HELPING WITH ENQUIRIES?

A review of information available to the public in Chief Constables' Annual Reports

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CHAIRMAN'S PREFACE

The police provide a crucial public service in Scotland but their effectiveness depends in large measure on the extent to which the public support and co-operate with them.

In recent years people in Scotland have become much better informed about the public services that are provided for them and have shown a greater desire to exert an influence over the shape and quality of those services.

This process has been given a sharper focus by the Citizen's Charter, and the Justice Charter in particular has highlighted the need for the police service to articulate more clearly the level and type of service it can provide and to consult the public when deciding priorities and standards.

In our experience, however, consultation is more effective when the public have some understanding of the nature of the service. For this reason the Scottish Consumer Council decided to look at the published information about the police from a consumer point of view to see whether it was sufficient, whether it was clear and helpful and to assess whether it provided a good springboard for implementing those provisions of the Justice Charter that relate to information and consultation.

I believe the findings of the report make interesting reading and it is clear that much can be done to make the information that is already provided more accessible to the public. For example, statistics are often confusing and require further explanation; overall force objectives could be translated to relate more easily to local areas; and the content of Annual Reports could be adjusted to reflect more accurately the concerns of consumers.

The report also underlines that there are potential conflicts for the police service in responding to the challenge of the Justice Charter and it is clear that a good deal of consideration needs to be given to the ways in which the service can best increase its accountability to the local community.

I hope that this report will be useful to the police and public alike in furthering that process.

Deirdre Hutton
CHAIRMAN

January 1993
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Scottish Consumer Council would like to thank Sir William Sutherland who, on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland, commented on a draft version of the report. Sir William’s response provided us with helpful information and the clarification of a number of issues.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1.1 CITIZEN'S CHARTER

In 1991 the Government launched the Citizen's Charter. The aim of the Charter is to raise the standard of public service up to and beyond the best at present available. The Charter aims to make public services more responsive to the needs of users and to raise their quality overall. It is also about giving people more information and more power. The four main themes of the Charter are quality, choice, standards and value.

1.2 THE JUSTICE CHARTER

The police service is an important public service and the Scottish Office committed itself to improving the police service when it issued The Justice Charter for Scotland in November 1991. When he launched the Justice Charter, the Rt Hon Ian Lang MP, Secretary of State for Scotland, said

"The Justice Charter affirms that the public have a right to know what level of service to expect from their police service. Chief Constables' Annual Reports include statements of force objectives which are, of course, already available to the public. In future I expect these reports to include details of the targets set for standards of service, and an account of how far these targets were met."

"To provide the best possible service the police rely on us, the public. The Justice Charter stresses the importance of the police consulting the public for views on priorities and standards of service, though we should not forget the duty each of us has to assist the police ..."

For the police, the Justice Charter has a number of specific recommendations (Appendix I). The police should

* have an annual statement of objectives reflecting the needs and concerns of the public on display in police stations;

* find out what local people think and take their views into account when setting standards of services and deciding priorities;

* set and publish target times for getting to incidents and answering telephone calls, and have targets for the number of hours officers spend patrolling on foot;
* wear name badges where appropriate and provide details
  (name, station, telephone number) as a matter of course.

These recommendations clearly have important implications for the police. Although it is too early to assess how individual forces will respond, most of the Chief Constables outlined their initial thoughts in their Annual Reports for 1991, putting increased emphasis on quality of service, taking account of public opinion and measuring performance. There have too been notes of caution sounded. Tayside's Chief Constable was "anxious not to siphon resources from operational services without real enhancement of the service provided".

The Justice Charter initiatives have important implications for the public as consumers of police services. By placing a responsibility on Chief Constables to take local opinion into account when setting priorities, the Justice Charter gives the consumer an important role in the police policy-making process. This raises an important question - if consumer opinion is to play a role in setting police priorities, what type of information about policing policy and performance does the consumer have access to?

To answer this question, the SCC commissioned a review of information available to the public in Chief Constables' Annual Reports. Using the 1991 Annual Reports, the study considers the quantity and quality of the information presented to the public in these reports. Chapter 2 analyses the organisational, operational and statistical information, highlighting the similarities and differences between forces in terms of the information they provide about policing policy and the level and pattern of crime in the force areas. Chapter 3 focuses on the areas where action could be taken to improve the information available to the public.

1.3 PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO THE POLICE

It is important to place this report in context. Many of the developments in police-public relations in Scotland are taking place against a background of high levels of satisfaction among the general public with police performance in Scotland. The results of the British Crime Surveys of 1982 and 1988 indicated that 71% of respondents in 1982 and 70% in 1988 viewed police performance in their area as either fairly or very good. These attitudes varied according to the age of the respondents, victimisation and experience of contact with the police. A more detailed analysis is given in Appendix 2.
1.4 THE RESPONSE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS IN SCOTLAND

The Scottish Consumer Council decided to send a draft of this report to all Chief Constables and a response was received from Sir William Sutherland on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. In that response, he points out that:

"Chief Constables have a statutory duty to submit an Annual Report to their respective Police Authorities and to send a copy to the Secretary of State. It must therefore be acknowledged that Annual Reports are not primarily intended for the general public and the exact format adopted by Chief Constables to fulfil this function remains a matter for individual discretion".

Nonetheless, he goes on to point out the improvements which have been made in recent years. Since then, Strathclyde Police have already consulted the SCC about possible improvements to its 1992 Annual Report.

The Association’s response also points to the difficulties in determining how policing objectives can be translated into practice at divisional level. Although consultation is undertaken with a variety of organisations such as community councils and crime prevention panels and surveys are undertaken, the Association stresses that ultimate decisions about priorities should rest with the Chief Constable; otherwise "a force would become wholly demand-led, reacting only to the loudest or most persistent shouts and perhaps neglecting by default those in greatest need".

On the subject of community involvement, the Association’s response draws attention to developments in crime prevention strategy, almost exclusively police-led, although the Police Service would welcome other agencies taking a more prominent role. Commenting on the mention in the report of the lack of formal mechanisms for police-public consultation, the Association suggests that insufficient account has been taken of existing consultation procedures, for example crime prevention panels and neighbourhood watch committees.

The Association acknowledges the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of statistics and agrees that an explanatory statement would be worthwhile. It points out the numerous sources of official statistics already available and highlights, in particular, the wealth of comparative data contained within Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary’s Annual Reports.

Finally, the Association points out that the Annual Report is already a costly item to produce and if all the suggestions contained in the SCC’s report were adopted, these would have considerable resource and cost implications.
CHAPTER 2: THE CONTENTS OF CHIEF CONSTABLES' ANNUAL REPORTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Under Section 15 of the Police (Scotland) Act 1967, each Chief Constable must submit an Annual Report to the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Police Authority. Although such reports are probably read by few people outside these statutory bodies they are an important official statement about police organisation, policy and patterns of crime in the eight Scottish police force areas (see Fig. 2.1). Such reports therefore have an important role in consumer education, highlighting the demands made on the police and how the police respond to those demands.

The Annual Reports examined in this chapter are those for 1991. At first glance the content of these reports all seems remarkably similar. Each report includes sections on:

- **Force Management** - explaining the internal organisation of the force and the administrative infrastructure.

- **The Traffic Department** - reviewing the role and activities of the traffic police.

- **The Criminal Investigation Department** - providing details about the different CID sections and the incidence of crime.

- **Operational Policing** - focusing on aspects of local police work in the different territorial police divisions which make up the force area.

- **The Community Involvement Department** - reviewing community involvement in the force.

- **A Statistical Appendix** - providing the annual figures for recorded crime, road accidents, police numbers etc.

More detailed examination of the Annual Reports reveals, however, that despite superficial similarities in content, there are important differences between forces in the amount of detail provided about crime and policing. This chapter examines these differences, focusing on the three main types of information contained in the reports: organisational information, operational information and statistical information.
2.2 ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

The organisational information contained in the Annual Reports ranges from general descriptions of the internal management structure of the force to specific details about the activities of particular sections of the police, like the traffic and criminal investigation department. In the light of the Justice Charter, however, there are two aspects of police organisation which will be of particular concern to the consumer: statements of policing objectives and the activities of community involvement departments. These will be considered below.

2.2.1 Policing Objectives

An important recommendation in the Justice Charter concerns the provision of an annual statement of objectives by the police. All forces published policing objectives in their 1991 Annual Reports (compared with only five forces in 1990) and these are summarised in Table 2.1. For some forces (Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, Northern, and Strathclyde) the objectives are specific priorities for the coming year; for the other forces the objectives constitute a more general set of 'aims' (Grampian), a 3-5 year policy statement (Lothian & Borders) and a 'statement of purpose' (Tayside).

What is clear from Table 2.1, however, is the degree of common ground among forces with respect to their policing objectives. Quality of service, crime reduction and maintaining social order, and road safety are objectives pursued by all forces. Most forces also give community-based crime prevention a high priority and other shared aims include efficient management, the promotion of 'good citizenship' and personnel development. Table 2.1 also indicates the way forces combine general objectives such as road safety with more specific priorities like developing links with the media or helping victims of crime.

While statements of policing objectives are undoubtedly of value to the community in identifying police priorities, they also raise three important questions.

First, how are force objectives identified in Table 2.1 translated into policing practice at a divisional (local) level? With the exception of Strathclyde it is unclear what relationship exists between local priorities and force objectives. Strathclyde was the only force to publish the divisional policing objectives for 1992 for each of its fifteen police divisions in its Annual Report. These objectives are much more focused than force objectives and include issues such as: personal safety advice for women, the free flow of city centre traffic and house breaking in specific areas. It would clearly be of interest to consumers to know what the local objectives are in the areas where they live and how local needs are assessed.
Table 2.1 Police Force Objectives

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Key:  
CEN Central  
D&G Dumfries & Galloway  
GRA Grampian  
L&B Lothian & Borders  
NOR Northern  
SC Strathclyde  
TS Tayside

Secondly, how is performance in relation to police objectives monitored? While performance relating to some of the objectives can be measured quite easily (for example, a reduction in the number of fatal road accidents) others are more difficult to assess (for example, 'quality of service' and 'good citizenship'). Fife Constabulary was the only force to offer an assessment of its performance in relation to the previous year's objectives.

Thirdly, who decides on these priority areas? None of the reports explains precisely how policing objectives are established. Under the Justice Charter, however, there will be a responsibility on Chief Constables to take account of community opinion in setting objectives. This in turn
raises other important issues. Will, for example, community opinion be used to establish local (divisional) or regional (force) objectives? Furthermore, in suggesting that a set of objectives is drawn up in consultation with the community, the Justice Charter assumes that there will be some consensus among the public about what they want the police to do. Evidence from England and Wales, where local police-public consultation on policing already takes place, suggests there are often important differences of opinion within local communities concerning police priorities. Thought needs to be given to how such conflicts might be resolved.

2.2.2 Community Involvement Activities

A second aspect of police organisation discussed in the Annual Reports is the role of community involvement departments. All the Scottish police forces have these departments which are based at force headquarters. From their title, one might expect community involvement departments to be engaged in a range of liaison activities but in fact their major concern is with crime prevention.

The type of crime prevention activity engaged in by community involvement departments is of two broad types: physical crime prevention and social crime prevention. Physical crime prevention refers to the use of bolts, locks, alarms and property marking. This type of crime prevention is promoted by crime prevention surveys, crime prevention panels, watch schemes (covering areas such as residential neighbourhoods, hospitals, schools, and businesses), liaison with architects in an attempt to 'design out' crime, and multi-agency projects in which the police work with local authorities and private enterprise in order to prevent crime.

Social crime prevention refers to activities such as juvenile liaison and schools liaison where the police give talks to educate young people about, for example, the dangers of drugs and the importance of 'good citizenship'. From the recent Scottish Office consultation paper Crime Prevention in Scotland: A Strategy for the 90s (Scottish Office, 1991b) it seems likely that such social crime prevention will gain a higher profile in the coming decade.

What is clearly absent from the activities of community involvement departments are formal structures of police-public consultation. The focus of community involvement police work is on police involvement in the community rather than community involvement in policing. This situation contrasts with that in England and Wales where, largely as a result of recommendations in the Scarman Report (1981), the community have been given a more proactive role in discussions about local policing. This has largely been achieved by the establishment of Police Consultative Committees (PCCs) under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
(section 106). These PCCs consist of police officers, local councillors and representatives of community organisations. Although the PCCs have no statutory powers, they can discuss most aspects of local policing policy and have played an important role in establishing local policing priorities and multi-agency crime prevention projects. However, opinion about the impact of PCCs has tended to polarise between those who view them as 'talking shops' and those who believe they enhance the accountability of the police to the community. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that they at least provide a formal arena in which the voice of the consumer can be heard. At present the only force in Scotland to offer a comparable arena is Northern where in 1991 the Chief Constable directed all Sub-Divisional Officers to form local consultation groups in order to provide 'accurate indicators of local perceptions, priorities and expectations in relation to policing'. Apart from this initiative, there is no other evidence of formal community-police consultation of the kind available in England and Wales, despite a demand among the Scottish population for a greater say in policing. The 1988 British Crime Survey in Scotland found, for example, that 36% of respondents felt that they had too little say in policing while 31% felt that the amount of say they had was about right, and the remaining third felt unable to comment (Allen & Payne, 1991, p.3).

2.3 OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Operational information refers to information about the routine activities of police officers such as dealing with requests for assistance from the public, patrolling, running police stations, policing public events like football matches etc. In terms of consumer education about the police it is probably a key area given that the public is largely unaware of the variety of demands made on police time. Provision of detailed accounts of local operational policing would, therefore, seem to be an important element in Chief Constables' Annual Reports. However, there are wide variations in the quantity and quality of information provided.

At one extreme is the Fife Constabulary which, unlike any of the other forces, does not devote any specific space in its report to operational matters. The Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary report places a little more emphasis on operational matters but this consists largely of a statistical breakdown of crimes and offences in the police sub-divisions but with no written commentary on policing at this local level. Any written comments are confined to force-level matters.

All the other forces provide considerably more written information about operational matters, including separate reports for each of the territorial police divisions within the force area. Central, Grampian, Lothian & Borders, Northern and Tayside, for example, all have written reports on each police division discussing the level of crime, community involvement activities and any notable events such as royal visits. The most
comprehensive and detailed review of operational policing is provided in the Strathclyde report which contains a general review of force-wide operational activities and fifteen individual divisional reports. Each of these divisional reports is structured around a set of sub-headings:

* **profile** - highlighting the general geographical character of the division and the policing strategies used.

* **crime** - providing information on the increase/decrease in crime generally and specific offences.

* **operational commentary** - an account of major police operations or crimes in the division.

* **local initiatives** - a review of crime prevention activities, exhibitions, visits etc.

* **personnel profile** - a portrait of the background and work of a police officer or member of the civilian staff in the division.

In terms of educating the consumer about local police activity, the detailed approach adopted by Strathclyde is clearly of much greater value to local communities than general, force-wide comment about operations.

However, it is not just a question of the amount of operational information provided; the content is also important. At present it seems that most forces tend to focus their operational reports on rare but dramatic events such as murders and armed robberies. What is missing is information about the routine and seemingly mundane aspects of operational policing that are often of greatest concern to the public. Evidence from studies of Police Consultative Committees in England and Wales, for example, shows that the major concerns of the public at a local level are often to do with the enforcement of parking regulations, getting a prompt reply to telephone enquiries to police stations, the problems of vandalism and disorderly behaviour etc. Against this background, it could be argued that accounts of operational policing in Annual Reports should more closely reflect the concerns of local people and what the police are doing to tackle those concerns, rather than focusing on the more sensational events during the year.

### 2.4 STATISTICAL INFORMATION

All forces provide a large amount of statistical information about policing activities in their Annual Reports, covering topics ranging from numbers of recorded crimes and offences to the distribution of police strength. This information is used throughout the reports in discussions of operational and organisational issues. Given the inherent problems of interpreting statistics, however, it is critically important that this information is
presented in a way which the public can understand. This section examines some of the problems of interpreting the statistics provided by the police, focusing on the information relating to crime, 'clear-up' rates and police numbers.

2.4.1 Crime & Offence Statistics

A central concern of the public and the police is the level of crime. Establishing an accurate measure of crime, however, is a notoriously difficult task. Between a criminal act being committed and it being recorded in police statistics there are a number of stages and at each stage information can be lost. Not all acts known to the public which might be criminal in law will be defined as such by the public. Of those acts which the public does define as crimes, not all will be reported to the police. And even if the public does report a crime to the police, the police will not necessarily record it.

Clearly the relationship between recorded crime and all criminal acts varies with the type of offence. For example, a very high proportion of burglaries and car thefts are reported to and recorded by the police, largely for insurance purposes. By contrast, only a small fraction of sexual crimes such as rape tend to be reported to the police. Furthermore, there are certain so-called victimless crimes, like prostitution, drug abuse and driving offences which depend largely on police rather than public initiative for their detection. The recorded level of victimless crimes will thus largely reflect the priority given to targeting these offences by the police.

Recognition of the incomplete picture of crime presented in police statistics has prompted public surveys of criminal victimisation (crime surveys). Although crime surveys also have limitations, they do address the problem of non-reporting of offences. Indeed, the latest crime survey in Scotland for 1988 discovered that less than half (44%) of all the offences recorded in the crime survey were reported to the police. However, the survey also showed that in the period 1981 to 1987 police statistics indicated a 19% increase in crime (for a range of personal and property offences) whereas the crime survey revealed only a 6% increase, the difference being mainly attributable to increases in the reporting of crime to the police (see Payne, 1992, pp. 10-11).

It is therefore important that caution is exercised in the interpretation of police crime statistics. However, most forces in Scotland do not provide any guidance on the interpretation of crime statistics and tend to present this data as though it referred to 'hard facts', reflecting real patterns of criminal activity. In Central, for example, the Chief Constable comments on the '8.8% increase in the overall crime figures', while in Dumfries & Galloway the Chief Constable writes of a 23.2%
increase in the 'level of crime in the past year'. Such statements are misleading in the sense that they only refer to changes in recorded crime and perpetuate the myth that crime statistics are 'hard facts'. What is needed is a statement informing the public of the problems of interpreting crime statistics, such as appeared in the Lothian & Borders Annual Report last year:

It is now widely accepted that crimes made known to the police are only a proportion of the total amount of crimes actually committed. Therefore, although reported crime levels have increased, it does not automatically follow that actual levels have increased at the same rate.

Other interpretational problems are connected with the way the police present crime data in their reports. It is common practice in all Annual Reports, for example, to compare the level of recorded crime in one year with that in the preceding year(s). However, because these comparisons are based on absolute numbers of crimes and offences recorded rather than on recorded crime or offence rates (ie standardised by population), such temporal comparisons can be misleading. In Strathclyde, for example, it is claimed that recorded crime rose by 9% between 1990 and 1991. However, because there has been a decline in population in this period crime rate will be greater than 9%.

The geographical scale at which crime statistics are presented is another important issue. From the public's perspective there is clearly a concern with crime at a relatively local level but some forces (Central, Grampian and Tayside) only provide information for the force area as a whole. Furthermore, although the other forces provide statistics at a divisional level, these figures are again absolute numbers not crime rates, making inter-divisional comparisons of recorded crime impossible.

It is is interesting to note that some of the problems identified above do not apply to the reports on police forces by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). These reports not only provide recorded crime rates but also provide the figures for the other Scottish police forces. This means that inter-force comparisons of police performance can be made. (Figs 2.2 and 2.3, based on HMIC figures for 1990, illustrate the kind of simple crime pattern analysis that can be done using this information, highlighting significant differences between forces in levels of recorded crime and the proportion of crime cleared up. Although this data needs to be interpreted with caution, it at least provides the public with a way of making comparisons between police forces, something which is impossible using Chief Constables' Annual Reports.
2.4.2 Clear-up Statistics

Another set of statistics provided by the police in their Annual Reports deal with the clear-up of crime and offences. Clear-up or detection rates are usually presented as percentages, relating the number of crimes/offences recorded to the number of cases 'in which one or more persons were apprehended, warned, cited or traced'. Although clear-up statistics might seem a good measure of police efficiency, their interpretation is fraught with problems.

One issue concerns the types of crimes included in clear-up statistics. Most forces quote a clear-up or detection rate based on crimes recorded in the crime groups 1-5 (group 1 = non-sexual crimes of violence against the person; group 2 = crimes involving indecency; group 3 = crimes involving dishonesty; group 4 = fireraising, malicious and reckless conduct; group 5 = other crimes including bail and drug offences, attempting to pervert the course of justice and resisting arrest). Thus, for example, the 1991 clear-up rate quoted by Lothian & Borders Police was 34%. This figure is based on clear-up rates which range from 20% for group 4 crimes to 100% for group 5 crimes. Clearly the latter have a much higher chance of being cleared up than the former because they depend mainly on police reaction and involve little detective work. If group 5 crimes are removed from the calculation of the clear-up rate the figure in Lothian & Borders falls from 34% to 27%.

Another problem concerns the possible terminological confusion caused by the interchangeable use of terms like 'solved', 'detected' and 'cleared up'. It is unclear from Annual Reports whether these terms all mean the same thing. As with crime and offence statistics, the public needs to be given more information on how to interpret clear-up statistics.
Recorded crime rate per 10000 people

0 50km
0 50mls

Recorded Crime Rate (per 10000 people)

Source: HMIC Reports, 1989 & 1990
Fig. 2.3

Recorded crimes in thousands

Proportion of crime cleared up

Recorded Crime and Proportion Cleared Up 1990

Source: HMIC Report 1990
2.4.3 The Distribution of Police Strength

A third area of interest to the public is the distribution of police strength. The 1988 British Crime Survey in Scotland found that 60% of respondents felt that there were too few police in their area. Furthermore, only 22% of people claimed to have seen a police officer in the last seven days and a third of respondents said they had not seen a police officer in their area within the last fortnight.

The statistical information contained in the Annual Reports, however, is of little help to the public in assessing whether their area is better or worse off in terms of police strength than any other area. Furthermore, although all the reports detail the actual number of officers in each force at the end of the year, this does not specify what proportion of the officers were employed on uniform patrol. At present such information is only provided in HMIC reports. The Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary HMIC report, for example, gives the total number of officers in an operational role (340 or 95.2% of force strength). This figure is then broken down so that the proportion of officers allocated to different functions is revealed: 66.9% were employed on normal uniform patrol; 7.3% were employed in CID work; 2.2% were employed on Community Relations duties; and 13.7% were employed in the Traffic Department. Clearly such information is of interest to a public concerned about maintaining a visible police presence on the streets. If the public are to make informed comment about police priorities as the Justice Charter recommends, this type of information could perhaps feature in Annual Reports.

2.5 SUMMARY

This review of information contained in Chief Constables' Annual Reports has highlighted a number of areas where there is scope for improving the quantity and quality of information provided to the consumer. In particular, the following issues have been highlighted:

* policing objectives - all forces publish objectives but provide little information on how such objectives are established, monitored, and put into practice.

* community involvement - the community involvement activities of police forces appear to be dominated by crime prevention and by police-led rather than public-led initiatives.
* operational policing - information on operational policing ranges from detailed divisional reviews of police work during the year to superficial, force-wide descriptions of policing. Much of this information focuses on the relatively rare major crimes, such as murder and armed robbery, rather than issues of more immediate concern to the general public.

* statistical information - forces provide no or little guidance in the interpretation of criminal statistics. Furthermore, statistics are presented in such a way that prohibits comparison within and between forces; and there are more important variations between forces in terms of the geographical scale at which criminal statistics are made available.
CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has highlighted a number of areas where action could be taken to improve the information provided to the public and thus aid them in making informed judgments about the quality of local policing. This of particular importance given the Justice Charter's recommendation that the public play a greater role in decisions about police priorities.

However, increasing community input into policing, as the Justice Charter recommends, raises issues which go beyond consumer education. Reference to the experience of England and Wales, where increased community involvement in policing is now well established through Police Consultative Committees, suggests there are significant constraints to making the police more responsive to community wishes (Fyfe, 1992). In particular three issues can be identified, all of which may become significant in Scotland as a result of the recommendations in the Justice Charter:

* **legal issues** - any form of community involvement in policing must recognise the existing statutory arrangements for police policy-making. These arrangements derive from the Police (Scotland) Act 1967 and centre on a tripartite relationship involving the police (via the Chief Constable), local government (via the police committee) and national government (via the Secretary of State for Scotland). Each element of this tripartite structure has a set of statutory powers and responsibilities. The most powerful element in determining general force policy, however, is the Chief Constable. His (there are currently no women Chief Constables either in Scotland or the rest of Britain) power in this area derives in part from the so-called 'doctrine of constabulary independence'. What this means is that the police have a duty to enforce the law and to do so in accordance with the requirements of the law and no other authority.

Against this background any form of community involvement in police decision-making will be circumscribed by these statutory arrangements.

* **organisational issues** - if there is to be greater community input into policing at a local level, there must be a decentralised organisational structure within the police force which would give local senior officers the power to respond to community wishes. It is not clear from a reading of Chief Constables' Annual Reports whether such an organisational structure exists.
* political issues - community involvement in policing also raises important political questions. Do those members of the community expressing views about policing have any democratic mandate? If not, there is a risk of conflict with those elected members of police authorities who already have a responsibility for police matters. Is there a consensus among the community about what they want the police to do? If not, how are the police to respond to competing and possibly conflicting community demands?

In order to deal with these legal, organisational and political issues much thought will have to be given to how the police respond to the recommendations in the Justice Charter. Although these recommendations should enhance the accountability of the police to the communities they serve, there is a danger that if the expectation of greater police responsiveness to community wishes created by the Charter is not fulfilled, the consequence may be a public less not more satisfied with policing in Scotland as a result of the Justice Charter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SCC has considered the response from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (see 1.4), which has clarified many issues and given helpful further information on others. The SCC considers that much can still be done to make the Annual Report a more meaningful document to the public and recommends that:

* more attention should be given to the Annual Report as a means of communication with the general public;

* in the annual statement of objectives, all forces should identify the specific priorities for the coming year;

* explanations about how priorities are decided should be given, in particular the amount of public consultation undertaken;

* consideration should be given to ways of translating force objectives into policing practice at divisional (local) level;

* ways of measuring performance should be devised so that performance can be compared against objectives;

* consideration should be given to establishing a forum for police-public consultation where local concerns can be represented;
* in the review of operational information more details should be given about local police activity;

* an explanatory statement should be given on the interpretation of statistics and the basis on which these statistics are gathered;

* the terminology used in reporting clear-up statistics should be clarified.
APPENDIX 1:

THE JUSTICE CHARTER FOR SCOTLAND

- THE POLICE SERVICE
PUTTING THE CITIZEN FIRST

We are committed to making sure that the quality of service provided by police forces inspires public confidence.

The public are entitled to expect the police to understand their needs and concerns. These needs and concerns should be reflected in the annual statements of objectives which should be on public display in all police stations.

PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS

The people of Scotland can expect their police:

- to uphold the law fairly and firmly
- to help prevent crime
- to preserve order and provide protection, help and reassurance to the community
- to detect offenders and report them promptly and professionally to the Procurator Fiscal
- to act without fear, favour or prejudice
- to treat all members of the public with courtesy and respect
- to behave in a professional manner, even in the face of provocation
- to apply only the minimum force necessary to carry out their duties.

People should be confident that the police will respond quickly when they need help. Police forces should:

- set and publish target times for getting to incidents which require a rapid response. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will follow this up with each force
- publish their target times for answering telephone calls.

People want the reassurance of seeing police officers on the streets. They are entitled to expect a visible police presence in areas where this is most needed. We are asking forces to set and publish targets for the hours officers will actually spend patrolling the streets on foot.

We would like to see police officers wearing name badges in appropriate circumstances so that citizens can readily identify the officers with whom they are dealing.

In particular, victims, and other witnesses, find it reassuring to know the name, station and telephone number of the police officer dealing with their case. We expect police forces to provide this information as a matter of course.
Victims of crime need special consideration. They want the offender caught; but they are also entitled to be treated helpfully and sensitively by the police.

SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

If the victim wishes it:

- the police will put him or her in touch with the local victim support scheme
- where it helps, notably where the victim has been sexually assaulted or abused, the police will stay in touch with the victim until the case is over.

CHECKING PROGRESS

It is important that the performance of police forces should be checked against their targets. We will expect Chief Constables to say in their annual reports how effective the force has been in meeting all of its targets.

We will also expect these annual reports to say what has been done to obtain the views of the public on the quality of service provided by the police, and to say what action has been taken in response to public opinion.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary plays an important, independent role in checking the quality of service provided by the police. Lay experts are now being appointed to help the Inspectorate to improve the quality of service to the public and to promote efficiency.

The Inspectors will examine all Scottish forces in depth every 2 years. They will look at and report on the quality of performance against targets and on arrangements for consulting the public. In addition, each year Inspectors will report on selected aspects of the work of all forces. Their reports will in future be published and will be made available in local public libraries.
COMPLAINTS

People are entitled to expect that the police will treat complaints seriously, investigate them thoroughly, and respond promptly and courteously.

There is a leaflet explaining how to make a complaint and the procedures for investigating complaints. Anyone who wishes to make a complaint against the police may obtain the leaflet from any police station. We are improving the leaflet and will also make it available in Citizens' Advice Bureaux by March 1992.

The police will refer complaints about criminal conduct by the police to the Procurator Fiscal for independent investigation. The Procurator Fiscal will contact the person making the complaint to explain what will then happen. All other complaints, which generally relate to disciplinary matters, are investigated and acted on by the police force concerned. The person making the complaint will be informed of the outcome of the investigation.

Trust between the citizen and the police relies on public confidence in the complaints procedures. During 1992 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will review the complaints procedures of all Scottish police forces to see whether they can be improved. The results of the study will be published.

HOW TO HELP THE POLICE

All citizens should help the police to maintain law and order. This does not mean that citizens should "have a go" when faced with a violent criminal. But it does mean that members of the public should:

- abide by the law
- make it more difficult for crimes to be committed, for instance by locking their cars when they leave them
- report suspicious circumstances, such as intruders in a neighbour's house
- be cooperative when asked to help the police
- give any assistance they reasonably can at an incident when asked to do so by the police
- come forward as a witness.
APPENDIX 2:

POLICE AND PUBLIC IN SCOTLAND

A REVIEW OF ATTITUDES TO THE POLICE
This appendix provides a summary of the main findings of the British Crime Surveys of 1982 and 1988 (See Curran, 1987 and Allen & Payne, 1991) which contained specific questions about peoples’ attitudes towards the police in Scotland.

2.1 THE BRITISH CRIME SURVEYS

Comparing the results of the 1982 and 1988 British Crime Surveys (Fig. 2.1), indicates that there has been little change in the generally high level of satisfaction of the public with police performance in Scotland. 71% of people in 1982 and 70% in 1988 viewed police performance in their area as either fairly or very good. There has, however, been a fall in the proportion of people giving the police the top rating from 27% in 1982 to 16% in 1988; and a slight rise in those rating police performance as fairly poor and very poor from 11% to 16%.

Fig. 2.1 Views on Police Performance

![Pie charts showing views on police performance in 1982 and 1988]


These general views about policing were examined in more detail in the 1988 survey by looking at how attitudes varied according to the age of respondents, victimisation and experience of contact with the police.

Table 2.1 illustrates the impact of age on attitudes towards policing. This shows that the youngest age group (16-24 years) was most likely to hold negative views of the police with respect to police performance, police understanding of local problems and the amount of say the public have on policing issues. The oldest group (65+) were least likely to hold negative views of the police on these topics.
Table 2.1  Attitudes to the Police by Age of Respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police performance poor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police do not understand local problems</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public have too little say on policing issues</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.2 shows the relationship between attitudes toward the police and victimisation. It indicates that victims of crime were more likely to view police performance as poor and to feel that the public had too little say on policing. There was no significant difference between victims and non-victims concerning police understanding of local problems.

Table 2.2  Attitudes to the Police by Victimisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Non-Victim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police performance poor</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police do not understand local problems</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public have too little say on policing issues</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.3 shows the relationship between public-initiated contacts and attitudes to the police. It reveals that those who contacted the police (for example, to report a crime, to ask for information or when dialling 999) were more likely to feel that police performance was poor and that the public have too little say on policing. However, the 1988 British Crime Survey in Scotland also found high levels of public satisfaction with the way in which police had handled contacts. For example, 80% of those who dialled 999 were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the police response; 85% of those who visited the police station were either very or fairly satisfied with the police response; and 89% of those who spoke to the police in public were either very or fairly satisfied with the police response.
Table 2.3 Public-Initiated Contacts by General Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents with Contact %</th>
<th>Respondents with No Contact %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police performance poor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police do not understand local problems</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public have too little say on policing issues</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.4 indicates that police-initiated contacts also have an effect on respondents' attitudes toward policing. People who had been stopped by the police were more likely to think that police performance was poor, that the police in their area do not understand local problems, and that the public have too little say on policing issues.

Table 2.4 Police-Initiated Contacts by General Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents with Contact %</th>
<th>Respondents with No Contact %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police performance poor</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police do not understand local problems</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public have too little say on policing issues</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The British Crime Survey in Scotland also examined public annoyance and complaints at police behaviour. The results of the survey are summarised in Fig 2.2.
Fig. 2.2 Annoyance & Complaints at Police Behaviour

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**Ever really annoyed at police behaviour?**

- **NO**
  - 71% (1788)
  - Not annoyed in last 5 years
    - 32% (234)
  - Did you feel like making an official complaint?
    - **NO**
      - 45% (221)
    - **YES**
      - 55% (269)
      - Made a complaint
        - 25% (67)
      - Initial complaint not end of matter
        - 37% (25)
        - (upheld 6%, dealt with informally 14%, not upheld 29%, withdrawn 8%, not followed up by police 14%, still being dealt with 8%, Other 20%)

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Figure 2.2 reveals that over a quarter of respondents had felt really annoyed by police behaviour. The most commonly cited reason for annoyance was a perception that stops, arrests, and accusations had been made unfairly. Other important reasons for annoyance included police inaction (for example, failure to investigate an incident), use of undue force, and inappropriate police action. Of those who were really annoyed at police behaviour over half felt like making an official complaint but of those only a quarter did so. The main reason for not making a complaint was that it would be ineffective, but other reasons given included the belief it would make matters worse, not knowing how to make a complaint, and the perception that the police could not effectively investigate themselves. The main reason for complaining was the perceived attitude of the police, but other reasons included the use of undue force and unjustified behaviour. For most of those who did complain, the initial complaint was the end of the matter. For the remainder, there were various outcomes to their complaints, although as this is the consumer’s view of complaints it is not certain whether this view corresponds with the official outcome.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


