

Summary of the MPS Response to Policing: Building Safer Communities Together

Overview

- The MPS is supportive of further reform and is in fact already driving modernisation of the police service

Key issues

Community Engagement – Creating Capacity

The MPS believes that true community engagement in policing must include:

- the identification of local neighbourhood priorities;
- the building of capacity and capability in both the community and the police service to work together in identifying and tackling those priorities;
- the creation of space within national planning and performance frameworks for the local dimension; and
- transparency as to the contributions made by all agencies to improving community safety.

Shifting the Focus from Police Officer Numbers

- The MPS contends strongly that there must be a shift in public and political focus from police officer numbers to policing visibility of all uniformed police staff; the new MPS Operational Policing Measure will deliver this effectively in the MPS.
- There must also be a shift in focus from crime statistics to the delivery of outcomes, particularly in respect of public reassurance.

Greater Focus on Local Accountability

- The MPS believes that there is already a very strong framework of accountability for policing, and contends that there is an opportunity now to give this greater clarity and a stronger local dimension. This can be achieved through the introduction of new accountability mechanisms at BCU (borough) and neighbourhood levels.
- The MPS counsels strongly, however, that the effectiveness of new local accountability mechanisms will depend heavily upon government commitment, both to making room to tackle the local priorities which these mechanisms identify, and to delivering the additional capacity needed.

An Employment Framework for the Twenty-First Century

- The MPS currently struggles with an inflexible pay and conditions package, governed by archaic regulations. A workforce modernised to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century will need a new

employment framework, which recognises its professionalism and meets flexible conditions with salaried remuneration.

Specific points from each section

Community Engagement

- Increased capacity through MPS Step Change programme will deliver community engagement – dedicated resources (ring-fenced at neighbourhood level)
 - Mixed teams of Police Officers / PCSOs / Police Staff
 - Work with all communities, not just geographically i.e. Ethnicity, Age (temporary or single issue)
- Clearer funding streams & targets for both the community & community safety agencies – led by the Home Office, instead of plethora of government departments
- Move focus from police numbers to police visibility (Operational Policing Measure will deliver)
- Move focus from Crime statistics to delivery of outcomes particularly in respect of reassurance
- Local dimension of targets supported by the availability of local information about all the community safety agencies

Accountability

- Focused not increased - particularly at the local level rather than nationally and include all community safety agencies.
- MPS is already the model for a strategic force in respect of our police authority and size (NB. MPS is not prescribing the size of other strategic forces)
- Strategic Force of a size that adds value (economies of scale & level 2 crime)
- Local (Borough based) Community Safety Boards holding all community safety agencies to account
 - Comprising appointed & elected members
 - Ability to develop local priorities in conjunction with local police chief
- Engagement at sub-BCU level (Neighbourhood) crucial in order to truly understand the local view – local solutions to local problems (Step Change programme will support this approach)
- Community Advocates – Not clear what the problem is? – Need greater clarity – MPS committed to using Independent Advisory Groups

Operational Effectiveness

- The emphasis must be on both increased capability and capacity, not on structure alone
- Operational Autonomy must be retained
- Small police units not feasible to deliver community needs, level 2 and international level & terrorism (MPS model will deliver all levels)

- Consider national unit to combat organised crime and national border police
- No wish for direct BCU funding bias
- New police powers particularly relating to organised crime
- Development of a Police Modernisation Agency to implement strategic change across the police service
- Support the adoption of a 'Single Gateway' to filter requests from inspection/audit agencies

Modernising the Service

- Omnicompetence is not achievable
- Need much greater flexibility around employment framework especially pay & pensions
 - Reward skills & ability not time served
 - Focus on performance
 - Leaders directly appointed from outside the service
 - Specialist entry – commitment to police code of ethics
 - Consideration for contracts – exit points within pensions and portability of pensions
- Rethink the make-up of the service away from focus on police officer numbers – Extended police family (Core capabilities – Response, Community/Patrol, Investigation, Level 2/Specialist response & Strategic Development)
- Flexibility of workforce management for local police commanders (appropriate mix of staff and skills for the community) – MPS BCU Experiment
- Police service boundary much more permeable for volunteers & local people – support new ways of working & engagement
- Lighter touch inspection, access to specific funding streams & budget devolution supported

Police Reform Team
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