

## 10

### MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL

**“The only way you can control a police department from headquarters is if your aim is to prevent the police from doing anything.”**

William Bratton and William Andrews<sup>1</sup>

#### Management Style

**10.1** The preceding chapters have described a different style of policing – more rooted in the community, more accountable and more transparent, and explicitly committed to the protection of human rights. This would produce a very different police service. We know from talking to other police services around the world, and some non-police organizations too, how difficult it is to change the way in which a large institution works. And in every case the key to success has been management.

**10.2** In his report on Northern Ireland published in July 1999, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary<sup>2</sup> describes a police organization which is commanded rather than managed. This was the picture put to us by many serving and retired RUC officers. Officers from other police services working with the RUC in joint operations have told us how hierarchical they find the RUC, and the same point has been made by RUC Superintendents and by the Police Federation. A not untypical remark, made to us by a policeman in Newry, was that “nobody comes down to discuss policy decisions – we are told”. To some extent the style of direction – as opposed to management – and the hierarchical nature of the force, is the result of the way in which the security situation has distorted policing, and to be fair one must also note that many other police services were directed and hierarchical until quite recently, and some still are. But we believe that, even if the security situation continues to be a particular challenge in Northern Ireland, there is scope for considerable change in management style, which would significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and command the enthusiasm of police officers at all levels.

#### Managing Change

**10.3** The changes envisaged in this report can only be achieved if the police management commits itself fully to the programme. This is true of any organizational change in any large and complex organization. Outside bodies can monitor, but cannot themselves implement change or ensure that it is implemented. The first priority must be to get the right management team in place; this point was stressed to us in Ottawa, Boston, Charlotte and in a number of British police services we visited. The leadership team should be a mixture of experienced police officers and specialists brought in from outside. The Boston police have had a management consultant as a full member of their leadership team for the past four years, whose job is to work with the rest of the department on organizational change. *We recommend that the Northern Ireland police leadership team should include specialists in change management. These may be either civilians or police officers, preferably both. We further recommend that the leadership team should produce a*

<sup>1</sup> Bratton, W., and Andrews, W. "What we've learned about policing". City Journal (New York), Spring 1999

<sup>2</sup> 1998/99 Inspection, op.cit.

*programme for change, to be presented to the Policing Board and reviewed periodically by the Board. The efficiency and effectiveness of each chief officer should be judged on the basis of, among other things, their capacity to introduce and adapt to change.*

**10.4** Management at all levels in the police will need to determine how they can best deliver the policing services they are required to provide and how best to organize themselves to provide them. Again, it will be necessary to ensure that the right people are in the key management positions at every level. Our cultural audit of the police (see also Chapter 17) showed that a high proportion of Superintendents (82%), and other management ranks too, were keen that the police organization should change (constables were mixed in their views). This is encouraging and we have ourselves been impressed by many officers we have met at the crucial middle management level. This report provides an outline of how the police service should be transformed, but it would be an impossible task for any single report to cover all aspects of policing in detail. That must be the job of police management, and it needs to be carried out in as consultative and transparent a fashion as possible, both with the community and within the police service. For example, one police department we visited in the United States asked every district commander to consult publicly with his/her local community and with local police officers before the headquarters leadership team developed a departmental strategy taking account of the input from the districts.

## **Devolution**

**10.5** There are many layers of management in the RUC (a point also noted in the recent HMIC report)<sup>3</sup>. A Superintendent commanding a sub-division answers to the Chief Superintendent commanding a division, who has another Superintendent as a Deputy Divisional Commander. Above him there is a regional headquarters, with an Assistant Chief Constable and another Chief Superintendent as Deputy Assistant Chief Constable. Only at this point does the line of management lead to central police headquarters. With these elaborate structures it is no surprise to find the management style hierarchical and bureaucratic. The frustrations of middle management are evident. We were told by superintendents that they did not have delegated spending authority for even very minor purchases; one spent months getting approval to buy a chair and a hand-held tape recorder; and one told us he was required to use outside contractors to change light bulbs. Two thirds of all those officers who participated in our cultural audit said that there should be fewer layers of management.

**10.6** We propose in Chapter 12 a simplified organisational structure for the police which will have district commanders – mostly Superintendents – answering directly to Assistant Chief Constables at headquarters. This is increasingly the normal practice elsewhere in the United Kingdom and North America, and it works. It is important to note that this structure matches the structure we propose for the institutions of democratic accountability: the district commander works with the District Policing Partnership Board and the Chief Constable works centrally with the Policing Board. We see a strong argument on accountability grounds, as well as management grounds, why there should be no intervening layers of management between headquarters and the district.

**10.7** Managers must be allowed to manage. *We recommend that district commanders have fully devolved authority over the deployment of personnel (officer and civilian) within their command, devolved budgets (including salary budgets), authority to purchase a range of goods and services, and to*

<sup>3</sup> 1998/99 Inspection, op.cit.

*finance local policing initiatives. We recommend that they should reach service level agreements with all headquarter support departments.*

## **Internal Accountability**

- 10.8** In Chapters 5 and 6 we discussed how the police should be accountable to the community – external accountability. Internal accountability is also critically important. Internal accountability in police services is often primarily a matter of discipline, which we come on to in a moment. But it should first and foremost be a matter of management. Police managers, from the top of the organization downwards, should define clearly for all their staff the role that is expected of each of them in meeting the objectives agreed for the police service as a whole. Everyone needs to be clear about their personal performance objectives and the behavioural standards expected of them; they need to be monitored against those objectives and standards; and they should have a regular performance review with their line manager. Those who fall short of what is required should be helped through coaching and training as appropriate. If the performance is still inadequate, then administrative action becomes necessary (see paragraph 10.15), but good management should reduce the need for this.
- 10.9** Some of the most worrying findings from our cultural audit concerned this aspect of management. Only 26% of the officers responding to the cultural audit thought that the appraisal system was adequate, and less than half said that they received feedback on their performance from their superiors even as often as once in a year. On our visits to police stations we often got the impression that officers were not clear what was expected of them in terms of “good” performance. This is a serious failing of management.
- 10.10** The police have recently introduced a performance development review system in common with other police services in the United Kingdom. The system involves the officer working in conjunction with his or her line manager to set out personal objectives for the year ahead based upon the officer’s agreed role. Nine core skills are used to assess the officer’s performance and the agreed objectives are designed to be in line with local policing plans. There is a system of ongoing assessment throughout the year, with a six-month interim assessment and a retrospective review at 12 months. The system is quite intensive and has been criticised in Her Majesty’s Inspector’s most recent report for being “overly bureaucratic”. Nevertheless, if operated properly, it should define for each individual a role personally tailored to his or her post, and measure performance within that role. The system is brand new and it is impossible to comment upon its effectiveness. To work it will require commitment on the part of both officers and line managers. *We recommend that it should be a high priority of management to ensure that the appraisal system is fully effective.* One curious aspect of the new appraisal system is that appraisals will not be used in the promotion and selection process. We disagree with this practice and *we recommend that the system should be part of that process. We further recommend that an officer’s capacity for change should also be assessed and taken into account in the promotion and selection process.* As recommended in Chapter 4, awareness of and respect for human rights should be an important element in the appraisal process.
- 10.11** Five years ago the New York Police Department introduced its now famous system of “Compstat” (computer statistics) meetings, in which individual precinct commanders are grilled on their performance, as reflected in the crime statistics, by their senior officers in front of their peers.

These meetings are considered to have had a galvanising effect on the performance of precinct commanders in a city where crime rates have declined dramatically. Several other American cities that we have visited have since introduced variations of “Compstat”, including Boston, Charlotte, Los Angeles and Philadelphia, although in each case the format is somewhat less adversarial than the New York original. Whatever the format, we favour the periodic review of crime and disorder statistics with district commanders, and *we recommend that commanders be required regularly to account to their senior officers for the patterns of crime and police activity in their district and to explain how they propose to address their districts’ problems.*

- 10.12** We have looked into how the RUC currently uses information arising from complaints, internal discipline and civil claims for management purposes. We found that the relevant information was collected and registered centrally, and analysed to identify trends and repeat complaints. But there are a number of weaknesses with the present system. Trend analysis is carried out manually and therefore relies upon the individuals doing the analysis making connections between incidents that may be recorded in separate files. Unless officers ask the right questions they may well not be alerted to patterns or trends that are developing. As highlighted in Chapter 6 primary responsibility for identifying complaints trends will pass to the Ombudsman. *We recommend that an automated trend identification system be introduced.* Since the police will require access to this data for management purposes, this will have implications for the police information technology (IT) capability which we discuss in Chapter 11. Such a system could be programmed, for example, to identify officers attracting more than two complaints of a similar nature within a set period, and line managers could then be alerted.
- 10.13** The identification of trends is just the start of a process to improve internal accountability. We found that there was little or no follow up on how trend information had been utilised, nor did managers feel well equipped to counsel officers who were subjects of repeated complaints that were unproven. *We recommend that the use of trend information is followed up by management, and as appropriate by the department responsible for discipline, and that guidance is drawn up to help managers use this information effectively.*
- 10.14** Some of the police services we spoke to, such as Atlanta, New York and the London Metropolitan Police, continuously conduct random checks on their officers, using people posing as members of the public seeking assistance from the police or otherwise attracting police attention. They also conduct random checks on officers’ personal integrity. We were impressed by this rigorous self-examination, and *we recommend that police managers should use random checks as a way to monitor the behaviour of their officers in dealings with the public and their integrity.*
- 10.15** For many years the police service in the United Kingdom has been beset by an inability to remove ineffective or incompetent officers who fall short of committing major disciplinary offences. Police services in England and Wales have recently introduced administrative dismissal procedures to deal with such cases. These are due to be introduced in Northern Ireland later in 1999. It is important for the fresh start to policing in Northern Ireland that all officers are committed to the new policing style and that officers who, even after coaching, consistently fail to meet the standards and objectives set by the new police service are brought within the administrative dismissal process. The process contains adequate safeguards for honest mistakes and for those willing to learn. *We recommend that police management should use all the tools at its disposal to ensure that high professional and ethical standards are consistently met.*

## Tenure

**10.16** During our visits to police stations and departments we came across officers who had spent 10, 15 or even 20 years in one specialisation. This is a particular problem in Special Branch, as we note in Chapter 12. *We recommend that there should be a tenure policy, so that officers do not have inordinately long postings in any specialist area of the police.* Officers with particular aptitudes should not be precluded from serving more than once in their specialisation, but no officer should be allowed to lose contact with the core function of community policing. Fluid personnel rotation is also necessary to avoid cliques developing within the police service. This is not to say that members of neighbourhood policing teams should be moved on too rapidly; as we recommended in Chapter 7, they should serve at least three and preferably five years, and the same should be the case for station commanders.

## Sickness Absence

**10.17** Police throughout the United Kingdom have a higher rate of sickness absence than other public servants or the private sector. This is attributed to factors such as stress, danger and shift-working. In Northern Ireland the average absence through sickness is 15.3 days a year, compared with 12.5 in England and Wales. This is partly due to the injuries suffered by police officers, often as a result of the security situation: some 16% of sickness is related to injury on duty. We question the inclusion of injured officers in the overall sickness statistics, and *we recommend that the sick and injured be treated as separate categories.*

**10.18** An area of concern raised in a number of inspections by Her Majesty's Inspector has been the high number of officers employed by the RUC on "restricted duties". These are officers who are not medically fit for full operational duty, but are retained, as police officers, on less demanding duties. There were 357 such officers in February 1999. The HMI has expressed concerns that restricted duties are being used as an alternative to medical retirement (which is an expensive procedure, involving immediate payment of enhanced pensions). We believe that some flexibility on this matter is right, particularly in the case of officers injured in terrorist attacks who wish to continue to work within the police service and can perform a reasonable range of duties. But most officers on restricted duties are not the victims of terrorist attacks. We note that the RUC has recently introduced regular medical reviews for officers on restricted duties and we support this.

**10.19** For officers and civilians who are not victims of terrorist attacks, *we recommend that a new policy be formulated for the management of long-term sickness absence, incorporating appropriate arrangements for medical retirement, career counselling and welfare support.* In common with other police services in England and Wales, the RUC has just introduced a system of sanctions for officers with poor attendance records. We are concerned that the policy is exclusively punitive. Other schemes include rewards for officers with excellent attendance records, such as additional annual leave. Some police departments in North America allow officers with good attendance records to retire early. *We recommend that a system of rewards, as well as sanctions, be introduced as part of the sickness management policy.* A thematic report in 1997 by HMI encouraged the police to conduct a more rigorous analysis of sickness information to establish trends and causes. We are not convinced that the underlying causes of sickness absence in the RUC have been adequately identified, in spite of a number of reviews, and *we recommend a more detailed review of sickness absence, to establish underlying causes and to make recommendations to address them.*

## **Disabled Officers**

**10.20** During the course of our work we met many police officers who had been disabled as a result of terrorist attacks. We do not believe that these officers have been treated as well as they should have been by the police service or by the welfare services. Criminal injury claims in the early years of the present Troubles were settled for derisory sums of money. Inadequate attention has been given to the physical pain that many of the injured continue to suffer for years afterwards. We were also dismayed to see the low quality of the prostheses supplied to amputees, some of whom have gone to considerable personal expense to buy more advanced and better finished prostheses. We welcome the fact that consideration is at last being given to the establishment of a pain clinic and we hope that this will soon come into being. *We also recommend that a substantial fund be set up to help injured police officers, injured retired officers and their families, as well as police widows* (see below). The fund could supplement the income of those on very low pensions, help finance the procurement of better prostheses or household equipment for the disabled, and make grants to universities for research or for bursaries for disabled officers who wish to study.

## **Widows**

**10.21** We also met many RUC widows who felt that more could be done to help them. Again, the financial packages awarded in the early years of the Troubles were very small, and some of those widowed at that time are now living in penury. We were surprised that the RUC Widows Association, unlike the Disabled Police Officers Association, is not supplied with premises by the police, and that the widows who run the Association do so from their own homes, using their own telephones. *We recommend that the Widows Association be given an office in police premises, free of charge, and a regular source of finance adequate to run their organisation.* The fund recommended in the preceding paragraph should also be used to support widows in financially straitened circumstances.

## **Civilianisation**

**10.22** The development of an organization with a significant proportion of civilian members is central to our vision of a police service for the twenty-first century. The object is: to improve efficiency in the use of resources; to release highly trained officers from posts that do not require police powers, training or experience; and to help develop a more open culture in a traditionally closed organization. The appointment of highly qualified civilians to senior positions in charge of personnel, finance, training and information technology could bring in expertise from large private sector organizations and provide a leaven of experience at senior management level. Opening up other jobs to civilians provides an opportunity to diversify by bringing in people at different levels with diverse skills and wide experience. *We recommend that the Assistant Chief Constables currently responsible for support services should be replaced by two civilian Assistant Chief Officers, one responsible for personnel issues and one for finance and administration.* It is vital that these posts should be filled by people of the highest quality. The proposals in this report amount to a radical transformation of the way in which the police service is resourced, staffed and managed. We would see advantage in head-hunting individuals with past experience of transforming large organizations. If, as is likely, the right people for these jobs are to be found in the private sector it may well be necessary to be flexible over the remuneration packages to be offered. The essential requirement is to get people who can drive through change.

**10.23** Civilianisation needs to go much deeper than this. The civilianisation of police posts is significantly less advanced in Northern Ireland than in other United Kingdom police services. HMI has remarked on this several times in his annual reports. The proportion of civilians in the police service is only 20%; other United Kingdom police services are up to 35%, with the laggards at around 25-28%. HMI has noted that the Police Authority has over the years set modest targets for civilianisation which have never been met. In 1993 HMIC issued guidance to police on the categories of posts which should be civilianised. All police posts were categorised A, B or C. Category A posts were operational posts to be filled by police officers. Category C posts should be filled by civilians. Category B posts were judged suitable for civilianisation, although it might be desirable to retain a number of police officers in those areas. In 1993 there were 724 officers in Category C posts in the RUC (23% of all such posts) and 1,033 officers in Category B (86% of the whole). There has been only limited civilianisation since that time. Figures we received from the RUC in July 1999 showed that 75% of Category B posts were still occupied by police officers, and that the percentage of Category C posts held by officers had actually increased slightly to 25%. Police officers are still employed in areas such as property management, information technology, press relations and research, which should in our view be civilianised. Given the figures above it is not unreasonable to envisage that up to 1,000 posts could be civilianised. *We recommend a rigorous programme of civilianisation of jobs which do not require police powers, training or experience, exceptions being made only when it can be demonstrated that there is a good reason for a police officer to occupy the position.* The Policing Board should monitor this programme closely.

**10.24** Under the 1998 Police Act, the civilian staff previously employed by the Police Authority were transferred to the control of the Chief Constable. We endorse the move as conducive to good management, rationalisation and the better use of resources. The task must now be to create an integrated service where regular officers, part-time reservists, traffic wardens and civilian staff are all seen as equal contributors to the common enterprise, trained, deployed and managed as a cohesive and well motivated unit.

### **Contracting-out**

**10.25** A comparatively recent development in United Kingdom police services is the contracting out of certain support functions to private companies. Property services, IT and communications services, vehicle maintenance and transport services and pay and pensions administration are the main areas recommended for contracting out in a review done by the Metropolitan Police in 1996. We were not able to find any comparable work being done by either the Police Authority or the RUC. *We recommend that the Policing Board and the police service initiate a review of police support services with a view to contracting out those services where this will enhance the efficient management of resources. Consideration should be given to allowing "management buy-outs" of support services by police officers or civilian employees interested in continuing to provide those services as a private sector company, and in such cases we recommend that management buy-out contractors be offered a secure contract for at least three years to enable them to establish themselves before having to tender for renewal.*

### **Police Estate**

**10.26** In March 1999 the Audit Commission produced a highly critical report on the police estate in England and Wales<sup>4</sup>. The report found that the estate as a whole was in poor shape; many

<sup>4</sup> "Action Stations – Improving the Management of the Police Estate". Audit Commission, March 1999

buildings were in the wrong place to support police operations; stations were often inconveniently situated for the police; many of them were outdated and unable to cope with modern technology; many sites were under-used; and the backlog of maintenance work was costed at over £200 million. Similar problems exist in Northern Ireland. Many of the police stations we visited were visibly dilapidated, and the police estimate the maintenance backlog for the entire estate at £60 million (equivalent to nearly a third of the total for the whole of England and Wales).

**10.27** We gained little impression that the police – or the Police Authority, who were responsible for the estate until 1999 – had a strategy for management of the estate. The estate consists of 190 sites; at least one, potentially very valuable site is unused and we find it hard to believe that there are not others which are under-used, although we were told that there were none. We were also surprised to be told that, although the RUC’s Fundamental Review of 1996 had envisaged a substantial cut in the establishment of the police, and the elimination of 14 sub-divisional headquarters, there had been no assessment made of the scope for disposing of parts of the estate. Indeed we were told that the police saw “no big opportunities to free up property”.

**10.28** Although we have not been able to do a detailed audit of the police estate – which would require time and expertise which we have not had – we believe that there is considerable scope for rationalisation of the estate, including the disposal of some quite valuable sites in Belfast for example. A reduction of the estate would also reduce the large maintenance backlog, and release funds for the substantial investment that is needed to modernise police stations or build new facilities, including the proposed police college (see Chapter 16). *We recommend that the police should commission a comprehensive audit of the whole estate, to include outside experts, and develop a strategy for achieving an effective and efficient estate to meet the objectives for policing as outlined in this report.*