

# **Stronger Communities, Safer Citizens**

*Proposals for  
Crime and Policing Policy  
in England and Wales*



**Policy Paper 17**



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# Summary

Liberal Democrats want to protect people and neighbourhoods from crime and the fear of crime. To achieve this, we will work to rebuild Britain's civic society and restore confidence in law and order. We will increase people's opportunities and work with local communities to prevent crime. We will forge new partnerships between stronger communities and well-trained, well-resourced police.

Our strategy to reduce crime is based on four core principles.

*Crime prevention must be firmly rooted in local communities.* These are the people most directly affected by crime in their area and have the best understanding of local needs. To build strong partnerships between communities, local councils and the police, we will:

- Give local authorities the powers and resources to support community crime fighting measures.
- Enable the national Crime Prevention Agency to contract with local authorities to provide matching funds for high-quality, targeted crime prevention projects.
- Support partnership schemes to bring a greater sense of security back into vulnerable areas, in conjunction with other agencies providing service to the community, for example, through our proposed Citizen's Service.
- Ensure that victim support groups are adequately funded.

*Effective policing is the front line in defending individual rights and freedoms.* To protect people and neighbourhoods from crime and the fear of crime, we will:

- Provide police authorities with sufficient resources to put an extra 3000 officers on the beat.
- Enable police authorities to use existing staff hours and resources more effectively by:
  - Allowing police authorities to appoint a new category of retained police officer similar in status to a retained firefighter.
  - Using more civilian staff for ancillary police functions.

*We must build public confidence in the police and build partnerships with local communities.* To be fully effective, the police must work with their local communities and be accountable to them. Cooperation between police forces needs to increase. Liberal Democrats will:

- Make police authorities more democratic by increasing the proportion of elected members and excluding the Home Secretary from the process of appointing additional members.
- Improve cooperation between police forces - integrating police systems over wider areas whilst maintaining local command structures.
- Set up a Royal Commission to review the organisation, structure and accountability of the police.
- Work to increase international cooperation to fight crime, by supporting increased cooperation between police forces within the European Union.

*The problems of crime cannot be solved by law and order policies alone. They require the full range of Liberal Democrat policies to build a civilised society, in which people have greater opportunities to develop their own talents, skills and abilities. This way, the likelihood that individuals will turn to crime is reduced. To increase people's opportunities and remove barriers to their success, we will:*

- Make quality education the first call on the nation's resources, starting with an investment of an extra £2 billion.
- Create a skilled and adaptable work force and give people greater employment incentives and opportunities.
- Address the social and financial problems that families face by reforming the tax and benefits system, working to improve the quality of housing stock and building more homes.

The Conservatives have failed to tackle crime. Reported crime has risen from 2.5 million cases in 1979 to 5 million in 1994. Conservative politicians promise tough new laws but, despite the passage of more than sixty pieces of criminal justice legislation since 1979, crime continues to increase. Contrary to its 1992 election promises, the Government has been indifferent to the needs of the police. Chief Constables from England and Wales requested 2,675 police officers in 1994/95: the Home Secretary made no additional funding available. Now the Conservatives promise to recruit police - but even if this latest pledge is honoured, it will take at least three years to become a reality. For all its smooth talk, Labour makes no clear commitments to provide adequate resources for crime prevention.

# *Rebuilding Civic Society*

**1.0.1 There are no quick fixes or simple solutions to the twin problems of crime and fear of crime. It will take time to reduce the level of crime: to suggest otherwise both raises false expectations and creates disillusionment and frustration when these hopes are not met.**

1.0.2 Over the past eighteen years the Conservative Party has claimed otherwise. In the words of the Prime Minister its approach is based on “*understanding a little less, condemning a little more.*” No effective policies to combat the rise in crime can be formulated without a full understanding of the nature of the problem, its causes and perpetrators. As the Police Superintendent’s Association asserted in its submission to us: “*Neither crime nor policing can be considered in isolation. They need to be considered alongside education, social deprivation, community development and drugs taking.*” There also needs to be a wider understanding of the relationship between the individual and society. The breakdown in the our communities partly explains the increase in lawlessness.

1.0.3 Whilst Liberal Democrats put the freedom of the individual first we also recognise that almost all individuals find security and fulfilment by being part of a community, society or nation. Indeed, many people need sense of security in order to be able to exercise their freedoms fully. In a community responsibilities flow from rights. Successful individuals need thriving communities and strong communities can only be based on self-reliant individuals. We argue that such thriving and dynamic communities require an inclusive society that values the participation of all regardless of age, disability, gender, income, race, religion or sexuality.

1.0.4 Liberal Democrats strive for a self-regulating society where each person exercises their rights in the full understanding of the limits imposed by the rights and needs of others, respects diversity and accepts responsibility for their own actions. It is a function of government to provide all individuals with the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to encourage and enable them to participate in society.

## **1.1 The Role of Government**

1.1.1 The cornerstone of a society that recognises the rights and responsibilities of the individual is the establishment of a body of individual rights which no person, institution or Government can infringe. Liberal Democrats would, therefore, institute a Bill of Rights, starting with the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. We would establish a Human Rights Commission to secure compliance with its provisions.

1.1.2 The second step is to ensure that the education system enables each person to know their rights; to be able to exercise those rights and to understand that these rights are common to everyone. Part of this process is the understanding that the exercise of one person’s rights should not infringe upon the rights of another.

1.1.3 The third step is to establish and maintain a means of determining whether an individual’s rights have been infringed and the appropriate method of dealing with that infringement, recognising that the effect of infringing upon another’s liberty may be loss of some of one’s own. This is the purpose of the law and those charged with its enforcement.

1.1.4 Both the old political parties concentrate on dealing with infringement of the law, the third step outlined above, whilst failing to address either the protection of rights or the provision of education about them. We will not compete with the other two parties in blustering about crime and making promises that grab headlines but are misleading as to their effectiveness. Simplistic, but generally fruitless responses, such as sending more offenders into a prison system that is at risk of breaking down, merely tinker with symptoms of wider problems. Such responses fail to address problems at their source. The law cannot, by itself, rebuild a sense of community or respect for the rights of the individual. Nor can it tackle the many causes of crime.

1.1.5 National and community leaders should provide examples others should follow rather than simply imposing behavioural codes upon the rest of society. A government cannot build respect for the rule of law if its ministers mislead the House of Commons, withhold vital evidence from the courts or conceal arms sales to dictators. A Government will not build tolerant, cohesive communities by using its immigration and asylum policies to pander to racism. A Government will not build an inclusive society or discourage violence by condoning racism or homophobia.

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**To help prevent crime, we will  
promote civic responsibility and  
social harmony.**

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## **1.2 Supporting Families**

1.2.1 Liberal Democrats recognise the important role of families, in all their different forms, in forming the characters of the individuals within them. As the Liberal thinker Hobhouse wrote, the family “*is a little society where the common welfare lies very close to the heart of each member*”. A stable, supportive and caring family structure may be

the best way to prevent a slide into lawlessness. Conversely many studies have shown that poor parental supervision, erratic or harsh parental discipline, low parental involvement in a child’s activities and conflicts between parents have a major impact on the likelihood of an individual offending. This is why Liberal Democrats support lessons in parenting and relationship skills (see paragraph 1.3.2). The social pressures on families, including economic insecurity, unemployment, poor housing and domestic violence contribute to poor parenting and increase the likelihood that young people will turn to crime. Conservative policies have exacerbated all of these pressures on families.

1.2.2 Liberal Democrat policies to address the social and financial problems faced by families are to be found in Policy Paper 7, *Opportunity and Independence for All* (1994). They include retaining child benefit as a universal benefit and improving its value for each child; creating a carer’s benefit to help those looking after elderly or disabled relatives; and acting to improve the quality of housing stock and to build more new homes.

1.2.3 We deplore the Government’s proposals to use the benefits system to punish single parent families. This will do nothing to improve the sense of civic responsibility of the children of single parents and will further hold them back from achieving their full personal potential.

1.2.4 The Conservative Government fails to acknowledge that the nuclear family is a relatively recent development and that in the past the care of children was responsibility of a wider group of people: a child’s extended family, neighbours and the friends of his or her parents. We all have a role in the raising of children; in providing them with effective role models, choice and opportunity.

1.2.5 Where parents have separated measures are needed to improve relationships between them and to encourage parents to work together for the benefit of their children. Evidence discussed by Dr David Farrington, Professor of Psychological Criminology in his

article *The Influence of the Family on Delinquent Development* indicates that “it is not so much the broken home which is [the problem] as the parental conflict which often causes it.” This illustrates the importance of introducing mediation when considering reforms to the divorce laws. The proposal of Washington State requiring parents undergoing a divorce to submit a permanent parenting plan merits further study.

### **1.3 The Vital Role of Education**

1.3.1 Education should play a vital role in promoting civic responsibility and social harmony, thus preventing crime. First, we need to educate people about the rights and responsibilities of themselves and others. Second, education is the means by which we provide each person with the opportunity to develop their skills to the greatest extent possible and to enhance their self esteem. Low educational attainment is an important predictor of future offending. The opportunities opened up for young people by high quality education provide an important alternative to despair and the drift towards crime.

1.3.2 The current school system encourages schools to remove pupils who are disruptive or who play truant. Expelling such pupils merely gives society greater problems to deal with later in their lives: crime, drug abuse and the like. All too often such problems result from low self-esteem. Schools should be able to develop fully the individuals in their care and to provide them with the skills they need to live full and useful lives in society. This does not just mean simply giving them the knowledge needed to pass exams. It also includes skills such as co-operating, negotiating, communication and toleration. In particular, pupils ought to be given lessons in parenting and relationship skills which will help them tackle more effectively the problems they may encounter in a long term relationship and to make more informed choices about their lives. Evidence from the United States indicates that for every pound spent on programmes such as this six

pounds are saved through reductions in crime, improved educational achievement and reduced health and welfare costs.

1.3.3 Liberal Democrats aim to offer everyone a high quality education. Investing in quality education should be the first call on the nation’s financial resources. We guarantee to invest an extra £2 billion in education. If we need to ask people to pay an extra penny on their income tax, we will do so. We would particularly emphasise improving early years education as high quality provision for 3 and 4 year olds is now widely accepted as a prerequisite for later academic and social achievement. Liberal Democrats guarantee to: provide pre-school education for every three and four year old whose parents want it; increase funding for books, equipment and schools; give all 16-19 year olds in work the equivalent of at least two days a week education or training; and give every person an entitlement to a period of retraining or education to be taken at a time of their choice during their adult life.

### **1.4 Creating Jobs, Tackling Poverty**

1.4.1 High quality education will be of little benefit if pupils feel excluded or marginalised from the rest of society by their economic circumstances. American and British research shows that, if people believe they have no real prospect of gaining steady employment and the opportunity to improve themselves, they are more likely to become involved in criminal behaviour. This link has been recognised by the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee. In 1993 it concluded that “*there is obviously an unquestionable link in some cases between unemployment, hopelessness and crime.*” In addition, *Crime and Social Policy 1995*, a report by NACRO, shows that unemployment not only creates the circumstances that allow crime to flourish but also “*plays a vital part ... in undermining attempts to reduce crime.*”

1.4.2 We would tackle unemployment by creating a skilled and adaptable work force, encouraging enterprise and giving people greater opportunities and incentives to work. Liberal Democrats have a range of proposals to promote jobs and expand employment opportunities. These include:

- *Promoting employability* by investing in education and training.
- *Boosting employment* by investing in Britain's neglected social and economic infrastructure and assisting small firms to grow and compete.
- *Increasing flexibility in the labour market* by removing obstacles to job mobility and taking action to bring the long-term unemployed back into economic activity. Our proposals include: reducing employers'

national insurance contributions (NICs); a benefit transfer scheme to turn welfare benefits into working benefits and reforming Low Income Benefit.

- *Encouraging service to the community*, by introducing a voluntary Citizens' Service.

Further details are contained in Policy Paper 9, *Working for Change* (1994).

1.4.3 Being in full time paid employment should not be the only way of being regarded as a successful individual. We should recognise the importance of the work that people do in their communities and families and encourage it. For example, town councils could establish awards, as have some councils, to recognise an individual's contribution to the local community.

# Preventing Crime

**2.0.1 Liberal Democrats believe in empowering, encouraging and assisting communities to solve their own problems. The community-based approach has particularly strong potential in the area of crime prevention. We need to take a partnership approach to reducing the risk factors that are associated with crime: everyone has a part to play in preventing crime and making our communities safer. A coherent and integrated approach from central Government is urgently needed: preventing crime is as much a matter for housing, education and social services agencies as it is for the police. In turn, successful crime prevention schemes help to build and strengthen communities.**

2.0.2 Liberal Democrat crime prevention strategies aim to:

- Address factors which lead to criminality including educational underachievement, social disadvantage and peer pressure.
- Reduce opportunities for crime.
- Reduce the incidence of crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Encourage the community to intervene and ultimately to reduce the fear of crime.

## 2.1 The Partnership Approach

2.1.1 Our crime prevention strategy is based on a partnership between local councils, the police and local voluntary organisations. To be effective in enhancing people's safety, communities need encouragement, resources, assistance and information.

2.1.2 It is now increasingly recognised that a targeted approach helps to prevent crime.

Crime prevention projects are beginning to show results through the reported crime figures. Some effective solutions to the crime problem are emerging.

2.1.3 Effective partnership involves: defining which agencies take the lead on specific areas; setting clear objectives and priorities for action; and using resources in a focussed way. Usually, the first step for a local crime reduction scheme is to use a local crime audit to assess the priority tasks and targets for crime prevention and identify which projects and programmes are appropriate locally.

2.1.4 Crime prevention projects and programmes fall broadly into the following categories:

- *Reducing opportunities for crime.* This particularly relates to burglary, often referred to as "target hardening", through action on personal safety, environmental improvements on high crime estates, better lighting and supervision of vulnerable areas and the installation of CCTV on public transport and in town centres.
- *Tackling social risk factors for those most likely to offend in the future.* This includes the provision of preschool education, parenting skills training and family support where appropriate; diversionary schemes to provide recreational activities for young people; school based initiatives such as Youth Action Groups and action on truancy; expanding the use of supervised cautions by the probation service; and work with young offenders or potential offenders to develop social skills, self esteem and regard for others. (See Chapter One).
- *Involving communities on crime related issues,* by recruiting local people to assist in preventing and reducing crime in their communities, whether it be where they live,

work, shop or engage in leisure activities and by providing local people information which will help them avoid becoming victims of crime. We need to reduce the fear of crime amongst potentially vulnerable groups, such as older people and women.

2.1.5 These programmes harness the commitment of local organisations and individuals and the support and collaboration of agencies such as the social, education and probation services, the police, the courts and organisations in the voluntary sector such as NACRO, Victim Support, Crime Concern and the Safer Neighbourhoods Unit. Some programmes are on a small scale comprising activity schemes for young people targeted at particular neighbourhoods or schools such as SPLASH or junior crime prevention panels. Some are spread over a wider area and focussed on specific problems such as drug taking. The Fast Forward Drug Prevention Programme in Scotland is one example. Others are local in nature but cover a large proportion of the population. For instance, neighbourhood watch schemes have multiplied in recent years and now cover over 5 1/4 million households and comprise 147,000 schemes.

2.1.6 The support of local businesses in partnership with the police and local authorities is becoming increasingly valuable both in terms of sponsorship of social crime prevention projects and in joint town centre crime reduction schemes. These are beginning to show impressive results.

2.1.7 Local authorities are a crucial part of the equation. In 1991 the report of the Committee under James Morgan set up by the Standing Conference on Crime Prevention, *The Local Delivery of Crime Prevention Through the Partnership Approach*, recommended a much stronger role for local government in setting up Crime Prevention partnerships. Its findings have been ignored by successive Conservative Home Secretaries. We aim to take up the report's findings as part of a national crime prevention strategy.

2.1.8 Liberal Democrat controlled local councils have taken a lead in promoting cooperation between the police and local communities.

Examples of the work undertaken by Liberal Democrat run or influenced councils include:

- *Mendip District Council* which, in partnership with the police, has looked at the locations and frequency of different types of reported crime. From this a 'target area' and a set of priorities were determined.
- *Gosport Borough Council* which has focussed crime prevention on vulnerable groups and soft targets. Their initiatives include: the provision of free door locks and entry phones for all housing for older people; the creation of a Shop Watch scheme whereby retailers share information on crime prevention and the promotion of "Design Away Crime" initiatives ensuring that all new developments have a proper regard for features which could deter crime.
- *Cheltenham Borough Council* has established a Crime Prevention Panel made up of members of the public and representatives from the local police. The Panel offers advice on a whole range of crime prevention issues, such as cycle stamping, door locks and chains, personal alarms and vehicle security.
- *Rochdale Borough Council*, where Liberal Democrats have supported a burglary prevention scheme on a local estate of 2,288 dwellings. A package of measures was drawn up in consultation with local people including upgrading home security, property postcoding and a "cocoon" neighbourhood watch scheme.
- *Poole Borough Council* has worked with local police and local businesses to operate an Industry Watch Scheme. Members share information and meet regularly with the police and council representatives to work out crime prevention measures.

- *Somerset County Council* has funded a project to work with young people who have been cautioned by the police. The diversionary work includes personal development and independent living skills as well as tuition for young people excluded from school. The scheme is already very successful with positive reaction from the parents involved.

## 2.2 A National Crime Prevention Strategy

2.2.1 Individual local authorities should not be left alone to construct and operate crime prevention partnerships. Despite the success of these partnerships, there has been no concerted government crime prevention strategy to guide local authorities. Since the publication of the Home Office circular *Partnership in Crime Prevention* in 1990, the Conservative Government has taken little action apart from setting up a few new Safer City projects. Meanwhile, the resources available to the older projects have been cut. Local authorities are increasingly building crime prevention into planning decisions but there are still no relevant government planning guidelines. There is precious little co-ordination between government departments on crime prevention issues, despite the existence of an interdepartmental committee. The new crime prevention agency is a welcome development though its role and remit seem surprisingly limited. A national strategy for crime prevention leading to a properly resourced national programme of crime prevention is needed.

2.2.2 To build a national strategy for crime prevention, Liberal Democrats will:

- *Give all local authorities a statutory duty to adopt crime prevention strategies and set up partnerships to implement them.* This duty would be placed at the lowest level of principal authorities.
- *Require police authorities to consult district or unitary authorities on policing*

*plans and strategies.* This is all the more desirable following the reduction in the number of elected members on police authorities.

- *Place a specific statutory duty on local planning authorities to consider the community safety implications of development proposals where such considerations are relevant.*
- *Consider introducing legislation, similar to the health and safety regime, placing duties on employers and landlords to take account of employee and community security and crime prevention issues.*

2.2.3 Parish and Town Councils also have an important role to play, particularly in rural areas where the impact of crime can be disproportionate and where crime is rising as fast as in urban areas. Without the existence of the village police officer, the local community more than ever needs to adopt a partnership approach. A number of specific projects to support the police in rural areas have been developed such as the use of parish wardens and watch schemes. We would give parish and town councils the specific power to engage in crime prevention activity.

2.2.4 The link between drugs and crime, is of particular concern, as numerous studies, including those done by the Home Office, show. In *The Reduction of Drug-Related Harm*, C.S.J. Fazey found a wealth of evidence demonstrating a clear relationship between crime and addictions. Obviously unlawful possession of controlled drugs is unlawful. Further, the vast majority of addicted illicit drug users commit crime in order to support their addiction. One study by the Home Office Research and Planning estimated that between 6 percent and 24 percent of burglaries in 1987 were carried out by regular heroin misusers. Knee-jerk responses are not enough. Therefore, Liberal Democrats have proposed the establishment of a Royal Commission to investigate and consider a wide range of strategies for combating drug misuse.

## Getting the Balance Right

2.2.5 *Local authorities with additional duties should also have the resources to carry them out effectively.* In many areas of crime prevention, the resources required are relatively small. For instance, training for managers of local voluntary projects would further enhance their effectiveness and would be cheap to provide. Despite saving millions of pounds over the longer term, crime prevention is not a priority for the Conservative Government. Around £260 million goes to crime prevention, representing just one pound for every fifty spent on catching, convicting and punishing criminals.

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### We will build a national strategy to prevent crime.

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2.2.6 To ensure high quality crime prevention projects and crime reduction partnerships a hybrid solution is required to the question of resources. Any solution should reflect the need for local action and national planning and guidance. First, *Liberal Democrats would reflect the additional duties to be placed on local authorities in determining the amount of money allocated through the Standard Spending Assessment.* Second, *we would enable the newly established national Crime Prevention Agency to enter into "contracts" with local authorities to provide matching funds for projects which met a number of quality criteria, both on initiation and periodic evaluation.* Liberal Democrats also propose to give local authorities more freedom to raise their own revenue through a local income tax, replacing the Council Tax.

2.2.7 Whilst we welcome the establishment of the Crime Prevention Agency we would like to see its role more clearly defined and its board more representative of the various organisations involved in crime prevention. There is, at present, no woman on the board, for example. The Agency should be responsible

for targeted prevention and detection initiatives. Local reported crime figures demonstrate that these are successful. The Permanent Secretariat for Prevention Policy set up by the Belgian Government in 1993, provides a useful model for the Agency to follow. In addition to supporting local crime prevention initiatives with a budget of £60 million, the secretariat is also responsible for working with the police, local authorities and universities in adopting new ideas and spreading best practice. It has a particular mission to tackle key targets, such as drug addiction and drug related crime and to assist in particular high crime areas.

2.2.8 In order to make the best use of resources it is important to assess whether projects are doing the job they were set up to do, whether they are cost effective, sustainable and whether they can be replicated. We advocate:

- *Encouraging Chief Constables and Police Authorities to set clear targets for crime prevention projects and outcomes.*
- *Using audits to assess and improve the quality of crime prevention work but without duplication by each local agency.*
- *Giving the Crime Prevention Agency the task of auditing local crime prevention programmes.* The Agency itself should be audited by the National Audit Office.

2.2.9 A community where such initiatives operate must not feel that it is being victimised. Therefore, an important part of any targeting strategy must be economic regeneration, particularly in the inner cities. To this end, Liberal Democrats would: enable local councils to take the lead in encourage for the private sector in deprived urban areas by freeing councils from the present controls on their capital requirements; establish Community Enterprise Agencies where appropriate to assist small businesses and to promote Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS); assist the formation of Local Investment Agencies in the inner cities, to mobilise local funds and channel outside support to urban regeneration and

provide tax relief for investment in inner city areas. (Further details are set out in Policy Paper 2, *Reclaiming the City* (1994) and Policy Paper 16, *Investment, Partnership, Sustainability* (1995)).

## 2.3 Safer Communities

2.3.1 In many communities the retreat of formal and informal authority has reduced the quality of life for many people and increased the fear of crime. An unpleasant environment, with litter, noise, abandoned cars, graffiti and evidence of drug taking, can lead to increased disorder and further reinforces local peoples' fears and concerns. Over the years, often as a result of staff cuts, there have been fewer and fewer quasi-authority figures such as caretakers and park keepers able to help in ensuring that misdemeanours do not take place. These trends must be reversed.

2.3.2 Liberal Democrats advocate constructive partnership schemes to bring a degree of social control back into neglected areas. We would promote new pilot schemes to give young people and others a stake in improving their local neighbourhoods. In the Netherlands, the fight against petty crime has been increasingly assigned to supervisors without formal authority. To this end, City Guard projects have been established to improve the safety and quality of life of neighbourhoods and to provide employment opportunities for unemployed people. The Dutch experience indicates that the City Guard programme improves people's sense of personal safety, especially older people, and reduces the level of crime. Whilst City Guards are not active at night, when people feel most unsafe, and crime increases again at these times, the programme provides a useful model to follow, particularly in tandem with other crime prevention initiatives, such as CCTV. It is also successful in bringing unemployed people back into the jobs market and giving them a stake in their communities. The City Guard scheme could be combined with our proposed Citizen's Service which would give people, especially young people, the

opportunity to work for their communities. (See Policy Paper 9, *Working for Change* (1994)).

2.3.3 Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) has been put forward as an effective solution to crime in city centres, on public transport and against banks and other potential targets and Liberal Democrat councils have been actively involved in installing it. Evidence suggests that where CCTV has been installed appropriately crime has been reduced. In Berwick upon Tweed, with only four cameras, burglary is down by 69 percent and criminal damage down 41 percent. In Glasgow there has been a 69 percent reduction in crime and in Northampton a reduction of 57 percent. There is little evidence that CCTV merely displaces crime to areas to support claims covered by cameras.

2.3.4 Whilst we recognise that CCTV can play a key role in reducing crime, Liberal Democrats are concerned about the civil liberties implications of installing CCTV. We oppose the use of footage from CCTV for private or commercial gain such as the sale of clips of footage on video. The strict codes of practice drawn up by some councils that have installed CCTV are to be applauded. We would give the Crime Prevention Agency the task of promoting the codes of practice and of drawing up regulations on the use of CCTV in consultation with interested groups. The Agency should also commission a detailed study of the effect of CCTV on crime rates in comparison with other methods of crime prevention in order to ascertain the extent of its effectiveness.

## 2.4 The Role of the Police

2.4.1 Despite some evidence of change, the status of crime prevention in the police service is still low. It needs to be enhanced and integrated into police practices and management. Chief Constables and Police Authorities should be encouraged to increase the level of crime prevention work done by their forces.

2.4.2 Political pressures, including the misguided introduction of national policing

objectives, have led to the under recording of crime. Until we can be sure that local crime statistics can be relied upon, evaluation of crime prevention projects and the value of any crime prevention performance indicators will continue to be suspect.

2.4.3 Central to building a partnership between the police and local communities is the restoration of public confidence in the police. Recent changes to the structure of police authorities have undermined democratic accountability in the police service. Liberal Democrats believe that decisions need to be made locally by local people who know their communities (see section 4.2) Other specific measures, such as the increased use of police liaison officers in schools, can help to forge links between the police and local community as well as having a crime prevention function.

## 2.5 Victims

2.5.1 Despite the best attempt at crime prevention measures available, some people will, sadly be victims of crime. Liberal Democrats would ensure that the Victim Support Movement and the Witness Support schemes are encouraged and adequately funded. Although their views should not be regarded as paramount, they are entitled to be informed and consulted about the sometimes lengthy process of a case. We reject the Government's proposals to reduce the payment of compensation under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

2.5.2 Victims can play a useful role in discouraging future offending. Schemes where offenders are confronted by their victims and made to understand the harm and distress they have caused, have proved to be of immense psychological benefit and have had a considerable effect in reducing further offending. This should be encouraged where appropriate.

## 2.6 Preventing Youth Crime

2.6.1 Fifty percent of known offenders are

aged under 21. The number of 15 and 16 year old boys in prison or awaiting trial has doubled in the past two years and the peak age for offending for females is now 14. It is, therefore, vital that we address the problems of delinquency, boredom and drug use among our young people. This need not be an expensive strategy. The recent Coopers & Lybrand Report *A Preventative Strategy For Young People in Trouble*, commissioned by ITV Telethon and The Prince's Trust, identified the cost effectiveness of Youth Crime Prevention projects. The failure to adopt such a coherent national strategy would entail a larger cost in the long term. Such an approach was adopted in France in 1982. This placed considerable emphasis on sporting activity. After 10 years work the Conseil National des Villes (national council of cities) was able to report that juvenile crime had dropped as a result.

2.6.2. The problem is not simply one of young people offending. All the evidence is that young people are among the most victimised members of the community. Surveys carried out by young people themselves show that they have a number of key problems: personal safety, how not to get involved with drugs and drink, boredom, peer pressure and the problem of who to turn to for help and advice.

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***Liberal Democrat Councils are promoting cooperation between the police and local communities.***

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2.6.3 Successful strategies give young people the responsibility for identifying and solving their own problems, with full involvement in the decision making process. It is now widely recognised that what is called "peer-led education" is one of the most effective ways of getting messages across to young people, changing behaviour and overcoming the power of peer pressure.

2.6.4 Liberal Democrats at all levels of Government advocate a comprehensive approach to youth crime prevention, straddling agencies and the community in tackling the roots of criminality and provides the necessary resources. The key elements of our comprehensive approach to preventing and tackling youth crime are:

- *Expanding preschool and nursery education.* We guarantee to provide pre-school education for every three and four year old whose parents want it. Evidence, particularly from the United States, suggests that adults who had participated in high quality pre-school programmes at ages 3 and 4 have fewer criminal arrests.
- *Supporting families in crisis.* We will reform the tax and benefit system, targeting support at those most in need and making it easier for parents on benefit to work to support their families. (For further details, see Policy Paper 7, *Opportunity and Independence for All* (1994))
- *Working to make schools more effective particularly tackling bullying and truancy.* Given that the National Prison Survey showed that 30 percent of prisoners had mostly played truant rather than attend lessons after the age of 11, compared to 3 percent for general population, it is particularly important that this issue is tackled. We will, for example, ensure that each school has a policy on appropriate behaviour, including a procedure for monitoring incidents and agreed sanctions for transgressors. Peer-led education has been particularly effective in dealing with bullying and a number of schools have given pupils the responsibility of dealing

with disputes between pupils and of finding solutions. A survey by HM Inspectorate of Schools in 1990 found that group work with dependent drug users led to individual members of the group being helped by the others to understand the cause of their problems and find solutions.

- *Providing education about risks.* We will give teachers the time and the resources to teach children about their responsibilities to other people, the dangers of drugs and alcohol and the consequences of crime.
- *Establishing an extensive out of school care system,* involving youth outreach workers, covering after school and holidays.
- *Developing constructive leisure and social activities.* We will give local authorities and voluntary bodies the support to provide schemes for young people to use their leisure time constructively and ensure that the use of school facilities outside curriculum time complements that of more informal educational services.
- *Providing opportunities for young people-particularly the young unemployed.* The incidence of offending is highest among young unskilled men without employment. Youth crime prevention needs to go hand in hand with local action for economic regeneration. We will establish a voluntary Citizens Service, to train and use the talents of young people. Any individual, but especially young people, would have the opportunity to give one or two years' community service for environmental projects, housing renovation or crime prevention. (See also Policy Paper 9, *Working for Change* (1994)).

# Secure Citizens

**3.0.1 Liberal Democrats are committed to enabling individuals to gain fulfilment and personal success, as members of thriving and vibrant communities. Strong communities and self-reliant individuals are complementary and mutually reinforcing. The role of central government is to create a framework that enables individuals to live as secure members of secure, cohesive communities.**

3.0.2 A vital part of this framework is a police force that enjoys the trust and confidence of the public. To achieve the goal of protecting the security of all citizens of the United Kingdom Liberal Democrats will seek to:

- Increase police resources and visibility;
- Target police resources at combating attacks on minorities;
- Promote positive and active partnerships between the police and the communities they serve.

## 3.1 Visible Policing

3.1.1 All Britain's citizens have the right to feel and be safe and secure in their homes and communities. Part of the process of building a sense of security is the reduction of fear. This in large part can be achieved through the crime prevention measures outlined in Chapter 2. However, we also believe that more visible policing could play an important role, both in reducing the fear of crime and in improving detection rates.

3.1.2 Keeping the peace and reducing the fear of crime are crucial responsibilities of the police, yet often they come directly into conflict with the police's responsibilities for fighting crime itself. The conflict comes to the fore in determining the correct balance between the

visibility of the police on the one hand and their capacity to respond quickly in emergencies on the other. The Conservative Government's policies are in danger of creating the worst of both worlds.

3.1.3 The police's non-confrontational roles, which have helped to develop public trust, are being abandoned, delegated or privatised. The decline of traditional beat policing continues in some areas as patrols are drawn away to meet other needs. These, in turn, lead to a breakdown in trust between the police and local communities, fuelling the discontent of the growing underclass which sees itself as outside the protection of the law. In fact, the reduction in visible policing may be one of the causes of the increase in the fear of crime in recent years. It also contributes to the increasing reliance on private sector security organisations.

3.1.4 If this process is allowed to continue unchecked, traditional British policing will end. The situation may deteriorate to the point where police are distanced from the people they serve and where local communities are in conflict with those who are supposed to protect them.

3.1.5 Patrolling our streets and public places is the job of a properly trained, equipped and organised police force. Whilst support can be given to that role by a number of auxiliary and other agencies, that is not a substitute for providing a satisfactory level of police patrol. We also recognise that in some cases more visible policing may have an impact on the safety of police officers themselves. Whilst police officers should not normally be armed they should be provided with proper protection. The use of CS gas, currently undergoing controlled trials, is one possible response. However more research should be undertaken into the most appropriate forms of police protection.

3.1.6 High public expectations of the levels of patrol, particularly foot patrol, are often hard to reconcile with the equally high - and understandable - expectations of prompt and effective emergency response. The role of the police needs to vary geographically due to the different demands between rural and urban areas. The best balance between patrol and emergency response can only be decided by the police locally in consultation with local people, rather than by politicians or civil servants in London.

3.1.7 *In 1992 the Conservatives promised to give the police the support and resources they need to do their jobs effectively. However, police numbers, have not kept pace with workload or with need and total police strength in England and Wales has fallen by nearly 800 since the 1992 General Election. Despite Chief Constables' requests, no additional resources were provided in 1993.*

3.1.8 To enable the police to protect people and neighbourhoods from crime and the fear of crime, Liberal Democrats would:

- *Immediately provide the resources necessary to increase in police numbers by 3000 officers.* This is the figure requested by Chief Constables as the minimum necessary to fight crime effectively. The Conservatives have promised to provide the resources for an extra 5,000 police over the next three years. However, in 1992, they promised an extra 1,000 police: a promise they failed to deliver. Furthermore the extra 1,000 officers offered for this financial year is dependent upon chief police officers containing expenditure in other areas.
- *Improve the management and status of patrol officers* with, for example, clear guidance on the expectation of higher visibility of patrol, reductions in abstraction rates for other duties and financial recognition of the value of the experienced police officer.
- *Improve the constructive use of civilian staff in support of the police.* At the same

time, we will act to retain in the force officers who for reasons of health or injury are unable to take on the full range of police activities, in order to make more officer time available for patrol.

- *Reduce the time taken by officers on paperwork and non-patrol duties* through the effective use of new technology, reducing unnecessary reporting procedures and improving the quality of court administration and practice to reduce the pressures on officers and others to spend unproductive time at court.
- *Allow police authorities to, if they wish, appoint a new category of "retained police officer"* similar in status to the retained firefighter or the territorial army.

3.1.9 Retained police officers would be an alternative way chief constables could choose to use the money allocated for special constables. At present special constables can choose when and if they work. The retained police officer proposal extends and upgrades the role of the unpaid special constabulary and would enable police managers to use existing police hours and resources more effectively. It would enable members of the public and police officers wishing to return to work, to be adequately trained and equipped for the duties of constable. Retained police officers would be paid for their duties and provided with appropriate insurance cover. They would supplement the work of existing police officers and provide a presence in areas where it is currently uneconomic to do so. Unlike special constables they would be rostered to do a certain number of hours a week.

## **3.2 Attacks and Harassment of Minorities**

3.2.1 The increasing number of attacks on minority communities in Britain means that the police should have particular regard for the safety of members of these communities and work with them in the prevention and detection of crime. We support and welcome the

introduction of awareness training for police officers on race, gender and sexual orientation issues.

3.2.2 Liberal Democrats are appalled at the scale of racially motivated crime. For example, racially motivated crimes have risen by 500 percent since records began in 1990. There are now on average 30 such crimes reported each day. This figure probably understates the scale of the problem: according to the British Crime Survey, there are 130,000 racially motivated crimes against adults. The survey shows that members of ethnic minorities are more likely to be victims of personal crime than white citizens. However, we are not convinced that establishing the offence of a racially motivated crime will help address the problem. We believe that such motivation would be difficult to prove and would, thus, lessen the likelihood of a conviction.

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***We will provide sufficient resources to put an extra 3000 police officers on the beat.***

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3.2.3 Liberal Democrats are also concerned at the increasing number attacks on lesbians and gay men, to which the police must respond effectively. A recent Stonewall report stated that 35 percent of lesbians and gay men had suffered violence because of their sexuality. For lesbians and gay men under 18 the figure rose to over 50 percent. Where appropriate, best practice learnt from dealing with racial attacks should be deployed in such cases. Police forces should develop closer links with lesbian and gay communities.

3.2.4 In all cases of attacks and harassment of minorities Liberal Democrats would:

- Encourage victims to report attacks and harassment.

- Ensure that statutory agencies have clear procedures for dealing with such attacks and work to improve the effectiveness of the local multi-agency response.
- Encourage the spread of best policing practices for reducing the level of racial and homophobic violence, which could include the establishment of dedicated hate crime investigation squads.
- Ensure that local authority departments have clear policies to tackle harassment in the provision of its services and, in particular, in the provision of housing, education and social services.
- Encourage the use of aggravated penalties in sentencing where racial motivation has been identified.

3.2.5 The level of violence faced by many minorities is a reflection of the fact that the law itself and the way it is applied does not treat people equally. More work needs to be done in building confidence in the law and the police amongst minority groups, including, in particular, those directly affected by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, such as travellers. For example lesbians and gay men are repeatedly discriminated against in law. Liberal Democrats would:

- Make discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful.
- Introduce the offence of incitement to hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation.
- Stress the importance of police treating lesbians and gay men as equals and not as criminal by nature of their sexuality. In particular, ensure that the evidence of an *agent provocateur* is rendered inadmissible and the practice of entrapment is ended.

3.2.6 While the law alone cannot change public attitudes it has an important role to play in setting standards of public behaviour and acting as a catalyst for change. We will, therefore, examine whether existing laws could

be strengthened to reinforce society's abhorrence of racism. The Conservative Government's outright rejection of the European Convention on Racism and Xenophobia is regrettable. Liberal Democrats will work with our European partners in the fight against racism and in the establishment of a Convention that reflects and enhances the diverse nature of European society.

### **3.3 Identity Cards**

3.3.1 Liberal Democrats oppose the introduction of a national identity card scheme. There is little evidence that the impact of such a scheme on crime would justify the £474 million cost of establishing it and the bureaucracy required to maintain it. Identity cards would be open to abuse by the authorities and fraud and error, all of which would erode citizens' civil rights. Their introduction could cause tension between the police and minorities. The Home Secretary has also proposed a voluntary scheme. However this would be just as costly as a compulsory one and would not bring any of the dubious benefits claimed for the compulsory version. It could result in an increasing number of circumstances in which the official card was required, thus leading to a loss of civil rights.

### **3.4 Private Security Companies**

3.4.1 Liberal Democrats recognise that there is a legitimate role for private security firms, notably in patrolling private property. However, the private patrolling of public areas (often little better than vigilantism) is fraught with danger and is wide open to abuse. The growing support for such schemes merely underlines the arguments for a properly resourced and supported police force. The patrolling of public areas must remain a responsibility of the police. We are concerned at the increasingly large amount of work of the police and prison services that is being pushed into the private sector.

3.4.2 There are now more people employed in the private security industry than there are attested police officers. The uniforms worn by many guards are often not easily distinguishable from those worn by the police. This situation must be addressed. However, there is no system of registration of companies or individuals working in the industry and only 20 percent of companies support the self regulatory agencies. There is no national system to vet those who set themselves up as security guards. An article by the chief constable of Humberside gave the example of a company of 26 employees, 11 of whom had criminal records. A study in Lancashire showed that in an 18 month period 130 security company employees committed 249 crimes between them and, according to a recent ACPO report, the employers are not much better. This situation is not acceptable. Furthermore, with households in some places being asked to pay a pound a week for private security, it is not cost effective for the citizen either.

3.4.3 We advocate a statutory requirement for licensing of private security, wheel clamp and private investigating companies to provide an adequate level of protection for the public against unscrupulous or inadequate operators and require an adequate level of formal training through the system of NVQs.

3.4.4 Liberal Democrats acknowledge and welcome the useful work carried out by local authority security services. We would allow local authorities to sell the services provided by their security staff to the private sector as an alternative to the private security companies.

### **3.5 Enforcing Traffic Laws**

3.5.1 The continuing carnage on our roads and the level of enforcement against those who kill other people by flouting traffic laws is of major concern. To tackle the twin problems of dangerous driving and excessive speed, we would encourage the use of video cameras in all police patrol vehicles. The placing and servicing of speed cameras should be the responsibility of the local highway authority (who are already responsible for traffic calming

measures) in consultation with the police. This would have benefit of freeing up police time for other duties. Liberal Democrats are concerned at the use of footage from speed cameras for private gain. Where appropriate, we support extending the codes of practice regarding CCTV to the operation of speed cameras where they are appropriate.

3.5.2 The enforcement of traffic regulations does not generally need the full range of skills used by police officers in the course of their other duties. The role of the traffic warden is underdeveloped. We propose to extend the jurisdiction of the traffic warden service to cover a number of non-moving traffic offences. The establishment of a separate traffic force should be rejected. It would needlessly limit the functions of police on traffic patrol.

# ***Police Organisation***

**4.0.1 The police are society's front line against crime and lawlessness. Without them the security and safety we all desire could not be possible. The police forces deserve the resources needed to carry out their functions effectively and each officer a proper recognition of the important tasks they undertake. However, to be truly effective, the police must work with the communities they serve and be accountable to them.**

4.0.2 The organisation of the police must ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency in the fight against crime. While operational decisions about policing are, and must remain, the sole domain of police officers, Government must create a framework which helps, rather than hinders, their work. The key elements of such a framework are:

- A clear and sensible delineation of duties and responsibilities.
- Effective means for consultation with local communities and for local democratic influence.
- Mechanisms for full cooperation between regional, national and international units, and between the police and other agencies.
- Fair remuneration for police officers.

## **4.1 Governance and Funding**

4.1.1 The Police & Magistrates' Court Act 1994 introduced substantial changes to the way individual police forces are governed. The Act paved the way for a considerable shift of emphasis, giving the Home Secretary the discretion to exercise very extensive reserve powers. It introduced a new and, as yet, undeveloped role for Police Authorities and

allowed central government, should it choose, to exercise direct control over policing.

4.1.2 We are committed to the traditional tripartite control of policing involving the Chief Constable, the Police Authority and the Home Office as partners. Similarly, we support the basis of British policing practice of power exercised within and with the consent of the local community. However, the Conservatives' legislation has put both principles under considerable pressure.

4.1.3 Liberal Democrats recognise the value of local policing plans. We would encourage the further development of policing plans at the level of the Basic Unit of Command, recognising local needs and priorities, and involving local authorities and other community interests in assessing both policing practice and opportunities for crime reduction. The overlay of the Home Secretary's national objectives is unnecessarily prescriptive. It is absurd for politicians in London to try to require every police authority to follow national objectives or to impose unbalanced local priorities.

4.1.4 It should be the role of the local police authority to assess need and allocate resources, with a distribution formula that is objective and fair to all areas. However, historical spending patterns have created substantial imbalances which the distribution formula cannot address directly. We would ask HM Inspector of Constabulary and the Audit Commission to undertake jointly a one-off review of current assets to ensure that all forces have a reasonable asset base that meets their requirements.

4.1.5 We would abolish the current maximum and minimum capping regime for police authorities.

## 4.2 Local Accountability

4.2.1 The newly constituted police authorities comprise, with very few exceptions, nine elected members of local authorities, three members drawn from local magistrates' benches, and five 'independent' members drawn from a list provided by the Home Secretary. Their roles include: fixing the annual budget, within the closely defined parameters set by the Home Secretary; issuing a 'Costed Policing Plan' which identifies policing policies and objectives (again subject to national priorities set by the Home Secretary); holding the Chief Constable to account; and answering to the local community, on performance against these identified targets. The police authorities are further required to manage the process of regular consultation with the public based on the Police and Community Consultative Groups.

4.2.2 Liberal Democrats have long argued that the authorities are insufficiently democratic in their structure and fail to reflect adequately local concerns about the standard of policing. Liberal Democrats believe that decisions need to be made locally by local people who know their communities. To address these concerns, we would:

- Increase the proportion of elected members to represent more adequately the population of the police authority area and restrict voting to those elected members.
- Exclude the Home Secretary from the process of appointing additional members.

4.2.3 In Greater London, the 'Police Authority' for the Metropolitan Police is the Home Secretary. An advisory committee has been set up to inform the Home Secretary on London policing issues but its members are non-elected and are not required to reside in London or have any policing experience. To provide for proper accountability, Liberal Democrats would establish a Police Authority for the Metropolitan Police Area.

## 4.3 Improving Cooperation Between Police Forces

4.3.1 The degree of cooperation between forces within the UK has demonstrably improved over recent years. For example, the common procurement by the Home Office of police vehicles has led to significant cost reductions. In other areas, such as information technology, common procurement has been less effective and even the successes are now under threat from contracting out.

4.3.2 To integrate police systems over wider areas, whilst maintaining local command structures, we would:

- Improve coordination at a regional level between Chief Constables and Chairs of Police Authorities to identify areas for cooperation.
- Give priority in capital spending plans to regional bids for joint procurement,
- Bring non-territorial forces, such as the British Transport Police, into the framework of published policing plans and public accountability and improve their coordination with local forces.
- Identify units carrying out a national function, such as those within the Metropolitan Police, and relate those responsibilities to local user requirements.

4.3.3 A number of national and quasi-national police units deal with large scale crime such as fraud, drugs and counterfeiting, but their relationship with provincial forces is unbalanced and causes resentment. Scarce resources are carefully guarded by provincial forces, often leaving the national units without the means to act effectively on a national basis. As a result many 'national' units, such as the Diplomatic Protection Squad, remain nominally part of the Metropolitan Police.

4.3.4 The Government has introduced legislation to enable the Security Services to assist the police in tackling organised crime. Under Liberal Democrat pressure, it was amended to make absolutely clear that the police are in charge. However, because the Security Service Bill was introduced in advance of any measures to sort out the national parts of the police structure, the end result, while it may bring limited help to the police, is confusing and will pose difficulties. The key role in tasking the security service will be played by the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS), which still has no status in law at all.

4.3.5 NCIS, set up three years ago, has an intelligence gathering and collating role. It was set up to meet the need for intelligence about criminal operations on a national scale. NCIS has no 'enforcement' role as such, relying instead on co-operation with provincial forces and, particularly, regional crime squads.

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***We will make police authorities more accountable to their local communities.***

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4.3.6 The Government has announced that regional crime squads will be brought together into an England and Wales national crime squad, working closely with NCIS. All this should have been worked out and put into place in advance of the Security Service Bill with much clearer arrangements for accountability, co-ordination and machinery for complaints by the public. Liberal Democrats see the need for national structures to assist what should remain a structure of local police authorities. However, the present arrangements are dangerously and wastefully complex and lack a proper legal basis.

4.3.7 A further weakness is that, whereas the Security Service can use "eavesdropping" powers of intervention on property against

organised crime, the police have no such powers and none of the safeguards that go with them. Police activity of this kind is authorised by Chief Constables, but leaves officers in a very uncertain legal position and provides inadequate protection for the public. Liberal Democrats would ensure that a common system of warrants with proper safeguards is introduced.

4.3.8 In the longer term, the current policing structure cannot provide the necessary flexibility, accountability and control for the functions exercised at regional, national and international levels. Liberal Democrats propose to establish a Royal Commission on organisational issues within the police service. This would be the first such review in more than thirty years. In particular, the Royal Commission would examine: accountability, organisation and control; training within the service; the adequacy of support services from forensic scientists; and ways to improve operational effectiveness. The detailed issues for consideration and the key principles we would apply are set out in Federal Green Paper 22, *Justice and Security in the Community* (1991).

### **International Cooperation**

4.3.9 Many kinds of crime are now international in scope: terrorism, drug trafficking and fraud, to name but three. While border controls have never been particularly effective at stopping determined criminals, in the European Union, where there are fewer border controls, increased international cooperation can make a real and substantial contribution to the fight against crime.

4.3.10 Yet, to satisfy their Euro-sceptic wing, the Conservatives have impeded any extension in cross border cooperation between police forces. Furthermore, they have consistently underfunded the Customs and Excise division and drugs liaison officers both of which are key to stopping smuggling and cross border crime.

4.3.11 The opening up of the European Union

brings great advantages for business in this country and eases the way for British visitors to the continent. Yet this must go hand in hand with increased cross border cooperation so that the new freedoms are not abused by criminals. Therefore, we welcome in principle the notion of a cross border police unit to deal with serious international crime, provided that effective mechanisms are built in to protect human rights. Europol is currently at an embryonic stage, dealing with drug trafficking and acting as a rapid information exchange for EU member states. Any further development of its work would require Europol to be brought into a framework of accountability. To strengthen accountability, Liberal Democrats advocate incorporating more of the Justice and Home Affairs 'pillar' into the structure of European Union - a move vigorously opposed by the Conservative Government. At the same time the implications of Europol's development must be properly debated in the House of Commons. No police force can operate effectively without the consent of the people it is meant to serve.

## **4.4 Police and Criminal Evidence Act**

4.4.1 The 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act was an important piece of legislation, intended to protect both the police and suspects. Unfortunately it led to a dramatic increase in police paperwork which is only now being addressed. The police are not receiving sufficient training in the application of the Codes of Practice; indeed, they often do not recognise that the Act protects and assists them. To reduce the time spent at court arguing over the admissibility of evidence and to prevent poorly founded cases going to court, we would increase police officers' familiarity with the Act and the Codes. There is a significant role for Inspectors of the Constabulary to monitor the application of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the Codes in the course of their reports to the Home Secretary.

## **Crown Prosecution Service**

4.4.2 The increase in civilian support staff and the introduction of the Crown Prosecution Service has led to a complete lack of police responsibility over the conduct and supervision of any prosecution. The introduction of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as an independent prosecuting service was welcomed, in principle. A prosecuting authority, independent of the police and more able to make objective decisions, is a necessary component in the criminal justice system. However, the CPS has turned out to be a disappointment. Relations between the police and the CPS have virtually broken down. We, therefore, welcome prosecution lawyers working with detectives to improve the quality of cases brought to trial as being piloted in 12 police centres.

4.4.3 The CPS has been inadequately funded, frequently understaffed and often unable to attract lawyers of sufficient calibre. The salary and career structure are inferior to those in private practice. We recognise that a prosecuting authority must be adequately funded in order to function properly. In addition, Liberal Democrats would improve the management and accountability of the Service by:

- Making the units of management coterminous with police authority areas.
- Requiring the CPS to consult annually with its corresponding Chief Constable and Police Authority.
- Requiring each area to publish an annual statement of activity and its intended prosecuting policy.

4.4.4 Liberal Democrats are determined to ensure that the administration of justice is pursued fairly, rigorously and efficiently, paying due regard to the rights and freedoms of defendants, victims and witnesses. The credibility of the criminal justice system is deeply damaged by the pursuit of cases on inadequate evidence, resulting in miscarriages

of justice. At the investigation stage, we will ensure:

- Immediate cautioning of suspects.
- Recording on video of formal interviews and the custody procedure at police stations.
- Access to free legal advice.
- Exclusion of admissions made in the absence of an appropriate person where the need for such support is demonstrated.
- Enhanced recognition of the role of Custody Officer in enforcing the safeguards under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

4.4.5 We will repeal those provisions of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 that diminish the common law right of a suspect not to incriminate themselves.

## **4.5 Pay and Conditions**

4.5.1 Police pay awards have historically been cyclical. Generally they have been kept low, but, from time to time, very substantial awards have been necessary to address serious recruitment and retention problems. Since 1979, the Government has sought to address the problem by indexing police pay to maintain comparability with other professions. The Government had pinned its hopes for further restructuring of police pay on the Sheehy report, but its recommendations were so controversial and flawed that few were pursued. A type of appraisal related pay is, however, being piloted.

4.5.2 Short-term contracts and performance-related pay are not acceptable in the policeservice. Senior officers should, however, be subject to periodic appraisal. We would clarify the mechanisms for removing from post officers whose performance is persistently inadequate. Such procedures already apply in the lower ranks and a consistent approach is needed, with adequate rights of appeal. At the same time, safeguards are needed to ensure that

police authorities do not impose improper pressures on senior officers.

4.5.3 Police pay is facing other difficulties. All officers compulsorily pay 11 per cent of their salaries to guarantee their pension entitlements. The lack of a dedicated police pensions fund means that pension payments are made directly from current expenditure. These payments account for around one-eighth of annual police expenditure! The cyclical nature of police recruitment means that, intermittently, front line services face cuts to meet pension entitlements. This is a key question which would be addressed by our proposed Royal Commission on the Police.

4.5.4 The police themselves should be representative of the communities they serve. Hence police forces should establishment comprehensive equal opportunities policies for the recruitment and promotion of officers and staff. They should also be encouraged to adopt more modern and flexible working practices with increased opportunities for part time working.

*This Paper has been approved for debate by the Federal Conference by the Federal Policy Committee under the terms of Article 5.4 of the Federal Constitution. Within the policy-making procedure of the Liberal Democrats, the Federal Party determines the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom. The Party in England, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Welsh Liberal Democrats determine the policy of the Party on all other issues, except that any or all of them may confer this power upon the Federal Party in any specified area or areas. If approved by Conference, this paper will form the policy of the Party in England and Wales.*

*Many of the policy papers published by the Liberal Democrats imply modifications to existing government public expenditure priorities. We recognise that it may not be possible to achieve all these proposals in the lifetime of one Parliament. We intend to publish a costings programme, setting out our priorities across all policy areas, closer to the next general election.*

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