

News Beat

Edition three • April 2011

News from the Constables' Central Committee



A time to talk and a time to act...

As the year gathers momentum, you only need to turn on the television or look online to see the winter of discontent is spilling into the dawn of spring, with public sector workers filling the streets and column inches regaling the anger at the various knocks being received as the government makes moves to bridge the deficit gap.

As we go to press yet another government report has landed on our desks, this time commissioned by Nick Herbert, Minister for State and Policing. The report seeks to define what constitutes the frontline of policing. Yet instead of being glad this valuable piece of work has been

commissioned I'm flummoxed by the timing of it; post cuts to budgets announced in the CSR, post proposals to cut police officer pay, terms and conditions and yet before any whole sale review of policing has been discussed.

The report itself finds that two thirds of policing can be classed as frontline and that public perception is very much linked with visibility. The report itself is valuable in its remit but our concern is the timing which comes in a completely back to front way and clashes with our view that all constables are the frontline, not just the 'visible' two thirds.

Winsor and Hutton

Other attempts to reform the service came last month with the Tom Winsor Review of Pay and Conditions and the Hutton Review of Pensions. Yet again neither report commissioned sought to place the policing role in its modern socio, political and economic environment and dealt with the issues in isolation. These reviews seemed more about satisfying long held policing views, giving a sure fired hit to a service that couldn't fight back, than an attempt to ensure improvements to policing performance and public confidence.

The reality is that constables are taking the biggest hit in the public sector, not only having a two year pay freeze, dealing with 20% cut to the policing budgets but also facing the consequences of proposals to 'amend' their pay, terms and conditions.

As constables we police at the heart of our communities and want to play our part in

attempts to solve the country's financial crisis but the incredible hits the service are taking will not only make the service vulnerable but will leave constables in debt. As seen by a recent report by the PMAS.

Even ACPO believe the service will lose 12,000 officers over the next four years (the Federation believe this will be nearer 25,000 based on numbers already reported) and as the report above alludes to, public confidence is based on visibility. With cuts to numbers, there will be cuts to the frontline and therefore cuts to service delivery. Add to this the low morale being experienced by officers who feel their conditions are under attack and forces will struggle to retain officers they can't force out with A19 or natural waste. We are your Federation, we will fight this. Help us by giving us your views and lobbying your MPs.

Dispelling the Winsor/Hutton myths..

- As Constable numbers reduce more overtime will have to be worked to deal with incidents reported to the police
- The enhancements to overtime pay that are currently in place to prevent management abuse will be removed. Work/life balance will be lost and Constables' health and safety will be breached.
- Constables do not get paid extra for working weekends; it's just another working day. Many only get one weekend in four off work.
- Constables do not get paid four hours overtime for taking calls at home.
- Constables who are ordered to stay on at work at the end of their shift do not receive enhanced pay for the first half hour worked on four occasions each week
- A two year pay freeze in real terms equates to a 10% pay cut.
- Constables, who we know are the frontline, will be hit hardest by the proposals as any who are not on the top of their pay scale (ten points for PCs) will also be hit with a freeze on the incremental scale for two years.
- The competency related pay (which can be removed for poor performance) is to be removed. This payment supports and recognises the career Constables.
- Police pay the highest contribution to pension in the public sector – 11% or 9.5%.

Our message to government

Say no to the incremental pay freeze

Say no to the removal of the competency related threshold payment

Say no to the reduction of enhanced overtime triggers

Say no to the changes to pensions - our pension recognises our unique working conditions

What can you do?

Do the national member survey. We are your Federation, we need your views

Lobby your MP visit www.polfed.org and use the template letter. Also visit them in their surgeries

Follow us on Twitter @TheConstables

Watch us on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/constablescommittee>

Join us on Facebook <http://goo.gl/8oUCo>

Dates in the diary

Earlier this month we met with MP's from the North West region

27th April meeting with Vernon Coaker, Shadow Policing Minister

Later this month we're meeting with MPs and Lords from the North East Region

Constables Conference

The theme this year will be 'Communities Really Need Constables'. The recording of this will be available after the event via a stream at www.polfed.org. This year's conference guests include Bernard Hogan-Howe, HMIC, Tom Winsor (tbc) and the Policing Minister, Nick Herbert and looks to be a lively event!

Farewell

Sadly we say goodbye to former Chair of the Constables, Paul Lewis who retires this May. Paul has done a tremendous job for the constables and in his Health and Safety work.

Good luck for the future Paul. We also bid farewell to another colleague, Neil Hickey, former Deputy General Secretary who has not only played a pivotal part in the Federation's Equality remit but also in the Police Health and Safety arena. You will both be missed by your Constable colleagues.