

Chairmans' Update

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THE CHAIRMAN ATTENDED THE NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR PC GARY TOMS IN LEYTON, LONDON ON 18th OCTOBER 2010. THE PRIME MINISTER MR DAVID CAMERON WAS IN ATTENDANCE

THE POLITICAL DYNAMIC

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) has dominated the political and policing landscape during the past two months. The settlement will decide the future of British Policing and our pensions, pay and conditions for the next decade and beyond. The misleading announcement made during the CSR debate on 20th October by the Chancellor, George Osborne, initially suggested that cuts in the police central budget would be no more than 14%, still a major hit, but well below the 25% that was predicted. However, once the dust settled it became clear that we were actually looking at a real cut of at least 20% and every-thing else was castles in the air unless local authorities raise the local police precept (tax) by a substantial amount. It is worth noting that the policing precept has a freeze on it for the next financial year and cannot be raised until 2012, when we get the new elected 'police commissioners'. It is also worth noting that central government has no power to raise the policing precept. That is at the discretion of the local authorities who are themselves looking at a 40% cut in their budgets. The actual cuts to the police service from central government will be 8% in the first year, 6% in the second year and then two years of 4% cuts. This is known as front loading in the financial world and represents a really bad settlement for the budget holder in the negotiations. In laypersons terms, the Treasury has 'stuffed' the Home Office. Unlike other departments, the government has chosen not to prioritise policing and the Home Office. In fact we got a worse than average settlement. I think every-one in the police service is astonished that the government has chosen to slash the budget of an emergency service that so many of the most vulnerable in our communities rely on.

It is worth comparing our settlement with other similar departments in Whitehall. Defence, 7% cut; Education, schools budget frozen; NHS, budget preserved; Science, 8% cut; Overseas Development £4 Billion RISE. The last figure is worth a closer look. It has been well reported that the conservatives have been sending 50+ members over to Africa during the parliamentary summer recess to learn about the continent. This is highly commendable and worthy but I can't help thinking what a difference it might have made to the policing budget if a similar number of conservatives had spent time living in some of our more troubled areas during their summer holidays. Mustn't grumble though.....

Although we had support in our campaign against the cuts from the Superintendents' Association and our colleagues in Northern Ireland and Scotland, we were fighting with one hand tied behind our backs. This was due to ACPO giving a clear indication to government in the summer that the police service could accommodate cuts of 25%. Since then the self-appointed, 'professional voice of the police service' appears to have an extended dose of laryngitis. Compare and contrast the leaders in the police service to the leaders in the military who fought hard to try and preserve their budgets and never dreamt, unlike ACPO, of suggesting to government that they could absorb the cuts by slashing the pay and conditions of their troops. Why ACPO did this is a mystery. They have achieved the almost impossible, alienating government, the Superintendents' Association, PFEW, SPF, PFNI and the Association of Police Authorities who it is worth mentioning were so piqued by ACPO's recent stance on Police Commissioners that they considered withdrawing their funding from ACPO.

When faced with a new inexperienced government it was vital that we tried to steer them away from the precipice of unintended consequences that massive cuts in budgets will have on the police service. They seem to have no real overall policy apart from stating that cuts can be made in police numbers and crime can still fall. Do they really believe this when police officer numbers are now set to plummet? The only comparator they seem to be able to produce for this reduced officer/reduced crime model is policing in New York. It is worth looking at this model. Yes, police numbers have fallen, to around 35,000 officers but that is still thousands more than London, never mind Keswick or Llandudno. Also, New York has four times the murder rate of London. I'm not sure what the inhabitants of much of Britain would think of their local force being turned into the gun-toting NYPD. In all seriousness though, if you look at the NYPD Compstat crime figure they show that the murder rate has risen by 15.8% in the last year, rape by 14% and robbery by 4.7%. Hardly figures to crow about. It is also worth noting that a survey conducted recently of many retired police commanders found that many of them considered the crime recording system to be unethical. The New York Times has been running stories this year on its pages on suspicions over the veracity of the NYPD crime figures. Even London's Deputy Mayor, Kit Malthouse, the conservative lead on the Metropolitan Police Authority is open in his criticism of any-one comparing New York policing to London, let alone the rest of the UK. He says their crime reporting system in New York is completely different as is their whole policing dynamic. It is also worth noting a

frequently made statement about New York policing by many commentators, including ministers and some think tanks. They like to say that officers patrol alone in New York, while at the same time they claim there is an officer on every street corner. These statements are totally contradictory. Any-one who has been to New York to have a look at policing, as I have (don't worry, it was at my own expense) will be struck by the fact that the street corners are set mainly on a rigid grid pattern and that you can normally see four junctions a hundred yards or so, north, south, east and west from the corner you are on. So, if, as is claimed, there is an officer on every corner, no officer is truly alone as there will always be four other officers within a hundred yards or so. Of course this is all tosh just as the other part of the often repeated statement is total tosh too. There isn't a police officer on every street corner. What there are, as the trained police eye like mine can tell, are lots of people who look like police officers all over the place but in reality they are security guards, parking attendants and a host of other uniformed men and women who look like the police. It is also worth noting that the further you get away from the busy part of New York in Manhattan the fewer police you see. Two last observations about New York policing from me. Many people are trying to move all British officers to single patrolling in their cars, please note; all NYPD patrol cars are double-crewed. Lastly, at the NYPD Police Museum they make a direct correlation between recessionary economics and rises in crime. Many observers also make a direct correlation between officer numbers and crime generally. You have been warned. Still, it's good to know that the government's policy of reducing our budget is built on concrete foundations.....

So, we have been left with cuts of 20% made by a government who believe they have the magic formula to reduce officer numbers substantially while reducing crime further. This hypothesis has been largely unchallenged by police leaders within ACPO with one or two notable exceptions. I hope the government does possess a coherent policy that can achieve what they want. In the meantime we are still waiting to see what it is. It is this lack of any evidence of any coherent policy in the Home Office that appeared to lead Chief Constable Tim Hollis to rail against the cuts at the recent Humberside Federation Open Meeting. Too late though, the budget is set and ACPO should have made these representations earlier in the process, as we did.

To many officers in the service it is starting to appear to us that this government has fallen out of love with law and order and the police service in particular. It is worth highlighting two recent debates in parliament that were led by Conservatives. The first was led by Mark Pritchard, MP for The Wrekin and supported by some of his conservative colleagues. The 'debate' was full of glaring inaccuracies and was extremely pointed against policing generally. The only saving grace was that the police minister, Nick Herbert stepped in and challenged most of what was said, but the damage was done. The second debate was a bill to make police officers redundant and was introduced by the Kent MP Mark Reckless. He and some of his colleagues are so keen to see police officers sacked as quickly as possible that he feels unable to wait to see what Tom Winsor will recommend in his ongoing review of police pay and conditions. Mr Reckless was the MP who was found drunk

on the terrace of the House of Commons and unfit to vote earlier this year. His bill is supported by several prominent conservatives, including two members of the Home Affairs Committee and David Ruffley, the former Tory shadow police minister. The bill has passed its first reading and I understand that Mr Reckless has now written to all Chief Constables stating that his bill is intended to help them sack us quickly. David Cameron has stated consistently since he became Prime Minister that he admires the courage and bravery of police officers, however due to the way things are going I am not surprised he has felt it necessary to say publicly that just because his government has chosen to slash police budgets it doesn't mean that his party doesn't like the police. I'll let you make your own mind up.

So where are we now? Forces are going to have to accommodate cuts from central government of 20% and due to the funding formula some forces will be hit much harder than others. However, the cuts can only be made in three ways, efficiency savings, police staff cuts and lastly cuts in police staff/officers pay and conditions. That is what we are left with and that is what we are now working on.

The first duty of any government is the protection of its citizens, both from outside threats and internal threats. I believe the government is gambling without knowing the odds it is playing with. Wholesale 'reform' of the police service is not something to be undertaken lightly unless you have an absolutely clear vision of where you are going.

After the CSR that precipice with its hidden unintended consequences has just got a whole lot closer.

There may be trouble ahead,.....

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

The Chairman attended and spoke at the following Conferences

The Liberal Democrat Conference – Liverpool

Spoke at the PFEW/ACPO/Superintendents Fringe, speakers Chairman PFEW, Sir Hugh Orde, Derek Barnett, Tom Brake MP and Baroness Harris.

The Conservative Conference – Birmingham

Spoke at the following fringes

Reform (Think Tank founded by the Police Minister – Nick Herbert) – Policing Matters. Speakers included – Police Minister, PFEW Chairman.

PFEW/ACPO/Superintendents Fringe – Speakers, Chairman PFEW, Sir Hugh Orde, Derek Barnett, Police Minister.

Policy Exchange – Policing Matters/Cuts/Commissioners. Speakers included, Police Minister, Kit Malthouse, Chairman PFEW, Blair Gibbs, Policy Exchange

Reform – Policing & Airwave. Guests included Police Minister, Ch Con Chris Simms, PFEW Chairman, + several MP's

Plaid Cymru Conference – Aberystwyth

The Chairman spoke with Elfyn Llywd MP on stage during a live 30 mins televised BBC TV session.

He gave an interview to the BBC's Politics Show

Labour Party Conference – Manchester

The Chairman spoke at the PFEW/Superintendents/ACPO fringe meeting. Speakers – PFEW Chairman, Sir Hugh Orde, Alan Johnson MP, Derek Barnett.

Superintendents' Conference – Chester

Question Time Panel – The PFEW Chairman spoke at a session with the Police Minister, Sir Hugh Orde and Derek Barnett

Ex-Police Officers in Commerce Conference (EPIC) – Willis Building, City of London

The Chairman addressed the conference about the present policing dynamic and the Comprehensive Spending Review.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS etc

We held a media briefing event regarding the cuts at The St. Ermin Hotel, Victoria, London on 10th September 2010

From 3rd September to 1st November we completed the following 70+ interviews;

- X's 2 - BBC TV News
- X's 4 - BBC News 24
- X's 4 - The Times Newspaper
- X's 4 – Police Professional Magazine
- BBC Radio 1 News
- BBC Radio 1 Extra
- BBC Radio 1 Facebook
- X's 3 – The Press Association (PA)
- Channel 4 News
- BBC Radio Surrey/Sussex

- BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester
- BBC Radio Oxford
- BBC Radio Lincoln
- X's 4 - Police Review 4
- X's 5 - The Daily Telegraph
- BBC Radio Cornwall
- BBC Radio London
- X's 5 – The Daily Mail
- X's 3 – The Guardian Newspaper
- X's 2 – The Sunday Telegraph
- ITN News
- Horse and Hounds (re Mounted Branch)
- BBC TV Wales News
- X's 2 - BBC Politics Show
- Freelance for Sunday Papers
- X's 3 - BBC Radio 5 Live
- X's 2 – The Evening Standard
- X's 2 – The Daily Mirror
- X's 2 – Police Oracle Magazine
- BBC Radio Wales
- X's 2 SKY TV News
- SKY Radio
- The Wall Street Journal
- X's 2 Talk Sport Radio
- BBC News Round
- BBC Radio 4 Documentary (Re cuts)
- LBC Radio (London)
- The Sunday Times Newspaper
- SKY Jeff Randall Business Report

NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY

The NPMD was held in Belfast over the week-end of 24th – 26th September. The event was a great success.

On the evening of Saturday 25th The Chief Constable of the PSNI Matt Baggott, held a reception at the Courts of Justice for families, friends and guests attending the NPMD

On Sunday 26th The Home Secretary, Theresa May attended the service at Waterfront Hall, Belfast, as did the Police Minister, Nick Herbert.

The NPMD will be held in Glasgow in 2011 and in York in 2012.

We would like to thank Joe Holness for all the work he does in putting the NPMD together each year. Once again he did a great job.

MEETINGS of Note

- Ed Balls – Shadow Home Secretary
- Vernon Coaker – Shadow Police Minister
- Nick Herbert – Police Minister
- Andrew Bridgen, Conservative MP
- Deborah Regal ex-Met Police Authority Member – Conservative
- Kit Malthouse MPA
- Keith VAZ, Labour MP – Chairman Home Affairs Select Committee
- Stephen Mann, Police Mutual (re effects of cuts on officers finances)
- Godfrey Bloom, Conservative MEP
- Tom Winsor – Pay Reform
- Rob Garnham, Chairman Association of Police Authorities
- Lord Young, Conservative, lead on Government H & S Review
- Sir Hugh Orde, President ACPO
- Derek Barnet, President Superintendents Association
- Peter Neyroud, Lead on Home Office Training and Leadership Review
- John Shaw, Police lead for the company G4S
- Nick Gargan, Lead NPIA
- Mark Adams, James Gray, Political Lobbyists

PFEW OPEN MEETINGS

Humberside PF Open Meeting.

The Chairman addressed 400 officers, 20% of the force.

Hampshire PF Open Meeting

The Vice Chairman addressed 200 officers

Forthcoming Meetings that the Chairman will be attending

23rd November - Kent Open – Hilton Hotel, Bearsted

25th November - GMP Open – Lancashire County Cricket Ground, Old Trafford

Paul McKEEVER

Simon REED