JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 20 May 2008

Session 3

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JUSTICE COMMITTEE
† 12th Meeting 2008, Session 3

CONVENER

*Bill Aitken (Glasgow) (Con)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

*Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)
*Nigel Don (North East Scotland) (SNP)
*Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab)
*Stuart McMillan (West of Scotland) (SNP)
*Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD)
*John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Aileen Campbell (South of Scotland) (SNP)
Marlyn Glen (North East Scotland) (Lab)
John Lamont (Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
Mike Pringle (Edinburgh South) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Deputy Chief Constable Jim Barker-McCardle (National Policing Improvement Agency)
Professor Adam Crawford (University of Leeds)
Dr Daniel Donnelly (University of Paisley)
Alistair Henry (University of Edinburgh)
Professor Martin Innes (Cardiff University)
◊Professor Wesley Skogan (Northwestern University)
Rachel Tuffin (Home Office)

◊by video link

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Douglas Wands

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Anne Peat

ASSISTANT CLERK

Euan Donald

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

† 11th Meeting 2008, Session 3—held in private.

Scottish Parliament

Justice Committee

Tuesday 20 May 2008

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 13:00*]

Decision on Taking Business in Private

The Convener (Bill Aitken): Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. As I have formally opened the meeting, I ask everyone to ensure that mobile phones are switched off. Agenda item 1 is a decision on taking business in private. Is the committee agreed that item 5, which is consideration of whether to accept written submissions into evidence, should be taken in private?

Members *indicated agreement*.

Community Policing Inquiry

13:00

The Convener: Item 2 is our inquiry into community policing. This is the first of the committee's scheduled oral evidence sessions for the inquiry. There will be a suspension of 15 minutes at 2.45 pm to allow the videoconference link with Professor Wesley Skogan in Chicago to be set up. I welcome the first two witnesses, who are Deputy Chief Constable Jim Barker-McCardle of the National Policing Improvement Agency, and Rachel Tuffin, research officer at the Home Office. I thank you for joining us to give evidence. The committee will move straight to questions because we have boned up on the various activities that you have carried out.

Paul Martin (Glasgow Springburn) (Lab): Can the panel give us some indication of the main features of the neighbourhood policing programme?

Deputy Chief Constable Jim Barker-McCardle (National Policing Improvement Agency): Most certainly, and thank you, convener, for the invitation to appear before you. In briefly answering the question, I will reflect on some of the history of the neighbourhood policing programme because it is important to acknowledge that the programme is, and was originally, built on a strong evidence base. The programme reflected the early work that was done in the national reassurance policing programme, and a growing realisation that moving from what I would call the looser, woollier concept of community policing in England and Wales towards a more determined and specific model of neighbourhood policing built on international research and knowledge would require more than a loose framework of implementation across England and Wales.

Therefore, the programme's principal features are strong trilateral governance by the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities and the Home Office; a significant and well-resourced central programme team of 22 staff, including six field officers; the existence of a chief officer-level programme lead in each force in England and Wales; and all that goes with strong programme planning in terms of clear milestones, project and programme management, careful budgeting and an array of professional products, forms of guidance and advice published in the course of the programme's first three years. I stress that the programme provides support and assistance that allow flexibility within a central programme, and that it is not a rigid and dictatorial model of central management in which one size fits all.

The process has been one of active learning along the way. The programme was not conceived with a particular solution in mind that would be pursued regardless of the learning en route; the programme team has endeavoured at all times to respond to the learning and feedback from forces, and to support the required local flexibility. The programme came with dedicated additional resource to police forces in the shape of police community support officers, so the programme was launched in the context of increased resourcing for neighbourhood policing.

The Convener: Could you direct your comments to Mr Martin's specific question?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: Certainly. Forgive me. I thought that you were asking for the key features of the programme. I can give you more detail on the contents of the programme and the products that it has delivered. I am sorry, convener. I was not seeking to stray from the question; I was trying to stress that how the programme is managed is one of the key features.

The Convener: I think that we got that from your answer. Perhaps you could highlight one or two ways in which it differs from other approaches.

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: First and foremost, the programme relies heavily on the evidence drawn from Chicago and from Martin Innes's research—I know that he is speaking to the committee later. It also draws on experience from 43 police forces in England and Wales. The senior responsible officer is a chief constable, so it has a specific chief constable lead nationally, but within the programme we deliver an array of products. Examples include guidance on community engagement, specific guidance to basic command unit commanders on effective performance frameworks, and the provision of 200 or 300 seminars and workshops to support the development of neighbourhood policing.

Paul Martin: You mentioned community engagement. Surely part of officer training should be community engagement training. How is your programme any different from that? What is innovative about community engagement?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: I agree that there is nothing new in the concept of community engagement. Indeed, one would say that it is one of the founding principles of policing across the country. However, we recognised that, in the array of different community policing models that existed, there was little research that we were relying on to identify the most effective forms of engagement. Furthermore, we had not necessarily been equipping neighbourhood police officers with the skills and understanding to run community engagement events effectively.

Within the programme, we have identified and clearly supported a range of effective community engagement models. That includes what we have referred to as street briefings, house-to-house investigations and attending public meetings. More specifically, there has been the development of what we have called the PACT—partners and communities together—model of engagement. That is a significant departure from what existed before because it draws on the Chicago experience. It calls on police officers, members of the public in the neighbourhood and, importantly, other public services to work together to identify and agree a limited and specific number of priorities on which the police and the other partners will focus locally. That leads to a form of accountability in which the neighbourhood officer or team is accountable to that public group for progress against those priorities.

Paul Martin: Why was the neighbourhood policing programme formed in the first place? Was it the result of a political direction or local events?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: There were a number of drivers—a combination of six or seven produced a significant head of steam. I can briefly run through them chronologically.

First, there was the identification of what became known as the reassurance gap: how could the recorded crime figures say that crime was falling in many communities while the fear of crime and public perception of antisocial behaviour were travelling in the other direction? There was a strong sense that community policing models adopted thus far had provided a degree of accessibility and visibility—which was undoubtedly popular with the public—but not necessarily a hard drop in crime and related antisocial behaviour.

We then had the national reassurance policing programme, which was led by the police service with strong academic research behind it. It produced significant evidential findings that indicated where the strength in that approach rested, in particular in the combination of powerful and longer-term partnership solutions to difficult and stubborn local community problems and all the information that came with that, including learning about what became known as signal crimes.

At the same time, there was a growing debate in the service about the phrase "citizen focus" and about how to have a more citizen-centric, public-focused and understanding approach to policing. We discussed in detail the journey that a member of the public takes through our policing service and what it feels like. We saw that, at times, the journey did not feel as good as it should.

In its strategic plan for 2004 to 2008, the Home Office spoke with much greater strength about

neighbourhood policing. That was followed by the white paper "Building Communities, Beating Crime: A better police service for the 21st century" and the national performance framework, which saw greater interest being taken in public confidence and trust in local policing. There was also a realisation that successfully tackling antisocial behaviour related directly to the public perception and fear of crime. Historically, police forces were said to have focused on core volume crime categories without realising that—understandably—in the public mind, the distinction is not quite so clear.

The last driver relates to the advent of local criminal justice boards across England and Wales and the focus on the need or desire to increase confidence in the criminal justice system for which the police service is a large gateway. Of course, public confidence in policing tends to reflect public confidence in the criminal justice system more widely.

Paul Martin: So, despite significant resources being invested in communities at the time, there was no reduction in the antisocial behaviour statistics. Is that a fair summary of the outcome?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: It is. Undoubtedly, there was strong support for visible local policing, particularly on foot. However, police forces began to realise that it was not driving down crime. Confusion was also growing on the meaning of the word "community".

Paul Martin: At that point, I am sure that you would have undertaken an appraisal of the various models that could be adopted. Were models under consideration other than the Chicago experience?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: We drew particularly on Chicago in what has become the partners and communities together engagement technique, which is one of a number of techniques that we have adopted. We drew on the University of Surrey and Surrey Police research on signal crimes and on research in which my colleague was directly involved with others in academia on the evaluation of the national reassurance policing programme. In many ways, that programme was the forerunner of the neighbourhood policing programme proper. I think that much of the early learning on that developed from the national reassurance policing programme.

Paul Martin: Was there no alternative to Chicago? Why do we always end up there? Does it sound good? Does it make good headlines if you are considering an alternative that is based in Chicago? Surely other experiences and other parts of the world should be considered.

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: Yes. I do not want to lead you to think that the neighbourhood policing programme that has been developed over three years is a rigid model that is contained in a box out of which we will not stray. The programme was established to take account of any overseas learning or research that comes along, wherever it comes from—Canada, America or Australia, for example. My colleague and others in the National Policing Improvement Agency maintain strong links with colleagues in other parts of the world precisely for that reason. If there is a good idea or a tried and tested piece of practice, we will look at the appropriateness of adopting it in this country. That said, we did not start out with a specific architecture of neighbourhood policing and follow it dogmatically. We are in a learning process in which good-practice discovery is made en route.

Paul Martin: You referred earlier to the definition of terms. How has the term "neighbourhood" been interpreted and defined by different forces in the context of the neighbourhood policing programme?

13:15

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: Neighbourhood policing is now more than just high-visibility policing on bike or on foot, although visibility contributes. We now talk about an approach that seeks to increase contact between police and public in a particular geographical area—the neighbourhood as opposed to the looser concept of the community—to focus on making local police work more responsive to public needs; to develop the notion of collective security and shared interests within a neighbourhood and between different public services; and to tackle local problems strongly in partnership so as to increase confidence and reduce not only the perception but the incidence of antisocial behaviour and crime. That approach seeks to build on the already fairly established national intelligence model.

Paul Martin: Academically, in terms of a manual being provided to your officers, that sounds plausible. However, what specific example can you give us from one of those forces of what you have just described being translated into front-line activities? What innovation has been shown in terms of contact with communities that did not take place before?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: The innovation is the more sustained and determined approach to different forms of community engagement and a public commitment to respond to what is identified, linked with the extended geographical coverage. In many cases, depending on where one was in the country, the geographical extent of community policing was, arguably, patchy in places. There is now a much

stronger geographical coverage, with all neighbourhoods having access to named police officers or named teams, depending on the size of the neighbourhood, and officers, along with other partner agencies and local authorities, committed to tackling local problems in a way that makes sense to the local community.

John Wilson (Central Scotland) (SNP): The neighbourhood policing programme is presented as a national programme, but what scope is there for local flexibility to take account of the differences between, for example, urban and rural areas, affluent and deprived areas and high and low-profile crime environments? Are any features of the neighbourhood policing programme non-negotiable?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: I will answer your first question first. Yes, there is considerable scope for flexibility. The national programme does not seek—nor has it ever endeavoured—to set out a formula that governs, for example, the distribution of police officers or police community support officers. That decision rests entirely with the local force and will take account of demographics, crime trends, deprivation, travel times, sparsity, density and everything else.

There are very few givens within the programme. One of the givens is a requirement for forces to carefully articulate an abstraction policy. That is not to say that every force must have the same abstraction policy, but one of the flaws of the predecessors to neighbourhood policing was widely seen to be the fact that officers were promised locally but were seldom there because they were called away—or mobilised—for other events or bigger issues. So, a commitment to consistency and access to named police officers and community support officers is a given, geographical coverage is a given, and abstraction policies are a given. Many other things in the programme are encouraged, but those are probably the core givens. We have issued advice and guidance on effective performance frameworks to support neighbourhood policing at the basic command unit level. That is strongly encouraged, although there is no mandate—to put it bluntly—to enforce it.

John Wilson: You have mentioned police community support officers. How important are those officers to the programme?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: They are regarded as vital. It would have been difficult to get the neighbourhood policing programme running nationally—and to get forces to deliver against a commitment to have a named officer or team in every area—if additional resources had not been provided. One of the great stretches and strains in former models of community policing was the fact that officers were torn between vandalism, at one end of the spectrum, and terrorism, at the other. It was often coverage at the community or neighbourhood end that suffered.

John Wilson: What lessons have been learned from the process of implementing the neighbourhood policing programme at both a force level and a local level? Is the programme now part of mainstream policing in England and Wales?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: Before we came here today, it was interesting for us to reflect on what we would do differently if we started the neighbourhood policing programme again. We concluded that there were four things. First, we would pursue clear abstraction policies in all forces much earlier in the programme. Secondly, we would develop the performance framework and circulate it to forces earlier. To some extent, we are using the benefit of hindsight, because there was a degree of learning on the way.

Thirdly, we would train, guide and help response officers to understand the significance of neighbourhood policing and to ensure that they and others in the policing family are part of it. It is all too easy to reach a position where some colleagues in police forces regard neighbourhood policing as a particular piece of business that does not necessarily connect to everything else that we do. If the call is handled badly when a response officer attends an emergency in a neighbourhood, that will rebound significantly by affecting confidence in the neighbourhood policing to which forces are committed.

Finally, we would need an earlier realisation of the intrinsic link between the development of a neighbourhood policing approach and the wider, difficult issues of culture change and citizen-focused policing throughout the country.

Part of me says that it was almost inevitable that we would have to learn those lessons with the benefit of hindsight. Part of me says that we could have picked up on some of those points earlier. If we had acted on them more quickly, it would have been helpful nationally.

Bill Butler (Glasgow Anniesland) (Lab): Good afternoon, colleagues. Rachel Tuffin might want to respond to my question. Mr Barker-McCardle said that the approach relies heavily on the evidence, so I turn to that. Neighbourhood policing teams are expected to deliver increased police visibility, greater community involvement in the identification of local priorities, and a commitment to collaborative problem solving. What evidence is there that progress has been made in relation to those three indicators?

Paragraph 16 of your written submission refers to percentage increases in the correct direction, but would you elaborate on that? Is there any other evidence that the programme is a progressive move?

Rachel Tuffin (Home Office): You might be familiar with the evidence from the national reassurance policing programme, on which, as Mr Barker-McCardle said, much of the current programme is based. That is perhaps the strongest and most robust evidence that we have on many policing issues. It suggests that we can significantly increase all the things that you mentioned, in a statistical sense, through a process that is close to the current approach of neighbourhood policing. It is much more difficult to demonstrate that with the national roll-out because all forces are proceeding at the same time.

The Home Office has in place an evaluation approach that tries to take into account the level of implementation that each basic command unit reaches and looks to see whether those which have implemented more of what one might call a neighbourhood policing approach are doing better on the indicators that you mentioned. The early evidence suggests that there is a mixed picture so far, but implementation is showing a strong improvement. An example of that might be that the public priority indicator—whether forces say that the public are setting the priorities for action, which is a critical part of neighbourhood policing and builds on Martin Innes's work on signal crimes—has improved. We hope to see the outcomes begin to change in the next waves of the evaluation. Obviously, we need to see full implementation in the BCUs before we can see the outcomes, such as public confidence and perception of antisocial behaviour, start to improve.

At the same time, the national picture is encouraging. Four years ago, 48 per cent of the public said that their local police did a good or excellent job, but now 52 per cent of the public say that. Because of the way that that figure was previously measured, it was static for quite a long time, and it declined in the 1990s.

Bill Butler: That is right—and so says your written submission. You talked about there being a mixed picture so far. Let us talk about two of the indicators. First, on the public priority indicator, have there been cases where it has been difficult to get the public working with the police? I notice from the Chicago experience that it was less difficult to get people in more socially deprived areas—where we would expect it to be more difficult—involved than it was to involve those in more affluent areas. Is that experience echoed in England and Wales?

On antisocial behaviour, Mr Barker-McCardle said that you want not just to change the perception of ASB but to cut ASB. How is it going with that indicator?

Rachel Tuffin: The key issue with community engagement is that the methods have to be tailored to the people whom you are trying to reach. I know that that is an obvious point, but it is critical. The evidence from the national reassurance policing programme suggests that the wider the variety of types of engagement that are used, the better, including the sorts of things that my colleague will have mentioned, such as street briefing, door knocking, web-based approaches and surveys. It depends on whom you are trying to reach and for what purpose. Is it a consultation or are you feeding back to the community the results of something that you have done? Do you want the community to participate in problem-solving activity, which is more than a consultation exercise? Different tactics will be appropriate and that will depend on what you are trying to do.

Successful engagement also depends on whom you are trying to reach. Some people prefer newsletters, or perhaps local radio solutions. All of those things are possible.

Bill Butler: Are people across the range more amenable to becoming involved if the right approach is taken to drawing them in?

Rachel Tuffin: It is partly about the right approach, but it is also very important that they see something happening as a result of the engagement. That mistake has been made in the past: a lot of consultation has been done about what matters to the public, but the perception is that there has been insufficient action. If you do not go back to the community and tell people what you have done to address the issues that they have raised, or to explain why it is not possible to tackle a particular issue at this time, any subsequent engagement will be limited because people will not see the purpose of getting involved.

You also asked about antisocial behaviour and evidence on that indicator. I would go back to talk about why neighbourhood policing is different to community policing. The theory behind community policing is that a general improvement in police-community relations will lead to greater legitimacy for the police. That in turn will lead to more co-operation. The public will give more information and, for example, overall crime will reduce.

13:30

In the development of neighbourhood policing, it was realised that the policing had to be targeted. It had to focus on crime and it had to focus on public priorities. Critically, there was a focus on antisocial behaviour as well as on crime. Previously, no

targets had been set for dealing with antisocial behaviour. However, once it was realised that some issues were more important to the public than others, it was also realised that the focus had to be on those issues. That goes back to Martin Innes's work, which he will describe better than I can. Evidence of the focus is clearly seen in the antisocial behaviour indicators in the national reassurance policing programme. However, across the country, it can be difficult to see that, because the different types of antisocial behaviour—the ones that matter at neighbourhood level and BCU level—will be different in different areas.

Bill Butler: Where it works well, does community policing complement neighbourhood policing? Do community policing and community involvement provide intelligence for the police so that they can combat particular manifestations of antisocial behaviour?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: The short answer is, categorically, yes.

Bill Butler: I am glad about that. Will you elucidate?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: The more confident communities are in our ability to be accessible and to respond, the more likely it is that there will be a virtuous circle of continued engagement and greater trust. Communities will trust us more to deal sensitively with what we are told. However, as Rachel Tuffin said, we have to go back to the supplier of the information and tell him or her that we have actually done something about it. We cannot always assume that what we have done will be visible to the person who contacted us in the first place.

Bill Butler: So, a continuous flow of appropriate and relevant information is central to the process.

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: Yes.

Bill Butler: What evidence is there that the neighbourhood policing programme has had a positive impact on what I imagine is another indicator, which is the perception of safety.

Rachel Tuffin: I am sorry. The perception of what?

Bill Butler: Of safety.

Rachel Tuffin: Of safety. I am sorry.

Bill Butler: That is all right. It is my accent. Forgive me.

Rachel Tuffin: That question leads me to another issue that I feel is quite important, which is perceptions versus reality. It is sometimes contended that public perceptions of antisocial behaviour, fear of crime, and feelings of lack of safety are somehow separate from the reality, but evidence from the national reassurance policing programme suggests that that is not the case. People's perceptions track their experiences in their communities. As a result, if the problems that matter to people—crime and antisocial behaviour—can be tackled, that will impact on perceptions of safety, of the crime rate and of police effectiveness.

Bill Butler: I understand your point about the link between perceptions and reality, but is the degree of people's feelings important? People might perceive that there is a lack of safety in their areas, but their perception might be exaggerated. That is not to say that there is not a lack of safety. Tackling areas that are unsafe could have an effect on people's perceptions.

Rachel Tuffin: Yes. It is also often thought that police visibility can be reassuring: the public feel safer when the police are around. However, some evidence suggests that we have to be more specific and say that the public feel safer if they feel that the presence of the police reduces crime and antisocial behaviour. It always comes back to a real impact. It is not about a general feeling of safety produced by a police uniform; it is about what people think the police can do to tackle problems.

Bill Butler: So it comes down to the effectiveness of action by the police working with the community, within a framework that is formal yet flexible.

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: Indeed.

Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab): Neighbourhood policing was the subject of detailed analysis in the recent Flanagan review. The National Policing Improvement Agency's submission to the committee states that

"Responding to the recommendations from the Flanagan review will form a significant part of the work plan."

What are Ronnie Flanagan's most important recommendations with respect to the neighbourhood policing programme? Why do you think the areas that you highlight are the most important?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: The most significant recommendation in Sir Ronnie Flanagan's report that will directly affect the construction of phase 2 of the neighbourhood policing programme—the second three years—relates to what I think he referred to as the principles of neighbourhood management. There is a good and growing track record of local problem solving under community safety partnerships, and under crime and disorder reduction partnerships with parish councils and local authorities.

It is fair to say that Sir Ronnie Flanagan sees such measures going one or two stages further. For example, he puts particular emphasis on co-located multidisciplinary teams within a neighbourhood. The concept is to have a neighbourhood management team, which will not necessarily consist only of police officers and community support officers but will involve people from the local authority and perhaps someone from the probation service. He says that if we travel down that route, and he encourages us to do so, it must be supported by an appropriate set of joint performance measures, which encourage that form of working and do not inadvertently set one agency against the other with conflicting targets.

Sir Ronnie Flanagan goes a stage further and floats the idea of joint

"financial planning and pooling of budgets"

between agencies in particular neighbourhoods to tackle particular problems. That represents a significant step forward: truly combined multi-agency neighbourhood management. The National Policing Improvement Agency has not arrived at a conclusion on that, but it is consistent with where the energy is on the future direction in England and Wales. We wait with breath a little bated for the Government's green paper, which we now expect to be published in mid-June, because we anticipate that it may well say something—or more than one thing—about neighbourhood policing, and that it will say certain things about aspects of Sir Ronnie Flanagan's review.

Cathie Craigie: At least one of my colleagues will come on to the partnership approach that you mentioned, so I will let them discuss that further. My next question is perhaps for Rachel Tuffin. There has in the past been criticism about community policing not being part of core policing and about performance management indicators not fully recognising it. Are such concerns justified?

Rachel Tuffin: Local interpretation has meant that there has perhaps been too much focus on a limited number of crime types. That was not the intention when the indicators were brought in. There has been a change in how the performance management framework is set up to allow variation at local level. In addition to focusing on serious crime, there will be surveys that ask about the local crime and antisocial behaviour problems that matter to people. A method of measurement has been introduced that allows local variation according to what matters in particular neighbourhoods. That change might suggest acknowledgement that the performance focus was too restrictive.

Margaret Smith (Edinburgh West) (LD): I take you back to your earlier comments on community engagement. I note your suggestion that we must ask with whom to engage and why such engagement is desirable. There must be feedback to communities. Are some mechanisms more successful than others? How would you account for the differences? Is it a question of whether we are dealing with a more deprived community, or with an urban or a rural community, for example?

Mr Barker-McCardle suggested that in the past guidance had not been issued to police officers on how to get the best out of community engagement. Committee members are veterans of hundreds of public meetings—such guidance might be useful not only to the police but to community and elected representatives. What guidance might be given to communities to ensure that they articulate what they need from the police?

Rachel Tuffin: I reiterate a point that I made earlier: it is true that some techniques are more effective than others, depending on what one wants to do. There is evidence—from Chicago and from the reassurance policing programme, for example—to suggest that traditional methods of engagement can be problematic in some circumstances. If the community is not reached out to—in other words, if the police do not go to meetings that members of the community have arranged, do not knock on their doors and do not hold street briefings—and the expectation is instead that the community will always approach the police, problems might arise with attendance at traditional meetings. A strong theme about reaching out to communities has emerged from the work that has been done.

What was the second part of your question about?

Margaret Smith: It was about the need for guidance to be issued in order to get the best out of community engagement.

Rachel Tuffin: There is consistent evidence to suggest that the more empowered the community is, the more skills it has, the more involved it is and the more ownership it takes, then the more successful community engagement can be.

The Convener: Paul Martin wants to come in on that point.

Paul Martin: I will wait until Margaret Smith has finished her questions.

Margaret Smith: I am interested in whether such considerations have formed part of the work that you have done to make information available. You suggested that guidance has been made available to police officers on how to improve what they do. Has guidance also been made available to community organisations, parish councils and

elected representatives, for example, on how they can get the best out of neighbourhood policing?

Rachel Tuffin: Such information is available in a plethora of places. There are various websites, as well as a number of extremely helpful interactive tools. We can certainly provide information about some of those resources, if that would be helpful.

Margaret Smith: It might be useful to receive information on a smattering rather than a plethora of those resources.

I would like to move on to a slightly different issue, unless Paul Martin wants to come in.

The Convener: Just carry on.

13:45

Margaret Smith: Mr Barker-McCardle touched on abstraction, which is one of the great bugbears for community police officers and local representatives, as it always seems to be the reason why a local senior officer says that he cannot deliver what he has promised or what he wants on the ground. Has genuine improvement occurred in abstraction levels or has the improvement come about simply because there are community support officers? What extra resources have been required to get to the point at which people expect to see improvements? You mentioned the indicator that people are generally happier with policing levels. What resources have come in to make that happen?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: I agree that abstraction has been the bugbear in local policing efforts and that it is easily used as an excuse. I will come to numbers in a minute, because I agree that the issue is in part about numbers, but it is also about where neighbourhood policing is in the pecking order, for want of a better phrase. Is it the part of the local policing that is raided before any other part to mobilise resources for a problem somewhere else, or is it the part that has particular importance, related to public confidence and visibility? If colleagues need to mobilise, it is just possible that other parts of the policing structure should be visited first when a duty planner looks at the duty sheet.

Local basic command unit commanders and chief officers need to make a strong public commitment and to set out the names of local police constables, PCSOs and sergeants, so that, for most forces, people can find out who the officers are by going to a website and searching on a postcode. To be blunt, there is a discipline that comes with neighbourhood policing. There cannot just be a constable; it must be a constable with a name and a face who is contactable locally and accountable locally for what he or she does. The management must be similarly accountable.

The point about numbers is significant. To be blunt, if 43 chief constables were here, each of them would say that it would be either exceptionally difficult or impossible to realise the vision for neighbourhood policing without the additional 16,000 community support officers. That brings to about 30,000 the number of police officers and support officers who are engaged permanently in neighbourhood policing. The reality of the records is that I cannot tell you exactly how many officers were committed permanently to former community policing models before the advent of the neighbourhood policing programme. However, we now stand at 30,000, which includes an extra 16,000 community support officers.

Paul Martin: Technically, officers should attend local community forums. That has always been the case—it is nothing new. I have been an elected representative since 1993, and there has always been a directive from senior officers that officers should attend community forums and make communities aware of who they are. What enforcement is there? How do you ensure that the vision is delivered? I am sure that if I interrogated websites throughout the United Kingdom, particularly in the areas for which you are responsible, I would not be able to find out who the local police officer is for every single area. If the vision is not delivered, where do we go?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: If the commitment was not delivered, public confidence in the entire concept would collapse quickly and we would be heavily criticised country-wide in the media. Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary, as part of its baseline assessment of all forces in England and Wales, includes neighbourhood policing as an in-depth area for inspection. It has specific grading criteria that draw heavily on the documentation, guidance and advice that underpin the programme, which set out what all the evidence tells us are some of the best ways of doing neighbourhood policing. Among the things that the inspectorate will examine are geographical coverage, abstraction policy and whether the officer's experience of abstraction is consistent with what the line manager is saying. Only a minority of forces are currently graded as being excellent on neighbourhood policing; the bulk are satisfactory. Those gradings are public.

Paul Martin: Although it all sounds good from a presentational perspective—community engagement, glossy documents and the website—people are saying, "I'm sorry, but there's no engagement with my local police force because they don't engage with me; I'm not aware of facilities to let me interrogate a website to clarify the situation," or, "I don't even have access to a website so how do I find out that information?" If police forces are not willing to engage and we want to take the carrot-and-stick approach, we do

not have the stick to ensure engagement. Although you can present community engagement well, it might not work in reality.

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: The reality of 43 inspection reports, if they were presented here, would indicate the extent and depth to which the inspection process goes. The process results in publication of information on areas for improvement, with which chief constables and forces have to comply.

I did not intend to give the impression that the approach is entirely dependent on websites—forgive me if I did. One of the challenges is to inform people in ways that they find useful—rather than just putting a leaflet through the door that can end up in the bin—about who the local officers and support officers are and how to contact them.

Paul Martin spoke about public engagement. In reflecting on 26 years in policing and attendance at many public meetings representing all my different ranks and parts of my former force, I have to say that we—the police—have often been to public meetings from which we have come away with no clear agenda for the two or three top priorities of the neighbourhood. That has probably been our fault. I have been to many meetings over the years, which, with hindsight, were not necessarily located in a particular neighbourhood, nor did they attract people who felt that they belonged to that neighbourhood. We have learned a lot but—to be candid—I feel that we still have a lot to learn. There is a challenging route ahead, which is why the principal objective for years 4 to 6 of the neighbourhood policing programme is truly to embed all that we have said and agreed on. I cannot sit here and suggest to the committee that the programme is completely embedded across the country now.

Stuart McMillan (West of Scotland) (SNP): My question is about a similar point, but comes from a different direction. You have said a great deal about information that is available to the public, including contact details. How is feedback—not so much on issues on the ground, but on the system—from the public, the PCSOs and rank-and-file police officers fed back to the NPIA so that it can learn from it? There might be a specific issue in one part of England and a similar issue might occur in another part of England: how will the information get to somebody further up the chain who can say, "Well, the same issue exists here and there. How can we fix it?"

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: There are several points to address. First, the programme has six field officers. Six in 43 forces might not sound like a lot in some respects, but they spend their entire time in the field engaging with the chief officer leads in each force and with the programme teams, and talking, walking and sitting with community support officers and police officers who do the job. You can therefore see the direct connection between the national programme team, the people who are running the programmes in forces, the command teams and the officers on the front line. It would be somewhat reckless if the NPIA were to proceed on the basis that everything was necessarily as a manager or senior manager would report it.

That is complemented by a regular programme of workshops and seminars, which bring together practitioners, managers and supervisors from more than one force. Inspectors who manage a number of neighbourhood teams might not necessarily seize on particular issues, but when they hear colleagues from Wiltshire, Sussex or Norfolk mention it, it will ring a bell and a debate will develop in the room. People might say that they are struggling to make sense of some of the guidance or that they do not think that they are as good as they should be at bringing to life the neighbourhood performance framework that is being encouraged. Through field officers, workshops and seminars we facilitate practitioners' speaking to each other, so that they are not constrained in their basic command unit or police force area.

We have acknowledged that in part 2 of the programme we need to provide increasingly tailored support to police forces, rather than just to proceed on the basis that there are a number of generic priorities to be put in place throughout the whole of England and Wales. We need to concentrate effort where there are particular challenges in particular neighbourhoods or parts of the country, for whatever reasons. The programme has to learn from the practitioners; it is not a teaching model.

Rachel Tuffin: Many police officers, PCSOs and others have access to the members area of the neighbourhood policing programme website. Members from different force areas send in case-study examples of problems and explain how they dealt with them. That information is picked up by others and used where appropriate, although it is obviously tailored to the local context.

Stuart McMillan: If a member of the public had a particular issue about which they had been in contact with a PCSO fairly regularly, who would they contact to raise the matter further up the command chain?

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: I do not know whether we have had any experience of the public contacting the national programme team directly, but I can certainly find out. Before I joined the NPIA, my experience was that members of the public who thought that they were getting nowhere would generally seek to write to the commander in charge of the local policing area or

to engage via their parish council, local authority, local ward councillor or member of Parliament.

Stuart McMillan: Politicians get letters and e-mails regularly about a host of issues. If there was a clear way for members of the public to contact you, that would help MPs down south, parish councillors and so on.

John Wilson: You have talked about the concepts of neighbourhoods and communities and you mentioned consultation of parish councils and local authorities. What are your definitions of the neighbourhood and the community with which you are trying to engage? Those are important concepts, which we have to get clear in our minds.

Deputy Chief Constable Barker-McCardle: We work on the basis that someone could belong to a number of communities while residing in a particular neighbourhood. Someone might be part of the commuter community, the small business community in the local high street and a visible minority ethnic community. The fact that people can belong to a number of communities at the same time is where the confusion arose for many of us. "Community" started to feel like a slightly woolly concept when it was applied to a model of policing. In the national programme, a neighbourhood is a defined geographical area.

The challenge is to define the most relevant neighbourhood geographical boundaries. Local police officers, commanders and officers are encouraged to work with the public and local councillors and partner agencies to try to do that, but it is not an easy task. In my experience, the majority—perhaps the vast majority—of neighbourhood policing areas have been defined along parish council or local authority ward boundaries. Such areas are recognised and make sense to local authorities and councillors. A neighbourhood must be a defined geographical area; it cannot be flexible.

The Convener: I thank Ms Tuffin and Mr Barker-McCardle for taking the time and trouble to give evidence. We have had a useful session.

14:00

Meeting suspended.

14:02

On resuming—

The Convener: I welcome Professor Martin Innes, who is director of the universities police science institute at Cardiff University, and Professor Adam Crawford, who is director of the centre for criminal justice studies at the University of Leeds. Thank you for coming, gentlemen.

As you can see, we are a little behind the 8-ball. We are heavily dependent on being able to use the technical equipment that you see behind you at 2.45 pm, when we will link up with Chicago. Members will try to ask as succinct questions as possible and it would be helpful if you could bear in mind our timescale when you answer, although of course we do not want to lose the impact of what you have to say.

Stuart McMillan: How do the witnesses define community policing? What are its key features and why is it regarded as a necessary feature of contemporary policing strategies?

Professor Adam Crawford (University of Leeds): As we heard, there are different approaches to community policing and there is perhaps some debate about where community policing begins and neighbourhood policing ends. If we consider community policing generically, an important distinction, which is not semantic but conceptual, can be made between community police and community policing, which is to do with the extent to which community policing is understood in organisational and institutional terms as being about the relations between the police as an organisation and local communities and key partner agencies. In that context, the debate is about responsiveness, relations and community engagement with police officers and the police force as an institution.

During the meeting less emphasis has been placed on the broad understanding of community policing as being about the acknowledgement of the roles that private citizens and diverse agencies, actors and organisations in the public and private sectors play in policing and the maintenance of order. In some senses, it is a truism that the public peace is kept not simply on the basis of what the police do—important as that is—but through the efforts of a diverse and intricate web of actors and agencies that contribute to informal and formal social control. In that regard, and in the context of what was said about Sir Ronnie Flanagan's ideas on neighbourhood management, the role of other actors and how they link with what police forces do is an important part of the debate on community policing.

Stuart McMillan: Earlier this afternoon we heard a great deal about neighbourhood and community policing. According to current research, what is the public's and rank-and-file police officers' general perception of PCSOs' role in helping with neighbourhood and community policing?

Professor Crawford: The role of PCSOs is interesting. We have heard about how important they have been in delivering a certain institutional infrastructure, through neighbourhood policing

teams. One of the most important aspects of their role is the fact that they have limited powers. That has enabled police managers to reduce abstraction pressures and has meant that PCSOs can be—and, by and large, have been—dedicated to the patrol function. PCSOs have contributed significantly to visible patrols. That raises another set of questions about the purpose of patrolling. We entitled our research report "Patrolling with a Purpose" because essentially the act of patrolling must be about community engagement that taps local knowledge and capacity, especially in crime prevention. Where PCSOs work particularly well, they do so because of their capacity to engage with the public sector and with people living in residential areas, and to solve particular local problems. That is much harder for police officers, who are pulled hither and thither by other pressures.

Stuart McMillan: Around the world there are different models of community policing. Is there robust evidence to indicate which of those models appears to be the most effective? Would any of them be appropriate in a UK context? If so, why?

Professor Crawford: That is a big and difficult question. We have already heard about some of the models. There is an evidence base for the benefits of having multidisciplinary teams that are dedicated and tied to specific geographical areas. Such teams can do many of the jobs that community policing seeks to do. Often the problem with community and neighbourhood policing is that it has grand ideals but is difficult to implement. It is important to have teams that are dedicated to particular areas and can resist wider pressures, as well as pressures relating to turnover, status within the organisation and movement of jobs. In the English context, how we keep people dedicated is a particular issue in relation to community support officers.

An important role for such teams is to open up beyond the police organisation. For example, community wardens may be involved in working with and supporting the police, but they may also do different work. A key aspect of community policing in the wider sense is knowing the limitations of what the police organisation can do and what roles other partner organisations can play. Neighbourhood and community wardens can assume certain tasks and functions in communities that police officers are patently unable to perform, partly because they wear police uniforms. There are other organisations that are better placed to develop trust and the capacity of local communities to solve problems and to engage with hard-to-reach community members. Those organisations can connect with the work of the police.

Stuart McMillan: Later this afternoon, we will hear about community policing in Chicago. However, Australia's culture is probably more akin to that of the UK than is the culture of Chicago and the US as a whole. Has research been done into the methods that are used in larger cities in Australia?

Professor Crawford: I am not abreast of the most up-to-date research in relation to Australia, although I have been there relatively recently. In Australia, there is a lot of interest in what is going on in England, and there is a movement of ideas from the British context to the Australian context. However, I am not in a position to say what the latest developments in Australia are.

The Convener: I have a question for Professor Innes. How important are issues of police culture, management, leadership and resources in developing any community policing model?

Professor Martin Innes (Cardiff University): Over the past 10 years in the United Kingdom, we have learned that, in order to make different types of community policing work, we need a cohesive and coherent structure and system to underpin the delivery mechanisms on the ground. One of the most important things to come out of the research in England and Wales is the fact that, without leadership, management and attempts to re-engineer the culture of the organisation, success and delivery will not follow.

It is difficult to provide evidence of that, but if we consider the results that have been achieved in different areas of England and Wales, we see that the places where there has been success have in place all the things that you spoke about. The organisations in those areas have established clear leadership from the senior ranks of the service; they have put in place systematic management frameworks for evaluating the performance of teams; and they have tried to confront the cultural resistance that the implementation of a community policing approach frequently engenders.

Nigel Don (North East Scotland) (SNP): I want to pursue that point. When we were down in the Borders examining the situation in relatively small towns and relatively isolated communities, with quite a number of miles between them, I was struck—as were other committee members, I am sure—by the relative ease with which there could be one management structure for everybody who was working in a certain town. The question whether they could all be located in the same office is not so easy, however. Has there been research into how to deal with such issues in big cities, which have many times the population of small towns and where there is a need to break the area up into many little units? Do you have experience of that or any observations to make? Is

there any evidence that that can be done on a large, urban scale?

Professor Innes: Yes. Although the previous witnesses have spoken about a neighbourhood policing model, different organisations in England and Wales are adopting different approaches. The London safer neighbourhoods model has effectively been developed through a massive increase in resources and what is known as the one, two, three system: every ward has one sergeant, two police constables and three police community support officers assigned to it. The ward becomes the unit of analysis, delivery and measurement.

The situation in Lancashire, which has some urban areas, including deprived urban areas, is rather different. A far more multi-agency partnership problem-solving approach has been adopted there. The different agencies have joined together to align their resources and the way in which they direct their problem-solving activities.

The West Midlands has adopted a slightly different approach again. The model there is based far more on market research. There, communities are surveyed intensively across a range of attitudinal, perceptual and experiential measures in order to gauge performance in different areas. To give you a sense of scale, I think that about 20,000 people are surveyed annually in the West Midlands area.

Nigel Don: My geography is a little rusty, but whereas Wolverhampton, for example, is a reasonably small place—compared with Birmingham, which we would have to describe as a large place—if I drift over the border, I can go to Shrewsbury, which is a very small place. It is easy to imagine how collective management might be possible in Shrewsbury, but it would be interesting to see how that would work in Wolverhampton, which would probably need to be chopped into three or four patches for the purposes of sensible management. Is there any evidence that larger places have been divided up effectively for the purposes not only of policing but of local authority services such as housing and social work, so that everyone works as a team in an area that is big enough to have adjoining teams?

14:15

Professor Innes: I have seen that happen in two locations. The London Borough of Sutton is developing some pretty good joined-up working by aligning local authority administrative areas and policing arrangements. That has been facilitated by appointing an individual who works half time as a superintendent in the Metropolitan Police and half time as the community safety lead for the safer Sutton partnership. In addition, the staff have been co-located. A similar process is taking place in Cardiff—I cannot say whether it has been successful—where the city has been divided up into six neighbourhoods that are common to all service deliverers.

Nigel Don: Is the partnership working in Sutton far enough down the line for us to be able to derive lessons from what it has achieved?

Professor Innes: I think so. I think that Sutton provides a good model of partnership working. If the committee is interested in pursuing the issue, it would be worth talking to the people in Lancashire, who are probably the leaders in that field.

The Convener: We may well explore those options.

Paul Martin: To what extent does the panel think that current United Kingdom police performance management systems recognise and reward community policing activities?

Professor Crawford: Traditionally, it has been difficult to measure aspects of work that do not easily conform to performance measurement. That is true not only of community policing but more generically. For example, elements of crime prevention can be difficult to measure by their very nature because, in a sense, they involve measuring a non-event. The emphasis on performance measurement has often gone against the role, status and organisational recognition of community policing within the police force. To go back to an answer that was given in response to your question to the previous panel, the movement towards reassurance policing and the neighbourhood policing agenda came about in part because of a recognition that the measuring involved in performance management was having perverse effects by, in a sense, skewing certain elements of the capacity to deliver community policing.

Paul Martin: Professor Donnelly makes a similar point about performance measurement in his written submission. Given that some communities are not served by their full complement of community police officers, could performance be measured on the basis of the effect on a community when it does not have a community police officer?

Professor Crawford: Sorry, will you rephrase the question?

Paul Martin: As we speak, some communities do not have their full complement of community police officers because, for example, the force has not been able to provide cover for an officer's maternity leave. Is there a method of clarifying whether increases in crime have resulted from the lack of a community police officer supporting an area?

Professor Crawford: One would need to look at the extent to which the evidence supports that. However, it is difficult to work out a previous baseline and to determine whether there is a causal relationship between the increase in crime and the lack of a particular dedicated officer.

Paul Martin: I will rephrase the point again. If a community is served by one community police officer—in some cases, the complement is in fact zero—could there be some way of measuring any increase in antisocial activities in the community when the community is not served by its community police officer? Could that not be a method of measuring how effective the community police officer is?

Professor Crawford: That certainly would be some kind of measurement.

Paul Martin: So there is an available method of measuring the effectiveness of community police officers. I am not saying that it is the most accurate, but it is a possible method of clarifying the impact.

Professor Crawford: Different factors are involved, and it partly goes back to the purpose of the community police officer. We have talked about wider relations and engagement with local communities, and reference has been made to issues of visibility, public confidence and perceptions of security, which are all slightly different measures from the one that you identify. It depends on the principal aims of the role and how you wish to measure their achievement.

Paul Martin: Are our police forces throughout Scotland and the UK creative in the way in which community policing approaches rural communities, as opposed to urban communities? Do they use different methods in those two different environments?

Professor Crawford: I do not know enough about where police forces in England and Wales are up to at the moment with the implementation of neighbourhood policing teams, especially in rural areas. Going back to an earlier question, in a sense, rural areas present more challenges, particularly in relation to issues to do with teams and visibility. Although there are management and partnership challenges in urban areas, there are challenges of visibility, accessibility and familiarity in rural areas.

Paul Martin: It is not all about visibility, though; at the same time, it is about being able to react to crimes or prevent them.

Professor Crawford: Certainly.

Margaret Smith: Good afternoon. Let me take you back to the question of community engagement. Ms Tuffin said that there is a degree of flexibility in the way in which community engagement could be undertaken and that one model does not fit all circumstances. I think that that is absolutely the case. In your experience, what mechanisms of community engagement by the police appear to be more successful, and why are they more successful? What challenges do local communities face in trying to engage with community policing initiatives, and how can those challenges be addressed?

Most elected representatives in Scotland will know that a community often starts to build a relationship with a community police officer only to see that officer moved on. It is not just a question of abstraction because they have to be in court; it is about career progression and wider issues. I ask you, bearing that in mind, to turn your attention to the mechanisms that have been most successful and the challenges that communities face in engaging with the process.

Professor Innes: It is important to an understanding of community engagement and how it has been progressed, and how it should be progressed further, to recognise that it needs to be embedded as a proactive rather than a reactive element of policing. Typically, when the police have sought to undertake engagement, they have relied on people coming to them with their problems, rather than placing the onus on themselves as police officers to go out and research and understand the problems that pertain to all the communities.

A lot of the work in which I have been engaged over the past three years or so has focused on community engagement and trying to develop a more systematic and structured approach to engagement with all communities in a given territory. We are part of the way through a series of field experiments that we have been conducting with various police agencies, the largest of which is in Cardiff, to do just that. We have been trying to develop a far more structured and systematic approach to community engagement. Although police organisations tell us that they are engaging with different communities and can talk us through their key individual networks, PACT meetings and so on, when we test those things systematically it becomes apparent that engagement is patchy. There are geographic holes in coverage and entire communities are frequently not being engaged with for a variety of reasons.

One of the challenges for neighbourhood policing in England and Wales is that the capacity for community engagement and the status that that work has among community police officers must be significantly developed.

Professor Crawford: I endorse what Professor Innes said. Community policing is challenging and time consuming, which is why either it is not done at all or it is not done rigorously. Of course, when it

is not done rigorously, the sections in communities that are best able to articulate their voices are the ones that tend to get heard. That reinforces the importance of the proactive challenge that Professor Innes was outlining.

Margaret Smith: You have said that engagement with community policing is patchy. Is there a tendency for that patchiness to be split along social demographic lines? One of the striking things about Chicago was the willingness of the African-American communities and the communities in the most deprived areas to be proactive in the process. If the priorities are to come from the people, it is important that the people should be engaged. Is the picture in England and Wales similar, or is Chicago atypical?

Professor Innes: Although the Chicago evidence is important, we should not overstate its relevance to the UK context. The political culture is very different. What struck me about the results from Chicago was that the African-American communities were starting to see improvements in their social and economic status anyway. The process was part of a broader movement.

The other thing that is important about the evidence from Chicago is that the process was happening within one political unit—a city unit. The evidence from England and Wales is important because it shows us the way in which different political environments shape the process of engagement. That is why it is particularly important to put the onus on public agencies to see researching and understanding their communities as a core part of their role, rather than just responding to what they are told in a higgledy-piggledy fashion that can be hijacked by single-issue groups and the like.

Margaret Smith: You mentioned different political environments. Will you elaborate on that point?

Professor Innes: The challenges of engaging with communities that are traditionally socially excluded and which have a history of structural deprivation and high crime rates are very different from the challenges of engaging in the more affluent areas of Surrey, for example. What came out of our research was an understanding that the desire for engagement among communities can be more textured—it can be situational, in effect. There is a bit of an assumption in policing that communities should want to engage with the police all the time. That is not the case. People in the more affluent areas in particular are quite content for a more distant form of engagement. However, when a major crime or serious incident takes place in their community, they want the capacity to make contact with the authorities, engage with them and solve problems jointly. That is different from the situation in some of the more deprived, high crime areas, where there is a need for on-going engagement. That is an important point, which has not yet been fully appreciated in England and Wales.

14:30

Bill Butler: Good afternoon, gentlemen. In your view, which features of community policing initiatives are the most effective and successful in reducing crime and ASB and increasing public perceptions of safety?

Professor Crawford: I return to the earlier point about the way in which community police officers and other officers who have responsibilities proactively engage with diverse members of local communities in problem solving. We researched the first year of implementation of PCSOs in two cities in the north of England, and it is clear that they worked best where they went out of their way to talk to local businesses and residents about the nature of local problems and engaged in specific crime prevention work. We were told that, where they were seen as mobile scarecrows—in other words, where they just walked around somewhat aimlessly—what they did had much less impact.

PCSOs were encouraged to engage proactively with different groups of people and to enlist their local knowledge. A key issue, which is also an issue for the police organisation, is how that information is used, managed and made into a relevant resource. It is one thing to say that we need a flow of information, but the next question is what we do with that information. How do we keep it and use it? How does it influence the way in which a team in a particular area works?

Bill Butler: You talked about a team in a particular area. I would guess that PCSOs work most effectively not only where they engage with the diversity of the community rather than being mobile scarecrows, but where they complement mainstream constables. Is there any evidence that they do not work where there is tension due to a lack of complementarity between PCSOs and mainstream constables?

Professor Crawford: The integration of the PCSO role within the police services has always been one of the biggest organisational challenges, and it remains a major challenge. However—

Bill Butler: What is your impression of the integration, or the lack of it?

Professor Crawford: Over time, deliberate effort has been required to confront and engage with the cultural issues. There are questions about the role and powers of PCSOs and when they can and should call on police officers to support their work. PCSOs are in large part dependent on the assistance of police officers, particularly in relation to detention powers.

Bill Butler: I take it from your answer that there is continuing, albeit creative, tension between PCSOs and mainstream constables.

Professor Crawford: Undoubtedly there is. That is still an issue. There are questions about the limitations of the PCSO role. When we did research in the early years, we were concerned about mission creep and the slippage of powers. We thought that PCSOs' powers would increase and that their role would move from being a dedicated patrol officer who did the things that we talked about earlier to being an officer who filled in service gaps that appeared in the police organisation.

Bill Butler: Will you define mission creep for me, please? Do you mean going native or—

Professor Crawford: No, I mean the police organisation moving away from the original purpose of PCSOs being patrol and community engagement to saying, "Here's an officer who can be used to fill certain functions that we might need to fill."

Bill Butler: In other words, being a substitute, albeit not a fully qualified one, instead of being complementary to fully qualified constables.

Professor Crawford: That was always the tension—it is within the role and it needs to be managed. In a sense, the arrival of neighbourhood policing teams led to the original mission and idea of PCSOs being protected. It enabled police managers to ensure that PCSOs were not pulled into other service functions.

Bill Butler: Do you gentlemen continue to support the idea of PCSOs? Did you ever support it?

Professor Crawford: One important issue for police forces in England and Wales is that PCSOs give them the ability to deliver something that was difficult to deliver for a long time—visible patrols. If you go to parts of England and Wales, you cannot but realise that a significant change has taken place. Forces are now able to deliver a key aspect of what members of the public always say they want, which is visible policing. A major shift and development has taken place in that regard.

My concern relates to the role of the other actors, in particular neighbourhood wardens. I say that in the context of the Scottish audience to whom I am speaking. The neighbourhood warden role, which was heavily promoted in England and Wales from 2000, has been reduced, in part because of the tensions involved in funding PCSOs and wardens. Where local authorities have limited budgets, the question often is, "Which one do we fund?"

Issues arise as a result of the decline in the role of neighbourhood wardens and their replacement by PCSOs, particularly in areas where they were working well. PCSOs are not and can never be neighbourhood wardens. The relationship between the neighbourhood warden and PCSO roles is also an issue.

Bill Butler: Do you share your colleague's concerns, Professor Innes?

Professor Innes: Yes, but for different reasons. On the basis of my field research, I know of individuals who perform the PCSO role superbly and add value to policing as it is delivered on the ground. Typically, those individuals tend to be from different backgrounds and have different life experiences from those individuals who join the police.

The people who perform particularly well have worked out a role for themselves, particularly around engagement, but also in developing and collecting community intelligence from members of the public. They find out what is going on in their communities, what is troubling people and so forth. The fact that they have on-going relationships with people in the community and are not response police officers who just zip in and zip out is an important element of how and why they perform their role so successfully.

My concern, which overlaps with Professor Crawford's, is that the people who perform the PCSO role well seem to be few and far between. Many individuals who come forward to perform the PCSO role do not have suitable skills for doing that work.

Bill Butler: Other than measuring crime and ASB reduction and the public's perception of increased safety, what else could be measured to evaluate the effectiveness of community policing?

Professor Innes: Output measures could be put in place on, for example, the number of contacts that people have had within the community. I know that some organisations are introducing output measures based on things such as community intelligence submissions.

For me, the important point about the development of the approach through the reassurance programme and latterly through neighbourhood policing has been the focus on outcomes and the recognition that it is not simply a matter of reducing crime. If you reduce crime but the public do not notice that you have done so and they do not feel safer or better, what is the point? As a senior person in the police service put it to me once, you could be performing a damn fine operation, but the patient is dead already. That sums up the situation from my point of view.

Bill Butler: We would not want to bury the patient.

Professor Crawford: I largely endorse what has been said. A variety of output-based measurements could be used, as long as they are seen as means of encouraging and facilitating wider outcome measurements. That is ultimately where success lies.

Bill Butler: I am obliged.

The Convener: We will lastly ask about partnership working. You have dealt with police community support officers down south and other agencies, but perhaps the issue could be examined a little further.

Cathie Craigie: Given the time, I will be brief. From your evidence, it would be safe to judge that you believe that partnership working between the police and other agencies is important. What are the key ingredients in a successful partnership?

Professor Crawford: The simple answer is mutual trust, which is premised in large part on some understanding of other organisations' responsibilities and the limitations of what they can do. Often, one difficulty with working across organisational boundaries is a lack of understanding of others' capacities and limitations. In particular, agencies often think that the police can do everything, and they are therefore happy to leave things to the police. Learning about how other organisations work and developing interorganisational trust relationships are important parts of interagency and multi-agency partnership working.

Professor Innes: In addition, partnership working needs agreement that the different bodies are working to a common set of priorities and from a shared evidence base.

Cathie Craigie: I do not know whether you heard the evidence from Jim Barker-McCardle, but he suggested that shared accommodation could encourage better partnership working. Are you aware of that happening in any locations in England or Wales?

Professor Innes: Yes, in Sutton and Lancashire.

Cathie Craigie: Thank you.

The Convener: Before dismissing the witnesses, the committee may be minded to seek further written information about the Lancashire and Sutton projects to see whether there is anything to be learned from them.

I thank the witnesses for coming. We have found your answers exceptionally helpful. Bill Butler and I now know what mission creep means. More important, a lot that has come out from your answers will inform our continuing deliberations on community policing.

I suspend the meeting for 15 minutes in order that the video link with Chicago can be established.

14:44

Meeting suspended.

15:00

On resuming—

The Convener: The next part of this afternoon's business is a link-up with Professor Wesley Skogan in Chicago. Good afternoon, Professor Skogan, or in your case—

Professor Wesley Skogan (Northwestern University): Good morning.

The Convener: Good morning.

I am the convener of the Justice Committee. I will introduce the members of my committee. Stuart McMillan is sitting on my extreme right. Next we have Margaret Smith, Cathie Craigie, Paul Martin and Bill Butler, who is the committee's deputy convener. The gentleman to my right is Nick Fyfe, who is a committee adviser. The other committee members present are Nigel Don and John Wilson.

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in a videoconference with us. As you are aware, the committee is carrying out an inquiry into policing in general. We have reached the stage of focusing on community policing.

We will move straight to questions, if that suits you. How do you define community policing? What are its key features?

Professor Skogan: There are three underlying principles. The trick is how they get turned into programmes on the ground, which varies considerably from city to city, because in my country the police are highly decentralised and locally controlled. However, the same three principles underlie most community policing around the country.

The first principle is to establish what we call a turf orientation, which has to do with decentralising police and affixing responsibility for particular pieces of geography—neighbourhoods, police beats and precincts—to individual units.

The second principle is civic engagement, the organisation of which by communities and police departments varies enormously from city to city. Some places have advisory committees to the chief of police, some have citizens police academies and some conduct public opinion polls. In Chicago, which I will talk about later, we have public meetings between the police officers who work in neighbourhoods and the residents who live in them.

The third feature of community policing in the United States is that, of necessity, it involves the police adopting an extremely broad problem-solving view of the nature of the problems that they face. For reasons that I can discuss, that is one of the prices of civic engagement. The public come to meetings to talk about their problems. The police must be organised to respond affirmatively, if only by connecting systemically with other city services. The three general principles of community policing are turf orientation, civic engagement and a broad problem-solving focus, but how it manifests itself in every municipality is strikingly different.

The Convener: We accept that.

As you are a professor of political science at Northwestern University in Chicago, perhaps we could ask some questions specifically about Chicago. What was the main catalyst behind Chicago's decision to introduce a new community policing strategy?

Professor Skogan: First, the decision to do that was rooted in the best possible reason—politics. The mayor perceived that he had several problems on his hands, one of which was that in the early 1990s, crime rates were going through the ceiling. We had terrible waves of homicides and street drug wars, and demands were made that something be done. The mayor could point to the fact that he was doing something about his police department as an affirmative response to the problem.

Secondly, the police in Chicago were of pretty low repute—they were not very popular. Broadly, they were thought to be lazy, ill-organised and more than usually corrupt, and were considered to be not particularly good public servants in a whole number of ways. When the mayor went to community forums around the town, he always heard complaints about the police not coming when they were called or driving by when people tried to flag them down in the street, so he felt that he had to introduce some responsiveness into his police.

Thirdly, the mayor was facing a changing city. Chicago is now about one third African-American, one third Hispanic—almost all the Hispanic people are from Mexico—and slightly less than one third native white. The native white portion of the population is declining and the number of Hispanics is increasing enormously. The mayor had to find ways to react to that diversity and to crime problems in a way that was seen as affirmative and positive and which incorporated people. He could not stay in office blaming people for the problem; he had to make them part of the solution.

The natural response in Chicago was to turn to its city neighbourhoods, which are a strong component of our civic life, and to try to find a way to link the police and neighbourhoods into crime prevention in a way that the general public would see as positive and affirmative. As a result, we had a community policing programme. We did not have a programme to increase the number of police or to put more people in jail; we had a programme to incorporate the public and try something new. It was a response to a series of political and policy problems that the mayor faced.

The Convener: That is interesting. I invite Stuart McMillan to examine the strategy in a little more detail.

Stuart McMillan: Professor Skogan, you said that incorporating the public was key to the programme. What were the other key elements of the Chicago alternative policing strategy?

Professor Skogan: Chicago chose to hold public meetings every month in every one of its small police beats—there are 280 beats, so they are not very big. The police would meet the public to exchange information and discuss problems. Other cities do not do that. Some cities have advisory committees at higher levels, which are more manageable. Other cities conduct opinion surveys or hold police academies. People come from all over the world to see the meetings that Chicago holds, because they are so unusual, so please do not think that having such meetings is the usual response.

The average meeting lasts about 70 minutes. Each beat meets once a month in facilities within the beat. Large numbers of meetings are held in church social halls and basements, school buildings, park district buildings or hospital cafeterias—whatever institution the police can find that will provide a nice safe home in which to have the meetings on a monthly basis. On average, five police officers come to each meeting. There is often a representative of city agencies, and people from specialised units of the police department, such as detectives, come to report on concerns that people raised at the previous meeting. In good weather, 35 to 45 residents will attend the meeting. Over the course of the year, about 67,000 people have attended beat meetings, and something like 700,000 people have attended over time.

At first, people did not know how to hold a beat meeting, but the meetings have evolved over time. The typical meeting has three parts. First, the sergeant who is present reports back on what has been done since the previous meeting and there is a discussion. One of the things about having a meeting every month is that there is continuity, because the same officers and a number of the same residents attend. There is a discussion of

old business, followed by a discussion of new problems and what people should be thinking about in the coming month. People raise issues that had not previously come to the table.

A lot of information is exchanged. Crime maps and one-page reports on the top 10 crimes in the beat in the past three months are passed out. All kinds of information is made available in English, Spanish and Polish, which is our third biggest language. The meetings allow for the exchange of information and, in a funny way, which the police did not anticipate, they are also accountability sessions, because people hear reports about what has been done since the previous meeting. It is hard to find much government that has such a tight feedback relationship between government agencies and the public. A remarkable little thing has emerged in those 280 monthly meetings.

Stuart McMillan: To summarise, there are three key elements: public meetings, the exchange of information and the accountability sessions. Is that correct?

Professor Skogan: The accountability sessions have evolved, and it is my description, not the police department's. People meet the police, hear what they have done and complain or give them approval and say, "That's terrific, we've seen big progress on the problem." That little accountability feedback loop has emerged as an important part of Chicago's programme. That is what happens when a body engages the public regularly. As a consequence, the public are critical and rewarding, when they see their concerns being responded to.

Stuart McMillan: What changes did the programme require in the Chicago Police Department and how were they achieved?

Professor Skogan: One of the biggest changes in the police department was the move to a turf orientation. Previously, Chicago, like many cities, had a computerised dispatching system. A call would come in and the computer would pick up the next available car, which would be dispatched. Cars would drive around here, there and everywhere in the course of an evening, often ending up pretty far from where they started. There was no connection between calls, so two or three teams of officers might respond to problems in a single block in the course of a night. In other words, it was a nice, modern, efficient and professional system.

Instead, the city decided to take some of its officers—it turned out to be about 2,800 of them—and give them a new title. They are the beat teams. Each of the 280 police beats has a beat team. The beat teams simply answer calls in their beat. By and large, they do not do anything special, although they have had extra training.

The computer dispatching system was changed. The contractors who developed it were brought back in to rewrite the software so that the computer now strives to keep the beat team cars and officers in their beat for dispatches. That may sound simple, but it brought a big change in operations. Now, when somebody calls the police, by and large their beat team will answer and, if they call again next week, by and large the beat team will answer. Further, when people go to their beat meeting, the officers from the beat team will be there, so people have a chance to see them in that context.

The aim is to keep the beat officers in their assigned beat about 70 per cent of the time, although, of course, they go elsewhere and emergencies do arise. In addition, there are calls that the beat team cannot take because they are busy. In that case, rapid response units come in and take up the slack. However, by and large, week in and week out, the great majority of the calls in a beat are answered by the dedicated beat team. They are not, by any definition, special units—they answer calls. Many cities have special units that are set aside for community policing. The officers in the units are not ring fenced, so they are constantly called off to serve in other units or to deal with a crisis or emergency. However, in Chicago, the beat teams answer the calls. Somebody has to answer the calls. It is really a dispatching system trick that turns them into beat teams.

There is one additional difference, besides the special training. Beat teams have special sergeants—beat unit sergeants—who oversee the teams' activities, attend the beat meetings with the public and take general responsibility for co-ordinating the officers as teams. A team is about nine or 10 officers, which is roughly what it takes to do three shifts a day, seven days a week. It is not a problem when people go on vacation or are ill. By and large, the teams just do regular policing, but they fix it on the turf that they serve and come to know and work with the communities who live there.

Stuart McMillan: It sounds a bit like the KISS—keep it simple, stupid—method that one hears about in managerial speak from time to time.

How transferable is the system to other cities in the United States and further afield to places such as Scotland?

15:15

Professor Skogan: I think that some parts of it are transferable, but there is a governance problem with making other parts of it work. I will talk about that, as it is an important issue. There is a big difference between our system and your

system. You could do the turf orientation, which essentially involves making local unit commanders responsible and having officers stay on the beat. That is a sensible solution that brings many benefits, and it does not increase the need for manpower much. People have to work with the dispatching rules and manage things. Could you do civic engagement? You could develop various ways for the public to interface with the police, talk to them, discuss priorities and bring problems to the table. That could be done in many different ways.

However, it seems to me that there is another problem: organising the response to community concerns. In my experience, some countries have had difficulties in that respect. As I say, if a person goes out at night and meets 35 to 45 members of the public, those members of the public will bring to the table the things that concern them. One thing that Chicago learned early on was that people could and would bring a broad variety of concerns to the table. It was expected that a lot would be heard about crime problems, but it turned out that residents in many neighbourhoods were bothered by many things that only marginally fell within the police's jurisdiction. They wanted to talk about such things, which is why they were there. Chicago, therefore, had to organise quickly mechanisms for responding to a much broader range of concerns, which inevitably involved other city agencies and service agencies, such as organisations that collected the garbage and that poisoned rats in the alleys. If a complaint was made at a beat meeting that there were rats in an alley, the police could note that on their forms, but they certainly could not do anything about it themselves. The police must have enough contact with municipal agencies that deal with rats in alleys to mobilise a quick response to a concern that has been expressed.

Because American governance is so decentralised and the police are, like many services, a municipal responsibility, people work in the same service areas. The police, garbage collectors, people who deal with water, people who clean the streets and people who tow away abandoned cars all work for the same city council, the same mayor and respond to the same set of voters and taxpayers. The American system therefore makes it much easier to mobilise co-ordinated responses across agencies and to call in agencies to respond to problems that the police have identified at beat meetings.

I will put things in a different way. Community policing in Chicago is the city's programme, not the police department's programme. All the city agencies play an important, co-ordinated role in responding to concerns that have been raised at beat meetings. Doing so has become a regular bureaucratic way of life for them. Forms that flow out of beat meetings drive the delivery of city services, and the mayor's office holds agencies accountable for their responsiveness to the problems that have been identified at police beat meetings.

Such an arrangement might be more difficult to implement elsewhere—I know that doing so is difficult in some countries that have different forms of organisation and in which the police have a different governance structure and cover different geographical areas. There may not be a mayor—who is an important and powerful figure in American politics—to co-ordinate agencies' responses. Delivering the goods and mobilising responses to an inevitably broad range of issues is one of the big challenges that you might face.

Paul Martin: From your evaluation of CAPS, how successful has it been in tackling neighbourhood problems, reducing crime and increasing public perceptions of safety?

Professor Skogan: Over the years, we have conducted various evaluations of the impact of CAPS. It is the big programme and it has many goals, so we have had to take many different approaches to gauge its outcomes. I will go through some of the approaches and say what we found.

The first thing that we considered was the extent of participation. Simply mobilising and involving citizens was a goal of the programme. Getting the community mobilised is a goal in Chicago—that is what everybody wants. So we looked at the extent of participation and turnout to see that it was sustained, broadly inclusive and that the people who got involved adequately represented the views of the community. I could talk for an hour and a half about that particular issue but, in short, we found high turnout, good community representation and good interest representation.

Secondly, we looked at the impact of the introduction of CAPS on public opinion by conducting a series of surveys over the years. Over time, we were able to engage in some little experiments in looking at places that had the programme and those that did not yet have it as it began to phase in across the city. Based on the measures that we used in our surveys, we found a 10 to 15 percentage point improvement in people's assessment of the quality of the police service. We asked questions about how responsive the police were to neighbourhood concerns and how effectively they were dealing with crime and various aspects of antisocial behaviour, which turns out to be very big when we do community policing. We found that the public's views became more positive by about 10 or 15 percentage points. Much of that increase came early, during the first six or seven years of the programme. Since 2000, it seems to have peaked and it is not

much higher than it was before. Importantly for Chicago, we found improvements in the perception of the police across the board in all three of the large racial communities—whites, African-Americans and Hispanics. It was important for the city that the programme was working to some extent in all its diverse neighbourhoods.

We also looked at the impact of the community policing strategies on neighbourhood crime problems. We did that in a variety of ways, one of which was an intensive case study of a random sample of neighbourhood problems. Another way was by tracking people's perceptions of crime problems in the surveys. A third way was to use service agency data that came out of the computers of some of the other big service agencies. The goal with that was to see how responsive they were being to the priorities that were raised by the public. Again, we found a pretty substantial pattern of success. In fact, in some ways, CAPS had its biggest success in dealing with graffiti, abandoned cars and buildings, and other physical aspects of the city that could be cleaned up by city services. Before CAPS started, it was thought that there were 10,000 abandoned cars on the streets of Chicago, so identifying and towing them in response to community concerns was a big priority. So we looked at the programme through looking at public opinion, problem solving and citizen involvement.

Finally, I looked statistically at crime rates to see what the impact of neighbourhood mobilisation and community policing was on levels of officially recorded crime. The decline in crime in Chicago that is attributable to the additional influence of community policing is about 15 per cent. About 85 per cent of the decline is due to other factors. So community policing is not the biggest factor, but it is noticeable in explaining why crime has been declining in Chicago since the middle of the 1990s.

Paul Martin: Professor, that was more than comprehensive. I have no other questions.

Margaret Smith: Good morning, professor. It is interesting that CAPS has successfully involved the different ethnic groups in the city. What particular challenges did communities face in their involvement with CAPS? You suggested that, over time, changes had been made to the way in which community engagement was done. Could you give us some more information on that?

Professor Skogan: Certainly. I will speak to the three great communities, each of which presents its own challenges.

Over the long haul, Chicago's Hispanic community is going to be the most important challenge that the city faces. Chicago has experienced a huge flood of immigration. The thought that cold, dark, windy Chicago, way up there in the north by the great lakes, is on the way to becoming a majority Latino city by 2020 is an astonishing feature of American life. The Latino community is the only group that is growing, partly through immigration and partly through internal growth, and because it is young and is having lots of kids, it is growing rapidly. Language has been a big problem. Finding officers who can speak Spanish, recruiting Spanish language trainers for officers and training officers in cultural awareness—all those things have been challenging for the police department. Finding ways to incorporate the Latino community into the participation parts of the programme has been difficult.

Community policing interfaces in a contradictory way with immigration enforcement. As you may know, in our country there is immense pressure from the federal Government to get local police involved in the enforcement of immigration laws. However, many American cities have resisted—some stoutly—getting involved in the federal agenda. That can happen because we are so decentralised. The federal Government can say one thing and the local police chief can say, "Not here—we don't do that." So far, Chicago is one place where people have said, "Not here—we don't do that." There is a very restrictive executive order by the mayor guiding the extent to which the police can look into the immigration status of people whom they detain. In fact, the order applies across the board to all city agencies including the schools, health care systems and everything else. Nevertheless, in heavily concentrated Latino neighbourhoods, substantial concerns have arisen from people confusing the local police with immigration enforcement authorities.

So, language and immigration are key concerns with respect to the Latino community. There are also the cultural expectations that people bring with them when they come from other countries. People from Mexico, primarily, who come to the United States expect the police to be corrupt, brutal, indifferent and very much the tool of their political masters. They are completely cynical about what the police are and what they do, and they have very low expectations of them. That cultural expectation that they bring with them when they come north has played a big role in inhibiting their getting involved in many aspects of city life. It is simply a truth that they come with a bad attitude, as one of my police friends would put it. I would describe it as a cultural expectation.

So, Latinos experience problems because of language, immigration and cultural expectations. They also face poverty—they are poor. They have the least education and the lowest-paid jobs, and they live in the worst housing in the city. Times are tough for them.

African-Americans, who make up the single biggest group in Chicago, have a quite different set of concerns. They have been here for a long time. The last big wave of immigration from the American south happened during the second world war and, since then, the level of such immigration has fallen to zero. So, the African-American community is stable and is no longer growing—in fact, it is shrinking a little and is getting older. Historically, African-Americans have had very bad relationships with the police. I can generate maps of police shootings of residents, residents' shootings of the police and complaints of police misconduct that show such incidents heavily concentrated in African-American neighbourhoods. Overcoming that historical tension was one of the challenges that CAPS faced when it first came along.

The other big group in Chicago is the ethnic white population, which comes from a variety of backgrounds. The biggest groups are Germans, Irish and English—there are not many Scots, I am afraid. There is also a significant number of Italians. Their immigration happened generations ago and, by and large, they like the police. Before the programme started, they were very supportive of the police. Their crime problems are relatively small, and their fear of crime is relatively low—they live in the best parts of the town. If all of Chicago looked like Chicago's white population, we would not be doing community policing—we would not need to do it. They are quite satisfied, thank you. So, finding ways of incorporating them is an interesting story. They have a very different set of concerns and perspectives from those of the other two groups.

15:30

Margaret Smith: You have discussed some of the cultural issues that needed to be overcome—issues relating to language and the cultural awareness of officers and others. Obviously, that involved developing a recruitment strategy that enabled you to deal with diversity issues. Your comments on those issues and on the programme as a whole suggest that this was a resource-intensive operation and that significant costs were involved. Is that a fair assessment? Has the programme survived changes over time in the political environment in Chicago?

Professor Skogan: The cost of the programme and who pays for it is an interesting issue. Chicago's programme is not much more expensive than others. We should recall that the beat officers' role is simply to respond to calls, except when they take off to go to beat meetings and to engage in other projects. About 70 per cent of officers' time is spent answering calls, so they are doing the work that needs to be done. Some overtime expenses are involved, because officers who are off shift—members of the beat team who are not working at the time of beat meetings—get paid overtime to attend beat meetings. Although meetings are held at 6.30 or 7 in the evening, the police want officers from the day shift and the midnight shift to attend to represent the problems that arise at other times of the day. Conducting the meetings involves some minor expenses. However, providing some paper so that agendas can be handed out at beat meetings is a small price to pay, given that Chicago Police Department's budget is $1.1 billion.

Other city agencies find that they have to meet some of the costs of the programme, because they must be responsive to requests—for special garbage pick-up, towing abandoned cars and painting out graffiti—that intrude on their ordinary bureaucratic routine. They grumble, but they meet the costs of those services. A significant part of the programme does not appear in the police department's budget, so it does not bother the department. I would not exaggerate the resource intensiveness of the programme. It does not involve special ring-fenced units or taking people away from the important routines of police work most of the time. Its resource demands are relatively limited.

Margaret Smith: In our communities we face the issue of abstraction. Often community police officers are taken away from areas because they must appear in court or help to police events such as marches and football matches. Are beat officers protected as much as possible from abstraction?

Professor Skogan: Their job is to answer 911 calls, so if they are abstracted someone else must be put in place to do that. The programme's designers ensured that beat team officers would spend about 70 per cent of their time answering calls. It is difficult to abstract them, because then someone else must deal with the calls. Abstraction has turned out not to be much of a problem.

There continues to be monitoring of the extent to which beat teams are sticking to their beats and taking beat calls. By and large, teams are spending about 70 per cent of their time on their beats—answering 911 calls, driving to crime scenes, filling out reports, talking to the public, finding witnesses and interviewing people. Those are the ordinary routines of police work. Because beat teams are not special units—no one in Chicago is called a community policing officer—abstraction has not been an organisational problem. That was the programme designers' goal. They saw that in other cities community policing units were decimated by being turned over to other duties, and they were determined to devise a structure that prevented that from

happening. The way to do that was to root officers' work in the ordinary daily routines of policing, so that what they are doing has to be done.

The Convener: The major abstractions of officers in Scotland are to police football matches and other large sporting events and marches and their aftermath. Who funds the policing of baseball or football grounds in Chicago?

Professor Skogan: The handling by police officers of traffic and general security—I emphasise "general", because police officers do not take tickets or guard the doors—is always an overtime assignment, for which the officers get extra pay. The cost is always met by the consumer of the product. Our football team has a contract with city government and pays for the officer hours, supervisory hours and administrative overheads for assignments such as providing general security on the football ground, directing and controlling traffic or providing an emergency van with communication equipment—all that is part of the contract.

That is true of other institutions. Chicago has the second biggest mass transit system in the United States after New York City. We have extensive subways and elevated railways, as well as buses. Transit policing is provided by the police department, but there is a contract with the transit agency, which pays. Likewise, the airport has a contract for the police service that it gets. The public housing agency, which is separately funded and runs substantial public housing developments, pays the costs of the public housing unit police who are provided by the police department. We have one policing provider in Chicago, but through contracts for regular policing or contracts for overtime policing the consumer pays for the policing of transit, public housing and sporting and other big projects.

The Convener: Bill Butler will ask about the broader challenges of community policing.

Bill Butler: Concern is often expressed that community policing is not part of core policing and police performance management indicators do not fully acknowledge the breadth of community policing activity. Is such concern justified? If so, how should it be addressed?

Professor Skogan: Your analysis is 100 per cent accurate. There are many movements and innovations in policing, but they do not always add up or correspond to one another. I have witnessed significant clashes between community policing and what are most broadly called management accountability processes—systems such as New York City's compstat or your extensive system of commissions, bureaus, auditors and improvers, which oversee the operation of local policing, sometimes even down to the basic command area. Such things do not always work in tandem. For years I have been kvetching—as we say in Chicago—about the need to find ways of developing and including in management information systems more information that is relevant to the effective application of community policing.

Chicago has introduced some measures in its management accountability reviews—what I will call its compstat meetings. I will tell you about measures that are used, although I must also tell you that by and large they become secondary to the traditional measures. For example, beat meeting attendance is measured—especially trends in attendance; if the trend is down the commander must have plans for getting it back up. There are measures of city services delivery. Are abandoned cars being towed? Are graffiti being painted up? Such problems are discussed and forms are filled out at beat meetings, and it is the job of the neighbourhood police to follow them up and ensure that the agencies deal with them. The paperwork flow to do with accountability for neighbourhood service delivery is also part of the process.

But that is pretty much it. Those are the kinds of quantitative indicators that the police have been able to extract from their systems. They use them in management reviews. However, we have to consider what those indicators come into conflict with. I am talking about issues such as clearing up crimes, seizing guns, and recovering stolen autos; about speed of response—how quickly the police get there; and about staying out of trouble relating to allegations of misconduct, charges against officers, and public complaints. What causes district commanders to get fired is public complaints, corruption and the ineffective delivery of traditional services. I have not known a police commander to be fired because his beat meeting trends were down. In the battle for the attention of top managers, it is almost inevitable that traditional accountability measures will overwhelm the limited and spartan measures that we have been able to assemble on the community policing side. That is a problem.

We have to keep reminding top managers—people who sit in police headquarters and never get out in the world—that civic engagement, public satisfaction and public participation are important; that support among the voters and taxpayers is important; and that those people love community policing. We have to keep reminding managers of the indicators that are not in their information systems. Those indicators tend to get driven out in management accountability computer systems.

Bill Butler: What evidence is there that some mechanisms are more successful than others in terms of community engagement and what accounts for the differences?

I would also like to hear your comments on a particular section in your very interesting paper. What is your view on group sponsorship of neighbourhood patrols?

Professor Skogan: Let me start with that second question, because it is very interesting. American cities are quite divided in terms of the kinds of autonomous citizen action that they can sponsor and be responsible for. A city at the opposite end of the spectrum to Chicago would be Fort Worth, Texas. Fort Worth is a very interesting town of about 600,000 people. It is a substantial place but it is very poor. The city and the police department are the active sponsors of a large and aggressive community patrol scheme. Private citizens' cars are scheduled, and what I would call giant refrigerator magnets are attached to the sides of the cars to say that they are part of a neighbourhood patrol. The magnets are slapped on the sides of the cars when they go out. The cars have a radio so that citizens can call in to the local police. The citizens wear distinctive orange jackets that say "Citizens on Patrol" on the back. That is all part of an official public programme, but it is at one end of the spectrum and not a lot of places do that kind of thing.

Chicago lies closer to the other end of the spectrum and there is no official endorsement of that kind of organised citizen patrol. Much of the reason for that has to do with liability. In our culture, if something goes wrong somebody is going to get sued—I would guess within 15 minutes. The city does not want legal liability for a lot of citizens whom it has not recruited and has not trained, and whom it is not supervising. That is a very big issue. Most police departments think like that: they are pretty wary of aggressive citizen patrols.

That said, there are many other things that the public can do besides patrolling. Chicago supports a lot of other things. For example, the city organises many Saturday morning neighbourhood clean-ups, in which the big targets are things such as graffiti. With the support of a city agency that shows up with paint and paint-brushes, neighbourhoods get out and they paint out graffiti and they paint and clean up the alleys. That kind of neighbourhood clean-up or paint-up is widely sponsored.

The city also sponsors what I would call globalisation events such as marches and rallies that have the theme of taking back the streets. Every Saturday morning in Chicago, the mayor leads a march somewhere in the city. Several hundred people will be on the mayor's march, because he has a staff that turns people out for him. That is all to do with mobilising the public and focusing their concerns on particular issues in their neighbourhoods.

15:45

Chicago holds a lot of marches and rallies—citywide and in the districts—but it has drawn the line at active citizen patrols with radios, special jackets and the like. Other cities have endorsed such activity. I do not know whether their model is more effective than ours, because I have evaluated only Chicago's approach. I have been to Fort Worth and have driven with the guys in their patrols, but that is a long way from doing a serious evaluation. I would describe Chicago's community mobilisation as modest and contained within the community policing framework. The marches are organised at the beat meetings and sometimes the beat meeting itself gets up and goes out and marches, but they do it within the context of the programme—they do not have a lot of other stuff going on.

Bill Butler: I take it that you prefer Chicago's approach. Is that because, at its extreme, there is a danger in Fort Worth's approach, for example, of vigilante groups emerging?

Professor Skogan: That is a possibility. I have not seen or heard of anything that I would describe as vigilante action in Fort Worth. In fact, the big goal there is to identify street drug-market activity and inform police units about it. Any sensible citizen in America does not intervene; our criminals are armed to the teeth and are very dangerous people, so it is best left to the professionals. The extent to which the bad guys carry guns in our country means that vigilante action will always be fairly restrained. Our citizen patrols are about calling in the professionals; they are not about engaging in vigilante activity. Once the ordinary police get involved, they are bound by the constitution—they have been trained in the laws of the state of Illinois—as they are under any circumstance.

I have not seen in practice that vigilantism is an important issue. I read in the papers about rural areas where vigilantism associated with immigration politics is an issue, but it is not a problem in my city or, I think, in other big American cities. I understand your concern, but because of the laws and because the bad guys are typically pretty well armed, Americans have not taken vigilante action in a long time.

The Convener: You have given us comprehensive answers and have probably given us more or less all the information that we need. Are there any other questions?

Cathie Craigie: I echo the convener's remarks, Professor Skogan. Your answers have been informative and detailed.

What support is provided to communities to articulate their policing needs? You mentioned the need for partnership working and explained how

the beat meetings take place, but what has been the key ingredient that makes the partnership effective?

Professor Skogan: That is a very good question. I have not discussed one very important aspect of the programme, which is that the beat meetings and the public participation in marches, rallies and Saturday morning clean-up programmes do not happen accidentally. Another aspect of the programme is that there is a fairly large office staffed by a team of civilians, who are all community organisers and are experienced, professional people. When the office is fully staffed, there are about 85 of them. They are carried on the police department's budget, because that protects the office from other politicians, but they have a civilian director, who is a well-known former civil rights leader in Chicago. They are called the community mobilisation team and they go out, march, walk the streets and give out brochures. They also go to other meetings and encourage people to attend beat meetings. When there is going to be a march on a Saturday morning, they ensure that people turn out for the march and that marchers have posters to hold up. They support the clean-up programmes and see to it that the paint and brushes arrive and that somebody is out there to help get people mobilised on a Saturday morning. The staff of civilian organisers who push along public participation play an important part in the programme. Chicago is a big city; we have 3 million people so it takes a substantial amount of staff work to reach out, mobilise and push people forward. Financially, that part of the programme is not that expensive, especially when you are talking about a budget of $1.1 billion. Having an implementation office has been an important part of making the public side of the programme work as effectively as it has.

John Wilson: Professor Skogan, you said earlier that something like 15 per cent of the reduction in crime could be attributed to CAPS and that the other 85 per cent could be attributed elsewhere. To what can that 85 per cent reduction be attributed?

Professor Skogan: The huge decline in crime that has taken place since about 1991 is one of the great mysteries of the United States at the end of the 20th century. There was a sharp drop during the 1990s; the decline has now levelled off in Chicago, although it is still dropping a bit throughout the 2000s.

Like many other academics, I have tried to address the reasons for the decline. I can only speak for Chicago because all crime is local—all these guys are doing it in our neighbourhood so my statistical work has been confined to Chicago. I see three broad contributions to the crime decline. The first was increasing rates of incarceration, especially during the first two thirds of the 1990s. From 1991 through 1996 or 1997, there was a big run-up in the level of incarceration of people from Chicago in our county and state prisons. Nationwide, incarceration accounts for about 25 per cent of the total crime decline; I have no reason to think that that was not as effective in Chicago and, statistically, I see about the same level of decline.

From the late 1990s into the 2000s, we had large-scale mobilisation around community policing. I find that an independent contribution of citizen involvement plus my measures of the effectiveness of the programme in the different areas account for a chunk of decline from 1996 through 2002 or 2003.

In addition, starting in about 2003, Chicago began to adopt what I would call smart policing strategies that had been proved elsewhere but which were slow to come to Chicago. The strategies adopted the kind of management accountability in monitoring and supervision that I talked about. They started using computers to analyse hotspots, to focus concentrated policing on those hotspots and a whole variety of things that other cities had moved towards more quickly but which did not come to Chicago until the 2000s. In the 2000s, those measures also contributed to the decline in crime in Chicago.

So the three broad trends of smarter policing, community policing and incarceration account for much, but not all, of the decline—there are still huge mysteries involved in that decline. However, those trends account for a significant proportion of the decline in crime in Chicago at that time.

John Wilson: Thank you, professor. You also said that the drive behind the programme came from the mayor's office. What would the reaction be if there was either a change of mayor or a political change between the neighbourhoods and the police?

Professor Skogan: That is hard to say. We have had a mayor Daley in office since 1953 and our current Daley shows no signs of leaving, so I have no experience of mayoral transition. However, I know that mayoral transition has created big problems in other cities. In Seattle, when a new mayor came in with a new set of priorities, he got rid of his old chief and went in another direction. I could name other cities too.

I am now on my fourth chief superintendent. Each of them has come in responsive to the city's agenda and, in their own way, has continued to support the programme and see to it that it functions. Some were more enthusiastic than others, and some had other priorities that they wanted to focus on. In the end, the big strength for

Chicago's programme is that it is the city's programme, not the police department's. Police chiefs have come and gone, and the programme has remained pretty much the same because it is so firmly rooted in the city's culture and neighbourhoods. The information systems support it, the services are co-ordinated around it and the public attends in huge numbers. The politically inclined public loves it. It will not go away any time soon. It is pretty much built into the civic culture of Chicago that this is the way that we do things. As you say, some day, perhaps after the next Olympics—which Chicago desperately hopes to attract—we might see a new mayor, and then we will have a true test. We have not seen such a test yet.

The Convener: If there are no further questions, I thank you for giving evidence. I heard a lecture that you gave some months ago in Edinburgh. I was sufficiently impressed to think that the committee would derive a lot of benefit from having evidence from you—that has proved to be the case. We could learn quite a lot from Chicago, although perhaps not on the issue of political and civic nepotism. The figures on crime are most impressive. We are very much obliged to you for giving your time. No doubt we shall hear from you again.

Professor Skogan: Thank you for your thoughtful questions.

15:56

Meeting suspended.

15:59

On resuming—

The Convener: Our final visitors are Dr Daniel Donnelly, of the Scottish centre for police studies, who gave evidence at the earlier stage of our policing inquiry, and Alistair Henry, who is a lecturer in criminology at the University of Edinburgh.

The first question, regarding definitions and contexts, will be asked by Stuart McMillan.

Stuart McMillan: How would you define community policing and what are its key features? Why is community policing viewed as a necessary feature of contemporary policing strategies?

Dr Daniel Donnelly (University of Paisley): Traditionally—that is, since the 1980s—community policing has been looked at as an opportunity for members of the public to participate in policing, influence policing in their area and gain a feeling that their problems are being listened to and their questions are being answered by the local police. In recent years, the definition of community policing has become broader. In the past few decades, the iconic patrol officer would have been viewed as the centre of community policing. Recently, however, there have been more players in the wide world of community policing. The private sector plays a part, as do closed-circuit television systems, local authorities and their agencies, community wardens and the voluntary sector. More important, within the police organisation, there are many, many more individuals—civilian police staff, detective officers, analysts and a wide array of others in the background—who play an important role in modern-day community policing.

If you asked other people for a definition of community policing, you would get a different response from each person. The situation is dynamic in the 21st century. Suffice it to say that community policing requires the adoption of a different mindset by the police organisation, communities and central and local politicians.

The police realise that there has to be a regular interface with communities, and that, for the police to be successful, they require the involvement and support of communities. One of the ways of ensuring that that happens is to develop trust, and one of the ways of developing trust is to have a regular communication system whereby the police can meet the community on the street and in a wide array of forums, such as community councils and residents associations.

Modern policing requires the community to give information to the police. Different types of intelligence are required, such as community intelligence and criminal intelligence. The community must be willing to contact the police when things go wrong and when crimes take place, and people must be willing to give witness statements and go to court at some point in the future to give evidence to support the police side of investigations.

We could spend hours articulating different definitions and ways of looking at community policing, but at its core there is a regular interface between the police, other agencies and the community. That ensures that the police organisation understands and regularly tackles the community's problems and concerns, which might not always be to do with crime. Certainly, the police organisation should at least be in a position to have a flow of information from the community.

Alistair Henry (University of Edinburgh): I would reiterate much of what Dr Donnelly has said, but I also make the point that the definitions of community policing have been notoriously vague and varied—that may be one reason for the committee's interest in the issue. Often, the definitions have been aspirational and have simply reflected how people, including police officers,

would like policing to be. As a result, community policing has sometimes been thought of as being more about rhetoric and how we want policing to be rather than about actual practice. The powerful thing about the definitions of community policing that have been proposed by scholars such as Wesley Skogan and David Bayley—whom I will mention in a moment—is that they try to connect community policing with its operational aspects. Rather than just rhetoric, community policing must be about doing something quite specific.

David Bayley's definition is based on CAMPS—consultation, adaptation, mobilisation and problem solving. First, consultation should be part of community policing. Secondly, adaptation must flow from that consultation. In other words, the police must adapt what they do in the light of those responses. Consultation should be an exercise whereby the police not only inform the community of what they are doing, but find out what the community wants and, where necessary and appropriate, adapt what they do to meet the community's needs and interests. Thirdly, mobilisation of community resources is required. Those resources may include other public sector services and agencies, such as local authorities and health boards, that may have the mechanisms with which to deliver community policing. Finally, problem-solving approaches are needed that flow from that idea of mobilisation. By consulting the community and adapting police activities to what the community wants, we adopt a problem-solving approach that can actually deal with those problems.

It is useful to mention that definition alongside Wesley Skogan's definition, because it is important to define community policing in a way that reflects how community policing needs to be operationalised. Community policing needs to move away from being simply about rhetoric.

Stuart McMillan: HMIC's 2004 report "Local Connections—Policing with the Community" highlighted confusion and ambiguity about the term "community policing", given the varying styles, approaches, labels and designations of community officers throughout Scotland. The report stated:

"While local creativity and responsiveness are desirable, HMIC considers that there is a need for more consistent force and national strategies in this area."

To what extent do you agree with that assessment? Does it still have relevance in 2008?

Dr Donnelly: The point that HMIC made about community policing could be expanded to cover levels of service in other areas of policing throughout Scotland.

It is important to consider the ability of rural and urban areas within Scotland to deliver a community policing service. In urban areas, the community police service occasionally needs to be suspended or is subject to abstractions because of the additional responsibilities of the large cities. For example, Glasgow has a number of large football grounds and many other public order responsibilities that other areas of Scotland do not face. Community police officers are often dragged away to tackle events such as pop concerts and football matches. In addition, the high level of crime of various categories sometimes requires police strategies to focus on particular initiatives, for which additional resources need to be found, and that often means utilising the local community police. An example from my experience is that, every Saturday when there was a football match at Parkhead, about 40 community police officers were involved in the policing, and they were taken away for the majority of their tour of duty. That would not pertain in other parts of Scotland.

The demands on community policing differ in each area of Scotland. That is reflected in the additional workloads of the local police and the type of work that is required of them.

Bill Butler: Good afternoon, gentlemen. Dr Donnelly, you articulated what you regard as an urban/rural split in respect of abstraction. In effect, the employment of community police officers in an urban setting is suspended because of various things such as parades, concerts and football matches. I guess that the corollary is that that does not happen in rural areas. Is there a way round the problem?

Dr Donnelly: I would not say that it does not happen in rural areas. They have their own—

Bill Butler: It happens less often, or to a lesser extent.

Dr Donnelly: That is probably more accurate, yes.

Bill Butler: Okay. How can we get round the problem?

Dr Donnelly: There are a number of ways, the first of which is to make additional police resources available to the police organisation. That is difficult, because the police are always engaged in additional work and specialisms. Never a year goes by without another workload falling at the feet of the police. History shows that, as we bring in new recruits, officers dissipate somewhere else, but the provision of additional resources is certainly one way of tackling the problem.

Another way is for specific aspects of community policing to be done by someone else. It does not always have to be police officers who tackle things. In the past few years, the work of community wardens—

Bill Butler: Work can be done by another member of the police family, then.

Dr Donnelly: Yes—by an extension to the police family.

Other tasks could be tackled by the private sector, by additional security, or by the voluntary sector. There are a number of marshals and street pastors. There are numerous individuals who tackle low-level antisocial behaviour and crime. It does not always have to be police officers who undertake that work.

Bill Butler: I understand what you say.

Leaving aside the problem that is caused in all police forces, to some extent, by abstraction, what evidence is there that different community policing strategies or models are used in different parts of the country because of the demographic or socioeconomic make-up of particular police areas?

Dr Donnelly: Sometimes it is more than that; sometimes the model is dictated by the local authority and the local chief constable. Edinburgh has particular models for tackling community crime, and the police in Glasgow set up a model of neighbourhood teams, which is fully supported by the local authority. Because they can put large numbers of community support officers on the streets, they can afford to have a different type of community policing.

Small towns and villages in rural areas are fortunate if they have a local community police officer, although three or four villages are sometimes given an officer, normally on mobile patrol—technically, that officer is the local community police officer. Geography therefore comes into it, as well as resources. We must also take into account the strategic approaches of the local authority, the politicians and the community, as well as the needs of the community and the ways in which chief constables implement their resources to address community policing in their areas.

16:15

Alistair Henry: My research was focused more on community safety partnership work. However, there are a number of similar issues, and there are connections with community policing. I considered urban and rural contexts in my research, although I did not examine the whole of Scotland—that was beyond my remit.

Bill Butler: Which urban and rural areas did you consider?

Alistair Henry: The city of Edinburgh and the Highlands and Islands. It was perceived by the people involved that there were smaller policy networks of people in the more rural settings. While I was conducting the research, partnership work was being very much exhorted by the then Scottish Executive, although it was not statutory, as it was in England and Wales. In both the areas that I examined, partnership working was quite well developed. People perceived and argued that the smaller size of the policy networks in the rural setting allowed the work to be done more informally. People in the different agencies and organisations knew one another, which facilitated such multi-agency work. That goes along with the issues that Dr Donnelly raised about the personalities and the structural issues involved.

There is perhaps a connection with the previous question about community policing and abstraction. The ways in which community policing works and the different emphases that are placed on it in different locales can be affected by the different status that it is perceived to have in those areas. At different points, community safety work was perceived to have a different status in the two research sites. Where the work was perceived to be valued highly by agencies and organisations—including the police, central Government, the local authority and voluntary sector agencies—that encouraged more participatory working. Where there was a sense that abstractions were undermining the work of the partnership, that led to less warm relations between some of the partners.

I return to how community policing should be organised. From my knowledge of community safety partnership work, I suggest that, however community policing is done, it needs to be viewed either as part of the police's core work or as a highly prized specialism, which is given status for the people who work in it. If that does not happen, its operation and practice can be problematic.

Bill Butler: Can you draw to the committee's attention any examples of good practice in relation to community policing—whether in rural, urban or urban/rural areas?

Alistair Henry: There is an interesting example, although it developed after the period of my fieldwork, so I draw much of what I can impart to you from existing documents and from discussion with officers. The Edinburgh capital partnership model has been hailed as an innovative approach. Arguably, it is more about intelligence-led policing than community policing—I will return to the distinction in a moment.

The Edinburgh capital partnership model is interesting for a couple of major reasons, which I will try to describe briefly. First, it uses the national intelligence model, which is used extensively by all the forces in England and Wales and which is, in essence, a management tool for guiding and prioritising police resources. It is potentially a

powerful management tool, in that it collects data at local levels and can perform analysis of local problems, but it can also be upgraded to look at force-level problems and to consider policy issues on a force-wide basis. It can be extended even further, to national and international level, to look at larger trends, problems and issues.

That system is being deployed in Edinburgh as a means of objectively identifying local needs and problems. It is seen as something of an antidote to concerns that local problems and needs that were identified through consultation in the past were identified, arguably, by more active communities or those that were better organised, involved voluntary sector agencies and already had capacity and a voice but were not necessarily the communities with the greatest need. Some officers perceive the model as a way of focusing and targeting police resources more objectively on crime problems and issues of need.

Secondly, as far as I am aware, Edinburgh is connecting use of the national intelligence model with existing partnership structures. Neighbourhood tasking and co-ordinating partnerships are being set, which involve members of the police and the local authority analysing the national intelligence model data, formulating the tasks that flow from that and running them past partnership structures that include a much broader range of representatives, such as elected representatives and community and voluntary sector representatives.

The model is potentially interesting. One of the caveats about it is that, formally speaking, it is what one would call more of an intelligence-led policing approach; it uses intelligence about local crime problems to target policing resources. Community policing is, I hope, more about identifying the community's issues and concerns. I question whether the model actively identifies community voices about what the local problems are and engages with them, or whether it merely reproduces the anxieties and concerns that are found in existing police or local authority data sets.

There is potential for the model to support the idea that community policing is problem oriented and to focus on operationalising community policing, but to do that it will need the capacity to get the community's views into the system. I am afraid that I do not know whether it is capable of doing that at the moment.

Bill Butler: Dr Donnelly, do you have any brief exemplars?

Dr Donnelly: The best examples are areas in which the community police officer has been so successful that, through the good agency of local authorities and the encouragement of the police, community councils and other forums, members of the public phone the local authorities or other agencies and get them to solve the problem of abandoned cars, remove rubbish and deal with numerous other low-level nuisances, without a police officer being approached. The success of community policing is that it gets the community and other agencies and partners to do the job and solve the problems, often without involving the police.

Bill Butler: So the community is central.

Dr Donnelly: The community is central. Since the 1970s, the police have been the catalyst and the change agent. They have given confidence, direction and education to numerous agencies and members of the public to achieve end results on their own.

The Convener: Some full answers earlier have to an extent cut across the issues that we were going to raise, but Paul Martin has a question on that issue.

Paul Martin: Dr Donnelly talked about the need for the community to be involved and he used abandoned cars and graffiti as examples. Is there not a role for community police officers in detecting who abandoned the car or graffitied the local school? The public have their role, but what role do the police have in preventing the abandonment of cars by detecting the people who abandon them?

Dr Donnelly: There are instances in which crimes or offences are involved, and the police are the best agent to follow those up. However, in other instances, other agents can deal with enforcement. Many local issues, whether they concern traffic, litter or dog fouling, can be dealt with by other agents and referred directly to the procurator fiscal. Often the police are not involved but, in some instances, they have a duty to track people down and solve offences or crimes.

Paul Martin: I do not want to duplicate previous discussions that the committee has had, but there is a drive to reduce the time that police officers spend on such activities. However, what benefit does the community get from that? If the community continues to report abandoned cars but the police do not detect who abandoned them, we end up with a breakdown situation in which people wonder what the point is of reporting graffiti if more appears the following day. That happens in communities. You will remember from your previous life as a chief superintendent some famous graffiti artists who would repeatedly graffiti in local communities but who were never detected. I do not recall ever seeing a headline saying that a community police officer has detected an individual for abandoning a vehicle or for graffiti. Where is the quid pro quo? People should give their time for such issues, because that is their civic duty, but what do they get back?

Dr Donnelly: There are two important issues. First, when it is obvious that there is regularity and that individuals or groups are involved in activities such as abandoning vehicles, obviously the police take that on, and it is their job to do so. However, there could be a spate of abandoned cars that might not involve any crime or offence—it is just that individuals have abandoned vehicles. Other agents can track down those individuals and they can be brought to justice.

The second important issue is what communities get. I must always be careful on that. I have never, in my time as an academic and police officer, proposed that we should adopt ideas such as civilianisation or community wardens to achieve an end result of a reduction in the number of police officers. The levels of some categories of serious crime are falling, but they are still exceptionally high and they affect communities. I see any additional free-up of police officers' time resulting in a relocation of those highly trained and professional individuals to tackle other matters that are a cancer in society. The purpose is not to reduce the number of police officers. Therefore, there would be an indirect benefit at the end of the day for communities if they played more of a role in self-policing, and if other agencies and local authority employees played a broader and larger role in dealing with low-level nuisances and offences.

16:30

Margaret Smith: Many of my questions have probably been answered, but others have popped up.

Mr Henry mentioned in passing the word "status". We have heard about the Chicago model and the professor told us about the beat team approach, whereby officers continue to answer calls most of the time, because that is the bread-and-butter work that needs to be done in any neighbourhood, with the result that abstraction is not as much of an issue. Bearing that in mind, will you comment on status in the wider context of abstraction? Would being part of such a team help police officers to retain their status? In my experience—and I think you backed this up—around the country, different approaches have been taken to the status of community policing. In my area in Edinburgh, abstractions have occurred not just for public order reasons, for example for marches and football matches, but for career progression reasons. Might the beat team approach be a more effective way of dealing with issues of abstraction and status?

Alistair Henry: I would have to think a bit more about exactly what Professor Skogan meant in his response to an extremely interesting question. He seemed to be saying that because there was a pool of officers, all of whom had responsibility for a particular beat, the abstraction of some officers did not prevent other officers from fulfilling the community role, with the result that there was a continuing presence of officers at the beat meetings. There was never a situation in which officers did not attend the beat meetings or in which there was a lack of continuity in attendance at beat meetings. My impression was that Professor Skogan felt that abstractions were less problematic from that perspective.

As I mentioned, my research focused on community safety partnerships. One problem might be to do with people being seconded to more specialist roles. In the CSPs, it was seen as problematic when someone who had a specialist role was required to attend a meeting but could not make it and sent another officer in their place, because it meant that there was a lack of skill, expertise and knowledge of what had happened at previous meetings. Such situations were viewed as symbolic of the lack of status that the organisations involved accorded to the work of the partnerships, but it was by no means the case that they arose only in the context of police participation; the issue was common to participation by all members of the partnerships.

You asked about career progression and secondment. One reason why I mentioned status and think that it is important in the context of community policing is that I found that officers were not sure of the status of their work in community safety partnerships. On the one hand, policy documents contained many statements about the importance of partnership working and at force level senior officers did—and do—take such work extremely seriously. However, officers who were involved in such work felt that among their peers there was still a sense that it was not real police work and that it was soft stuff rather than the bread and butter of policing. I do not know whether their perceptions were right or wrong, but they wondered about the extent to which working in such partnerships would be valuable from a career progression perspective.

The position that I moved towards in my research was that if officers are to be asked to do such work, it is important that they feel that it is of status. It should be considered part of an officer's career progression—such an important aspect of policing that most high-flying officers will participate in it at some point in their career. That could add status to such work although, certainly, the perception among some officers is that that is already the case.

Again, I apologise for returning to the somewhat different issue of community safety partnerships, but I do so to raise the linked issue of mentoring. People tend to work in CSPs for a couple of years

and become very engaged in the community as a result. Such people make a lot of effort to get on with other agencies, develop a number of skills and have insight into other agencies and organisations and their strategies, only to be moved on. When that happens, the move is usually sudden, and there is no mechanism to allow people to mentor the person who comes into post. I think that virtually every agency expressed concern about that; it was by no means just the police. People should have an opportunity to pass on the skills and knowledge that they have picked up over a period of time.

Nigel Don: Much of what I wanted to ask has been covered, but I have a question on the Scottish concept of community safety partnerships. I am particularly interested in successful partnership examples in individual areas of the much larger area that is the city—in other words, sub-group working in our cities. It is relatively easy for people to work together in a small place where everyone knows everybody and the boundaries are clear, but it is much more difficult to focus appropriate resources to create effective communication networks in areas of a city. Can you point to good examples of partnerships in our cities and say what the characteristics of such good practice are?

Alistair Henry: The question is a good one, albeit that it is difficult to answer. As I mentioned, the focus of my research was the working processes of partnerships rather than outcomes. There is a need for more research into good practice and what partnerships produce.

Community safety partnerships have become strategic partnerships. They now involve key personnel at senior officer level in public service agencies and the police and, potentially, private sector and other agencies. The question is how those partnerships can be used to address localised problems in specific communities and neighbourhoods. The way to do that is by having local partnership structures that allow people to become much more engaged in partnership working and producing partnership initiatives closer to the ground.

As I said, one example of good practice can be found in Edinburgh. The council and police have drawn up neighbourhood areas that are more similar in geographical terms than was the case in the past. That has allowed them to organise local partnership working in a more meaningful way, right down to neighbourhood level.

Nigel Don: Does Dr Donnelly have anything to add to that from his experience?

Dr Donnelly: Again, the city of Glasgow is a good example. The city seems to be successful in pulling together under the community safety partnership umbrella its CCTV and local authority systems and the work of its community wardens, community support officers and community police officers to tackle problems in a meaningful and strategic way. The model is developing but it seems to be showing some success, and some good practice for the rest of Scotland might come out of it.

John Wilson: Dr Donnelly has just referred to community safety partnerships. Mr Henry, who were the partners, and what engagement was there with local community activists or local communities?

Alistair Henry: Historically, the membership of community safety partnerships has varied throughout Scotland. Police and local authorities are always present. Local public service providers and agencies that are also almost universally represented at the strategic meetings include the health board, fire brigade, education and social work.

Private sector engagement with the partnerships has had varied success, but there has been representation through the Scottish Business Crime Centre.

Community representation on the partnerships and consultation with communities were perceived to be a problem by many of the individuals involved in partnership working. They felt that much of the representation of community interests was done by organisations and agencies. The voluntary sector was seen to represent some community interests, through local victim support, local women's aid, or local agencies representing ethnic minority groups, young people or the elderly, and where such associations and groups existed, they were often brought into the partnership structure. That said, people remained a little concerned that the partnerships conducted consultation largely by consulting agencies that had or were perceived to have good community connections. I believe that the Audit Commission's reviews of the partnerships that were done a number of years ago acknowledged that. However, there was some proactive work, through community surveys and so on.

The Convener: We now come to the broader challenges of community policing. Again, due to the comprehensive nature of the answers that we have received, we have covered quite a lot of this already.

Cathie Craigie: Concerns are often raised that community policing is not part of core policing, and that performance management indicators do not fully recognise the breadth of community policing activities. Dr Donnelly, I note that the final paragraph of your written submission to the committee refers to

"The current moves in policing circles towards a strategic, problem solving and targeted approach"

and says that they are "not a threat" to community policing. Therefore, are such concerns justified?

16:45

Dr Donnelly: We have to understand that modern-day community policing is policing. All aspects of community policing and policing are pretty similar, and the majority of policing involves community policing. Regardless of what guise they are in, most police officers do community-style work, whether they are monitoring sex offenders, dealing with victim support or whatever. Part of the problem with community policing is the descriptor; we give it a label.

Listening to Professor Skogan's comments, I think that they have been pretty smart in Chicago. They do not have abstractions from community policing, because they do not have community policing, or they tend to have it at the end of the month when they have their beat meetings—I am being slightly tongue-in-cheek; I have a lot of respect for Professor Skogan and his work. The fact is that in the 21st century the vast majority of policing is what we once would have called community policing. That is why whenever we launch policing initiatives through performance management and measurement systems we have to involve all individuals, including community police officers.

Of course, there is no reason why that should not happen. Unlike in the 1970s, when community police and community involvement officers were encouraged to use their discretion and not to get involved in arrests or abstractions, the community now want community police officers to tackle crime, enforce the law and lock people up. Definitions are difficult because community police officers are now as much a part of core policing as the iconic patrol officer on the street. If we decided to do away with the definition and call it modern policing, we would save ourselves half the trouble. Every division of any large police force contains dozens of community police officers; however, in the back room, there are dozens and dozens of different professional police officers doing many different jobs whose end goal is the same as that of community policing.

At any meeting of a targeting and co-ordinating group involving community police officers, you will find a wide array of other police officers and civilian staff geared up to deliver community-style policing to the community. The uniformed police officer on the street might well be the front line—what might be described as the interface—but day after day many people are involved in delivering community-style policing. That did not happen in the 1970s and 1980s, but it happens today and the difficulty is trying to define something that has become so broad as to be nearly meaningless. Community policing is really just modern policing.

Paul Martin: My question has been answered, but I want to pursue the point about definitions. My understanding is that community police officers engage with local communities through public forums such as tenants associations, residents associations or community councils. I do not expect traffic officers to attend community council meetings to talk about a local speeding campaign or, indeed, expect child protection officers to have the same public engagement. Is it not community police officers who have that kind of engagement?

Secondly, do you blame politicians—and I mean politicians of all parties, for we are all guilty of it—for creating such an environment through their obsession with constantly arguing for more bobbies on the beat? Have we conditioned the public into thinking that the best police officers are those who are on the beat and that those who carry out the back-room work are not as important?

Dr Donnelly: No. If anyone is obsessed, it is the police organisation or the community. After all, elected members reflect their communities' feelings. Perhaps the media and the police organisation have instilled in the community the impression that the solution in policing is always to have more officers on the beat, which of course translates into community policing in certain ways.

To throw your question back at you, why should we not expect a traffic officer, the local detective, or officers involved in the monitoring of sex offenders and numerous other officers to sit down with the community to explain things and offer reassurance? Fear of crime is reduced in many ways, and one way is through constant interaction with the police—having them explain what they are doing and having them show an interest in the need to solve problems. You may have touched on a vital issue: perhaps it is not just the community police officer who should attend such meetings, but police officers in general. I am sure that in Chicago, an amalgam of officers turn up for some such meetings.

Paul Martin: That is a great idea.

The Convener: There is some interesting stuff there.

I see that there are no other questions. Gentlemen, I thank you very much. Mr Henry, this is your first appearance before the committee, and we found what you had to say of great interest. Dr Donnelly is a veteran, having been here twice and also having submitted a very full paper. We are grateful for your enthusiasm in helping us.

Subordinate Legislation

Lyon Court and Office Fees (Variation) (No 2) Order 2008 (SSI 2008/168)

16:51

The Convener: There is one negative instrument for the committee to consider today. No points were raised by the Subordinate Legislation Committee and there does not appear to be any great excitement about this particular piece of legislation. Are members agreed on it?

Members *indicated agreement*.

Annual Report

16:51

The Convener: As members will know from their parliamentary experience, committees are required to produce annual reports on their activities in each parliamentary year. The reports must adhere to a specific format and length. There is a draft report before members that indicates the committee's activities over the past year, which I think can be compared favourably with those of any other committee. Do members have any comments?

Bill Butler: It is an excellent draft.

The Convener: Are members prepared to accept that as our report?

Members *indicated agreement*.

The Convener: Thank you. The committee will now move into private session.

16:52

Meeting continued in private until 16:53.

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