



Policing Methods

A Discussion Document

December 1981

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POLICING METHODS

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A discussion paper on an approach
to research policy following reorganisation

Research Services Department
Humberside Police
December 1981

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ACQUISITIONS

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper is submitted as a discussion document within Research Services Department.
- 1.2. The major philosophy embraced may be expressed as; "an attempt to establish an approach to policing methods, appropriate for the newly reorganised Humberside Police, hence making maximum use of our new structure - and avoiding the importation of "solutions" in advance of establishing the existence of problems, and the appropriateness of any such solutions".
- 1.3. In order to achieve the above, we would urge an approach of building from the ground upwards, by a process of problem identification. The approach recommended relies heavily on establishing close links with the community in order to avoid the identification of "police - perceived problems" and subsequent action in isolation by the police - resulting in satisfaction only for the police.
- 1.4. The 'second - leg' of this process is the establishment of a micro - computer based Management Information System.
- 1.5. Thereafter, the approach demands flexibility, and the capacity for Sub Divisional Commanders to respond to the problems identified.

2. The Current Position

Before outlining proposals for future research and policy, we feel it is relevant to review, if only briefly, the position that the police service generally and Humberside police in particular, finds itself at the present time.

2.1. Humberside

As a result of the review of the Force the organisation structure has undergone an almost total metamorphosis. In so far as this affects our operational behaviour and thus our policing methods and inter face with the public there are three principal areas of relevance.

2.1.1. Sub Divisional Responsibility

In their final submissions, P.A. had this to say about the role of the Sub Division.

"..... early discussion at Chief Officer level suggested a series of intentions or objectives
Confirm the Sub Divisional Commander as the key man in terms of day to day control of policing operations, with the Divisional Commander assuming a role of manager and co-ordinator of operational unit Commanders" (P.A. 1980).

and later

"The territorial Sub Division is the key unit for the control of every day policing operations" (P.A. 1980).

These points having been accepted by the Chief Officers of the Force, it is plain that responsibility for operational decision making rests fairly and squarely with the Sub Divisional Commander concerned.

2.1.2. The Role of the Division

At the same time the role of the Divisional Commander and other Divisional staff was identified as follows:

"The Divisional Commander ought not to become involved in day to day control of policing operations. His role is to manage and co-ordinate the activities of the Sub Divisional Commander (and others) who are responsible for operational control" (P.A. 1980).

Thus it follows that Divisional Commanders will be primarily responsible for interpretation of policy and the exercise of a form of inspectorate role. Additionally they will co-ordinate the function of their Sub Divisions, especially with regard to deployment of resources within the Division.

2.1.3. Centralised Functions

The centralisation of a number of operations which were previously carried out on a Divisional or Sub Divisional basis has had the twin objectives of either, relieving operational staff from time consuming routine paperwork or standardising procedure across the Force. Specifically Inspectors are now no longer committed to spending lengthy periods checking offence reports due to the revised prosecutions procedure and there should be a consistent force policy with regard to juvenile offenders under the re-structured Community Liaison Branch. There are other examples but these two are particularly relevant to this paper, as will become apparent.

2.2. The Police Service in General

It can scarcely have escaped anybody's notice that the methods and policies of the Police Service have been the subject of extensive scrutiny for some time. In the immediate past we have had the Scarman Report, but research into policing methods

has been a matter of considerable interest, both nationally and internationally for many years.

3. Research Findings

Before undertaking our own in house research and experimentation it is vital to thoroughly review what has been said by others so as not to "re-invent the wheel".

Much of the empirical research material published has its origins in the United States and there are many factors which are irrelevant to policing in the United Kingdom. For example, the appointment of Senior Officers, use of firearms and the pre-trial process. Nevertheless important similarities can be found, the limitations which constrain the performance of a North American Officer would be recognised by his British counterpart, similarly while the amount of crime may vary between countries, the broad characteristics are essentially similar, in both countries much crime is committed in private places and thus is inaccessible to the police. The point is that whilst care should be taken to consider the relevance of American research to British practice, much of it is of considerable use.

The research into policing during the past two decades can be conveniently grouped under the following headings:

3.1. Mythology of the Police

The term "myth" in this context refers to a belief, neither true or untrue, real or unreal which enables members of a society to interpret reality in relatively simplistic terms. The mythology of policing leads both the police and many, if not all of their various publics to hold shared expectations

of their role in society. Popular conceptions about policing tend to draw on the metaphor of warfare: The police are engaged in a "War against Crime" (Presidents Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration 1967). As a corollary of this the primary task for the police is seen by many as the suppression of crime and the pursuit of criminals; and main weaponry in the war are strategies of deterrence. The preventive patrol, the detection of crime and the work of specialist squads are regarded therefore as tactics of central importance. (Morris and Heal 1981).

This mythology is supported by a number of factors;

- 3.1.1. Firstly the individual member of the public subscribes to the myth because he wishes to believe in the efficiency of the service and its ability in times of crisis or danger to place a policeman at his side within minutes.
- 3.1.2. Secondly the police emphasise the importance of the crime fighting role at the expense of more mundane aspects of police work.
- 3.1.3. Thirdly the media sustain the crime fighting image. As Sir Robert Mark argued, the acceptability of the Force depends upon its accountability - not least to public opinion which the mass media plays a significant part in forming. (Mark 1971).
- 3.1.4. Finally the training given to Police Officers is heavily slanted towards the crime fighting role and it may be argued that as a result does not provide sufficient instruction in how to handle the incidents most commonly confronting Police Officers.

3.1.5. Much research has shown that surprisingly little time is in fact spent by operational police officers in recording, investigating or otherwise dealing with crime matters¹ Similarly the majority of the calls for the public are unconnected with crime matters.

3.2. Effectiveness

Discussion of police effectiveness inevitably raises the broader issue of accountability. Seldom has this been more clearly stated than in the recent Scarman Report.

3.2.1. It has been recognised for some time that where improved performance stems from the use of specialist squads and tactics, accountability may stand in opposition to effectiveness. Judgements about police effectiveness will vary according to the evaluation and any discussion of effectiveness must necessarily be relative. Furthermore, it should be recognised that factors outside the control of the police play a major part in determining how effective the police can be.

3.2.2. Effectiveness has been defined in general terms as the extent to which a particular resource is accomplishing its purpose, and for the most part it is assessed without regard to costs or other inputs, although an effectiveness ratio may be computed by dividing the output achieved by the maximum output possible. (Riccio 1978). Thus the 'Detection' or 'Clearance' ratio provides an obvious example.

1. e.g. Comrie and Kings (1974) found that only 28% of total duty time was spent on crime matters in Provincial Forces.

3.2.3. Efficiency on the other hand measures the extent to which resources input to a particular function actually perform that function. For example the percentage of patrol staffs time actually spent on patrol as opposed to parading, court etc. The distinction between effectiveness and efficiency is vital if we are considering research into methods of policing.

3.2.4. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between police effectiveness and Crime Control effectiveness. The importance of this distinction can be recognised by considering that one consequence of measurement in any organisation is for its members to concentrate on those activities that are capable of being measured at the expense of those less tangible areas of activity which are difficult, if not impossible, to measure such as crime prevention, social assistance and the maintenance of public order. (Fisk 1974).

3.2.5. Research on the relationship between police strength and Crime Rates has produced much of interest (Carr-Hill and Stern 1979, Greenwood and Wadycki 1973). The findings may be summarised as follows:

- The higher the clearance rate the lower the crime rate;
- The larger the number of police in an area the higher the recorded offence rate; and
- The larger the number of police in an area the lower the rate at which offences were cleared.

3.2.6. These results have been attributed to the 'recording phenomena' whereby more police lead to more offences being recorded, either because the police discover more offences themselves or more

likely because they record more of the offences reported to them by the public. While it would appear that more police lead to lower clearance rates it is not suggested that the police are ineffective or fail to deter criminals, rather that the recording effect serves to mask out deterrent effects.

- 3.2.7. The implication of this research is that measurement of police effectiveness using recorded crime rates is a problem that has to be approached with a degree of caution marked by its absence in many police sponsored research projects.

3.3. Patrol Work

In the view of O.W. Wilson, (Wilson and Mahonen 1963), the aim of preventive patrol is to establish a sense of police visibility, to create a feeling of police 'omnipresence' and thereby reduce crime. While this is intuitively a reasonable expectation, it is only recently that the effectiveness of patrolling in the prevention of crime has been empirically examined. Research in this area has produced conflicting results.

- 3.3.1. In 1969 a complex experiment was carried out in four British cities (Bright 1969). The police strength on various beats was systematically varied from 0 to 4. The findings suggested that when the patrol strength rose from 0 to 1 there was a decrease in the level of reported crimes. There was no evidence to suggest that an increase from 1 to 2 produced a similar effect and only very tentative evidence that greater increases in patrol strength caused any reaction.

- 3.3.2. The well known Kansas City preventive patrolling experiment, (Kelling et al 1974) carried out in a similar fashion found that there was no significant differences to be found in reported crime, victimisation rates or level of public satisfaction as a result of varying patrol strengths.

- 3.3.3. It is frequently stated that the chance of making arrests and the level of public satisfaction is significantly increased by swift responses to calls. Several studies have been undertaken in this area both in the United States, (Isaacs 1967, Clouson and Chang 1977, Bieck 1977) and this country, (Heal 1981) and extensive amounts of financial and technological resource devoted to reducing response times. The studies in this area tend to refute the intuitive beliefs. The principle factor influencing the arrest probability is the time taken by members of the public to contact the police. In more than 50% of urgent calls this time has been found to be in excess of 5 minutes and in those circumstances the chance of arrest is unaffected by the speed of the police response. Similarly public satisfaction is almost entirely influenced by the service or response time they have been led to expect by the police officer to whom they speak on the telephone.

- 3.3.4. A recent study in New Jersey, (Kelling and Pate 1980) on the impact of foot patrol activity found that there was no relationship between recorded crime levels and foot patrol intensity but that residents saw the severity of crime decreasing and took fewer precautions in areas of high patrol density,

although this result was not true for commercial respondents (shop keepers etc).

3.3.5. The most optimistic conclusion to be drawn regarding the effectiveness of patrolling on foot or by car, is that very substantial increases in patrol manpower or the introduction of patrol to an area where none previously existed may, on occasions, lead to a reduction in particular types of crime though for only short periods of time.

3.3.6. There is some evidence to suggest that specialised police tactics may have an effect on crime although this may only be a short term gain. However the studies have demonstrated that such a strategy may incur costs in the form of public alienation from the police, or rivalry between one group of officers and the next.

3.4. Criminal Investigation

It has been successfully argued, (Reiss and Banduce 1967) that the vast majority of cases cleared by arrest solve themselves in the sense that the offender is known to the complainant or the police at the time the crime is reported. There is a paradoxical relationship between the way in which detective work is organised to solve those crimes and how crimes are actually solved. Police departments ideally organise Criminal Investigation Departments to solve those crimes that require intensive investigation. Yet most of the knowledge that contributes to the solution

is based on citizen information on the identity of the suspect.

3.4.1. Of the time spent by detectives on duty it is estimated that a third is spent on investigating specific cases and upto half on office matters such as typing reports, reviewing files, informal meetings etc.

3.4.2. Mawby's work in Sheffield, (Mawby 1979) demonstrates the value of interviewing suspects. Approximately 40% of a sample of detected standard list offences were found to have been detected indirectly as a result of routine police interviews with offenders caught for other offences.

3.4.3. Further support for these observations is found very close to home. Research into detective work in Hull, (Bottomley and Coleman 1976) found that in 26% of detected cases the police were presented with a ready made solution at the scene of the crime, for a further 24% were detected by means of information from complainants, victims or witnesses. The number of cases detected as a result of 'real detective work' (informants, contacts, intelligence systems etc) accounted for 5% of detections. Special enquiries (e.g. house to house) amounted to 2% and 'set ups' or 'plants' a further 2%.

3.4.4. On the basis of these and other studies there is little doubt that the detection and clearance of the commoner forms of crime depend for the most part on the willingness and ability of the public to report criminal incidents to the police. However, it is important not to overlook those areas where the skills of

information gathering, locating suspects, interviewing and case preparation are of principal value.

3.5. Community Policing

As in most aspects of police work the term 'Community Policing' is open to a wide variety of interpretations. For the purpose of this paper it is taken to mean a strategy of policing whereby responsibility for control of crime within the Community is shared between the police and the public.

3.5.1. It has been suggested, (Parkinson 1977) that the most significant aspect of this approach consists in the breaking down of barriers and when the police act as a catalyst for the involvement of other professions and citizens. However, in order for this approach to be fruitful it is necessary that communities exist that share similar values and members capable of self regulation through development of police community relations.

3.5.2. There are many theoretical, practical and ethical problems associated with this approach. Firstly the police play a politically ambivalent role and the resolution of a particular conflict may be to the satisfaction of one group at the expense of another. Similarly while they may be perceived as being involved in community relations they may be actually engaged in social control.

3.5.3. Secondly the concept of community policing rests on the assumption of the feasibility of 'the return to some

arcadian existence where (crime) is kept in check by the local community, that is by the commonality of ordinary people', (Croft 1979).

3.5.4. In practice the nature of a mobile pluralist society may create a totally different scenario;

"In the anonymity of the city street, the factory and the market place, the opportunities for crime are multiplied social and geographical mobility have created relationships that cannot be governed by informal controls", (Bantor 1978).

3.5.5. A third obstacle arises over collaboration on information sharing between the police and other agencies. This aspect raises questions of accountability, responsibility and protection of individual rights.

3.5.6. That these problems can be overcome is evidenced by the success of such exercises as the 'Grange Project' in Humberside and by the work of the Crime Prevention Support Unit in Devon and Cornwall.

3.6. The Scarman Report

It is unlikely that the Scarman Report needs much introduction in this paper. It is arguably the single most important publication affecting the police service since the Royal Commission Report of 1961 - 62. Not so much in respect of what it says but because of the public and media attention it has engendered and the consequent political atmosphere generated.

3.6.1. It is not proposed to detail all the recommendations contained in the report in this paper. Many of them are specific to the Metropolitan Police and to other areas over which the Humberside

Force has no influence, in any event the subject will have already been the subject of extensive review and further comment is unlikely to be especially productive.

However, there are two specific points which it is felt relevant to discuss here.

3.6.2. Firstly there is a strong, and specific recommendation concerned with the establishment of local consultative or community liaison committees.

3.6.3. Scarman states that local Police Authorities can use existing powers to set up these bodies and comments that there should be statutory obligation on Chief Officers to co-operate in their establishment. Lord Scarman does not elaborate on how he sees these bodies operating or on precisely how they should be constituted or what powers they should have. We feel that there is considerable potential in this proposal and will return to it in greater detail later in this paper.

3.6.4. Secondly, Lord Scarman makes a number of points on how he considers the methods of policing should develop. Whilst acknowledging the need for 'hard' policing tactics in certain situations he recommends that Chief Officers, in consultation with their Police Authorities and with local community leaders should re-examine the methods of policing used, with particular reference to:

- the pattern of patrolling, especially the mix of foot and mobile patrols,

- the role of the Home Beat Officer, with particular emphasis on ways in which they can be integrated more effectively into the mainstream of operational policing,
- the provision of opportunities for operational officers to get to know the community they are policing,
- ways of ensuring greater continuity and a balanced spread of officers of different ages in more sensitive inner city areas.

3.6.5. This paper may in fact form the basis for the very review that Scarman envisages, however, it will not be sufficient simply to write reports and introduce policing experiments.

3.6.6. The debate must be entered with the local community. This may prove uncomfortable for many police 'professionals' who may discover that the community's views of their policing needs differ in fact from what has traditionally been perceived, nevertheless, unless we know, and understand what is wanted of us we cannot hope to provide it. This debate must, if we are to follow Scarman, extend to those areas commonly regarded as 'operational' or 'for consideration by professionals only'.

4. Principles for Action

In order to adopt a rational approach to research into policing methods it is felt necessary to itemise a number of ground rules to which that research should conform. These rules should not however be taken too literally, rather a flexible approach should be adopted within the structure outlined below.

4.1. Identification of Needs

Before any major change in a Sub Division's policing strategy is put into operation it is essential that a need for that change is established. This need could manifest itself in a number of different ways; public concern, low morale, high crime or incident rates, a high concentration of juvenile offenders. All these phenomena must be capable of recognition by those responsible for the local policing strategy and will lead to a modified service if and only if such a change is in fact warranted. In order for these factors to be monitored by the Sub Divisional Command they will need to be aware, not only of community feelings but of incident and crime patterns that are developing within their areas.

4.2. Avoidance of Imposed Schemes

As a general rule, we believe that the impetus for a change in strategy should come from the Sub Divisional staff and not as a result of imposition by a Headquarters Department. The reason for this is straightforward. The most important factor in any policing project is the personnel who implement and administer it. If they are inclined to support it then the

potential for success is immeasurably improved. If they oppose it or are resentful of the way it has been thrust upon them then, notwithstanding the environment of a disciplined service, the project will be doomed from the outset.

4.3. Avoidance of Inappropriate Imported Schemes

It should be axiomatic of good management that means should be tailored to needs, however there is a strong temptation to adopt schemes seen as successful elsewhere without first considering their relevance to the areas and circumstances involved. This has probably been the principle reason behind the failure of the Unit Beat concept. Developed in Accrington, Lancashire, there is no doubt that it is regarded as highly successful in that area, however its portability was not established properly and the concept was introduced into areas which were utterly inappropriate. As a result the whole concept has now fallen into disrepute among a large section of observers. This total disrepute is equally as misguided as the blind faith it was originally the subject of.

4.4. The Establishment of Objectives

Police decision making, like many other aspects of police work, has tended to be reactive in nature. This has been evidenced by the way in which short term deployments frequently take place to cover eventualities that have arisen and finished even though there is an extremely low probability of them recurring. Very little attempt is made in the service to

forecast needs and identify real trends as opposed to transient peaks and troughs in demand. This is not to say that it is possible to predict accurately that (say) a run of burglaries is going to be committed in a given area at a given time. Such concepts only exist in the pages of science fiction. However, it is perfectly possible to identify that the weekly trend in burglaries in that same area is in a particular direction and that tactics could then be varied to meet the changing situation as it arose. It is suggested that, as a principle, objectives should be set as a means of monitoring performance and identifying promising policing strategies.

4.5. Use Headquarters Departments in Advisory Role

As has already been stated the role of Headquarters Departments should not include the imposition of 'pet' schemes on Sub Divisions. Rather they should be seen to offer a consultative and advisory service to the staff who are actually engaged in the scheme. Two Headquarters Departments in particular, will have an important role to play in this respect.

4.5.1. Firstly Force Services Department, Community Relations Branch will be best able to advise Sub Divisional staff over the establishment of liaison with community leaders and other local agencies. It should be stressed, however, that this role should be definitely advisory in nature, Force Services Department should avoid the temptation to become involved in the administration of the scheme for two reasons;

- if schemes are introduced in many of the Sub Divisions of the Force the Force Services Department will quickly become overloaded if they take too active a role in each of them.
- it should be stressed that the scheme is the responsibility of the Sub Divisional staff. If Headquarters Departments become too involved then it will rapidly be seen as 'their' scheme by operational officers and will founder.

4.5.2. The other Department with a major role will be Research Services Department. The Research Services Department should develop a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluation of policing schemes based on the particular skills with which staff in that Department have been equipped or have developed. The Research Services Department will be able to assist with pre-project establishment of control data, formulation of objectives, identification of potentially useful tactics to meet those objectives, the provision of an information system to supply the need for objective data and a monitoring or evaluation procedure which will enable management to establish the effectiveness of the project.

5. Community Contact

As already mentioned there is a strong recommendation by Lord Scarman, in favour of the establishment of local consultative committees. It is felt that this is an area with very considerable potential and therefore we suggest a way in which this could be achieved in Humberside.

5.1. We suggest that these committees could be established at Sub Divisional level. The incentive for their formation should come from the police and with this in mind contact could be established between the Sub Divisional Commander and representatives of local residents associations, local councillors, local government officers with responsibility for the area (e.g. housing and social services), local schools etc. The meetings should be formal in nature with a project agenda and should be held, on average once a month. The chair should be held by different people each month and the meeting place should not always be the same.

5.2. It can be seen that the format suggested is very similar to that adopted for management of the 'Grange Project' in Grimsby, however it is suggested that the terms of reference should be wider than simply one estate or one specific problem.

5.3. It will be important to ensure that, while a broad spectrum of the community is represented, the committee does not become a political forum nor does it become unwieldy.

5.4. Membership of the committee should at first be at the invitation of the Sub Divisional Commander but as soon as it is functioning additional members should be invited by a simple vote of the committee.

5.5 It should be established at the outset that the committee is a consultative body and as such will have no executive function. In the final analysis the police officers will have to make a decision about what is operationally and practically the correct course of action to take, however it is suggested that members of the body should have certain privileges extended to them. Perhaps they could be invited to visit the Sub Divisional Headquarters at their will, so long as this privilege is not abused. There could be a formal right of the committee as a body to petition the Chief Constable or the Police Authority over matters that cannot be resolved at a lower level. (Members would of course have this right as individuals in any event).

5.6 The purpose of the committee should be two fold; Firstly to ensure that a dialogue takes place between the police and the community it serves. As a result of this dialogue many potential problems may be resolved before they arise simply because they were subject to open discussion, additionally some problems which were hitherto hidden, unrealised or perceived to be insoluble will be more readily identified and subjected to far greater resources than before. The second objective of the consultative body will be to ensure that consultation is seen to be taking place. If this can be achieved then many problems may never occur at all simply because public confidence will be maintained at a higher level.

5.7 The approach outlined above will require considerable moral courage on the part of those police officers called upon to administer it. The idea will be anathema to some who may see the committee as an unwarranted encroachment on their professional autonomy nevertheless we feel that, properly constituted, there is enormous potential in the prospect.

6. Information Systems

Management Information Systems in the police have had a very chequered history. Police management have enjoyed an honeymoon period with information technology. The relationship is beginning to sour, as the technology fails to live upto its promises. There are signs of an over reaction in which the technology will be seen as totally valueless, (Hough 1980) however this reaction will be as unfortunate as the blind acceptance that preceded it.

6.1. If the twin concepts of 'problem identification' and 'community involvement' are to be implemented, then it is vital that the Sub Divisional management teams are provided with a first class source of factual information.

6.2. In order for the operational police Commander to rationalise the conflicting claims of his fellow committee members he will need to be able to present accurate, up to date factual information about the level of crimes, accidents, disorders and other incidents within his Sub Division. The maintenance of the level of information system required cannot practically be undertaken manually. 'One off' searches through records are not only troublesome and expensive to mount but may well fail to present a sufficiently comprehensive picture to satisfy those with an interest in the situation. Additionally it will be necessary to carry out routine statistical analysis of data in order to identify significant trends and variations. To date crime analysis has been a slow laborious process. However, the ready availability of the micro computer overcomes this problem. Capable of being installed relatively cheaply at Sub Divisional

level, it places at the disposal of the patrol officer, his supervisor and management, precise and relevant information that hitherto has slipped into oblivion as soon as it was filed, (Ramsey and Heal 1980).

- 6.3. The potential of a micro computer based Sub Divisional M.I.S. is illustrated most clearly by a comment by the Chief Constable of Lancashire when discussing the Skelmersdale Project:

"Only in one aspect of the experiment - the remarkable economy and accuracy of Incident Logging backed by a computer programmed by police officers - have we seen fit to reach a firm decision. The efficiency of this became so clear at an early stage that we have introduced it throughout the Divisions of the Force". (Laugharne 1980).

- 6.4. A detailed report covering the way in which such an Information System could be cheaply introduced will be submitted separately.

7. Specific Approaches

Notwithstanding what was said in section 4 concerning the adoption of packaged or neatly labelled programs, irrespective of their relevance, it will probably be of help to itemise some of the principal strategies available to Sub Divisional Commanders. This list is not intended to be exhaustive and it must be stressed that in each of the approaches outlined there may be components which will not be appropriate to all circumstances. Once again, the objective of matching means to needs must be emphasised.

7.1. Intensive Policing

This method relies on the availability of a sizeable pool of manpower which can be called upon to swamp an area and provide an high visibility, high density patrol. It can have the effect of alienating sections of the community who may be inconvenienced by such tactics. It is highly expensive in terms of manpower and resources and can therefore only be mounted over short periods of time. This is probably no bad thing because the research has shown that this tactic, if effective at all, is only so for a short period. Nevertheless it is likely to be of use in areas where there are severe but short term public order problems whose temporary nature does not justify a high level of establishment for the area concerned.

7.2. Formation of Specialist Squads

The efficiency of these squads is highly dubious when presented with the task of investigating a class of offences rather than one specific matter such as a murder or a series of offences

which have some major common factor e.g., a run of burglaries apparently attributed to the same offender. All the evidence is that where problems are created by the predominance of a certain class of offence over a period of time it is far more effective to ensure that all Officers are thoroughly familiar with the nature, pattern and methods involved. Exceptions to this rule are where peaks in the level of a particular type of offence can be fairly reliably predicted and Officers deployed to cope with these in advance (for example shoplifters on Saturdays or at Christmas time) or if the offence in question is highly technical (e.g. Fraud). Thus in the circumstances outlined above it has been found far more productive to ensure that the collator is disseminating information as widely and thoroughly as possible.

7.3. Split Force Policing

This term owes its origin to an experiment in Wilmington, (Tien et al 1978). The scheme was based on a separation of the call for service response and the crime prevention functions of a patrol. To achieve this method of policing, it was necessary to increase the efficiency of the call for service response so that a dedicated preventative patrol could be formed. This was done by ensuring that the reactive units were deployed in better proportion to the temporal distribution of calls from the public for assistance and by carefully allocating priorities to calls. The low priority calls (86%) could be delayed if necessary. This exercise has been largely repeated at Skelmersdale and Blackburn under the name 'Split Level' policing.

7.3.1. Both the American and English schemes claim a slight reduction in reported crime together with an improvement in detection rate and a maintenance or improvement in public attitudes. The papers published on the Lancashire exercise claim that the attitude of Police Officers working the scheme has also improved dramatically however there would appear to have been a tendency for rifts to develop between the 'Reactive' and 'Proactive' or 'Structured' sections. Certainly the reviewers or the Wilmington experiment identified a lack of communication and co-operation between the sections but suggested that this could be mitigated by more careful organisation of the units work.

7.3.2. It could be argued, and powerfully so, that this method of policing is little more than a rejigging of the way in which the 'Unit Beat Scheme' has developed in practice, with area men being supported by foot and panda patrols.

7.4. Team Policing

This approach cannot be said to be a revised version of traditional methods except in so far as it extends a method of policing which has proved itself in the rural areas to the urban environment.

The way in which team policing operates may be summarised as follows:

7.4.1. A Sub Division will be sub divided into sections (probably about four), each of which should be as homogenous as possible. Each section then has assigned to it a team of patrol Officers,

detectives, supervisors etc., who will, so far as is practicable, not be deployed outside this area. Hours of duty will be worked out within the teams, dependent upon local need and subject to a requirement to ensure that sufficient men are on duty to cater for a first line response to some major Sub Divisional emergency.

7.4.2. The aim should be to make each team as self sufficient as possible. Ideally teams should have a base on their area that they can use for report writing, parading etc. Inspectors should be appointed as team leaders and they will be primarily responsible for the area policed by their team. However, Inspectors will have to provide a roster cover for the Sub Division and it must be made very clear that 'poaching' of manpower from other teams will not be permitted except in the most urgent cases.

7.4.3. There are six key elements to the establishment of a successful team policing project, (Wasson 1975).

7.4.4. Stability of Geographic Assignment

This means that the team of Officers are solely responsible for the delivery of police service to a defined geographical area. They should have control over what tactical units enter the area and there should be continuities of despatching i.e., Officers should not be sent to calls outside their area. This geographic stability will allow the working police Officer to build up an intimate knowledge of his area and will improve the channels of communication with the public.

7.4.5. Decentralisation of Authority

This element implies that the teams will be responsible for shift scheduling to meet workloads, decisions as to when or where to work in uniform or plainclothes, and most important, planning of team objectives, programs of action and even budget preparation.

7.4.6. Emphasis on Community Relations

This element may take a number of forms; the teams should be encouraged to involve themselves with the community of their area by setting up meetings, referral of appropriate problems to other agencies and other informal contacts.

7.4.7. Emphasis on Crime Prevention

This is a major facet of the team policing approach. It relies on placing considerable emphasis on prevention, if necessary at the expense of detection, by identification of potential offenders by close co-operation with the public and by identification of potential targets.

7.4.8. Internal Communications

Careful attention to internal communications is vital to successful team policing. Team conferences should be scheduled at regular intervals to provide for the exchange of information and education of team members. In addition inter-team meetings should be held to ensure that ideas formulated and information obtained is disseminated throughout the Sub Division. It may be that the collator could play a key role here by the medium of a regular bulletin or newsletter.

7.4.9. Reduced Use of Specialists

This implies a reduction of the reliance upon specialists for criminal and traffic matters which can largely be dealt with within the team structure. Team members should be encouraged to take greater responsibilities for the investigation of minor or routine crimes. Detectives should be assigned to the teams to assist in investigations and to provide advice. There will be a need to retain a centralised detective function for serious or complex matters or those which are part of a pattern which transcends team boundaries.

7.4.10. Team policing requires that the Sub Divisional Commander and his deputy have considerable faith in the concept. They must be prepared to devolve considerable authority and play very much a managerial rather than supervisory role. They will need to resist the temptation to interfere excessively in the operation of the teams while maintaining an interest and of course the overall responsibility for the policing of the Sub Division.

7.4.11. Similarly the team approach places an additional burden upon the team leaders who will need to plan their teams operations far more carefully and thoroughly than they are currently expected to plan for shifts. By giving these Officers complete responsibility for a specific area it is suggested that they will be able to develop a far more consistent and methodical approach to policing than they currently do during an eight hour span of responsibility for the whole Sub Division.

7.5. Situational Policing (Gladstone 1980, Ramsay and Heal 1980, Hough 1981)

This method, also labelled 'The Crime Specific Approach' is less a method of policing than a management responsibility.

The aim here is to present an approach to crime prevention which is more tightly focussed than the traditional approach. It is argued that it is more effective to seek to work with those individuals responsible for planning and management of places repeatedly proving themselves to be troublesome and thereby tackle problems at source.

7.5.1. It is further argued that there is nothing inevitable about recurrent trouble at a particular place; nor will it necessarily be displaced to another location.

7.5.2. During research in Southampton recently, (Ramsay and Heal 1980) the most troublesome pub was closed by the brewery which owned it, the clientele and its reputation had done nothing to make it profitable. There was no indication that this closure was followed by displacement of the trouble to another location.

7.5.3. In order for this approach to be successful several conditions have to be met. The police management must have a working relationship with the people responsible for the places concerned; the police must be in possession of all the relevant information; they must present these facts to others and they must press for real changes with all the vigour customarily brought to bear in the short term in dealing with incident after incident.

7.5.4. Thus it can be seen that the recommendations in the previous sections detailing community liaison and information systems are a pre-requisite for this method of policing to be in any way successful.

7.6. Conclusion

The five approaches presented above do not represent what we consider to be an exhaustive approach. Nor should it be taken that we envisage that any of the 'packages' need necessarily be implemented in entirety or isolation. For example a Sub Divisional Commander may wish to introduce a team oriented system as the structured patrol portion of a split force exercise with a Sub Divisional response section and to adopt a crime specific approach in his relations with the community.

7.6.1. By way of conclusion, it is worth making a plea for judging all policing methods in context. New approaches are often rejected out of hand if they are less than totally successful, but it is only fair to assess them against the effectiveness of competing alternatives.

7.6.2. All the approaches put forward promise small rather than large gains but this must be preferable to nothing at all.

8. Implementation

If the approach to research into policing methods outlined in this paper is adopted then it is suggested that the following plan be adopted for implementation.

8.1. Small Beginnings

It is recommended that in the initial stages we do not attempt to do too much by implementing the policy on policing methods throughout the entire Force area. Whilst it may well be that, in the event, many Sub Divisional Commanders will see no need to examine their present methods of policing, should more than two or three do so then Research Services Department would rapidly become over burdened with requests for evaluation, establishment of M.I.S. etc. An additional reason for a limited implementation at first is that should the approach prove to be unworkable or inappropriate then a small scale project is far easier to withdraw from than a large one.

8.2. Locality

It is recommended that the Sub Division selected for initial implementation should be located in reasonable proximity to the Research Section offices. This is not essential but will cut down on the inevitable amount of travelling which will take place and will enable Research Services Department staff to offer a better consultative service.

8.3. Personnel

It is recommended that the Sub Divisional Commander and his deputy should be carefully chosen as those who will be receptive

to new ideas and willing to participate in research. As already stated, the key to any project of this nature is the willingness of the personnel involved to operate the scheme. Additionally the Sub Divisional management team should be composed of individuals who will be constructive in their approach and who will be willing to identify problems and plan to overcome them.

8.3.1. In contrast to the management, the operational personnel should not be specially selected. It must not be possible, at the end of a successful experimental period, for outsiders to point to specially selected personnel as the only reason for that success. If any scheme is to have any pretence at portability, the staff actually operating it must be representative of the 'ordinary bobby'.

8.4. Flexibility

One of the principle reasons for recommending the introduction of a micro computer based Management Information System is the flexibility of micro computers. They do not suffer from the same constraints as large main-frame computer systems, which require large numbers of support staff and which because of the complex operating system required to service a large network require highly specialist programs taking large amounts of resources. As evidenced by the introduction of such systems at Skelmersdale and Havant they can be introduced cheaply (under £10,000 capital cost per Sub Division) and programmed by non specialist staff.

8.4.1. Furthermore because of their relative simplicity the programs can be far more easily modified to accommodate temporary or additional information requirements. This sort of flexibility should be adopted throughout the whole implementation of any project. An excessively rigid approach to pre-determined objectives or procedures can be a major cause of failure.

9. Evaluation

Commonly, when measuring the success of any policing project, it is evaluated against a set of objectives which are set at its commencement. However, it is axiomatic, given our guiding principles of problem identification and flexibility of response, that identification of objectives will occur during this approach rather than at its commencement.

Rather general goals may be identified, and the evaluation must be itself flexible and responsive in order to allow of the replacement of early objectives by new ones, as the scheme progresses.

The identification of objectives, attempts towards attaining them, tactical evaluation, feed-back and identification of new or higher priority objectives must be a continuing process.

As stated, these objectives will, of necessity, have to be formulated for each project dependent upon local problems, however the following are included as a sample with the idea of generating discussion on the subject.

9.1. Public Satisfaction with Service Generally

It is often said that the objective of the service is to increase public satisfaction however it is important to consider precisely what is meant by this. The general level of public appreciation with the police is one facet of this.

This level can best be established by opinion polls and survey research, or perhaps by use of the local consultative committees together with direct contact by police officers.

9.2. Public Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Service

If a project is aimed solely at specific areas rather than an overall improvement in service then those areas should form the basis for evaluation. The same points made in section 9.1. concerning surveys apply equally here.

9.3. Victimisation Levels

Reported crime rates are notoriously unreliable as a measure of effectiveness, (Bottomley and Coleman 1980) and thus it may be appropriate to consider that a reduction in the level of actual crime may be appropriate. This can only be measured by victimisation surveys carried out before and after implementation of any new strategy.

9.4. Recorded Crime Rates

Notwithstanding the methodological drawbacks, recorded data on crimes reported by the public is readily available and therefore cheap to obtain by comparison with surveys, which tend to be expensive and time consuming. Furthermore, public expectations are largely linked with the police ability to control the level of recorded crime. Nevertheless if an objective is set to reduce the level of recorded crime this may lead simply to operational Officers simply recording less if they wish to achieve that objective. Additionally a

successful policing project may have the effect of actually increasing the level of recorded crime as more of it comes to notice.

9.5. Detection Rate

The proportion of crimes cleared up is subject to the same problems as recorded crime levels when considered as a measure of effectiveness. Furthermore since some crimes are in fact 'self detecting' the proportion detected is not independent of the number reported thus if the reported crime level goes up, the detection rate is likely to go down even though more crimes are actually being cleared up.

9.6. Improvement in Job Satisfaction

Ways of measuring job satisfaction are again limited to surveys of the Officers concerned in the project. These will again need to be undertaken before and after implementation. It must be noted that if the project is very small scale then any conclusions drawn as to changes in job satisfaction are highly unlikely to be capable of generalisation due to small sample sizes.

9.7. Incident Levels

A reduction in the level of complaints can be established by analysis of occurrence sheets. This measurement is again subject to the recording problems mentioned under 9.4. and 9.5. Similarly whilst it is possible to carry out very elementary analysis of incident patterns manually, detailed analysis will only be possible with computerised data.

10. Conclusions

- 10.1. This paper has been an attempt to set out our views on the direction which future approaches to policing methods research should take.
- 10.2. The main principle has been that the importation of 'solutions' should be avoided.
- 10.3. The approach recommended is heavily "community contact" oriented.
- 10.4. This is a discussion document. It is recognised that further detailed planning is required if the approach recommended is to be adopted - there is still much to be resolved. We recommend the flexibility of the proposals in this context. It will be possible to work out much of the detail "on the ground" in the selected Sub Division before extending the method Force wide.
- 10.5. Central control will be retained, through the Divisional Commanders to Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) and through Research Services Department to the Deputy Chief Constable.

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