of reform, and documents how that boundary has advanced over the past decade. In this sense, it can be looked upon as a catalogue of best practice in reforms directed at 'making time'.

Support services: Some of the earliest attempts at using the private sector involved facilities and fleet management, but the scope of contracted services now extends considerably further. At the local level, corporate support functions and ICT are being contracted to external suppliers. In some cases, authorities and councils have collaborated, increasing efficiency through co-location and the creation of shared service centres. There is a growing market for custodial or detention services, in part inspired by the success of prison contracting in the 1990s, reinforced by recent legislation that allows non-core police powers to be designated to civilian staff.

Specialist services: Forces have long contracted with specialists such as police surgeons and interpreters, but they are now experimenting with recruitment and criminal record checks, freeing up police time, making access to these services more flexible and facilitating multi-agency, multi-regional working.

Physical facilities: For more than a decade now, the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and other public-private partnership (PPP) models have enabled policing agencies to renew physical assets, but the range of services included in these projects has gradually expanded, incorporating a wide range of support functions. Greater consideration is now given to business processes at the design stage, and this has been especially important for heavy-use facilities such as custody suites and training centres. There are also examples of innovative publicly-procured buildings which have brought together police, probation and court facilities under one roof and improved the outcomes for criminal justice.

Criminal investigation: It would be rare today to find a sworn constable at a crime scene securing DNA or clothing fibre evidence and arranging for its analysis: these roles are now widely undertaken by civilian Scene of Crime Officers. More recently, civilians have begun to support detectives in aspects of their core work, building files, undertaking interviews and securing evidence. There is an emerging market in forensic analysis with about 50% of the work competed for by the corporatised Forensic Science Service as well as smaller private laboratories. The introduction of competition in these services has created an incentive to maintain high standards, underlined by the recent appointment of a market regulator.

Crime prevention: In addition to Community Safety Officers, the most high-profile of the crime prevention initiatives, regulation of the private security industry and community safety accreditation schemes now allow Chief Constables to award specific anti-social behaviour powers to private security staff and publicly employed street wardens. Some forces have established plural policing units to coordinate local police patrols and private security guards in town centres. Communities themselves also have a greater choice in purchasing extra reassurance.

The Benefits

What have been the benefits of these reforms? How has civilianisation and contracting assisted police forces in reinforcing the core business of policing?

Diversion of resources to the frontline: Competition and contracting for support services have resulted in cost savings, freeing up resources to be redirected to the front line. Police forces have also been able to transfer some of the risk of cost escalation to their private sector partners. Examples include corporate support and ICT, interpreter and forensic services. The PFI has meant that new facilities have been built on-time and on-budget. When Sussex police rationalised their custody facilities,

employing the contractor to take responsibility for detention, medical and interpreter services: processing times accelerated, the facilities were used more efficiently, and the care of detainees improved.

Joined-up law enforcement: Contracting (with both public and private providers) has assisted neighbouring police forces and local authorities to procure support services jointly, ensuring greater professionalism and delivering economies of scale. Examples include fleet management, air services, and corporate support. The co-location of criminal justice agencies in Warwickshire resulted in the more effective use of time, with officers spending fewer hours at court, and in transit between offices.

Smarter deployment of officers: Technological innovation has provided officers with greater access to information, enabling them to remain on the streets longer. Contracting prisoner escort and custody support have freed up warranted officers for front-line duties, and increased the accountability of those performing these roles. In Staffordshire, there was also evidence of cost savings.

Greater police visibility: The introduction of Community Safety Officers and accreditation of community and commercial initiatives have raised the profile of policing and have been associated with reductions in crime and the fear of crime. For example, in West Yorkshire, overall crime declined by 10% in the first year after community safety officers were introduced.

1. Midshire Constabulary



1. Midshire Constabulary

A fictional case study demonstrating how reform has freed up front-line policing

Midshire Constabulary is a medium-sized police force with around 3,000 officers and 2,000 staff arranged into three basic command units covering the east, west and central regions of the county. A new Chief Constable was appointed in 1995 who was faced with increasing concern in urban areas about violent crime rates, and criticism from rural areas about slow response times. He inherited an ageing estate spread across a mixed urban and rural landscape, and transportation and IT infrastructure also required renewal. However, budgetary constraints left little room to tackle these problems, and Midshire sought more creative solutions, drawing on best practice from other police forces, local governments and public bodies around the country.

Buildings and services

After exhausting traditional sources of funding to rebuild facilities that were in disrepair, in 1998, Midshire procured its first police station under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), replacing a building that was almost a hundred years old. The contract included a narrow range of services, covering building maintenance, cleaning and catering, and energy and waste management.

Five years later, Midshire embarked on a more ambitious PFI project, commissioning a new divisional headquarters, five police stations (two with custody suites), and a central property storage facility based in a local business park outside a main town in the county and next to the motorway. In addition to basic facilities management, Midshire's private sector partner on this project provided a 24-hour help desk and custody assistants. Whereas previously police constables were used to take fingerprints and perform searches of suspects, these routine tasks were now carried out by specially trained employees of the contractor, under the supervision of a custody sergeant. Contractor staff were also used to monitor and cater for prisoners. This arrangement allowed 50 officers to return to patrols and emergency response duties.

In 2005, the service contractor offered to add to the services already provided, assuming responsibility for providing healthcare cover from doctors or nurses seven days a week, and to supply foreign language interpreters, either in person or over the phone.

Investigations

Today, all Midshire's custody suites include offices for mixed teams of detectives and civilian support staff, used to take the investigations forward and build case files. This means arresting officers are no longer expected to conduct follow-up investigations of their own and can concentrate on neighbourhood policing and emergency calls. When the mixed teams were formed, Midshire approached a number of specialist recruitment agencies to provide retired detectives who were interested in working in the force again.

After trialling the new investigation teams for six months in one of its custody suites, the force decided to seek permanent staff. At this stage, applications were also sought from existing police employees who had been security cleared and wanted to develop their career in the service. A number of call centre workers were transferred and trained by the retired detectives who were also retained on a contract basis to provide support and experience. A year after the new system was introduced, there was a noticeable drop in the time taken to conclude investigations, allowing more cases to be pursued and contributing to a higher success rate.

Recently, Midshire's Chief Constable has concentrated on getting the constabulary to work more closely with its criminal justice partners. He has begun to assess the feasibility of building a multi-purpose centre in the part of the county covered by the eastern division of the police force. The centre would integrate all agencies in one building, bringing together probation services, local government, the courts and the Crown Prosecution Service. If successful, similar centres could be introduced for the other two divisions (western and central).

By co-locating offices, custody facilities and a magistrates' and crown court, the Chief Constable hopes to reduce the amount of time his officers spend on court duty, as well as reducing the cost of a new divisional headquarters and custody facilities, which will be shared with the courts. Having probation next door will make it easier to track offenders, while closer ties with the Crown Prosecution Service should increase the proportion of successful trials. It is intended to make victim and witness support available on site, to make people more aware of police and court procedures and to facilitate liaison with the agencies as required. There is also scope for incorporating other community safety projects and agencies which help to re-integrate offenders into the community.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Midshire decided to integrate the majority of its desktop, command and control, case management and mobile ICT solutions, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its previously disparate solutions. A single contract was negotiated with a private sector specialist in 2001 for the provision of equipment and round the clock maintenance across all systems. A priority for the new service provider was to merge legacy data bases into a single data store, updated in real time. For the first time, the integrated database allowed officers to make routine enquiries remotely via a PDA and be confident that all the latest available information about a person, vehicle or location would be forwarded to them without the need to access multiple systems. New portal technology also meant that officers returning to duty after rest days or holidays could receive information about incidents that had occurred on their area as part of an e-briefing system.

A central service desk operated by the strategic partner was introduced to provide immediate support by trained staff, with a team of engineers kept on permanent standby to handle more technical queries and emergencies.

In 2005, when all police radio communications were switched to the Airwave national digital communications system, the strategic partner helped Midshire to upgrade and install new equipment on desktops and in vehicles, as well as rolling out the new radios. All targeted patrol teams have recently been issued with handheld PDAs and cars with mobile data terminals. This allows control centres to track officers' whereabouts, and officers to record arrest details electronically and transmit them almost instantly to custody suites, reducing the need to carry and complete lengthy forms.

Shared Services

When Midshire was restructured in the mid 1990s, some financial savings were achieved by reducing six Basic Command Units to three, although these three retained their own human resource and finance departments. A fourth function was responsible for headquarters staff and for co-ordinating force-wide policy.

More recently, the force has re-organised its human resources and finance teams as a result of consultants' advice on how best to make efficiency savings in its back office functions. It had been following central guidance to devolve functions such as finance, human resources, recruitment, health and safety without recognising how expensive this model had become. Issues over corporate standards and widely differing performance prompted a review of all back office functions. The result was a return to the centre of many transactional services, resulting in savings in the order of 25% of operating costs, which could be directed to front-line policing.

The Chief Constable also sought advice from neighbouring police forces and local authorities. Although none had taken this step, some had successfully outsourced payroll services. Following talks with the Chief Constable of neighbouring Northshire Police, it was decided that the two counties would enter into a joint venture to tender for a private sector partner to provide a range of services under one roof, with the possibility of bringing on board other authorities or local businesses in the future. For example, the county council was also interested in outsourcing its legal and property services. Both police forces were open to the possibility of broader collaboration at some time in the future.

Transport

Predating the arrival of the current Chief Constable, Midshire had collaborated with Northshire on the shared lease of a helicopter and, since 1992, the two forces have jointly paid for the services of a pilot. From 1997, local NHS trusts have also contributed funding for the maintenance of the helicopter as an air ambulance as and when required.

As a result of the positive benefits of sharing capabilities and the savings accrued from this project, in 2003, Midshire and Northshire sought to take the collaboration further into fleet maintenance. The joint fleet is purchased and maintained by a single body for both forces (the exception is detainee transport vans, which are managed by the service contractor in Midshire). However, for a number of years Northshire has argued that it has been subsidising its neighbour, having only about half the number of officers as Midshire, but paying over 40% of the costs for these services. Midshire's view is that, although numerically smaller, Northshire is of a similar geographical size and relies on cars more to get around its largely rural population. Rather than break up the consortium, which took two years to bring together, and has produced significant savings and resulted in better vehicle availability rates, Midshire's Chief Constable convinced his Northshire counterpart to follow the example of other forces by market testing the agreement and subjecting it to competition from private sector suppliers.

Despite some opposition to competition from staff and officers, the fleet maintenance department put together an in-house bid with a revised billing system based on actual use of equipment and facilities by each force. Most of the external bidders based their offers on projected usage each month, which did not address Northshire's concerns about equitable treatment. One bidder offered to assume the risk of vehicle downtime by taking on ownership of the fleet through a long-term agreement, but the length of such a contract was felt to be unsatisfactory. The in-house team won the contract on the basis of better projected availability rates, and lower maintenance costs. A review of the department's work processes found efficiency savings from reducing the number of garages from three to two and improving the ratio of vehicle miles to maintenance action, as well as reducing the average time to carry out MOTs.

Community Policing

Following the introduction of extended hours for licensed premises in 2006, a greater police presence was required in Midtown centre on Friday and Saturday nights due to an increase in alcohol-fuelled fighting. At first, more officers were rostered for weekend evenings, but this led to other times being understaffed, especially Saturday and Sunday afternoons in the busy town centre when a visible presence was required to reassure shoppers and deter petty thieves.

By liaising more regularly with local community groups and businesses, as well as private security firms employed by shops, bars and clubs, to get information about hot spots, police managed to get a better picture of when, where and how much police presence was required.

A campaign was launched to recruit additional Community Support Officers to patrol the town centre during the daytime when less arrests were required, with the aim of reassuring the public and allowing more officers to be assigned to patrol on weekend nights. In addition, Midshire established a community safety accreditation scheme to train council-employed street wardens. The wardens have powers of dispersion, confiscation and to issue penalty notices. They are also permitted to use Airwave radios to communicate with police officers.

Through contact with a local Crime and Disorder Partnership, Midshire's Chief Constable was instrumental in encouraging one ex-street warden to set up a community patrol group, with funding from a local organisation representing town centre businesses. The group, known as the "Midtown Rangers", its members easily recognised by their green shirts, began daytime patrols, providing directions and information about the local area, as well as reassurance to the public by keeping an eye out for groups of unruly teenagers and street theft.

The Midtown Rangers were made up from a mix of ex-security guards and newly trained staff, all licensed and trained in accordance with British Security Industry Association regulations, and paid at similar rates to local office and shop security. As a result of their popularity with the public, they were offered a contract by the local bus company to provide security at bus stops and on selected buses in the evenings, following a spate of reported attacks on passengers. When on the bus company's property, the Chief Constable agreed to accredit the Rangers with similar powers to those exercised by the street wardens, as well as allowing them to carry Airwave compatible radios to call for further assistance. By 2007-08, the number of violent assaults in Midtown centre had dropped sharply and surveys of local residents suggest that their fear of both assault and acquisitive crime has decreased by a small but significant margin.

Summary

Over the past decade, Midshire's reforms have enabled the police to meet rising public expectations about community safety, stay abreast of technological innovations and respond to increased standards of professional accountability and financial prudence, whilst operating within a climate of fiscal constraint. They have accomplished this in a variety of ways:

- (i) Resources have been moved from the back office to the front line. In corporate support, value-for-money initiatives have been directed to personnel and financial savings that have been redirected to core policing functions.
- (ii) At the same time, the physical and technological infrastructure that supports front-line policing has been modernised, and the responsibility for maintaining those facilities and delivering the associated support services has been assigned to professionals. This has meant that warranted police officers are diverted less often from front-line duties.
- (iii) Along with other police forces throughout the country, Midshire has reassessed the nature of policing itself, identifying those activities that do not necessarily have to be performed by highly-trained and warranted officers. Midshire has taken advantage of legal changes that have redefined the boundary between core and non-core services, focusing police effort on those activities that are properly performed only by warranted personnel.

2. The Drivers of Change



2. The Drivers of Change

Over the past decade, policing in England and Wales has undergone great change. The resources available to the service in terms of money, police officers, support staff and equipment have all increased to meet the new demands involved in addressing local and cross-border crime as well as international terrorism. The service has also changed to provide much greater accountability for its operational performance and the exercise of police powers.

And yet, with the exception of several new national agencies, the structure of the service has remained largely unchanged: rationalisation and merger of some of the 43 police forces, proposed in 2006, did not go ahead. At the same time, there has been an ongoing concern at the centre of government that resources were not being deployed as effectively as they might have been.

In 2001 the government set out its vision for a 21st century police service, emphasising better use of the time and skills of officers and support staff, improved training, the dissemination of best practice and more effective partnership working.³ The impetus for reform was maintained in a 2004 White Paper which focused on workforce modernisation, neighbourhood policing and greater community involvement.⁴ These papers have supported a programme of legislative change, commencing with the Police Reform Act 2002, followed by the Serious Organised Crime and Policing Act 2005 and the Police and Justice Act 2006, which have expanded the role of civilian staff in custody, investigation and neighbourhood policing functions, and rationalised the structure of national agencies, while strengthening local crime reduction schemes.

A 2008 review of the police service found that there had been a decline in productivity due to a disproportionate focus on inputs such as police officer numbers, rather than on the best ways of deploying staff and improving outcomes. The review urged the establishment of a more dynamic service, with a redesign of central structures that would allow Chief Constables to pursue more entrepreneurial and innovative approaches to service delivery.⁵

However, change has not just been driven from the centre. In an attempt to deliver significantly better outcomes with limited resources, some police forces have taken advantage of this momentum from central government, and developed bold new initiatives of their own.

Optimising the Use of Valued Personnel

One of the most important strands of UK police reform has been more efficient use of human resources by employing civilians in a variety of roles, freeing up trained police officers for core and front-line duties. In the past, police officers were expected to be omniscient and were trained to take on a variety of investigative, administrative, custodial and neighbourhood policing tasks. This has proved expensive to maintain.

Police forces have long employed civilians in support roles, allowing the redeployment of uniformed personnel to higher priorities, however there was a great deal of variation in the extent of civilianisation across the different forces, and legal constraints on the use of civilian staff in certain para-policing roles. This led Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to advocate a programme of modernisation through a more integrated national approach to recruitment, training and deployment which would still allow local innovation.⁶ The 2008 Flanagan Review of policing developed this aim into its vision for the service: "the right people in the right places at the right times, doing the right things, in partnership, for the public".⁷

Earlier research on police officer activity found that only 17% of officer time was spent on neighbourhood policing. The main areas to be explored in freeing up officers' time were in processing prisoners in the early stages of custody and in preparing prosecutions.⁸ As part of a national initiative to free up more officers for front-line duties, the Police Reform Act 2002 created four designated roles in which civilian staff could exercise certain police powers – detention, investigation, escort and community support officers. The Act also enabled the accreditation of public and private organisations with certain powers to target anti-social behaviour. Pilots were launched in 2004 to evaluate the use of civilian staff in custody suites, investigations and reassurance patrols. The National Policing Improvement Agency has also supported 11 demonstration sites across 13 forces to further explore how process re-engineering could improve police productivity.

There has been understandable concern among rank-and-file police officers about the delegation of police powers to civilian staff, and a Police Federation survey concluded that reforms had not made more officers available for wider, 24/7 response police work. The workforce modernisation pilots are viewed as having been largely successful, realising both performance improvements and cost savings.⁹ This offers the potential to free up scarce resources for front-line policing. However, at the time of publication, these reforms had not been rolled out across forces as a whole.¹⁰

Contracting also optimises the use of valued personnel through the professionalisation of support service roles. What appears to the policing agency as the back office is regarded by the support service firm as the front line. Staff who would have faced very limited career prospects as supporting members of a police force, are given the opportunity to rise to very senior positions with a service provider. Among other things, this means that police forces will have a much greater chance of retaining specialist personnel with IT, project management and process re-engineering skills.

Centralisation, Collaboration and Rationalisation

The police service in England and Wales is governed by a tripartite relationship between the Home Office, police authorities and Chief Constables, and over time the Home Office has taken greater control over policy and decision-making. There are no plans for the creation of a national police force and the number of forces in England and Wales has remained constant since 1964.¹¹ Although a number of national co-ordinating agencies have been created to lead on areas such as terrorism, organised crime, training and ICT, there are still significant challenges in sharing information and collaborating across county borders.

Many forces have sought to rationalise their internal structures and processes, by reducing the number of basic command units and centralising custody suites and back-office functions. In addition, some forces have collaborated, with other police forces and with local authorities and other local partners, to improve their services or capabilities.

At a national level, the National Policing Improvement Agency was created in 2007, bringing together two national agencies that previously led on training and development, ICT and crime analysis (Centrex and the Police Information and Technology Organisation) to form a central body to promote the unification of working methods. The Serious Organised Crime Agency was also formed from what were previously the National Crime Squad and the National Criminal Intelligence Service, as well as certain customs and immigration functions.

Performance Management

The development of a performance management culture has been a common trend across UK public services since the early 1980s, driven by the need to make public services more accountable, both financially and around the quality of service provision. Police services have experienced increasing exposure to performance assessment, at both local and national levels.

Typically, performance measures have become more holistic and outcome-oriented over time. The trend is for the introduction of more strategic targets with less focus on specific numbers. This serves to increase flexibility. The broader measures are also part

of the government's drive to develop a consolidated approach to community safety and criminal justice throughout all levels of government, and across different agencies and functions.

The current Performance Assessment Framework measures police force performance using a balanced scorecard, but at the time of publication, there were plans to replace this with a wider framework that would assess not only police performance, but the impact of all those organisations with responsibility for community safety, including crime and disorder reduction partnerships and local authority functions. Some of the precise targets set out in recent Public Service Agreements, such as those which require a specified number of offences to be brought to justice, have been criticised for creating perverse incentives, encouraging police to focus on lower level offences in order to meet their targets and leaving less time to tackle more serious crimes. The final report of the Flanagan Review recommended "a more proportionate approach matching resource to risk and harm".¹²

A complementary approach has been to allow police to set targets locally based on local priorities. Communities have also been given some opportunities to feed in. The Police and Justice Act 2006 created a mechanism known as the Community Call to Action which allows local people to request action on a community safety issue which may have been overlooked. Furthermore, the government has made dissemination of direct contact details for neighbourhood patrol teams a requirement, enabling the public to hold them to account.

Reform of Police Powers and Procedures

Increased accountability in the exercise of police powers and reforms in the handling of vulnerable detainees have contributed to the administrative burden that diverts officers from front-line duties. Examples include the codification and refinement of police powers following the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, paperwork associated with stop and search, and changes to the regulations governing custody suites directed to reducing the number of deaths in custody. Necessary as these reforms have been, they have contributed to the bureaucratisation of policing, and heightened awareness of the need to actively manage the administrative burden.

On the other hand, the delegation of powers to civilian staff to perform basic custodial and investigatory functions has facilitated the reform agenda by regulating and professionalising these roles.

Asset Renewal

The replacement of ageing infrastructure has been a priority for police forces across the country, and the availability of funding from central government through the private finance initiative has also stimulated innovation in service provision. National

Framework Agreements have been devised to speed up procurement processes through short-listing of approved suppliers with pre-arranged prices. Renewal has enabled forces to capture efficiencies from assets that are easier to maintain and the introduction of new ICT systems designed to streamline business processes.

Technological Progress

Advancements in technology have affected all areas of policing. In particular, rapid progress in ICT and forensic science has transformed the way criminal investigations are carried out and police resources are deployed. Today, criminal analysts use sophisticated geographical information systems to pinpoint hotspots and predict where crimes will occur, while forensic scientists work with tiny amounts of skin tissue or clothing fibres to match suspects to crime scenes. This has contributed to an increasing demand for expert personnel to support the police, and in many cases, it is more cost-effective to purchase these services from external providers, than for each police force to recruit and retain their own.

More for Less

Although spending on police services has risen over the last ten years and police numbers are higher than they have ever been, a funding gap of over £900m by 2011 has been identified by policing authorities.¹³ The most recent government spending review scaled back central funding of the service, while caps on council tax increases have constrained local funding. The rising cost of police pensions adds to the pressure. Spending constraints serve as an underlying driver of reform, as police leaders strive to allocate scarce resources more productively.

However, government policy also creates obstacles to reform. The increase in officer numbers and the greater use of Police Community Support Officers has been achieved largely due to ring-fenced government funding, made available to forces only if police numbers are maintained. This caveat has made it difficult for forces to make efficiency gains through civilianisation or outsourcing functions such as custody or investigation for fear of losing resources if sworn officer numbers reduce.

3. UK Police Reform



3. UK Police Reform

3.1 Support Services

Increases in the numbers of non-sworn staff have freed up uniformed police personnel to focus on their professional duties that only sworn officers can perform. In the last ten years alone, staff numbers in England and Wales have grown by over 40% whilst officer numbers have increased by around 12%.¹⁴ Support services range from administrative support, to call handling and casework. They also include a range of back-office functions, such as human resources, finance and legal/property services, through to technical support such as the maintenance and operation of transport and ICT equipment.

Most of these functions are similar to those carried out in thousands of other organisations everyday, both in the public and private sectors. This has led police forces to consider outsourcing and/or centralising these services to achieve financial savings, especially through shared service arrangements and the outsourcing of ICT services, two areas that were targeted by the 2004 review of government efficiency.¹⁵

Following the success of privately-managed prisons in the UK, including contracting of the prison officer role, forces have felt more confident in contracting the handling of detainees in custody suites. Legislative changes have increased the scope for flexibility in the use of civilian staff in such roles.

Corporate Support

Some police forces have outsourced corporate support services such as payroll, pensions and finance services, for a number of years. This has enabled them to take advantage of economies of scale and relieve pressure on their own departments, so that they can redeploy staff onto more strategic work.

The Metropolitan Police first contracted out its payroll and pensions services in 1998, changing to a new supplier when the contract was re-tendered in 2005. Suffolk and Essex benefited from a National Framework Agreement between HM Treasury and

private suppliers whereby service contracts and prices were pre-negotiated for a number of public agencies so as to improve value for money.

In 2002 Hampshire Police contracted with Northgate HR to manage its payroll and expenses system from its solutions management centre in Hemel Hempstead. Surrey Police undertook a review which recommended centralising large parts of its human resources and finance functions. The force is embarking on implementing the reforms itself.

Shared Services

In some cases, forces are working together and with public sector partners to achieve further efficiency benefits by sharing services across agencies. At central government level, there are plans to create a National Police Shared Service Centre and a separate Metropolitan Centre.¹⁶ The plans flow from a Cabinet Office initiative to obtain 20% efficiency savings through shared services from the annual spend for human resources and finance across government.¹⁷ A public inquiry in 2007 found that the police were being “sluggish in developing shared services”.¹⁸

Local government has often taken the lead in establishing shared services. Hertfordshire County Council was among the first local authorities to market-test payroll services, with a contract in 1993 for the management of payroll, pensions and finance. In time, the Hertford Shared Services Centre, under the management of the original contractor, extended its remit to serve numerous public and private sector clients including Hertfordshire Police. As a result, payroll staff numbers were reduced, delivering savings across the client base, even though total employee numbers rose during the same period. The contract was extended in 2007 to run until 2011. A similar arrangement was concluded in Staffordshire in 2006, after the County Council awarded a contract for delivery of payroll services across nine partner organisations, including police and fire services.¹⁹

South West One ²⁰

In March 2008, Avon and Somerset Police became a founding member in a joint venture company with Somerset County Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council and IBM, called South West One, to deliver finance, ICT, human resources and facilities management, as well as design and print, property, postal and procurement services from a shared service centre in Taunton. The project includes a framework agreement which entitles over 30 other public sector organisations to acquire similar services through the partnership.

The arrangement is valued at around £400m over 10 years. Services will be delivered by staff seconded from the local authorities, police and IBM. The bulk

of the staff will be provided by the public bodies, with IBM providing a thin layer of management for each workstream in the first instance, to help resolve problems and assist with the integration of staff and systems. It is envisaged that once the solutions are designed, implemented and operational, the IBM staff will withdraw, leaving day-to-day running to the public sector secondees.

An advantage of IBM as a partner, apart from the business process management expertise the company can offer, is the ability to provide cost effective access to software such as SAP. In the future, the police will also have the option of using IBM to roll out mobile data solutions and a resource planning system, which will help to reduce bureaucracy and free up officers' time. The three agencies will also try to integrate working practices as much as possible to create a model of best practice.

Avon and Somerset Police have commented: "Realistically, this sort of transformation of services would not have happened without the involvement of a major company such as IBM. Other Police Authorities are also faced with the same issues around funding and have chosen simply to cut staff to save money. This approach has been rejected by Avon and Somerset Police Authority, which has instead looked at a more imaginative, pioneering approach to secure the employment of valued police staff and improve the services we provide at the same time."

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Effective sharing of information is critical to police work, whether it involves major public safety incidents, large crime investigations or routine criminal record checks. Two of the most important elements of effective ICT infrastructure are 24/7 availability and interoperability amongst the different forces. Although there are national databases shared by all forces (such as the Police National Computer and the Violent and Sex Offender Register), forces differ in their use of case management and command and control systems. Some use software developed at a national level by the National Policing Improvement Agency or its forerunners and employ their own support staff, whereas others have bought in new technology, along with software development, training and maintenance. More recently, some forces have individually sought to integrate their IT and communications systems by contracting with a single provider.

Currently the Association of Chief Police Officers' strategy is to integrate major case, operations and information management databases. However, establishing nationwide systems can be a costly and lengthy process. The most ambitious project so far has been for a nationwide digital radio communications system (Airwave) agreed in 1999, to replace the old patchwork of locally-managed analogue systems.

Radio Communications

Before Airwave, each police force managed its own radio communications systems, with the result that there was a lack of interoperability. Some forces used in-house staff to maintain their systems, while a number of forces (such as Cleveland, Thames Valley and North Yorkshire) began to contract out maintenance and repair for all their radio equipment around 1991-92.

Airwave

A Home Office review of police and fire service radio communications in 1993 found that they fell below required standards and recommended negotiating a deal at a national level. Airwave was designed as a secure digital radio network for the exclusive use of the UK's emergency and public safety services. It replaced the old analogue system which could not cope with demand and could not be shared with other emergency services or offer encryption. The new system would also allow transmission of digital information held on computer databases, such as the Police National Computer, to remote terminals so that officers on the beat could access these directly.

The contract was originally concluded in 2000 under a framework agreement between telecoms provider O2 and the Police Information Technology Organisation. It took the form of a £1,470m, 19-year PFI deal to provide a guaranteed level of coverage to all forces as well as services to maintain or enhance their existing capabilities. Other services such as the provision and maintenance of handheld terminals and control room equipment would be subject to further competition at force level. Initial analysis of the benefits of such a system revealed that Airwave could save at least 10% of police officer time spent in the station and as much as 30%.²¹

By the end of 2005, it had been rolled out for police in England, Scotland and Wales. The Fire and Ambulance Services decided against involvement at first, due to the high cost of the contract. They have since joined the network, which will deliver further advantages from integrated communication and economies of scale. The RSPCA, which receives 25,000 emergency calls a year, has also joined.

Airwave set the scene for later developments in communications. Merseyside, Sussex and the Metropolitan Police have piloted the use of a handheld mobility device developed by BT which gives patrol officers access to the Police National Computer and other databases whilst on the streets. It also allows police officers to fill in reports on site which could save officers between 30 minutes and an hour per shift. This was rolled out in the Metropolitan area in January 2005 followed by British Transport Police

in October 2006. BT can provide installation, project management, service and support, as well as hardware and software.

Command and Control

A number of suppliers of command and control software systems provide application development and support services. The National Policing Improvement Agency has developed a system that was in use by seven forces at the time of publication, including the British Transport and Ministry of Defence Police. This was first rolled out in 2002 and originally designed to help the Metropolitan Police deal with the large volume of calls that it received. It allows control rooms to access information already held by police on particular people and addresses so as to better decide on a course of action and inform police at the scene.

Scottish police forces are moving towards a single national system provided by a company which already supplies 18 forces throughout the UK. As a result of its extensive reach, the company developed an 'active user community', jointly funded by all participating forces, which allowed users to consider enhancements already considered by other users.

Hampshire Police introduced the privately-developed Altaris command and control system in 2001, with Merseyside following the next year. The private sector partner provides round the clock technical support, with on-site staff during the working day with out-of-hours call outs for emergencies.

In Hampshire, the contractor also installed a vehicle location system to track all police vehicles in use and relay information to the control room about sirens in use and who is in the car. In Merseyside, mobile data terminals have been installed in vehicles, giving officers on patrol access to databases previously only accessible via the control room. In both cases, the contractor is responsible for maintenance and secure decommissioning of all equipment.

Complete ICT Systems

Some forces have embarked on projects to consolidate their ICT systems under broad contractual arrangements. In 2005, the Metropolitan Police signed a seven-year contract worth £350m with CapGemini to consolidate ICT services previously supplied by three separate contracts with different suppliers. The new contract covered management and support of desktop IT networks, telephony and mobile devices, including around 30,000 desktops and laptops, 38,000 telephone extensions, and 8,500 mobile phones and new mobile data terminals. It also included support for more than 50 software applications relating to crime-reporting information, analysis and records storage. Helpdesk services were also included.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland agreed a similar contract with Fujitsu in 2008, worth £100m over eight years, to provide managed IT services. This brought together five previous contracts with different service providers. The consolidated arrangement included a 24-hour support desk, as well as the maintenance and servicing of more than 8,000 computers. In-house IT staff were redeployed to more strategic projects.

Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)

In 2000, the National Crime Squad (NCS), which is now part of SOCA, entered into a 10-year strategic partnership with Serco Group plc. The partnership covered the development and implementation of Athena, an intelligence collation and analysis package, as well as the provision of secure IT and data hosting, training, mobile communications, a service desk, collection and storage of evidence, case files and seized assets, and general IT support for 1,500 officers and 400 other staff across the UK. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary has described the partnership as "effective and innovative".²²

In 2001, NCS commissioned the development of ChildBase, a more specific tool for the investigation of online paedophilia that aimed to reduce the inefficiency of manually retrieving, logging and categorising images. Serco used its close relationship with Canadian company Imagis Technologies Ltd to develop groundbreaking image recognition technology. In 2003, NCS was awarded the International Law Enforcement Cybercrime Award for the development of the ChildBase technology.

Transport Services

Fleet Management

The procurement and maintenance of motor vehicles is a vital element for all police forces, since it forms a large cost and demands a great deal of technical expertise and equipment. The largest and most innovative contract was concluded by Nottinghamshire Police using a PFI to attract a private sector specialist that would invest in its fleet and take on the risk of vehicle downtime.

A seven-year Metropolitan Police contract for vehicle purchase and service provision ran into problems when the contractor made a loss in the first 15 months to 1999 and a safety review of the 3,500-strong fleet revealed serious faults. Following re-tendering in 2005, a 10-year contract was awarded to a new provider.

Thames Valley, Hertfordshire, and Bedfordshire Police opted to make in-house arrangements, joining together to form the Chiltern consortium, which has become the 3rd largest police fleet in the country.

Nottinghamshire Police fleet management

Following a review of its Nottingham City premises and in-house vehicle workshop facilities, Nottinghamshire Police decided to award a 25-year PFI contract to Venson plc to provide all fleet management services. Under this arrangement, 500 vehicles were bought by the contractor, with the police purchasing monthly slots to use the cars, vans, scooters and other vehicles. This allowed more resources to be focused on policing activity, leaving the care of the vehicles in the hands of experts.

The project was designated a pathfinder by the Home Office and, since the contract commenced in 2002, Venson has delivered a 98% vehicle availability target and has responsibility for procurement, maintenance and repair, both in a purpose-built hi-tech secure workshop and via mobile repair units. The head of procurement for Nottinghamshire Police has commented: 'Working with a specialist fleet management provider has moved us much closer to our best value targets.'²³

Air Support

Most police forces contract for pilot services under a national framework agreement which was renegotiated by the Police Intelligence Technology Organisation in 2007. The agreement was reached following a competitive tender and covers aircraft purchase, maintenance and pilotage. Forces can negotiate outside the agreement or use third parties for maintenance; some employ pilots directly.

A number of police forces have joined together to form consortia to purchase air services from specialist companies that lease aircraft and provide pilots and training. The North East Air Support Unit, formed in 1995 by Cleveland, Durham and Northumbria police, contracted with Police Aviation Services (PAS) to operate two helicopters from Newcastle International and Durham Tees Valley airports.

PAS also provides services to Dorset and Wiltshire Police. In Wiltshire, PAS fly the helicopter as part of an emergency air support unit funded jointly by the police and the Ambulance Service NHS Trust. It was the first such unit in England and Wales. The company provides a similar service in Dorset, where Police Air Support Unit personnel also work closely with other emergency services and have undergone extensive training with Dorset Ambulance Trust. PAS have also developed flight simulators and training courses for police forces, investments that could not have been made by a force providing these services on its own.

Essex Police use a local company based at Stapleford Abbots to supply maintenance and pilotage (including recruitment and training) for its air services. All pilots are ex-military and highly skilled. Cambridge and Suffolk Constabularies have similar contracts with the same company.

Prisoner Escort

Until the mid-1990s, escorting prisoners to and from court and guarding them whilst there, was the joint responsibility of the police and Prison Service. This led to duplication of effort and diversion of both police and prison officers from their core responsibilities. A decision was made by senior officials in the Prison Service to create the Prisoner Escort and Custody Service, dedicated to this task with no other calls on its time. The use of contracts with private security companies to deliver the service was also trialled.

Between 1993 and 1994, the Prison Service let contracts for the East Midlands and Humberside area to Group 4 Court Services and for the Metropolitan Police District to Securicor Custodial Services. Following successful pilots, contracts were awarded for the remaining six areas in England and Wales. The contracts were re-tendered in 2004 and the eight areas were amalgamated into four.

The first contract for prisoner escorting throughout Scotland was let in 2003. A review by the Scottish Prison service in 2006 estimated that this had freed up 300 police officers to return to front-line duties (200 from escorting and 100 from court duties), whilst prisons were able to invest more in services. Both prisons and police also reported savings in vehicle maintenance.²⁴

In Cheshire, a private company provided a detainee escort service for the police from 2005, to allow officers to stay on the beat after making an arrest. This ground-breaking contract shifted much of the risk associated with the timely collection and delivery of detainees to the contractor, who used Geographical Information System software to map the location of arrests so as to position its vans close to potential hot spots. At the time of publication, this contract was being terminated, in part because of the difficulties involved in meeting the output specifications.

Custody Services

Detention

Whilst police forces did not begin contracting the detention officer role until recently, the use of civilians in this function has been established for some time. As with other areas of police work, the extent of civilianisation varied from force to force, partly because the use of civilians in this role was subject to legal restrictions.²⁵ The Police Reform Act 2002

changed this by allowing the delegation of detention and escort officer powers to both directly employed civilian staff and those employed by a contractor.

Prior to the reforms, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) reported in 1998 that standards of care had improved as the proportion of civilians employed in this role increased, replacing ad-hoc police officer support with dedicated detention staff.²⁶ However, the role of such 'civilian gaolers' was limited to simple functions such as serving meals, with the result that police officers still spent on average three-and-a half hours following arrest engaged in transporting detainees to the station, and waiting for finger-printing, photographing and criminal record checks.

Designated detention officers (also known as civilian custody assistants) are now employed in the majority of custody suites throughout England and Wales to deliver meals, take fingerprints, photographs and DNA samples, and even to carry out intimate searches. They can also help to arrange ID parades, although a sworn officer is required to witness an identification.

Between 2001 and 2007 Home Office funding rules that favoured boosting officer numbers made it more difficult for Chief Constables to increase civilian roles. However, a number of government-funded workforce modernisation pilots in 2004-05 tested civilian and contractor involvement in various functions including detainee handling. The pilots revealed significant benefits, especially in releasing officer time, but also in increased standards of care for prisoners and reduced delivery costs.²⁷

Contracting detention support services involves the selection, recruitment, training, development, welfare and discipline of civilian officers. In 1999, West Mercia became the first force to pilot the outsourcing of detention officers in Hereford and in 2002 this was extended to cover six custody suites and at the time of publication involved more than 55 contracted staff. Thames Valley concluded a much larger contract for 130 custody assistants over 12 sites in 2002. Detention officers have also been included as part of PFI deals for the design, build, finance and operation of custody suites and police stations such as in Sussex and Cheshire. The Metropolitan Police contracted for detention officers as part of its PFI project for four south-east London police stations, which commenced in April 2004.

HMIC has openly praised many of these initiatives. An inspection of Warwickshire, which tendered a force-wide contract in 2001 and 2006, found that the custody assistants saved "hours of officer time" by completing paperwork and taking DNA samples and fingerprints.²⁸ In 2004, Gloucestershire police awarded a contract which they claimed would free up 17 police officers for operational duties.²⁹ In a subsequent report, HMIC commented:

*The custody staff are well trained... They provide a good service to arresting officers and have taken on many administrative functions formerly undertaken by police officers.*³⁰

South Wales Police was able to release 54 police officers for frontline duties through contracting custody services at 11 suites, and the custody process was sped up for arresting officers. In addition the relationship with the service provider was found to be “good at both senior and operational level which ensures good team work within custody suites”.³¹

Staffordshire custody outsourcing pilot

In 2004, Staffordshire received Home Office funding to pilot the use of civilian detention officers in its Trent Valley division. The pilot replaced 10 police constables with a pool of 26 civilian detention officers working on a rota with 10 custody sergeants. The constables were redeployed to front-line duties to increase visible patrol time, offences brought to justice and community reassurance. Under the arrangement, the contractor was obliged to cover any staff shortfalls and to pay the costs of any officer abstractions where shortfalls could not be met.

The pilot achieved an overall saving of £177,000 for 2004-5, with annual savings of £127,000 projected for the next three years. It was found to be more cost effective than directly employing police staff and was rolled out force wide. Police surgeons also noted that the dedicated detention officers demonstrated higher standards of prisoner care and professionalism, which resulted in the number of complaints falling by half.

The manager of the pilot project reported that the use of on-site training was important for making contract staff feel part of the police family. They aimed to match detention officers to custody sergeants to build team rapport. The detention officers proved willing to take on additional roles as required and there was a general impression that they felt more positive about their role than police constables, as they felt they were doing the job they were employed to do. They were also more willing to adapt to new systems and techniques, where older, long-serving police officers had raised objections to change.³²

The Role of the Custody Sergeant

Legislative developments have also permitted the use of civilian staff to perform the duties of a custody sergeant, although civilians in this role must be employed directly by the police, and not by a contractor.³³ There was resistance to the use of civilian custody sergeants from the Police Federation and in Parliament. Part of the custody officer’s duties is to decide whether there are legal grounds to detain someone after arrest. Policing experience is deemed a crucial element of the ability to make this decision and to stand up to other officers, sometimes of a higher rank, who may hold different views. Opponents argued that civilians would be more prone to make poor decisions and thus

trigger claims for compensation or jeopardise prosecutions.

Despite some interest shown by Thames Valley Police in piloting this new civilian role, no Chief Constable has yet opted to use this power. However, some private companies offer civilian detention supervisor services to their clients. These supervisors perform all the functions of a custody sergeant apart from authorising detention, carrying out risk assessments and reading a detainee their rights. As a result, the custody sergeant is freed from administrative tasks and can concentrate on his or her decision-making and overall management responsibilities.

3.2 Specialist Services

Forces frequently employ non-sworn staff to deliver more specialised services, such as healthcare and interpretation, which require a particular expertise that is not native to the police organisation. It is not new for the police to employ such specialists. However, some forces are experimenting with new ways of purchasing these services to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of provision. In this way, more resources can be released to support front line policing and ultimately benefit public safety.

Specialist agencies are also being used to supply services such as recruitment, criminal record checks and evidence storage. This enables police to access these services as and when required, without the need for forces to directly employ the staff or maintain the facilities necessary to support them.

Interpreting Services

The costs of police interpreter and translation services have risen dramatically, partly because of an increase in migrant populations, but also because of shortages of professional interpreters in the criminal justice system. Research in 2006 revealed that West Midlands police translation costs had trebled over five years to £2 million per year.³⁴

Interpreters can be employed directly or hired via specialist agencies. PFI projects for centralised custody suites in Sussex and Cheshire incorporated interpreter services. Under these deals, police contracted for the service at a fixed price, which meant that where demand escalated due to some external event (such as the admission of eastern European countries into the European Union), the contractor was obliged to bear the cost. This was one of the factors that placed significant stress on the PFI contract in Cheshire, although, unlike forces throughout the rest of the country, Cheshire Police were protected against this sudden increase in cost.

Under a scheme managed by Plymouth Council, called 'Translate Plymouth', established in November 2004, local public sector organisations, including the police, are put in contact with freelance and council interpreters as and when required. The scheme functions as a clearinghouse, principally ensuring that the service providers on the books possess appropriate qualifications.

In some cases, interpreting services can be delivered over the phone, handling emergency and non-emergency calls, for example. Interpreting and translation company Language Line has contracts of this kind with 36 police forces.

Devon and Cornwall Police

In 2005, Devon and Cornwall Police launched a comprehensive interpretation service, through its contract with Language Line, covering all aspects of contact with the public in custody centres, call centres, patrolling and police station enquiries. 999 callers who require an interpreter are forwarded to the Language Line call centre within 90 seconds, where they can choose from 150 languages. Front line officers and staff can also access Language Line via a general enquiries number using speakerphone if in a police station, or their radios or mobile phones if on patrol, so that they do not have to return to the station.

The contract was negotiated under the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) tendering process, which provides standard service delivery agreements and preferential rates. Calls cost £1.50 per minute and the force predicted that it would save money in the long term. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary is considering recognising this model as best practice.³⁵

Medical Services

Traditionally, forces have employed General Practitioners to work part time as police surgeons (also known as forensic medical examiners), who were paid through itemised service fees. This left the police budget open-ended since fees were paid out based on demand. GPs also have duties to their local patients which sometimes have conflicted with police priorities. In 1998 the Audit Commission suggested that forces should instead consider purchasing services under large volume contracts from NHS trusts, universities or consortia set up by doctors.³⁶

The following year, Wiltshire Police contracted with a company expressly formed by existing local forensic medical examiners to bid for that service. West Midlands and West Yorkshire Police agreed a similar contract with a company set up by the trading arm of the Association of Police Surgeons. Driven by concerns about 'piecemeal privatisation' and the possible dilution of forensic medical skills through the involvement of non-specialists, the Association set up APS (Cellmed) Services Limited with five directors, all practising police surgeons, and a cooperative of 130 GPs.

Some forces have used a variety of health care professionals to provide more consistent cover. Forensic nurses can be employed to assess fitness to detain, attend to minor injuries, take blood samples and carry out impairment tests under the Road Traffic Act. This contributes to value-for-money by supporting the custody officer who otherwise would have to make the decision about fitness to detain without any specialist medical training. In 2005, Lothian and Borders police awarded a five-year contract to NHS

Lothian to provide police surgeons during weekdays and nurses during week nights and weekends. The cost of the nurses was only a quarter of the overall annual fee.

Kent Police were awarded 'Beacon' funding by the Home Office in 2000 to test direct employment of custody nurses. An assessment of this scheme found that it had been "successful in stimulating new approaches to healthcare in custody suites" and that it "led to improved access to healthcare for detained people".³⁷

In some areas the introduction of a fixed cost model has led to concern amongst police surgeons that the drive to cut expenditure may lead to the recruitment of unsuitable staff. In May 2006, it was reported that some companies were employing foreign doctors who may not have appropriate experience, poor language skills and who might have left the country by the time the trial took place.³⁸

On the other hand, with improvements in contractual remuneration from 2005, some GPs were reluctant to serve as police surgeons under the existing arrangements, and police forces faced a significant increase in cost. Fixed price contracts, such as that negotiated by Cheshire Police under its PFI arrangement, transferred the risk of any such increases, but placed additional strain on the partnership.

The medical services market has also widened to include occupational health for officers and staff. North Yorkshire Police in England and Grampian Police in Scotland are tendering for this service.

Police surgeons in the East of England

Essex Medical and Forensic Services Ltd. was established by a former police surgeon to bid for a contract in East Anglia with a consortium of police forces in four counties. Bedfordshire, Essex and Suffolk signed in 2005, while Cambridgeshire joined the agreement in 2006. Gloucestershire and Wiltshire subsequently joined the consortium in 2006, and Norfolk the following year.

The company employs experienced police surgeons, as well as off-duty nurses and paramedics who are all local to the areas covered by the contracts. Staff work 12-hour shifts and are dispatched to their cases via a contact centre which receives police calls. Police surgeons can also be contacted directly via the contact centre to give advice to police or other healthcare professionals attending a police location.

Recruitment

More than 20,000 police officers have reached retirement age over the last five years. While this has created challenges for police forces in replacing and training new officers, it has also created an untapped resource that could be used to supplement policing effort in a fast, flexible and cost-effective way, freeing-up serving officers for core duties.

One company, Dream Policing, manages the National Retired Officers Database (NROD) and a number of other companies also act as police recruitment specialists, providing experienced officers and staff as and when required.

As part of a workforce modernisation scheme in 2004, the major crime investigation team in Surrey used a specialist company to recruit and train suitable personnel to perform house-to-house enquiries for a murder case, as well as undertaking CCTV analysis. The time-intensive nature of this work meant that such a solution was more cost-effective, since highly-paid police officers did not have to be used for routine tasks.

Criminal Record Checks

When the Home Office established the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in August 2000, a £400m ten-year public private partnership was set up between the Passport and Records Agency and Capita plc for delivery of the IT system, application processing (but not assessment) and a call centre.³⁹

Prior to the establishment of the CRB, employers and voluntary groups recruiting staff into positions involving contact with children and vulnerable adults could only access potential employees' records by applying directly to individual police forces and government departments. If job applicants had lived in several areas, forces would hold different and separate records, and relevant information could easily be missed.⁴⁰

Early problems with the contract meant service commencement slipped six months to March 2002, and by October 2002 the CRB had accumulated a backlog of 300,000 cases. However, by 2003 many of the initial issues had been resolved, the CRB began hitting its performance targets and the original contract was revised to reflect changed circumstances and lessons learnt.⁴¹ A subsequent audit found that the CRB presented a much more comprehensive and consistent checking system than previously existed.⁴²

The Scottish Criminal Records Office (part of the Scottish Police Services Authority since April 2007) signed a similar 12 year contract worth £120m in 2002, partnering with BT. The system, known as Disclosure Scotland, was designed and developed under the agreement which, like the CRB, also included support services for processing disclosure applications and maintenance of the IT infrastructure.

Evidence Storage

A number of forces have contracted for the management of evidence storage, usually as part of wider PFI and facilities management contracts. Evidence storage can cover anything from motor vehicles to SMS text messages. Cleveland Police contract with Reliance to provide evidence storage under the Action Stations PFI Project. The project involved building a 500m² centralised storage facility to deal with all lost, found and crime property handling, exhibit, video and audiotape storage. As part of its partnership with the Serious Organised Crimes Agency (formerly the National Crime Squad), Serco provides secure storage, collection and distribution of evidential material. Equion provides similar services for four police stations it developed under PFI in South London.

Digital evidence has also become increasingly important, especially as a format in which to share information quickly between forces and other public organisations. In 2004 the Bichard Inquiry recommended that this be made a national priority to avoid police records slipping through the net and exposing vulnerable people to high-risk individuals. In 2005 and 2006 seven police authorities outsourced scanning services to a company whose employees are all police vetted. The arrangement covered the cataloguing, digitising and indexing of information, and placing it in a format that could be shared with the Criminal Records Bureau and other forces via the national police computer network. In 2007 Dorset Police asked the same company to scan and index several years' worth of sensitive child protection files amounting to around 600,000 images.

Digital storage has also helped speed up identity parades. In 2001, the Home Office found that on average it took four-and-a-half hours to arrange ID parades.⁴³ A great deal of time could be wasted in looking for people to complete line-ups as well as arranging for all parties to be present at the same time. New technology and new processes have since helped reduce the costs of organising parades. The Video Identification Parade Electronic Recording system (VIPER) was set up as part of the Street Crime Initiative launched in April 2002. Installation, implementation and maintenance of the new video identification system are managed by Cable and Wireless for the Home Office. The contract also provides information storage support for a National VIPER Bureau which edits Video ID Parades to a standard format for participating forces.

3.3 Physical Facilities

Policing agencies have employed public private partnerships (PPPs) to secure state-of-the-art police stations and office facilities that are more efficient and more functional. At the same time, they have freed themselves from the responsibility of day-to-day management by negotiating contracts for the provision of support services. This allows police to transfer the risks associated with service delivery as well as the construction, whilst at the same time providing an incentive for the contractors to comply with completion and performance targets.

Police Stations and Office Buildings

The first police accommodation scheme undertaken by way of PPP was Ilkeston Police Station in Derbyshire, launched in early 1996, becoming fully operational in October 1998. It was a relatively small project, with a total net present value, including services, of £5.3m. The new facility replaced a 92-year old station and provided accommodation for more than 100 officers. The range of services was relatively narrow, covering building and grounds maintenance, cleaning and catering, and energy and waste management.

A number of other single police stations followed, but quickly the scale and complexity of these projects grew. Derbyshire Police procured new divisional headquarters under PPP (completed in December 2000) and by 2002 a project for divisional headquarters and four police stations was operational in Dorset.⁴⁴

Gloucestershire Constabulary HQ

New headquarters for Gloucestershire Constabulary, with a capital value of £20m, located in a business park at Quedgeley on the outskirts of Gloucester, were opened in January 2006 on time and under budget following procurement under the Private Finance Initiative. As well as office facilities, they included scientific laboratories, incident rooms and an emergency centre. They replaced a small 1960s building located in Cheltenham town centre that used to serve as police headquarters.

In addition to being more serviceable, the new facilities are also more eco-friendly. Geo-thermal heating allows for significant savings on energy costs, a grey-water harvesting facility is used to recycle water and intelligent lighting has been used throughout the building.

Because the new headquarters were procured under a PFI arrangement, day-to-day management of the facilities was contracted out to a service company, Reliance Security, which employed a former police inspector to manage the activities. Services managed by the contractor included reception and portering, manned and electronic security (including CCTV monitoring), cleaning and waste management, landscaping and building maintenance, catering and event management. A separate contract was let by the police to ntl:Telewest Business to design and deliver a high capacity broadband telephony and data network and provide ongoing professional and management support for the network.

Greater Manchester Police revitalised their ageing estate with a large-scale contract that included five sub-divisional headquarters, six local deployment stations (some with custody suites), and a new headquarters for the traffic section. With a net present value of almost £100 million, the last of these facilities was opened in 2006. The services managed as part of the operation of the new buildings were: helpdesk, cleaning, waste management, grounds maintenance, estates, utilities management and furniture and equipment services

The Cleveland Action Stations Project was signed in March 2005 and included administrative and divisional headquarters and several local police offices, a central custody suite, an identification suite, a centralised property storage facility, as well as accommodation for other criminal justice agencies, such as the Crown Prosecution Service and Youth Offending Teams. The Chief Constable, Sean Price, commented:

The developments will replace ageing and unsuitable accommodation to provide better conditions for our officers and staff, and in turn enable them to give a better service to the public. New town offices have given the public better access to policing in Redcar and South Bank. It is a development of which Cleveland can be proud and helps drive forward policing services to meet the community's demands in the 21st century.⁴⁵

Centralised Custody Suites

For some police authorities, custody suites have formed an integral part of the new facilities provided under PFI. By updating ageing facilities, forces can ensure that detainees are kept in decent and secure surroundings, reducing the risk of deaths in police custody and other health and safety concerns. Some forces have also taken the opportunity to rationalise the management of their custody facilities and re-engineer business processes by building large centralised facilities and contracting out custody services, including the handling of detainees by civilian detention officers. Services procured under these contracts include:

- Reception duties and 24-hour help desks
- Building and grounds maintenance
- Cleaning, laundry and waste management
- Care of and catering for detainees
- Security systems
- Interpreter services
- Forensic medical services
- Taking of fingerprints, photographs and DNA samples
- Voluntary drug-testing
- Management of identity parades

Sussex Police were the first to procure centralised custody suites under a PFI contract in 2001. Cheshire followed with a contract signed in 2004 that centralised its custody facilities at three sites. This arrangement was based on the Sussex model, with the addition of an escort service to transport detainees from the point of arrest to the custody suites. Early indications were good, as independent research commissioned by the police authority showed a reduction in queuing times in the custody suites and continued improvement in performance, whilst prisoner numbers had continued to rise. Ninety-two percent of prisoners were booked in within 30 minutes, exceeding the contracted target of 85%.⁴⁶

However, Cheshire Police imposed much higher financial penalties than Sussex, and strenuous outcome-based targets for the escort service proved to be too ambitious, making it difficult for the contractor to meet its obligations. As noted elsewhere in this report, interpreter and medical services had also been promised at a fixed cost, and when market prices rose significantly due to shifts in supply and demand, the contractor was obliged to invest more of its own resources. While the contract was successful in transferring risk, it became increasingly unsustainable, and in standing by the strict terms of the agreement, Cheshire Police was left with no real alternative except to move to termination.⁴⁷

Sussex Police centralised custody suites

In 2001, Sussex Police agreed a £17m PFI deal to consolidate and update its ageing custody facilities into six Investigation and Detention Handling Centres. Previously the custody suites were based at 24 locations and managed locally. Reliance led the consortium that won the bid to design, build and finance the building of three new facilities, refurbish one and operate all six over 30 years.

The first centre opened in 2002 with the final one coming online in 2005. The involvement of the contractor at an early stage of the design allowed custody procedures to be streamlined and integrated with the investigation process.

Processing times were reduced and the handling centres were able to cope with an increase in annual throughput of 22%, leading to an increase in the operational visibility of operational police officers. It has also been reported that staff morale and inter-agency cooperation improved.⁴⁸

Local police reported that the contract made it easier for them to comply with the new accountability requirements relating to deaths in custody. Reliance was also responsible for the delivery of medical and interpreter services which were included within the unitary charge paid to the consortium. Medical costs have been contained through the use of appropriately qualified nurses for the majority of examinations.

Interest in shared custody suites has grown amongst other forces such as Humberside, North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. Suffolk and Norfolk Police joined together to contract for the design, build, financing and operation of six central custody sites, that would accommodate specialist teams and support staff to carry out investigations and prepare cases. Some of the sites were to be located at the boundaries between police areas, leading to significant cost savings and an increase in operational efficiencies. This scheme arose out of the need for both forces to comply with new Home Office standards in custody suites, raise efficiency levels and allow police officers to spend more time on front-line duties. Three bidders were invited to submit detailed proposals for the project, which is expected to go live in May 2010. The contract is to run for 25 years and incorporates provision of facilities management, catering for staff and prisoners, medical and interpreter services.

Specialised Facilities

The first police training centre to be built under a PFI arrangement brought together the Cleveland and Durham police forces in a project which centralised their firearms training facilities on a site in Stockton-on-Tees. The need for such a centre arose in 2000 after police were obliged to stop using the Catterick army base. The new facility provided a 100m indoor firing range with computer image targets and a smaller range with live firearms scenarios. The contractor was responsible for facilities management and building maintenance. Strathclyde Police made similar arrangements to replace ageing infrastructure with a new £20m training centre, which became operational in 2000.

A PFI contract in Northumbria (1998) was used to provide stables, transport and accommodation facilities for mounted police over a 15-year period. Three years later the Metropolitan Police also included mounted facilities as part of their requirements for the specialist training centre at Gravesend.

In 1997, Wiltshire Police signed a PFI contract with Police Aviation Services (PAS) Ltd to provide a base and helicopter support including pilots and maintenance services. The main role of the Air Support Unit is to supply a rapid response to any major incident and to transport police officers, paramedics and pathologists to the scene. As of September 2005, a mobile flight simulator was also introduced by PAS at no extra cost, to help train police pilots, making Wiltshire the first force in Europe to trial this service. This has helped to reduce the associated costs of arranging real flying time for pilots whilst improving staff training.

Metropolitan Police Firearms Training Centre

The Metropolitan Police Authority awarded a £50m contract to Equion in April 2001, to design, build, finance and operate a specialist training facility. This brought together on one site elements of training facilities that were previously spread over many locations. The partners worked closely through workshops that brought the client together with the designers and the contractors to make sure the brief was met. In 2005 it was awarded the Public Private Finance Award for Best Operational Local Government PFI Project with the judges describing it as a “world class project”.

The facility has indoor and outdoor firing ranges, which includes preparation, maintenance, specialist cleaning and targetry services; assault and search houses; a public order training facility complete with crossroads, cul-de-sacs and houses; classrooms, IT infrastructure and leisure facilities; accommodation for 300 trainees and stables for up to 10 horses.

Standard facilities management services are included such as catering, cleaning, hospitality, portering, waste management, security, building maintenance and utilities management. In addition to these, the contractor also delivers equipment for exercises including cars, train carriages, aircraft fuselage and petrol bombs. Furthermore, a team must be on hand to repair doors, windows and other fittings that are broken in the course of exercises so that downtime is minimised. The contract is monitored through Key Performance Indicators and financial penalties can be incurred if accommodation is not available or if service standards are not maintained.

Integrated Justice Centres

In order to promote joined-up working throughout criminal justice partner agencies, some authorities have built facilities co-locating police, probation and the courts. So far these have been publicly-built, but facilities management, custody services and IT infrastructure have been outsourced so that police and court custody suites can be

shared and to ensure that support services are uniform throughout the complex despite being part of separate agencies.

Warwickshire Police took the lead in developing this model (see case study below), with a new facility at Nuneaton that opened in March 2005. Following its success, another integrated justice centre was planned for South Warwickshire in Leamington Spa, due to be completed in 2009.

In Scotland, West Lothian Council has brought together courts, social services and police in a new Civic Centre in Livingston, due to open in early 2009. It is also anticipated that the fire service and the local health and care partnerships will come on board. Although the building will be procured with public money and facilities management will be kept in-house, the police have investigated a number of options for managing the police and court custody block. It was estimated that around £30,000 a year would be saved from the use of a single multi-purpose custody facility managed by custody officers provided by private contractors, releasing more police officers to front line duties, and cutting down on prisoner transfers.⁴⁹

North Warwickshire Justice Centre

The first building in England and Wales to house police, prosecutors, magistrates' and family courts, victim and witness support, a Youth Offending Team and probation services in one place was a £13m centre opened in Nuneaton in March 2005. Ineffective trials in the magistrates' court were well below the national average and this was attributed to closer collaboration between the different justice agencies. The project received the OGC/Cabinet Office Delivery Team Award for 2005.

Traditional public procurement was used to build the centre, and Reliance was responsible for management of the custody suite and the provision of detention officers. Serco Integrated Services delivered facilities management following the award of a contract in 2004. The range of services included building fabric and mechanical and electrical maintenance, asset and facilities management, and support services, including security and grounds maintenance. Kingston Communications were also contracted by the authorities to provide an advanced data transfer and telephony network with state of the art control room facilities that would later be rolled out to the rest of the force.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary highlighted the centre as an example of good practice and reported that the project had accrued one-off cost savings of £3.6m with on-going savings of £0.5m a year. The savings were due to a variety of factors including fewer complaints in custody, quicker transfer of prisoners from police to courts, increased arrests, increased confidence of victims and witnesses, reduced officer time at court and better knowledge transfer between agencies.⁵⁰

3.4 Criminal Investigation

Some non-core investigative work has also been civilianised, freeing up detectives and uniformed officers for the higher-level duties that only they can perform. On the one hand the specialisation of forensic analysis requires a certain amount of scientific training. On the other hand a large number of forces have employed dedicated civilian staff to assist in investigations by pursuing routine enquiries, interviews and paperwork, under the supervision of a detective. This is similar to civilian detention officers being managed by a custody sergeant.

With the exception of forensic science, there has been little market testing of services in this area apart from the use of recruitment agencies to hire experienced investigators. There is also one example of an entrepreneurial anti-social behaviour co-ordinator who has commercialised her investigative skills and marketed her services to police forces and local authorities.

Civilian Investigators

Wiltshire was the first force in England and Wales to introduce civilian investigators in 2001, used in interviewing, taking fingerprints, processing description forms and preparing files for prosecution. The original intention was to apply them to bulk offences such as criminal damage and theft, with the possibility of extending their use over time to more sensitive cases involving rape and murder.

Similar arrangements have quickly spread across the country and, since the Police Reform Act 2002, it has been possible to give designated civilian investigators powers of search and seizure. These men and women are mostly recruited from the ranks of former police officers, and police staff and traffic wardens. They can be employed directly on permanent contracts or temporarily via a specialist recruitment company.

Central Scotland police force began piloting civilian investigators in 2008 to investigate vandalism and fire-raising crimes around the Falkirk area. As part of their pre-implementation research they conducted focus groups with local citizens, who commented that their main concern is to receive a decent service regardless of who delivered it. The project leader, Superintendent Gavin Buist, commented:

Although it seems quite radical to appoint civilian investigators, the fact is that none of us joined as experienced investigators, but with experience and guidance we became good at it. I suspect the same thing will happen with assistant investigators but that the process will be faster because they are so focused on one area.⁵¹

Surrey Police 'mixed-teams' pilot

A pilot project run in Surrey improved productivity by about one-third by creating mixed teams of officers and staff to provide greater force visibility on the streets and speeding up investigations.

The Divisional Crime Investigation Team was arranged into five groups, each led by a detective constable, assisted by a police constable with two or three dedicated police staff investigating officers and an administrator/case allocator. The investigating officers were used to interview victims and witnesses as well as seizing evidence.

Independent evaluation of the project's first year showed that crimes were resolved more quickly, and the team was investigating on average 30% more crimes per person. Detection rates had also increased by 28%. Another advantage was that the investigation did not depend on the police officer being present to progress the case. In the past, many investigations lay stagnant due to sick leave, but under this team approach, duties could be reallocated more easily. In addition, victims of crime had ready access to the investigator for updates or to supply more information.⁵²

When it outsourced and centralised its custody process in 2005, Cheshire police re-engineered case preparation procedures using mixed teams of officers and police staff in its case management unit. Work was split between custody investigation, case building and file management teams. Custody investigation officers secured the evidence, case building teams relieved uniformed officers of an active role in taking statements and checking files, while file management teams dealt with administrative tasks.

To further modernise its approach, Cheshire invited a specialist policing consultancy to undertake an end-to-end assessment of its volume crime investigation procedures, with an in-depth analysis of activities and costs. Having pinpointed the areas that used the most resources, recommendations were made on how to increase efficiency by restructuring business processes rather than simply replacing officers with civilians.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Some police forces and local authorities have worked in an innovative partnership with a specialist company to help secure Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Anti-Social Behaviour Operations was established by Birmingham-based anti-social behaviour co-ordinator Claire Castle who later became a member of the government's Respect Task Force. In 2001, the firm was contracted by Stafford Borough Council to gather evidence and prepare court proceedings for 33 ASBO cases. The firm works closely

with witnesses and operates a 24-hour helpline as well as organising witness support meetings. Staffordshire and Gloucestershire Police have used the firm to secure ASBOs against released prisoners to reduce time spent in gathering evidence.⁵³

Forensic Science

Forensic Laboratories

The Forensic Science Service (FSS) was made an executive agency of the Home Office in 1991. Five years later it merged with the Metropolitan Police Forensic Science Laboratory to offer the first national forensic service. In 2005 it was incorporated as a private company with the Home Secretary as the controlling shareholder. The case for making it into a full public-private partnership has been under active consideration.

The FSS supplies forensic services primarily to the police forces of England and Wales, the Ministry of Defence Police, the British Transport Police and the Crown Prosecution Service, as well as HM Coroners and HM Revenue and Customs. It supports specific police investigations as well as providing services to other public and private sector clients. It also carries out research to improve and develop new forensic techniques and processes, and in 1995 established the world's first national criminal intelligence DNA database.

Scene of Crime Officers (either police or civilian) collect evidence for analysis by the FSS and work closely with them. FSS scientists can also be called to attend crime scenes and provide expert consultancy on both complex crimes, such as murder, and volume crimes, such as burglary.

The FSS has formed partnerships with police forces to target specific offences. Following a collaboration to reduce property crime, domestic burglaries dropped by 30% in the West Midlands and vehicle crime dropped by 15% in South Yorkshire. Since 1991 the FSS has expanded from 350 staff to almost 3000. In 2004-5 it handled almost 130,000 cases and over 400,000 DNA samples with a turnover of £150m.

Competition in forensic science services has intensified in the last 20 years. Currently, the amount spent by policing agencies on external forensic analysis services (£169m) is the highest single area of expenditure after salaries.⁵⁴ Fifty percent of the forensic science market is estimated to be provided by in-house police resources; the FSS then accounts for 35%, with 15% purchased from private laboratories.⁵⁵

In 2003, British Transport Police let a national contract to a private laboratory for the analysis of criminal justice and scene-of-crime DNA samples, drugs, questioned documents and mobile phones. City of London Police tendered a five-year contract to a private supplier in 2006 for analysis of DNA mouth swab samples taken from arrested suspects.

The Metropolitan Police in 2004 turned to LGC Forensics, a former public agency known as the Laboratory of the Government Chemist which was privatised in 1996, to re-analyse evidence from a high profile case four years earlier. The FSS had originally missed vital evidence from the case. This was uncovered by LGC and led to convictions in 2006. Although there was a Home Office inquiry into the forensic investigation, no systematic failure was found in FSS procedures.⁵⁶

The appointment of a full-time forensic science regulator in March 2008 was designed to help stimulate further competition and improve standards. Before it was commercialised, the FSS was also responsible for overseeing the maintenance of quality standards. Furthermore, the National Policing Improvement Agency is in the process of building the National Forensic Procurement Strategy, which will create a national framework agreement for procuring forensic services. This will allow all forces to save time and money by running local competitions for the required services without first having to advertise in the Official Journal of the European Union.

Scene of Crime Analysis

This specialist post has been civilianised for over 30 years and virtually all Scene of Crime Officers are now non-police personnel. Their main duty is to secure all available physical evidence at the crime scene as well as taking photographs. In 2007, the Metropolitan Police rolled out the Burglary Sole Response Scheme throughout London, whereby Scene of Crime Officers were dispatched after all reports to the emergency number, unless the burglary was in the course of being committed or there was a chance the burglar was still on the premises. As a result, evidence could be secured as quickly as possible without diverting officers from more pressing duties. In the past, Scene of Crime Officers would typically have attended the crime scene some time after the police.

Further civilian roles have been created to support these officers, including fingerprints officers, who are experts in matching prints and giving evidence in court, and Forensic Vehicle Examiners, who secure evidence when a car or its contents are stolen.

Crime Analysts

Most police forces now employ crime analysts to support investigations, map trends and assist in the production of crime statistics.⁵⁷ Police officer training is not a pre-requisite but the scope for civilianisation can be limited by problems of recruitment and retention of high calibre civilians.

Academic involvement in the development of crime analysis has led to an innovative partnership between the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science, based at University College London and West Midlands Police, who together launched the UK's first Crime

Science Laboratory in 2002. The laboratory works with police to support the reduction of crime in the area.

Crime analysis has not been given a particularly high profile in UK police reform. In the United States where civilian analysts are given a higher profile, Professor Herman Goldstein of Wisconsin-Madison University has commented:

One analyst, properly trained and utilised has the potential to increase many times the effectiveness of perhaps hundreds of police officers. Understood in this way, an investment in analysts can be a smart way to increase the return on the substantial investment that communities make in sworn personnel.⁵⁸

3.5 Crime Prevention

The National Policing Plan (2005-08) prioritised the need for public reassurance through high visibility policing of communities. This was to be achieved by pulling together local resources, expanding Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Local Criminal Justice Boards, and by involving members of the community more. A Home Office initiative was launched to recruit Neighbourhood Specialist Officers, aided by Community Support Officers dedicated to patrolling certain neighbourhoods, who would not be diverted in times of emergency as well as recruitment drives to increase numbers of Special Constables (volunteer police officers).

An important innovation in public reassurance policing has been to enable Chief Constables to set up community safety accreditation schemes under sections 40 and 41 of the Police Reform Act 2002. These schemes allow individuals or employees of accredited organisations to exercise certain police powers directed against low-level crime and anti-social behaviour, such as issuing penalty notices, dispersing groups and confiscating drugs and alcohol, in cooperation with the local police. The aim is to bring together groups such as neighbourhood wardens and private security firms within the wider police family to help assist in patrolling the community and to go beyond merely acting as the “eyes and ears” of the police.

Awarding accreditation has been made easier with tighter regulation for all forms of outsourced security work via a mandatory licensing regime under the Private Security Industry Act 2001. A number of schemes have already been introduced which make use of both private security to patrol public spaces and mixed police-civilian initiatives based on joint patrols and common information networks.⁵⁹

Private Patrolling Schemes

In 2001, the Holborn Street Rangers were established by the Holborn Partnership, a not-for-profit company which represents the 450 occupiers and businesses of the Holborn commercial district in central London. The partnership now employs six rangers to provide a highly visible presence by patrolling the streets every day, and to deter crime and anti-social behaviour as well as providing information to visitors.

As part of its franchise agreement for the Docklands Light Railway, Serco Docklands employs 17 Travel Safe Officers to patrol trains and stations to enforce byelaws and tackle low-level crime. They have powers to eject people from stations and impose penalty fares. Recruitment, training, vetting and licensing is sub-contracted to a specialist security company.

In 2007, Salford Council asked NCP parking attendants to take on additional community patrol duties in addition to issuing parking fines. They have powers to issue penalties of up to £80 for littering, fly-posting and dog-fouling on pavements.⁶⁰

Community Rangers in York

A private security firm, Mayfair Guarding, was contracted by York Council to patrol 19 of the city's 22 wards. It started patrolling in the Clifton area in 2000, spreading its coverage over the succeeding years, with the council spending more than £140,000 on procuring the services.

In Foxwood Ward, a patrol vehicle carrying on-board surveillance equipment patrolled nuisance hotspots identified by locals, council officers, police and other rangers five nights a week via two 30-minute patrols in the evening at an annual cost of £3,500. Rangers could also be called directly by residents for low-level incidents of disorder. They wrote up monthly activity reports and were monitored by Safer York Partnerships which oversees the city-wide operation.⁶¹

Mixed Patrols

Some police forces set up mixed policing units or created arrangements with local private security firms to share information and resources. This has proved especially effective in central urban areas and commercial districts.

In Bradford, private security firms in the shopping centres and markets were used to patrol the city centre along with 418 police officers (343 constables and 51 sergeants), 54 special constables, 30 police community support officers with traffic warden and detention powers, 15 police traffic wardens, 12 unaccredited street wardens with mobile phones and stab vests (but no police radio access), and eight parking attendants employed by the council.

West Yorkshire Police launched a Plural Policing Unit in March 2004 to encourage greater co-operation within the 'extended police family'. The unit is headed by a Chief Inspector and has an Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator as well being responsible for the recruitment of police community support officers. Crime statistics reveal that overall crime across West Yorkshire declined by 10% in the first year of deployment of community support officers. Vehicle related crime went down by 19% and personal robbery by 46%.⁶²

Trafford Park Industrial Estate, Greater Manchester

In 2001 the Home Office provided almost half a million pounds to fund the Trafford Park Security Initiative, to help reduce crime and regenerate the industrial estate, which is one of the largest in Europe. The initiative arose out of a partnership between Greater Manchester Police, Trafford Borough Council, Trafford Park Business Watch and Noble Security, a private company. Funds were used to employ a project manager, a crime analyst, two business wardens and police operations within the estate.

A voluntary registration and training scheme called Guardsafe was set up, similar to the licensing regime introduced under the Private Security Industry Act 2001, to help co-ordinate the 2,500 guards employed by around 100 security firms. It won the Outstanding Training Partnership award in 2002 at the Security Industry Training Organisation National Training Awards. A Business Watch scheme was used to coordinate information about crime and crime prevention and another initiative, Patrol Net, to provide on-site private security including rapid response to crimes.

It was reported that crime fell by 65% on the estate,⁶³ and once the scheme was terminated, there was a resultant rise in recorded criminal activity.⁶⁴

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⁴⁴ Major police station projects have also been constructed in Swindon, South East London, Northfleet (Kent) and Cleveland. Other projects have included headquarters for police, in Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, Kent and North Wales, and new facilities for the British Transport Police.

⁴⁵ Cleveland Police Authority and Chief Constable, 'Annual Report 2004-05', p.16, located at: <http://www.clevelandpa.org.uk/newadmin/publications/2004-2005%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

⁴⁶ Cheshire Police Authority Meeting 12/12/06, pp.6-7, located at: http://www.cheshire.police.uk/uploads/authority_agenda_12.12.06.pdf

⁴⁷ Richard Muirhead, Head of Business Management, Cheshire Police, 'Concluding the Partnership', Presentation to the Partnerships UK, Operational Taskforce Conference, London, 10 April 2008.

⁴⁸ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 'Baseline Assessment: Sussex Police', October 2006, p.45, located at: <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/inspections/baseline-assessments-ho-0607/sussex-baseline06.pdf?view=Binary>

⁴⁹ 'Civic Centre Joint Working, Livingston: Stage 1 Application - Expression of Interest', Efficient Government Fund, July 2005 located at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/94096/0022623.pdf>

⁵⁰ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, 'Baseline Assessment: Warwickshire Police', October 2006, p.45; located at: <http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/inspections/baseline-assessments-ho-0607/warwickshirebaseline06.pdf?view=Binary>

⁵¹ Lucy Adams, 'Civilian Investigators "will allow officers to get back to basics"', *The Herald*, 22 March 2008.

⁵² Accenture, *Police Workforce Modernisation*, op.cit., pp.109-116.

⁵³ Stephanie Condon, 'Police use private firm to control released prisoners with Asbos', *The Daily Telegraph*, 18 August 2006

⁵⁴ 'National Forensic Procurement Project', *National Policing Improvement Agency website*; located at: <http://www.npia.police.uk/en/9398.htm>

⁵⁵ Adrian Cory, 'Establishing the Forensic Science Regulator – Project Initiation Document (Version No: 1.2)', Forensic Science Regulation Unit, 11 July 2007; located at: <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-publications/publication/operational-policing/fsr-project-initiation-document?view=Binary>

⁵⁶ Alan Rawley QC and Professor Brian Caddy, 'Damilola Taylor: An Independent Review of Forensic Examination of Evidence by the Forensic Science Service', Home Office, April 2007; located at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/damilola-taylor-review-2007?view=Binary>

⁵⁷ About half of the 4,200 staff employed by the Serious Organised Crime Agency are intelligence analysts. The National Policing Improvement Agency provides a centralised facility known as the Serious Crime Analysis Section made up of crime analysts and specialist police staff who analyse rape and serious sexual assaults and provide suggestions on how to proceed to investigating officers as well as expert witnesses in court once a prime suspect has been identified.

⁵⁸ Ronald V. Clarke and John E. Eck, Foreword to *Crime Analysis for Problem Solvers in 60 Small Steps*, US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, v, located at: <http://www.popcenter.org/learning/60Steps/index.cfm?page=Foreword>
Salt Lake City police department reported that civilian analyst, Peggy Call helped clear up 314 burglaries in 2003 by linking them to a serial burglar after studying his patterns and sending out bulletins to surrounding agencies to inform them of his practices. In 2001, following analysis of local crime trends she predicted the day and time a convenience store would be robbed. A surveillance operation was mounted and the robbers were caught in the act of committing the crime. 'SLCPD Crime Analyst Discovers Serial Burglar', 2006; located at: <http://www.ci.sl.cu.us/police/support/analyst.htm>

⁵⁹ Research at Leeds University has revealed some useful case studies. See Adam Crawford, Stuart Lister, Sarah Blackburn and Jonathan Burnett; *Plural Policing: The Mixed Economy of Visible Patrols in England and Wales*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 2005, Appendix A.

⁶⁰ 'Super Wardens go on Patrol', *Manchester Evening News*, 23 May 2007.

⁶¹ Adam Crawford, et al, *Plural Policing*, op. cit.

⁶² Adam Crawford, et al, *Plural Policing*, op. cit.

⁶³ 'Crime cut works up praise for industrial estate', *Manchester Metro News*, 29 September 2006.

⁶⁴ Adam Crawford, et al, *Plural Policing*, op. cit.

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Police officers don't join the service to work as facilities managers. The public expects warranted officers to specialise in law enforcement, not IT support. In their efforts to free up the time of front-line officers, police forces have increasingly turned to civilian specialists to provide back-office services.

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