

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

CELG(4)-04-11 : Paper 1

Inquiry into Community Safety in Wales – Association of Chief Police Officers

Dear Chair,

On behalf of ACPO Cymru, I am grateful for this opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee from a chief police officer perspective.

This paper reflects the views of the four Chief Constables in Wales and has been structured in line with the terms of reference for the Inquiry :

To consider the impact of public spending cuts on the Welsh police forces, specifically:

1. *· the impact of the public spending cuts on frontline policing;*
2. *· details about the Welsh police forces' reform programme designed to improve efficiency and reduce costs; and*
3. *· the implications for local communities and community safety policy in Wales.*

1. **The impact of the public spending cuts on frontline policing;**

We are aware that the Police Authorities of Wales (PAW) in their written evidence to the Committee has covered the financial implications of the CSR and the impact on staffing in some detail. Rather than duplicate what PAW has submitted, in this section we have provided our view on the impact of the spending cuts.

Prior to doing so, it is important to set out a definition of 'front line policing' as there are a number of differing interpretations.

Earlier this year, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) set out to produce a definition of 'front line' policing. In doing so HMIC looked at police roles and concluded that *'The police front line comprised those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law.'*¹ We concur with this definition of 'front line'

This definition is wider than the common perception of 'front line' based on visibility or a uniformed presence on the street. Whilst visibility is an important element of policing, it cannot, by itself, protect the public from all the threats they face. For example, the variety of specialist officers required to

¹ HMIC 2011, 'Demanding Times: The Front Line and Police Visibility'. www.hmic.gov.uk

deal with crimes ranging from child protection issues to murder and terrorism illustrate the range of roles that are needed to protect the public. HMIC also highlighted that the police front line can be found in many different places: on the high street on patrol, dealing with crime in people's homes, or on the internet to prevent abuse of children and terrorism. It is also the case that more demanding environments tend to require a greater proportion of specialists in a workforce many of whom are also public facing. To illustrate this point, HMIC produced a matrix of police roles which is shown at Appendix A. It highlights the connectivity between roles which are public facing and visible and roles which on first sight might be considered 'non frontline' but which on closer inspection can be seen to be providing a service which keep people safe.

The PAW paper refers to a section in the HMIC report that found that 68% of the workforce could be defined as frontline. However, this figure needs to be treated with some caution in that it implies that 32% of the workforce is potentially 'back office' and could be reduced. In reality, as Appendix A shows, a large number of posts in 'process support' are directly linked to operational policing and provide critical functions essential to the safety and security of the public. The actual number of posts considered 'back office' is relatively small and nearly entirely made up of police staff. As can be seen from the functions, they reflect those in most large organisations. The risk of cutting too many police staff posts is that the functions would then have to be undertaken by police officers, a position which would take the police service to where it was in the 1970's and earlier.

The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review announced a significant reduction in public spending with central government support through grants for all levels of policing being reduced by 20% in real terms and 12% in cash terms over the four year period. The reductions were not evenly spread over the 4 years as the greatest savings are required to be found in the first two years as the below table shows.

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
% Real terms cuts per annum	6%	8%	4%	4%
Cumulative cuts	6%	13%	17%	20%

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
% Cash cuts per annum	4%	6%	2%	1%
Cumulative cuts	4%	9%	11%	12%

As the required savings were 'front loaded' it meant that forces have had to take immediate action in order to meet their reduced budget and this has involved making difficult choices as 80% of a budget is spent in one form or another on personnel. Whilst Chief Constables have made every effort to minimise the number of staff losses, the four Welsh forces will see numbers of police officers and police staff fall over the CSR period by 1,699 people:

Dyfed Powys Police will reduce by 92 police officer and 165 police staff posts.

Gwent Police will reduce by 207 police officer posts and 196 police staff posts

North Wales Police will reduce by 150 police officer posts and 104 police staff posts

South Wales Police will reduce by 256 police officer posts and 529 police staff posts

As an indicator of the enormity of the challenge, the reductions of police officers across Wales over the four year period is the near equivalent of losing one entire police force.

It should also be emphasized that the above figures are based on budget projections over the CSR period. The projections include an estimate of the council tax precept that forces will receive. Should a lower precept be awarded by a Police Authority (or PCC) then the shortfall could result in greater numbers of staff having to leave to make up the shortfall. For example a 1% reduction in council precept would require a further £500k of savings for North Wales Police and £750K for South Wales Police.

2. **Details about the Welsh police forces' reform programme designed to improve efficiency and reduce costs;**

The four forces are independent organisations and have developed to meet the differing socio economic and geographic make ups of the communities and areas they police. Their financial baselines are different and as a result each force has faced differing challenges in responding to the budget reductions. However, the four forces have responded to the challenge with the common objective of meeting community needs and from the perspective of the public.

This section briefly summarises the approach taken by each force. We would wish to highlight that forces in Wales were already initiating reform programmes prior to the 2010 CSR and in consequence were already putting in place transformational change which they have been able to build on following the 2010 CSR:

Dyfed Powys Police

In direct response to the CSR in 2010, Dyfed-Powys Police set up the 'Operation Sage' change programme. This formalised existing work that the force had started in 2009 to identify savings and streamline the organisation.

The aim of 'Operation Sage' is two-fold – to meet the financial cost reduction plan of £11 million, whilst delivering a high performance sustainable police service.

The programme itself has been split into 4 key areas:-

1. Non pay expenditure
 - a. Travel
 - b. Seminars, conferences and training
2. Human Resources initiatives
 - a. Voluntary early retirement
 - b. Voluntary redundancy
 - c. Changes to staff terms and conditions
3. Major functional reviews
 - a. Operational structure
 - b. Contact management
 - c. Criminal justice
4. Collaboration
 - a. Police
 - b. Local Authority

The force has developed a clear vision for policing over the next 4 years which prioritises service delivery to the public (especially neighbourhood policing), and safeguarding them from harm by protecting front line roles as much as possible.

Significant progress has been made to date with approximately £5 million already having been delivered, and the remaining money identified and scheduled to be delivered by the end of the current CSR period.

Gwent Police

The 'Staying Ahead' programme was instigated by Gwent Police in 2008 with the objective of creating an organisation which was more sustainable, flexible, leaner and more fit for purpose. It was created with inherent potential for achieving further efficiencies.

The Staying Ahead programme has proven to be an effective framework for managing strategic change and has now been extended for a further four years to manage the consequences of Government austerity measures. Staying Ahead Phase 6 has now been established and the 4 year Programme will achieve the required savings of £14.3m. The programme has already delivered significant improvements in operational performance and provided better value for money. For example, Staying Ahead, Phases 1-5, have generated cumulative efficiency savings of £18.3m (£15.1m realised) and engineered a substantial downward shift in the force's recurring cost base

As a consequence of the CSR, over the next four years, Gwent Police will need to reduce revenue spending by a further £24.17m (18.6%) within the funding available. The Continuous Improvement approach will enable this through its focus on improving quality of service to the public, reducing waste (and therefore cost) and changes to the culture of the organisation to empower frontline workers.

North Wales Police

In anticipation of the significant financial challenges facing the police service, in September 2009 North Wales Police initiated a systematic review of business within the organisation, which recognised the requirement to protect the public within the budget available and also identified the changes that would have to be made to achieve this.

This led to the creation of Project 2011+ to facilitate the process of review. Consultation took place with key stakeholders and local public to help shape the content of the reviews. A number of reviews have been or are currently commissioned as part of Project 2011+ to identify savings including: response, neighbourhood policing, investigation, control room, non operational, structure and management and a review of custody provision.

This led on the 4th of May 2011 to the introduction of a model of policing based on function as opposed to one based previously on BCU's. Under this new structure and to better deliver service to local communities, neighbourhood policing teams and PCSO's now report to six county chief inspectors. These chief inspectors are aligned to local authority areas and have created specific community engagement strategies for each of their areas. They are currently supported by a central community safety team headed by a superintendent and include the school liaison officer function.

Outside the reviews conducted by Project 2011+ a series of other reviews have also been or are currently being undertaken and include; IT, estates, fleet, contracts, as well as the identification of potential savings via collaboration.

At present it is estimated that a budget reduction of £17 mill. may be achieved by 2014/2015, which although in excess of the CSR savings required, allows for limited changes in planning assumptions that currently include a 4% increase in council precept per year. North Wales Police is one of seventeen forces throughout England and Wales to be in the position of planned budget reductions exceeding savings. This is considered a prudent position as a reduction of 1% in council precept would require approximately a further £500k of savings to be achieved.

The HMIC review 'Valuing the Police Preparedness Inspection' provided a strong endorsement of the approach identifying 'clear and justified timescales and milestones, supported by good analysis with clear governance structures in place to oversee progress.'

South Wales Police

The South Wales Police Reform programme was instigated in January 2010 and was not predicated on the need to achieve financial savings. Its objective was to transform the force and design it from the perspective of the public so as to meet communities' needs, in line with the force vision which is to be 'the best at understanding and responding to our communities needs'.

The ethos of the Reform programme has been to protect the frontline, and maintain performance. It is with this in mind that the force has developed a comprehensive resource modelling tool. It is through the use of this resource

modelling tool, that Chief Officers will make decisions around police officer reductions and where these reductions can come from.

There are three phases to the Reform programme; with phase 1 focusing on areas such as Call Management, Public Protection, Communities & Partnerships, Admin Support Units, Analysts, Disclosure, and the Force Business Centre. To date the Force has realised a saving of £17,208,078; as a result of the work being undertaken through phase 1 and the Value for Money Plan.

Collaboration

The Chief Constables would also wish to highlight the collaborative work which has been ongoing between the forces since 2006 and which is summarised in some detail in the PAW written evidence.

Collaborative work has the objective of improving interoperability between the forces as well as efficiency and effectiveness within forces and cash savings where possible. In addition, the Welsh forces are involved in collaboration initiatives with police forces at an England and Wales level and with public sector partners within Wales.

The Chief Constables are particularly grateful for the collaboration projects being undertaken with the Welsh Government:

- (i) Operation Tarian has enabled an effective partnership response that is disrupting and tackling crime groups intent on gaining a foothold in our communities. The threat from crime groups is very real and ongoing. For example, there is a worrying trend around the increasing availability of heroin in southern Wales. This can be seen from seizures of heroin, up from 198 grams in 2006/7 to 17.5 kilos in 2010. The Drugs Intervention Programme (DIP) has also identified that 1 in 3 people arrested for trigger offences in the South Wales Police area tested positive for heroin. This is a much higher level than the national average and South Wales in particular at 71% of those tested for trigger offences has significantly higher percentages of positive drug tests for heroin than some of the large metropolitan areas of England e.g. West Midlands (38%) and Greater Manchester (46%). In North Wales, the main threat is from organised crime groups linked to the North West of England. To combat this threat North Wales Police are a member of Titan which is made up of police forces and agencies in the North West region. This link also provides the force with broader operational and collaborative opportunities which also brings benefits to the other Welsh forces
- (ii) The 'Go Safe' partnership has contributed to Welsh roads being amongst the safest in Europe but despite this fact, the numbers of casualties on our roads are still too high and it must not be forgotten that every casualty has an impact and cost on many other services in the public sector. Restructuring, the alignment of speed thresholds and the ability to divert offenders to speed awareness courses have all

enhanced the partnerships ability to deliver levels of enforcement in a more efficient way and at less cost.

- (iii) The All Wales Schools Liaison Core Programme is an extremely effective initiative. By investing resources in young people we are safeguarding our future and building a more civil society. It would be tempting in a world of severe financial constraint to curtail this type of activity but to do so would risk losing the significant investment which is currently being made for our future. Match funding has been agreed for the financial year 2011-12 and we are grateful for this continued support. At a time of financial austerity we recognise the need to deliver services as cost effectively as possible and we are currently looking at options that would enable us to provide this programme more efficiently.
- (iv) The support provided by the Welsh Assembly Government to the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) is resulting in significant benefits from increased collaboration across the blue light services.
- (v) The decision to provide three Strategic Co-ordinating Centres across Wales which will enable an effective response to incidents requiring multi agency intervention.
- (vi) The decision of the Welsh Government to fund 500 PCSO's is a measure which is welcomed by the four Chief constables. At a time when forces have had to reduce staff, the additional 500 PCSO's will strengthen the 'front line' through the very visible and reassuring presence PCSO's bring to communities.

Criminal Justice

Greater collaboration and joined up working across the criminal justice sector will not only benefit communities but will also promote greater efficiency between agencies thereby reducing cost. To this end, an all Wales Criminal Justice Board was created earlier this year under the chair of Chief Constable Mark Polin, North Wales Police. As well as providing overarching leadership and governance to the Criminal Justice Service in Wales it also provide a single national Criminal Justice Service agency based forum, for the exchange of information and intelligence about high level strategic developments across the public sector, as they relate to Community Safety and Criminal Justice.

3. **The implications for local communities and community safety policy in Wales.**

The four forces aim to protect the front line as far as is possible. However, in meeting this objective the four Chief Constables have been faced with difficult choices which will result in communities seeing some changes to existing services.

For example, some forces, particularly South Wales Police, have a legacy of many large police stations, some of which are in a poor state of repair and situated in locations based on the needs of earlier less mobile generations. Modern technology enables the public to contact the police via a range of mediums and footfall at police stations has been decreasing for several years. Faced with the choice of ‘people or places’, the Chief Constable would prefer to retain trained staff but this will result in the closure of some stations and relocation of the police presence in the community to appropriate public access points.

As far as is possible, all Chief Constables are committed to safeguarding neighbourhood policing and to maximizing the numbers of front line staff.

We would also wish to highlight that policing does not operate in isolation and the importance of partnership working to community safety. The safety and security of communities requires effective collaboration and partnership working involving police, the communities themselves and the private, public and third sectors. We are concerned that as the cuts impact across the public sector it may lead organizations to focus on what are perceived as ‘core’ responsibilities and that support for community safety projects would be lost. It must not be forgotten that preventative measures, notably in relation to alcohol and drug misuse, as well as educational initiatives, address both cause and effect and result in sustainable solutions which have long term benefits.

In recent years Community Safety Partnerships have been supported by grants from central government which will be significantly cut over the CSR period. (The extent of the cuts is covered in the PAW paper). The four forces and community safety partnerships have been at the forefront of reducing crime and disorder in recent years and this has resulted in fewer victims. We strongly advocate the need to continue to invest in Community Safety Partnerships to enable the long term trend of falling crime to continue.

The Chief Constables whilst strong advocates of partnership working also recognise that the current system of partnership working is unsustainable due to the following reasons: -

- The reductions in funds for public services mean that there will have to be an agreed focus / reduction of priorities, underpinned by fewer meetings and in some areas, less funding to support partnership employees.
- Some grants enabling local authorities to provide functions to support certain partnerships have been reduced.
- Radical reductions in funding available to statutory partners, e.g. the Police and the Health Board impacts on their capacity to support the current volume of partnerships at local level.
- There is a high degree of duplication in the content, delivery and production of statutory plans.
- The performance of the current partnership structure has been challenged in terms of delivering change and agreed outcomes.

As a result they are working with partners with the aim of streamlining structures. For example, in North Wales the Chief Constable is working with partners with the aim of reducing the present partnership structure (using a

50% reduction of partnership bodies as a guide) and by doing so achieving efficiencies, reducing complexity and improving outcomes for the citizen. In South Wales, Safer South Wales a Multi Sector Leadership Group which works with Community Safety Partnerships and other key agencies to provide strategic context and coordination is in place with the aim of making communities safer and reducing the fear of crime.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee, I would be happy to expand on any of these issues should your require.

Appendix A

PUBLIC FACING			SUPPORTING PROCESSES	
Visible	Specialist	Middle Office		Back Office
		Process Management	Process Support	
Response Neighbourhood Community Safety/relations Probationers (Student Officers) Traffic Dogs Firearms (tactical) Mounted	Air Firearms (specialist) Marine / Underwater Surveillance Unit Ports / Special Branch / Protection / Immigration / Nationality Child / Sex/ Domestic /Missing Persons Fingerprints / Photographic Scenes of Crime Technical Support Unit (80%)* Asset Confiscation (80%)* Burglary (80%)* CID (70%)* CID – Specialist Crime Unit (70%)* Drugs (80%)* Fraud (80%)* Hate Crime (80%)* Vehicle Crime (60%)* Intelligence (40%)* Vice (70%)*	Custody Enquiry/Station Counters Coroners Officers Operational Planning Local Commanders Chief Police Officers HOLMES (murder) Unit (30%)* Control Room/Call Handling (60%)* Crime & Incident Management (60%)* Professional Standards Unit (50%)* Criminal Justice (30%)*	Intelligence (60%)* Control Room/Call Handling (40%)* Criminal Justice (70%)* Criminal Records Office CID (30%)* CID Specialist Crime Unit (30%)* Vehicle Crime (40%)* HOLMES (murder) Unit (70%)* Hate Crime (20%) Fraud (20%) Burglary (20%) Asset Confiscation (20%) Technical Support Unit (20%) Professional Standards Unit (50%) Crime & Incident Management (40%) Drugs (20%) Vice (30%)	IT/Audio/Comms Corp Development Finance Personnel/HR Press and PR Property Staff Associations Buildings Drivers Staff Officers Catering Stores Supplies Training Other Admin/Clerical Vehicle Workshop/Fleet Occ Health / Welfare

HMIC (2011) *Demanding Times*

12

Note:

Where roles cut across more than one category, the percentage split is shown. These weightings (indicated by a * in the table) are based on a pragmatic approach using professional judgment; they are meant to represent the national picture, and may therefore vary from force to force.

The **visible** category includes those roles that involve an officer or PCSO undertaking work that is likely to be seen by the public: for instance, patrolling or responding to 999 calls.

The **specialists** category comprises those roles that may involve direct contact with the public, but whose work is not in general visible to the public. Many officers in this category – such as those working in Criminal Investigation Departments (CID) – will not wear uniforms, and some roles (for instance, collecting forensic evidence) may be carried out by staff rather than officers.

The **middle office** is where operational and support functions overlap in carrying out police-specific processes. Its work comprises: *Process management* – these roles involve decision-making and tasking work; and *Process support* – these roles involve processing information in support of police decision-making.

The **back office**, which comprises those roles that are necessary to the running of organisations as large as a police force, such as finance, information technology and human resources.