

HOME SECRETARY'S LECTURE TO
POLICE FOUNDATION: 25 JUNE 1991

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN, THIS IS A MAJOR OCCASION IN THE POLICING CALENDAR. WE COME TO IT AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF PUBLIC CONCERN ABOUT RISING CRIME, GRAVE WORRY ABOUT MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE, AND A GROWING CHORUS URGING A COMPLETE RESTRUCTURING OF THE POLICE SERVICE. I WANT TO SET OUT THE QUALITIES OF POLICING AND THE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES WHICH WILL ALLOW THE POLICE TO DELIVER AN EFFECTIVE SERVICE.

PRESSURES FOR CHANGE

WE FACE PRESSURES FOR CHANGE FOR THE SAME REASONS THAT MANY OTHER ORGANISATIONS FACE THEM. NOT BECAUSE THE BASIC SYSTEM HAS COLLAPSED, BUT BECAUSE ANY LARGE ORGANISATION MUST CONTINUALLY ADJUST AND DEVELOP - BOTH TO KEEP PACE WITH CHANGES IN THE SOCIETY IN WHICH IT FUNCTIONS, AND TO ADDRESS THOSE AREAS OF ITS BUSINESS WHERE THE SERVICE NO LONGER MEETS THE NEEDS.

/THE READINESS TO FACE

THE READINESS TO FACE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IS A SIGN OF FUNDAMENTAL HEALTH IN ANY ORGANISATION. I PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WILLINGNESS OF THE POLICE TO CONSIDER PUBLICLY HOW TO REMEDY ANY DEFICIENCIES. IN THE FACE OF THE MEDIA CRITICISM WE HAVE SEEN, MANY OTHER ORGANISATIONS WOULD SIMPLY RETREAT INTO A PROFESSIONAL LAAGER, TURNING THEIR BACKS ON THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND ON CRITICISM ALIKE. FOR THOSE TRULY CONCERNED WITH POLICING, I KNOW THAT THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM REPRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY, NOT A THREAT. IT IS A CHANCE TO EXAMINE WITH OTHERS HOW BEST TO ADDRESS REAL NEEDS, AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE OF IMMENSE IMPORTANCE.

BEFORE TURNING TO THE FUTURE OF THE POLICE SERVICE, I MUST HIGHLIGHT THE VERY HIGH STANDARD OF POLICING THAT GOES ON EVERY DAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY. POLICE SUCCESSES OFTEN DO NOT MAKE THE NEWS. IT IS WHAT WE EXPECT THE POLICE TO ACHIEVE, AND THERE IS A DANGER THAT WE TAKE IT FOR GRANTED. BUT EVERY PIECE OF GOOD POLICING MATTERS ENORMOUSLY TO THE INDIVIDUALS WHO BENEFIT FROM IT.

LET US HAVE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE. OVER THE PAST YEAR WE HAVE SEEN A BARRAGE OF IDEAS, UP TO AND INCLUDING A COMPLETELY RESTRUCTURED NATIONAL POLICE FORCE. TALK OF INQUIRIES, OF ABANDONING THE POLICE SERVICE AS WE KNOW IT, OF MAJOR NEW PRIMARY LEGISLATION TO REPLACE THE 1964 ACT, IS AS UNSETTLING TO THE POLICE SERVICE AS IT IS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. FOR REASONS WHICH I WILL COME TO IN A MINUTE, I WANT TO MAKE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS FOR MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO THE POLICE SERVICE. THE POLICE ACT 1964 IS, AND WILL REMAIN, THE BASIS ON WHICH WE RUN OUR POLICING. THAT IS THE MESSAGE I GAVE TO THE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS AT THEIR SUMMER CONFERENCE EARLIER THIS MONTH, AND ONE WHICH I RE-EMPHASISE TODAY.

RESPONSE TO CURRENT DEMANDS

I SAID I WOULD GIVE MY REASONS. NO-ONE UNDERTAKES CHANGE FOR ITS OWN SAKE. THE PURPOSE OF ANY CHANGE MUST BE TO DELIVER REAL PRACTICAL

IMPROVEMENTS ON A SCALE THAT WILL MORE THAN
OUTWEIGH THE DISADVANTAGES, UPHEAVAL AND COST.
SO WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WHICH HAVE PROMPTED THE
TALK OF CHANGE? I THINK IN ESSENCE THEY COME
DOWN TO THE FOLLOWING:

ARE THE POLICE DELIVERING THE SERVICE THE
COMMUNITY WANTS: CATCHING CRIMINALS,
PREVENTING CRIME, KEEPING THE PEACE AND
RESTORING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE SERVICE
AS A WHOLE: HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF
COMMUNITY POLICING.

DO THE POLICE HAVE THE RIGHT STRUCTURE AND
FACILITIES TO ADDRESS COMPLEX AND
TECHNOLOGICAL CRIMES SUCH AS TERRORISM,
FRAUD, DRUGS INVESTIGATIONS AND OTHER CROSS-
BORDER CRIMES; HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF CO-
OPERATION BEYOND THE LIMITATIONS OF THE
EXISTING FORCES.

THE THIRD KEY ISSUE IS HOW CAN THE POLICE
SERVICE USE ITS SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES AS
EFFICIENTLY AND ECONOMICALLY AS POSSIBLE.

THOSE ARE THE ISSUES BEFORE US, AND THE POLICE SERVICE MUST BE ABLE TO FACE UP TO THEM AND FACE UP TO THEM WELL. I BELIEVE WE ALREADY HAVE THE MEANS AVAILABLE TO MOVE THE SERVICE FORWARD. IT IS NOT A NEW STRUCTURE WE NEED, BUT A GREATER READINESS TO USE THE TOOLS ALREADY AT OUR DISPOSAL.

THE CURRENT LEGISLATION OFFERS ENORMOUS FLEXIBILITY TO THE SERVICE. IT ALLOWS FORCES TO COLLABORATE IN PROVIDING ANY SERVICE THEY WISH - SECTION 13; IT ALLOWS MANPOWER OR ANY OTHER FORM OF HELP TO BE PROVIDED BY ONE FORCE TO ANOTHER - SECTION 14; IT ALLOWS ME, AS HOME SECRETARY, TO PROVIDE CENTRAL SERVICES - SUCH AS THE POLICE COLLEGE AT BRAMSHILL - FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL FORCES - SECTION 41; IT ALSO ALLOWS FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF FORCES - SECTION 21.

WE ARE INDEED USING THE FLEXIBILITY AVAILABLE. IT IS UNDER THOSE PROVISIONS THAT WE HAVE SET UP THE NATIONAL DRUGS INTELLIGENCE UNIT. WE HAVE SET UP A NATIONAL COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE NETWORK.

WE ARE SETTING UP A NEW NATIONAL CRIMINAL RECORD SYSTEM; WE ARE DEVELOPING THE SECOND GENERATION OF THE POLICE NATIONAL COMPUTER; AND WE ARE NOW LOOKING FOR WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THE REGIONAL CRIME SQUAD STRUCTURE.

NATIONAL/REGIONAL FORCES

NOT ONLY IS MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE UNNECESSARY, IT COULD ACTUALLY HAVE PROFOUNDLY DAMAGING CONSEQUENCES. AT PRESENT WE HAVE GOT 43 SEPARATE FORCES; THE CHIEF CONSTABLES ARE INDEPENDENT BUT DEPEND FOR THEIR RESOURCES ON THE LOCAL POLICE AUTHORITY, WHICH REFLECTS THE COMMUNITY'S WISHES, AND ON THE HOME SECRETARY, WHO SETS THE NATIONAL STANDARDS BUT CANNOT DIRECT POLICE ACTIVITY. IT IS WORTH STOPPING FOR A MOMENT TO CONSIDER JUST WHAT A NATIONAL POLICE FORCE, FOR EXAMPLE, WOULD MEAN IN PRACTICE.

YES, THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE SOME BENEFITS. SOME WOULD CLAIM THAT THERE WOULD BE ECONOMIES OF SCALE, GREATER FLEXIBILITY TO MOVE RESOURCES FROM ONE AREA TO ANOTHER, AND PERHAPS GREATER CONSISTENCY OF APPROACH.

/BUT THIS WOULD BE

BUT THIS WOULD BE ACHIEVED AT A CONSIDERABLE PRICE. EFFECTIVELY, POLICING WOULD BECOME AN ARM OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT UNDER THE HOME SECRETARY OF THE DAY. THE FORCE WOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AND THE REAL OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF CHIEF CONSTABLES WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A CHAIN OF COMMAND ABOVE THEM. THE SIZE OF THE NATIONAL FORCE WOULD BE AROUND 170,000, INCLUDING CIVILIANS. THAT IS SUBSTANTIALLY MORE THAN THE REGULAR ARMY AND WOULD REQUIRE AN ENORMOUS ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORT.

IN MY EXPERIENCE, ANY ECONOMIES OF SCALE WOULD BE SWAMPED BY AN INEVITABLE AND SUBSTANTIAL RISE IN THE BUREAUCRACY NEEDED TO RUN SUCH A LARGE SINGLE UNDERTAKING. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MONEY SHOULD BE SPENT ON HUGE ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHIES.

THAT MONEY WOULD BE BETTER SPENT AT THE SHARP END - ON GETTING MORE OFFICERS OUT INTO THEIR COMMUNITIES. THIS MEANS VISIBLE IN THE STREETS, NOT INVISIBLE BEHIND DESKS.

THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT IS, I THINK, THE SIMPLEST ONE: DOES ANYONE REALLY WANT TO THROW OUT THE BENEFITS OF A POLICE SERVICE ROOTED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES, AND REPLACE IT WITH A POLICE FORCE THAT IS THE AGENT OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT? IN THIS COUNTRY POLICING HAS ALWAYS BEEN BY CONSENT AND REQUIRES THE REAL CO-OPERATION OF THE COMMUNITY - BOTH AS INDIVIDUALS, HELPING THE POLICE WITH INFORMATION, AND THROUGH LOCAL STRUCTURES RANGING FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH TO THE POLICE AUTHORITY ITSELF.

LOCAL POLICING

THE LOCAL ELEMENT IN POLICING IS THE HEART OF OUR POLICING SYSTEM. THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE 1964 POLICE ACT IS VALUABLE, BUT THE KEY ELEMENT IN THE ACT IS THE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF POLICING - THAT IS, THE DIVISION OF POWERS AND DUTIES BETWEEN THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, THE LOCAL POLICE AUTHORITY AND THE HOME SECRETARY. THERE IS A PATTERN OF CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE ACT THAT COMPELS ALL OF US TO RECOGNISE THAT DECISIONS ABOUT POLICING MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

THE OPERATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, AND THE VIEWS OF THE POLICE AUTHORITY, WHICH PROVIDES LOCAL FUNDING AND ACCOUNTABILITY, AND THE CONCERNS OF THE HOME SECRETARY. THERE ARE TENSIONS IN SUCH A SYSTEM, INEVITABLY, BUT THEY ARE A HEALTHY SIGN, REFLECTING PROPER INTERESTS AND STRONG CONVICTIONS.

I BELIEVE THAT THE LOCAL BASIS OF OUR POLICING IS ONE OF ITS GREAT STRENGTHS. BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN PRACTICE? WHAT DOES A COMMUNITY WANT FROM ITS LOCAL POLICE? FOR MOST PEOPLE THE ANSWER WILL BE A DECENT, SAFE NEIGHBOURHOOD IN WHICH TO BRING UP A FAMILY. THAT MEANS A VISIBLE POLICE PRESENCE ON THE STREETS; IT MEANS COURTESY IN DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC; IT MEANS PROFESSIONAL EFFICIENCY IN PREVENTING, DETERRING AND CATCHING CRIMINALS. AND IT ALSO MEANS A PROPER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY ABOUT WHAT THE NEEDS ARE AND HOW THEY SHOULD BE MET. BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE - THIS IS NOT SOME OPTIONAL EXTRA. THE POLICE AUTHORITY ITSELF PROVIDES FOR FORMAL ACCOUNTABILITY. BUT BEYOND THAT, AND LESS FORMALLY, PROPER CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

IS A SPECIFIC DUTY LAID ON THE POLICE AUTHORITY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, BY SECTION 106 OF THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE ACT 1984. IT IS WORTH REMINDING OURSELVES OF EXACTLY WHAT THE ACT SAYS:

"ARRANGEMENTS SHALL BE MADE IN EACH POLICE AREA FOR OBTAINING THE VIEWS OF PEOPLE IN THAT AREA ABOUT MATTERS CONCERNING THE POLICING OF THE AREA AND FOR OBTAINING THEIR CO-OPERATION WITH THE POLICE IN PREVENTING CRIME IN THE AREA."

PARLIAMENT'S INTENTION IN PUTTING THOSE WORDS INTO LAW WAS CLEARLY THAT THE VIEWS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY SHOULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART IN DECISIONS AFFECTING HOW THEY ARE POLICED. CONSULTATION IS NO EMPTY EXERCISE. THE LOCAL COMMUNITY RIGHTLY WANT TO KNOW WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THEIR POLICING AND WHO CAN RESPOND TO THEIR CONCERNS. CONSULTATION WILL BE A DEAD LETTER IF THE LOCAL POLICE CANNOT RESPOND TO LOCAL VIEWS BUT HAVE TO REFER EVERYTHING BACK TO FORCE HEADQUARTERS FOR A DECISION.

TO GIVE REAL EFFECT TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ALSO MEANS GIVING REAL STATUS TO LOCAL POLICE COMMANDERS. THAT MEANS SUPERINTENDENTS, CHIEF INSPECTORS, OR INSPECTORS, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE COMMUNITY. THEY MUST BE SEEN AS THE CHIEF POLICE OFFICER FOR THE TOWN OR DISTRICT IN QUESTION, AND THERE MUST BE CONFIDENCE THAT THEY CAN TAKE THE DECISIONS NEEDED FOR THAT COMMUNITY. I WANT TO SEE RE-EMERGING THE LOCAL CHIEF OF POLICE OF TOWNS LIKE RUGBY, OXFORD, STOCKTON, DORKING, YORK. THAT IMPLIES THE DEVOLUTION OF REAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM HEADQUARTERS TO THE LOCAL COMMANDER - RESPONSIBILITY FOR A LOCAL BUDGET; RESPONSIBILITY FOR JUDGING BETWEEN COMPETING PRIORITIES; AND REAL LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE FORCE.

THAT IS A CHALLENGE FOR THE WHOLE OF THE POLICE SERVICE. IT INVOLVES HEADQUARTERS GIVING LOCAL COMMANDERS THE FREEDOM TO MEET LOCAL ASPIRATIONS AND THE FREEDOM TO USE THEIR RESOURCES AS THEY JUDGE BEST. THE BEST FORCES WILL ALREADY BE WELL ON THE WAY TO THIS. FOR OTHERS IT MAY

INVOLVE SOME CHANGE OF CULTURE, WITH HEADQUARTERS FOCUSING ON THOSE FUNCTIONS WHICH ARE UNIQUELY THEIRS. AND IT MEANS THAT LOCAL COMMANDERS WILL HAVE A HIGHER PUBLIC PROFILE, ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY FOR THE STATE OF POLICING AND RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN DECISIONS. AND I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM STAYING LONGER IN THESE POSTS, WITHOUT HINDERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAREERS, SO THAT THERE CAN BE REAL PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN "THEIR" CHIEF. BUT WHAT I AM SUGGESTING HERE IS NOT, OF COURSE, UNIQUE TO THE POLICE SERVICE. WHETHER IN BUSINESS OR IN PUBLIC LIFE, WE HAVE FOR SOME TIME SEEN THE BENEFITS OF DEVOLVING BUDGETS, RESPONSIBILITY AND DECISIONS WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO THOSE WHO ACTUALLY DO THE JOB.

ALL THIS, OF COURSE, IS NOT AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE EXISTING RESPONSIBILITIES OF POLICE AUTHORITIES AND CHIEF CONSTABLES, BUT A LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEM, STRENGTHENING AND FURTHERING THE FORMAL LINKS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND ITS POLICE.

ON MY VISITS TO POLICE FORCES I HAVE SEEN THE THEORY OF LOCAL POLICING BEING PUT INTO PRACTICE. IN SURREY, THEY CALL IT "TOTAL GEOGRAPHIC POLICING". IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE, THEY CALL IT "SECTOR POLICING". IN THAMES VALLEY, THEY CALL IT "AREA POLICING". WHATEVER THE NAME, THE PURPOSE IS THE SAME: TO GIVE LOCAL OFFICERS THE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR PATCH, AND TO GIVE LOCAL COMMANDERS THE ABILITY TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS. I WANT TO SEE ALL FORCES GOING DOWN THIS ROAD.

POLICING IS ESSENTIALLY A LOCAL SERVICE WITH LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY, OPERATING WITHIN A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK AND TO NATIONAL STANDARDS, AND THAT IS WHAT I WANT TO EMPHASISE. THE DEBATE ON STRUCTURE MAY HAVE BEEN NECESSARY, AND HAS USEFULLY LED US TO CHECK THAT PRESENT STRUCTURES CAN INDEED MEET THE NEEDS OF POLICING IN THE YEARS AHEAD. BUT IT HAS BEEN SOMETHING OF A DISTRACTION, AND IT WOULD BE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE IF WE ALLOWED DEBATES ON STRUCTURE TO DISTRACT US FROM THE REAL BUSINESS OF IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF POLICING ON THE GROUND.

AMALGAMATIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

I WILL IN A MOMENT TURN TO QUALITY, AND TO THE CRUCIAL QUESTION OF WHAT THE POLICE DO, BUT BEFORE I LEAVE THE QUESTION OF STRUCTURE THERE ARE A FEW GHOSTS THAT I MUST LAY: I WANT THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION TO BE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR SO THAT THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ANY LINGERING DOUBTS ABOUT JUST WHAT OUR INTENTIONS ARE.

FIRST, AMALGAMATION. AS I HAVE SAID, THERE IS ALREADY A PROVISION IN THE POLICE ACT ALLOWING FORCES TO AMALGAMATE, OR TO BE AMALGAMATED AT MY INSTIGATION, SUBJECT TO A PUBLIC INQUIRY. I KNOW THERE IS CONCERN IN THE SMALLER FORCES ABOUT THEIR FUTURE, AND I CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT AT SOME TIME I OR MY SUCCESSORS MAY WANT TO REVIEW THE POSITION. THAT IS ONLY PRUDENT. BUT I MUST STRESS THAT I HAVE NO PRESENT PLANS TO PROPOSE ANY AMALGAMATION - THERE IS NO HIDDEN PLAN WAITING TO EMERGE. BUT NOR WOULD I RULE OUT AMALGAMATION IF FORCES THEMSELVES WANTED IT AND CAME FORWARD WITH REALISTIC PROPOSALS.

/SECOND, THE CURRENT LOCAL

SECOND, THE CURRENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW. THE REVIEW IS CONCERNED WITH THE BEST SIZE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY TO DELIVER THE SERVICES REQUIRED. IT IS NOT ABOUT POLICE AREAS AS SUCH. THE CHANGES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES SHOULD NOT CHANGE THE STRUCTURE OF POLICING. WHEN THE REORGANISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS COMPLETE, I WOULD EXPECT TO SEE THE SAME POLICE FORCES MAINTAINED BY POLICE AUTHORITIES ON EXISTING MODELS. WE WILL NOT BE CHANGING THE STRUCTURE OF POLICING AS AN ACCIDENTAL BY-PRODUCT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

I HOPE WE HAVE CONCLUDED THE DEBATE ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE POLICE SERVICE. THE DEBATE I WOULD LIKE TO SEE US DEVELOP NOW - AND IT DOES NEED TO BE A DEBATE - IS ON THE PRODUCT OF THE POLICE SERVICE, AND ESPECIALLY THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICE THEY PROVIDE TO THE PUBLIC. THE PERFORMANCE OF THE POLICE WILL BE AN IMPORTANT ITEM IN THE CITIZENS' CHARTER WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS DRAWING UP.

WE HEAR MUCH ABOUT CRIME RATES AND CLEAR-UP RATES PER OFFICER. THIS FOCUS ON CRIME IS UNDERSTANDABLE. BUT IT IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY. THE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT AROUND 75% OF POLICE TIME IS SPENT ON MATTERS OTHER THAN CRIME; EVERYDAY INCIDENTS OF NUISANCE, DOMESTIC DISPUTES, RESCUING STRAY ANIMALS, TRAFFIC WORK, PATROLLING OUR STREETS, AND GIVING ADVICE AND DIRECTIONS OR HELPING THE LOST CHILD. THESE EVENTS ARE INVISIBLE AS FAR AS THE CRIMINAL STATISTICS ARE CONCERNED AND DO NOT FIND THEIR WAY INTO OUR CUSTOMARY INDICATORS OF POLICE PERFORMANCE. THIS IS CLEARLY WRONG. JUST AS IT IS WRONG TO JUDGE THE EFFICIENCY OF ANY ORGANISATION SIMPLY BY LOOKING AT THE RESPONSE TO A FEW OF THE MANY DEMANDS OF ITS CUSTOMERS.

WE NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE POLICE. CRUDE STATISTICS ON REPORTED CRIME ARE NO REAL INDICATOR OF POLICE PERFORMANCE; AS A "TIMES" LEADER SAID RECENTLY, "THE PUBLIC SHOULD NOT BE SEDUCED INTO GENERALISING ABOUT THE STATE OF THE COMMUNITY FROM SO SMALL A GLIMPSE THROUGH SO PARTIAL A KEYHOLE". THE AUDIT COMMISSION ARE RIGHT TO

CRITICISE FUNDAMENTALLY THE NATURE OF PUBLISHED STATISTICS OF THE POLICE IN DEALING WITH CRIME. NOT ONLY ARE THERE SERIOUS GAPS IN MUCH OF THE DATA PRODUCED ABOUT POLICE PERFORMANCE ON CRIME, BUT SIMPLY TO RECORD WHAT AMOUNTS TO SOME 25% OF POLICE ACTIVITIES AS IF IT WAS ALL THAT MATTERED PRESENTS A GROSSLY DISTORTED PICTURE OF WHAT THE POLICE DO, WHY THEY DO IT, AND WHAT THE PUBLIC WANT FROM THEM.

WE NEED MUCH CLEARER PUBLISHED INFORMATION ABOUT POLICE PERFORMANCE. I HAVE ALREADY TAKEN STEPS TO ENSURE THAT FROM THE END OF THIS YEAR A MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE SET OF INDICATORS OF QUALITY WILL START BECOMING AVAILABLE FROM FORCES IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED BY THE INSPECTORATE.

WE WILL BE LOOKING FOR MUCH MORE SYSTEMATIC INFORMATION ON:

PROVIDING A FAIR AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY SERVICE - THIS WILL INCLUDE ROUTINE MONITORING ON AN ETHNIC AND GENDER BASIS OF ARRESTS, CAUTIONING RATES, STOP AND SEARCHES, LETTERS OF APPRECIATION, AND COMPLAINTS;

TREATING PEOPLE WITH SENSITIVITY AND COURTESY - INCLUDING ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TIMES TO TELEPHONE CALLS, THE SPEED AND MANNER IN WHICH VICTIMS ARE HELPED AND ADVISED, ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS, AND THE ACTUAL RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF CRIMES;

INVOLVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC - THE RANGE OF BODIES THE POLICE CONSULT LOCALLY, AND THE WAY IN WHICH LOCAL POLICE COMMANDERS USE THEIR RESOURCES TO MEET LOCAL DEMANDS AND TAKE FORWARD THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH THE COMMUNITY.

SOME FORCES HAVE ALREADY DEVELOPED TARGETS FOR ANSWERING TELEPHONE CALLS. MERSEYSIDE HAS REDUCED THE AVERAGE TIME TAKEN TO ANSWER A 999 CALL FROM 9.8 SECONDS IN 1990 TO 6 SECONDS. I WANT TO SEE ALL FORCES MAKING REAL MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS WHEREVER THERE IS SCOPE. AT THE SAME TIME WE NEED TO MONITOR THE ACTUAL RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS, TO HELP FORM A JUDGMENT ABOUT THE QUALITY OF POLICING, AS MUCH AS ITS SPEED, AND KENT, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE ALREADY DOING THIS.

BUT MEASUREMENT OF PERFORMANCE IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. WE NEED TO USE IT TO TURN THE IDEALS OF THE QUALITY OF SERVICE INITIATIVE INTO PRACTICE. THAT MEANS A PERSONAL COMMITMENT FROM EVERY POLICE OFFICER AND CIVILIAN THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT QUALITY AND SERVING THE CUSTOMER IS AT THE VERY CENTRE OF THE BUSINESS OF POLICING.

FOR MANAGERS IN THE SERVICE, IT MEANS CLEARER PRIORITIES AND COMMON GOALS AGREED WITHIN THE ORGANISATION AND WITH THE COMMUNITY. FOR OFFICERS ON THE BEAT, IT MEANS PROMPT INVESTIGATION OF CRIME; REASSURING HELP TO THE VICTIMS; COURTESY TO THOSE WITH COMPLAINTS; AND FIRMNESS WITH PEOPLE WHO BEHAVE UNACCEPTABLY.

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS MADE CLEAR IN LAUNCHING THE "CITIZENS' CHARTER" THAT THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS ALL PUBLIC SERVICES TO RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS. THE POLICE SERVICE IS NO EXCEPTION, AND INDEED IS MUCH FURTHER DOWN THIS ROAD THAN MANY OTHERS. THE QUALITY OF SERVICE INITIATIVE REPRESENTS A SUBSTANTIAL

CONTRIBUTION TO THE CITIZENS' CHARTER. AND IT IS ENORMOUSLY ENCOURAGING TO SEE HOW THE DRIVE FOR QUALITY OF SERVICE IS FULLY SUPPORTED BY THE STAFF ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTING ALL RANKS AND BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ASSOCIATIONS ON BEHALF OF POLICE AUTHORITIES. I WANT THE POLICE SERVICE TO SET AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES TO FOLLOW.

IT HAS ALREADY MADE GREAT STRIDES TOWARDS EQUAL TREATMENT IN EQUAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ALL ITS CUSTOMERS AND ALL ITS EMPLOYEES. TO SERVE A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY - AND TO REPRESENT IT - THE SERVICE IS WORKING VERY HARD TO MAKE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES A REALITY BOTH WITHIN ITS ORGANISATION AND IN THE WAY IT DEALS WITH MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

I WAS TREMENDOUSLY IMPRESSED TO SEE THE WORK OF A RECENT NATIONAL SEMINAR ON THIS ISSUE AT BRAMSHILL, AND TO WITNESS AT FIRST-HAND THE COMMITMENT OF SENIOR OFFICERS TO ENSURE THAT ALL THEIR PEOPLE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL AND THEIR DETERMINATION TO STAMP OUT

UNPROFESSIONALISM, RACISM AND SEXISM. THE POLICE SERVICE KNOW THEY STILL HAVE MORE WORK TO DO. BUT THERE HAS BEEN TREMENDOUS PROGRESS IN RECENT YEARS: WE NOW HAVE NEARLY 15,000 FEMALE OFFICERS AND 1,400 OFFICERS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS, AND THE NUMBERS ARE INCREASING ALL THE TIME.

I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS HERE MY ADMIRATION FOR THE LEVEL OF SERVICE PROVIDED BY THOUSANDS OF COMMITTED PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS EVERY DAY:

OFFICERS WORKING, OFTEN IN THEIR OWN TIME, WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND IN SCHOOLS. OFFICERS IN STAFFORDSHIRE AND AVON AND SOMERSET GIVE UP ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF TIME TO RUN ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN OVER THE HOLIDAYS, AND I WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY WHAT I SAW OF SIMILAR SCHEMES IN BRIXTON RECENTLY;

OFFICERS WHO SET UP PROJECTS WITH OTHER AGENCIES TO TACKLE INNER CITY PROBLEMS OR SENSITIVE AND OBNOXIOUS CRIMES LIKE RACIAL ATTACKS OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. LANCASHIRE POLICE HAVE JUST FULLY ESTABLISHED RACIAL

INCIDENTS PANELS IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTY. IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE OFFICERS FORM GROUPS OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS AND USE CYCLES OF STORIES TO HELP SCHOOLCHILDREN GROW UP FREE FROM RACIAL PREJUDICE;

AND ALL THOSE OFFICERS WHO THROUGH THEIR COMPASSION, GOOD HUMOUR, SENSE OF JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS AND GENUINE OPENNESS PROVIDE THE SERVICE THAT PEOPLE WANT DAY IN, DAY OUT, WHATEVER TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT, HOWEVER DANGEROUS OR UNPLEASANT THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

THIS IS THE COMMITMENT TO SERVING THE PUBLIC WHICH DRAWS MEN AND WOMEN TO A CAREER IN THE POLICE. AND A COMMITMENT, LET US NEVER FORGET, WHICH TOO OFTEN HAS MEANT COURAGEOUS OFFICERS RISKING INJURY, AND SOMETIMES DEATH, TO PROTECT YOU AND ME.

AND IF YOU COMPARE BRITISH POLICEMEN AND WOMEN WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS ABROAD, THE MAJOR DISTINCTION IS THAT HE OR SHE IS APPROACHABLE, READY TO HELP ANYONE, WHATEVER THE PROBLEM THEY BRING - A STARK CONTRAST TO THE FORBIDDING,

/REMOTE, ARMED FIGURES

REMOTE, ARMED FIGURES FOUND IN SOME COUNTRIES. I HAVE MET MANY YOUNG OFFICERS IN MANY DIFFERENT FORCES OVER THE LAST SIX MONTHS. I HAVE BEEN ENORMOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH THE HIGH QUALITY OF YOUNG RECRUITS TO THE POLICE SERVICE, WHO DEMONSTRATE THE COURAGE AND DEDICATION WHICH ARE AT THE HEART OF OUR POLICING.

THESE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE THE LIFE BLOOD OF THE POLICE SERVICE FOR YEARS TO COME. THEY WILL FACE EXTRAORDINARY AND UNIQUE DEMANDS DURING THEIR CAREERS. TO MAKE THE MOST OF THEIR TALENTS, THEY NEED AND DESERVE STRONG LEADERSHIP. NOT JUST LEADERSHIP IN THE OBVIOUS SENSE AT SENIOR LEVELS IN THE SERVICE - AT CHIEF CONSTABLE LEVEL AND IN ALL THE COMMAND RANKS OF THE SERVICE TO THE SUPERINTENDENT IN CHARGE OF A TOWN - BUT ALSO THE INSPECTORS AND SERGEANTS WHO ARE THE FRONT LINE SUPERVISORS, AND THE EXPERIENCED CONSTABLES WHO MUST THEMSELVES SHOW LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY.

I WANT TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE POLICE SERVICE IN THE 1990S HAS THE BEST POSSIBLE LEADERS.

THAT REQUIRES PROPER SELECTION IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND EFFECTIVE TRAINING TO ENSURE THAT ALL THOSE WHO CARRY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP, FROM THE SERGEANT TO THE CHIEF CONSTABLE, RECEIVE THE BEST POSSIBLE PREPARATION.

AS MY FINAL THEME, I WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT CRIME. THE CENTRAL AIMS OF THE POLICE SERVICE ARE TO PRESERVE THE PEACE AND PREVENT CRIME. THIS MEANS PROVIDING REASSURANCE TO THE PUBLIC, AS WELL AS BRINGING LAWBREAKERS TO BOOK. I COMMEND THE WORK BEING DONE BY MANY FORCES TO ANALYSE LOCAL CRIME PATTERNS AND DEVELOP ANTI-CRIME PROGRAMMES IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS. THIS INCLUDES HELPING THOSE WHO MAY BE THE VICTIMS OF CRIME TO TAKE BASIC PRECAUTIONS. AND IT INCLUDES WORKING WITH OTHERS, LIKE THE HOUSING AND PLANNING AUTHORITIES, TO ELIMINATE THE FEATURES OF LOCAL AMENITIES WHICH MAKE IT EASIER FOR CRIMINALS TO OPERATE.

SOME FORCES GO FURTHER IN WORKING DIRECTLY WITH PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY TO

STEER YOUNG PEOPLE AWAY FROM CRIME. I PAY TRIBUTE TO THE WORK DONE BY MANY POLICE OFFICERS WITH SCHOOLS, THE YOUTH SERVICE, THE PROBATION SERVICE, SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS, VOLUNTARY BODIES, LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, THE CHURCHES AND OTHERS. THEY ARE AIMING AT THE ROOTS OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR. A GREAT MANY CAN AND DO CONTRIBUTE; THE POLICE HAVE A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO MAKE.

MANY LOCAL PROJECTS, INCLUDING SOME IN THE HOME OFFICE'S SAFER CITIES PROGRAMME, HAVE SHOWN WHAT CAN BE DONE. NEXT MONTH I SHALL BE INVITING A NUMBER OF PEOPLE TO THE HOME OFFICE TO DISCUSS THEIR IDEAS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON HOW TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE KEEP OUT OF CRIME. I SHALL BE DRAWING FULLY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE POLICE SERVICE WHO HAVE LONG RECOGNISED ITS IMPORTANCE AND BEEN PIONEERS IN THIS SORT OF WORK.

WHAT I HAVE BEEN SAYING CHIMES WELL WITH WHAT SIR PETER SAID EARLIER ABOUT THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE POLICE FOUNDATION. I WELCOME THE WILLINGNESS OF THE FOUNDATION TO RE-EXAMINE ITS ROLE, AND I AM SURE THAT A CLEAR STATEMENT OF

MISSION WILL HELP EVERYONE TO SEE HOW MUCH IT HAS TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE COMMUNITY. I KNOW THAT THE FOUNDATION IS ALREADY SEEN AS A RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON POLICE MATTERS AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT AN ENHANCED INFORMATION SERVICE WILL BE GREATLY VALUED.

CONCLUSION

SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US? WHAT ARE THE MAIN POINTS I WANT TO TAKE FORWARD AS THE HEART OF THIS GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO THE POLICE?

FIRSTLY, TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL IDENTITY OF POLICING, BUILDING ON THE RECIPROCAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMMUNITY AND ITS POLICE;

SECONDLY, TO FOCUS ON QUALITY OF SERVICE AS THE REALITY OF DAILY POLICING AND THE KEY TO PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENCE;

AND FINALLY, TO TAKE OUR ATTACK ON CRIME BEYOND CRIME PREVENTION AND INTO THE CHALLENGE OF STEERING YOUNG PEOPLE AWAY FROM CRIME IN THE FIRST PLACE.

THERE IS MUCH TO BE DONE IN TAKING FORWARD POLICING, BUT WE ARE BUILDING ON A SOLID BASE. MY VISION FOR POLICING IN THE 1990S IS NOT ABOUT GRAND STRATEGIES, ANY MORE THAN IT IS ABOUT STRUCTURES OR OTHER SEDUCTIVE BUT INTANGIBLE BENEFITS. I AM DETERMINED THAT EVERY POLICE FORCE SHOULD BELONG TO ITS PEOPLE, ITS COMMUNITY. WHERE THE LOCAL POLICE COMMANDER HAS THE POWER AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO SET HIS OR HER PRIORITIES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMUNITY. WHERE ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, WHENEVER THEY WALK DOWN A STREET AT WHATEVER TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT, FEEL REASSURED AND MORE CONFIDENT BY THE SIGHT OF ONE OF THEIR POLICE OFFICERS. AND WHERE THE POLICE THEMSELVES, THROUGH THEIR LOYALTY TO THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE, ARE SUCH A PART OF LOCAL LIFE THAT LAW AND ORDER IS SEEN TO GROW FROM THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.

MY AIM ABOVE ALL IS TO BUILD ON OUR GREATEST STRENGTH: THE QUALITY OF LOCAL POLICING BY DEDICATED OFFICERS. THE GREATEST GOAL IS THE COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE AND POLICE ARE AT ONE. I AM PROUD TO PLEDGE MY EFFORTS AND THOSE OF THE

GOVERNMENT BEHIND THE WELL-TESTED AND WIDELY
ACCEPTED MAXIM OF POLICING BY CONSENT. THAT IS
WHERE OUR STRENGTH LIES; THAT IS WHERE OUR
FUTURE LIES; AND THAT IS THE WAY WE BUILD
PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN A POLICE
SERVICE WE CAN RIGHTLY BE PROUD OF.