

Principles for Policing in Austerity

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Introduction

I would like to thank Sir Hugh Orde for this opportunity to address the nation's police chiefs.

It is a privilege for the grandson of Constable John Greenhalgh to address you. My grandfather never rose above the rank of Constable in the Greater Manchester Police but he met my grandmother while he was on secondment to the police in Derbyshire and he went on to serve with distinction in the British Army rising to the rank of acting Lieutenant Colonel whilst policing a part of occupied Germany after the war.

He then went on to build a major tunneling business in the Fifties and Sixties as Britain rebuilt itself after the ravages of war.

I have a lot to thank the police service for as my grandfather achieved all this without any formal education – leaving school at 14 – and so without policing I would probably not be standing here!

This is the first time since becoming Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime that I have been able to address the leadership of the British police service

Sir Hugh asked me to speak to you all about some of the themes we explored in a recent publication my advisor, Blair Gibbs, and I co-authored for the think-tank *Reform*

It looked at the policing mission, demand on the service in London, and how to adapt to the challenges ahead.

I will cover some of those topics today, but I also want to talk to you – our police leaders – about our experience of police reform in London.

I want to explain what the last two years have taught me about the interplay between the police and politicians...

Between the police and the public...

And also some observations on police leadership itself.

I will then set out my five Principles for Policing in Austerity that I urge all chiefs to take onboard.

I will start with the news from London.

Police reform is working in London

With the media focus on a new public inquiry and allegations of historic corruption in the Met, it has been a difficult period for Scotland Yard.

But the real record of policing in London over the last two years has been a quiet success story under the leadership of Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe and his team.

The police are winning against crime in London.

For some years, the crime drop in London lagged the rest of the country. When I was appointed in July 2012 crime was falling, but only by 1 or 2 per cent a year overall, and for some years total victim-based crimes were flat.

This crime record was against a backdrop of record levels of funding for the Metropolitan Police.

And the Met had the lowest victim satisfaction rate in the country.

Confidence scores placed the Met in 22nd place to Surrey.

So in 2012, with the Olympics safely delivered, and despite the unprecedented budget challenge we faced, I was sure that we could do better.

We worked for months and produced an ambitious Police and Crime Plan that set a clear direction.

The Mayor and Commissioner both wanted crime to fall. The argument was by how much. This was settled – over a curry – at 20% over four years.

And we said we wanted the police to prioritise those victim-based crimes that blight neighbourhoods – so the target was to cut seven high-impact crimes by 20% by 2016 – known as the MOPAC 7.

This was part of the Mayor's "20-20-20 Challenge" to the Met - accepted by the Commissioner.

Not just to cut crime, but also to boost the public's confidence in the police by 20% over 4 years.

Because we knew that cutting crime was not enough

And to achieve both of those objectives whilst also cutting costs by 20%.

Cutting the MOPAC 7 crimes by 20% would mean at least a quarter of a million fewer victims each year

Boosting public confidence by 20% would put the Met at the top of the table and show that the bond with the public had been strengthened, after decades of declining public contact with the police.

That was MOPAC's big challenge to the Met and we have stuck to it.

We set no operational targets around arrests, or detections, or stop searches.

It would be short-sighted and wrong to do so.

We were interested in the big picture.

We gave the police a clear challenge with clear priorities and that has helped them to change the way they work – reshaping local policing and giving a better service to victims.

Now we are seeing the benefits

Under Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe's leadership, the Met have successfully introduced a new local policing model

By putting 2,300 more officers into visible, neighbourhood roles, and by moving to a flexible team model, neighbourhood Inspectors are able to put the cops where the crime is because crime patterns are not uniform. Some wards like Soho have 10 times more crime than other wards in the city of Westminster.

Now neighbourhood teams are tasked to prevent and detect local, beat crime – instead of simply providing daytime reassurance.

In the last year the crime drop has accelerated – down 6% in the year to March.

This now means crime overall has fallen more than 17% since Boris was first elected – two thirds of that fall came in the last two years under our present Commissioner (which helpfully coincides with my tenure in office).

In a city of our size that means 120 fewer victims of crime every single day

And crime is now falling at a faster rate than the rest of England and Wales

In fact I predict that the next quarterly ONS statistics for recorded crime will demonstrate that London's performance is propping up the rest of the country – where I note that some forces are now seeing crime rise

Without this progress in London, it might not be possible for Home Office Ministers to laud a national crime reduction this year.

And we monitor whether Londoners feel safer too.

Recorded crime might be dropping, but have the public noticed?

Last month we commissioned an independent survey which found that the number of people worried about crime in London had fallen to 45% – down 5 points in a year

And this turnaround is happening in London despite the budget cuts and despite having fewer officers than we had in the Olympic year of 2012

The Mayor's budget supports maintaining police numbers at around 32,000 and we are now recruiting again, so by next spring we will be back to full strength

But our experience already shows that it is not all about numbers – you can reform policing and cut crime even with fewer resources

A Populus survey for *Reform* in April also revealed that Londoners were more likely to say policing had actually improved since 2010, rather than got worse

In the rest of the country, as many said police performance had improved in their area as said it had got worse – most thought it had stayed the same

But in London a much higher proportion (29%) of people said it had got better – in fact three times as many as those who said it had got worse (10%).

Victim satisfaction is now rising and public confidence in the Met - damaged so badly by the riots of 2011 – is now at its highest ever rating of 69%.

In short, police reform is working in London, and the public have noticed – even if the media has not.

There is clearly more we need to do.

Local confidence in the police is too variable. There are success stories like Waltham Forest and Hackney but much more needs to be done to boost the public's confidence in the police in boroughs like Lewisham, Haringey and Barking & Dagenham.

Gang crime and serious youth violence remain a problem

Our streets are safer but we need to make our homes safer too – with reports of domestic abuse up significantly

But under Sir Bernard's leadership, and with MOPAC's support, the turnaround in London is underway.

I want to commend the hard work of officers at every rank who have made it happen, and the senior officers who have led the change.

I am not going to say more about what we have achieved – the figures speak for themselves.

But I do want to say more about what the last two years have taught me about this role and about policing.

Because in the years ahead, all police chiefs must come to terms with what the financial challenge really means.

And I will explain my five principles for coping with this challenge.

The politicians

Before I was appointed by Boris Johnson I had been the leader of Hammersmith & Fulham Council for six years.

In that time I had a record of cutting taxes, cutting council expenditure and improving local public services.

I am by instinct a tax cutting, cost cutting and debt busting Tory but also one that wants to see high quality local public services delivered at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer.

This is why my administration spent millions on buying extra police officers to patrol our 3 town centres around the clock so that our businesses could thrive and our residents could feel safe.

When I began my current role I arrived six months before the other Police & Crime Commissioners across the rest of the country, so I had a small head start.

My background was as a businessman and I knew about leading large organisations, but I had little knowledge of policing.

But I understood the role and Nick Herbert's vision behind the reform he had taken through Parliament.

I knew I was not there to interfere in operations or second-guess the day-to-day policing decisions of the Commissioner

I have got to see a lot of frontline policing and I always enjoy meeting officers and seeing them work up close, but I do not spend my time immersed in the minutiae of Operation Tumbleweed.

Some senior Met officers find this hard to understand.

But my role is to monitor performance of the Met, set the budget and deliver the Mayor's priorities.

Then my job is simply to challenge and support the Commissioner to deliver for the people of London.

Where I have experience and can add value, like on commissioning or procurement, I have got stuck in alongside Deputy Commissioner Craig Mackey who is ably leading the Met Change programme.

I have directly helped the Met to negotiate tougher contracts with their top suppliers to deliver savings

And after two years I now know a lot more about policing itself and I have recruited a high calibre team of MOPAC officials and advisors

But we all know it is our job at MOPAC to focus on delivering outcomes for Londoners, not interfering in the Met's operations.

You are the professionals and you should have the space to do your job

I believe MOPAC has also demonstrated the importance of the PCC reform to policing itself

There is a proper role for politicians, and in London, we have shown how it can end up making the police's job much easier

A good example would be estate changes.

Unavoidable budget cuts have forced us to make £500 million in savings

Much of that will come from releasing under-utilised assets across the Met's old and sprawling estate of over 500 buildings which was costing over £200 million a year to maintain in a dilapidated state.

In London that means reducing the size of the Met police estate and selling up to 200 buildings

Many of these were police stations that had been surplus to operational need for years, but the police – lacking political support before now – had been unable to dispose of them without a public backlash, so the estate was half empty and crumbling and resources were being wasted

With a budget plan that meant we could reinvest the savings in the frontline and use the capital receipts from building sales to fund one-off investment in new ICT and other infrastructure, we had a shared vision that we could sell

I led a public consultation alongside Assistant Commissioner Simon Byrne on plans to close 65 front counters and sell 29 police stations – the largest estate sell-off in the Met's history.

Simon and I held public meetings in every one of the 32 boroughs across London

And with political leadership we made the argument to the public – and were prepared to adjust our plans

We found that Londoners backed us in putting bobbies before buildings

In this way politicians can create the space to lead

Since then the closures have happened and there has been remarkably little local resistance

Next week we will reveal just how much we have saved by this approach

This did not happen under the old MPA and the police could not have done it on their own

When changes to policing are necessary, political leadership from the PCC is vital

The public view such changes to their local public services as a political matter, not a technocratic one

So police leaders should not see politicians as an encumbrance...

And meaningful consultation with the public is not a distraction – it is the way you get consent

We have a constructive relationship with the Met because they have accepted the new settlement and understand how it can benefit them

The Mayor and I can provide the cover for difficult decisions the police cannot take on their own

Another recent example would be water cannon, which is now subject to formal approval by the Home Secretary, but we would not have got here without MOPAC support

The public

The position that politicians occupy depends on their mandate from the public

In our case, Londoners gave our Mayor a mandate of over a million votes two years ago

That mandate is what underpins the political role he has in setting police priorities and reflecting public concerns

For that we need effective channels of communication – so we hear what residents and businesses are saying and can respond to their concerns

So we are doing more to encourage community involvement in policing, and we are creating new Safer Neighbourhood Boards to give local people a forum to shape local police priorities, with input from young people and crime victims

We know that engagement with the public is vital to help raise awareness, inform people about policing locally, and so help raise confidence

As politicians we must always be alive to public opinion and the changing priorities that people have

We should never assume that we know what their priorities are.

We owe it to the taxpayers – who after all fund the police – to keep listening to them

For our work with *Reform*, we wanted to explore in more detail what the public's priorities for policing actually were, rather than make assumptions about what the police mission should focus on.

The Populus survey showed that the overwhelming preference of the public was for the police to prevent crime from happening in the first place ahead of helping those in immediate danger or solving violent crime or property theft.

This view that crime prevention must come first was even stronger in London than in the rest of the country.

Sir Robert Peel was right – the core mission of the police must be to prevent crime and the public clearly believe that is still the right approach too

And so the police need to reflect that view of the public in how they police

And they can use the technology to get upstream and start solving problems – not just reacting to them

The police

This brings me to the police themselves, and some other observations I've made.

Policing is an incredibly fulfilling vocation and it attracts strong characters who are confident, often impatient to act, and very hands on.

This "can-do" attitude is a huge strength – especially in the bureaucratic, process obsessed and risk averse climate of today's public sector.

It also makes policing prone to tactical interventions and short-term initiatives.

In responding to emergencies or calls for help, the police have always been reactive to some degree

But being purely reactive is not an effective way to police

And it is not what the public say they'd prefer policing to be like

And it is not going to cut it in the face of future funding cuts

In our *Reform* pamphlet we urged the police to come to terms with the need for more reform to cope with the fiscal reality – that public spending is likely never to go back to the levels seen before 2010

And that this meant it would be more important than ever to look closely at how the police can reduce their demand and become more preventative

At a time when police budgets continue to shrink and when the demands on the police continue to rise, there is a need to follow my five Principles for Policing in Austerity:

1. Reduce, Release, Reform

Our guiding philosophy for the budget challenge in London is the three 'Rs'.

We are reducing the overhead in policing.

Police staff numbers had grown substantially in the boom years and they are now down already from 13,500 to 12,000 - the vast majority leaving via voluntary exit schemes.

Staff play a vital role but spending more than we have to on civilian support services is just not sustainable.

We are releasing under-utilised assets.

We predict that our estate changes – including the sale of New Scotland Yard – will generate up to £500 million to put back into technology and allow us to modernise the

remaining estate including a new HQ at Curtis Green, new training facilities at Hendon and forensic science labs and control room at Lambeth.

Lastly we are reforming policing by changing the rank mix so we have more bobbies than ever (26,000) and fewer supervisors and police chiefs.

Plus this means we can get more officers to the frontline and into neighbourhoods under the new Local Policing Model.

2. Find time to prevent crime

The police need to find the time to be much more preventative and to design out crime.

The Met receives 5.25 million calls for service, handles 750,000 crimes and arrests 250,000 people every year with all the risk that that entails. Policing our capital city cannot only be about responding to crime. Preventing crime is the smart way to fight crime.

We have to find new ways, using new technology and training approaches to embed a more preventative culture.

To shift the dial towards solving crime hotspots and designing out crime rather than just responding to calls for service the whole time.

Success is not tasking people to react more quickly to a problem, or driving up arrests

A good day for a local neighbourhood officer is when they haven't made an arrest because there was no crime on their patch.

This is already happening with burglary where crime prevention tactics such as the use of traceable liquids, cocooning an area after burglary incident, predictive policing for the deployment of neighbourhood officers and electronic tagging of repeat offenders.

Burglary continues to come down in London – now at a 40 year low – because of the focus on preventing burglaries from happening and stopping the victim of a burglary becoming a victim for the second or third time.

A nice example of this preventative mindset was a recent tweet by the Met Police in Brent

They were promoting the impact of traceable liquids – which MOPAC is supporting a roll out covering up to 440,000 homes in London.

The Twitter message proudly declared - "No residential burglaries in either Kensal Green, Dudden Hill, or St Raphael's... over the past week"

What a fantastic message to push out!

So we need new ways to make prevention sexy, and to get cops to communicate what success means when you prevent crime.

I am pleased that Sir Denis O'Connor, the former Chief Inspector of Constabulary will be leading a project for MOPAC to take this agenda forward, with the support of the Commissioner

New technology is a great opportunity to enable this change to happen faster.

Tablets and smartphone with integrated apps including predictive crime maps so that you can patrol where and when crime is likely to happen...

The ability to file crime reports and take witness statements on the move without having to go back to the police station...

This technology can be a force multiplier for preventative policing.

It makes cops more productive, whilst delivering a better service to the public

That is why we are investing in a pioneering mobility pilot to demonstrate how this approach saves time and enables the police to engage more with the public

By using technology to become digital Dixons of Dock Green – our police can make the criminals think once, twice, many times before they commit a crime!

With mobile devices to keep cops out on the street and connected to the people in their neighbourhood we can give frontline officers more information so they can be both safer and smarter in how they work

3. Compete or commercialise all support services for the police

Finally the police must embrace private enterprise and use competition as a way to drive down the cost of support services.

It cannot be right that as much as £1 in every £3 is spent on supporting the first public service to do its core job.

Competitive tendering of policing support services is a moral imperative – not an unfortunate by-product of austerity.

Because every pound spent on support services that are costing too much, is a pound not spent on frontline delivery for the public.

Competitive tendering – not privatisation – must be done and it is about getting maximum value, not giving up control

With greater efficiencies it is perfectly possible for our budget to still fund 32,000 police officers in London - which after all costs around £2 billion out of a total budget in 2015/16 of over £2.8 billion.

Politicians of both main parties are unlikely to yield on police numbers in 2016 and so it is essential that there is a root and branch programme to competitively tender all policing support services over time, including core elements within a putative internal market where the Met delivers services to itself such as intelligence services, forensic services and duties planning.

Not all chiefs have the political cover to make these changes, but they do in London, and where you have that support, you need to get on and do it.

4. Decentralize and empower

The police must decentralize both decision-making and budget responsibility to designated leaders who must have full authority but also be held to account for performance.

You cannot design and command and control everything from the HQ.

You need to decentralize decision making and budget responsibility down the chain of command and hold your leaders to account.

This means that the Commissioner or Chief Constable must trust his Commanders in the field.

In addition your officers need to stay in the same role for more than 6 months – ideally two to three years – if individuals are to be held to account and strong relationships are going to be built.

5. Collaborate and integrate at the local level

No single agency holds all the tools to prevent crime and disorder.

The best problem-solving involves really good collaboration with partners

But too often the police want to seize control and lead the partnership

I would urge police leaders to take a different approach. The police should integrate some services with other local public services by pooling budgets at the neighbourhood level

We need the police to collaborate more, even where other partners might play a bigger role.

This will help the police to deliver better local public safety services on a smaller overall budget.

This does mean that sometimes the police will have to follow rather than lead.

Take gangs where Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley has had considerable success with Trident in London.

This is a key Mayoral priority and police enforcement efforts have paid off.

Shootings are down by almost half and stabbings have been cut by a third since the Trident Command was launched

But now we need to get better at prevention and diversion, with an effective gang exit offer

We need the police to play their role, but they cannot convene local authorities and other statutory agencies or monopolise engagement with the communities that are affected by gang violence. They cannot lead diversion work in schools – even if school safety officers are part of that work

And they simply are not present in children's centres or family intervention with troubled families where prevention efforts need to start

Prevention and diversion of gangs is an area where the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) should take the lead.

The police have to be round the table and they have a critical role in preventing violence, but they cannot always lead

In fact really effective schemes – like the Integrated Gangs Unit in Hackney – have strong police involvement but are led by council staff, alongside probation.

The Reform Debate

I want to end on the question of reform and what it means for police leaders.

You should never underestimate the power of the status quo. Police reform is a process, not an event.

We have had four years of radical police reform but it does not end here.

In my *Reform* pamphlet we argued that we were now entering a second phase of police reform

A period when the focus is no longer on institutions, or structures, or legislation – the governance landscape has been settled

Instead the focus for police reform is now on the people in policing

Technology and innovation will help, but it is the people agenda that will determine whether policing can meet the challenges of the years ahead

Does policing attract and retain the right people with the skills needed to fight not only the old crimes but also the new like cyber crime and organized retail fraud against a backdrop of rising public expectation and diminishing budgets?

And I believe – as someone who has led change in the public sector – that no reform can happen without the police leadership driving that change.

There is always the granite middle - the middle management ranks that are resistant to change.

But with leadership from the top, police reform will be the new default and will succeed

Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe has proven this in London – a peerless reforming and crime-fighting Commissioner who has had a harder job than any of his predecessors, but one who is delivering on what matters: cutting crime and boosting confidence whilst cutting costs and changing culture

One reason for his success is that he has appointed a strong team to support him and has invested his time and energy in forging a constructive relationship with both the Mayor and I

Despite a burning platform, Sir Bernard has shown the right sort of leadership – open to new ideas like direct entry and schemes like Police First that came directly from his own team of future leaders in the Met – the Commissioner's 100.

And with the vision and the support of the Mayor he has been able to embrace a clear agenda and improve policing markedly for Londoners.

That is what I hope we will see more of from other chief officers in future

We need a successor body to ACPO where chief constables can convene and speak up for the service as leaders

But we also need you to become comfortable with the new landscape where politicians have a key voice in representing the public – their electorate – in the policing debate too

I respect the professional leadership role and legal authority of chief officers

But this reform only works if all chief officers also respect the role of politicians in policing too

My poor eye sight means that I cannot see clearly the men and women in this room, but I can see clearly that the country's police leaders are thriving despite the pressure of policing in austerity.

And to continue to thrive I would urge you all to embrace my five principles for Policing in Austerity:

1. Reduce, Release, Reform
2. Find time to prevent crime
3. Compete or commercialise all police support services
4. Decentralize and empower

5. Collaborate and integrate at the local level

Only when chief constables and politicians work together will we be able to reconnect the police with the public and the public with the police in a way that is true to the legacy of Robert Peel.

ENDS