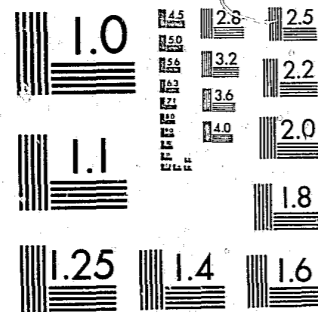


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Community Policing

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William H. Webster, Director

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Management

### Editor's Note:

This article is adapted from a speech presented by Chief Constable Parrish before the FBI National Academy in November 1982.

# Community Policing

By  
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## The Derby East Police Scheme



August 1983 / 1



Chief Constable Parrish

Early in 1980, an experimental community policing scheme was implemented at Chaddesden, a suburb of Derby. As experience was gained, it proved to be a very satisfactory scheme of policing for the particular area concerned, with the right balance being maintained between "enforcement" and "service" roles.

If particularly good police/public relations are not to be eroded, schemes such as this are a necessary ingredient of the policing role. However, each scheme must be tailored to the particular needs of the area concerned.

The Derby Police Division encompasses more than the city of Derby itself. For policing purposes, it is divided into three subdivisional areas; the Chaddesden scheme is still operated in the central subdivision.

To set the scene, it is worth comparing briefly the policeman's lot in our two countries. As statistics indicate, there are enormous differences in the incidents of personal violence. The rates for homicide and robbery are 8 times higher, and for rape 15 times higher, in the United States than in England and Wales per head of population. On the other hand, rates for property offenses are, perhaps surprisingly, fairly similar.

Crime rates vary considerably throughout Derbyshire. Fortunately, we are well below the national average, except for Derby Division. The East subdivision, in particular, is very markedly above the national average. Not only is the crime rate here the highest in the county by a significant margin, but detection rates for most types of offenses are distressingly low. The situation has been steadily deteriorating over recent years, particularly for offenses of burglary, especially housebreaking, and thefts of vehicles and pedal cycles.

In addition, the particular needs of a multiracial population as centered in Derby Division requires constant consideration. As early as 1981, it became evident that an accurate evaluation of the police role in the mainly immigrant settlement area that is a suburb of Derby East subdivision was needed. A working party was formed in April 1981, to appraise the situation and report on its findings.

The city of Derby suffered serious disorder on the day following the street riots of Brixton (London) and Toxteth (Liverpool) during the summer of 1981. For no apparent reason, groups of several hundred youths congregated in the city, and many instances of damage to property ensued. The public disturbances in Derby subsided as quickly as they began and the city resumed its usual relative calm. Thus, the working party was considering policing in that part of the city which typifies inner-city problems associated with deprivation, unemployment, and poor housing at the time of the worst public disorder seen in Great Britain this century.

**“ . . . an experimental community policing scheme . . . proved to be a very satisfactory scheme of policing . . . with the right balance being maintained between ‘enforcement’ and ‘service’ roles.”**

The city has 220,000 inhabitants and compares in numbers with Baton Rouge, La., Richmond, Va., and Fresno, Calif. The population includes 17,000 of Asian descent (Pakistani and Indian), 15,000 East Europeans, 14,000 Afro-Caribbeans, 500 Vietnamese, and 350 of Malay/Chinese descent, an approximate 3 to 1 ratio between indigenous population and those of mixed ethnic immigrant origin, some 50 percent of whom were born in Great Britain.

Having visited many police forces in England and examining various policing schemes, the working party was able to highlight difficulties which should be avoided when implementing a scheme to return to traditional policing methods. The two areas of difficulty considered to be important were role conflicts and selection processes.

#### Role Conflict

A scheme should avoid any aspect of being special. It should be a joint police/community venture. Reactive-type policing causes a role conflict if superimposed on other more traditional methods. For example, the unit beat police system adopted by all British police forces gave the constable mobility which evolved subsequently into a reactive response to calls from the public.

The overworked "panda" driver became in danger of being alienated from the public and his foot patrol colleagues. The panda drivers saw themselves as the "law enforcers" and regarded the foot beat officers as the "community peace-keepers" or "hobby bobbies." No successful scheme could tolerate such a two-tier policing concept.

#### Selection Processes

Because of poor selection, difficulties occurred when officers lacked motivation through the erroneous belief that the traditional methods are outdated and not important. No formal training in community police work or social awareness had been offered, and consequently, officers were unprepared for the changed strategies.

Traditional methods of policing place emphasis on closer and equitable interaction with the public, and in essence, mean more officers on foot and cycle patrols. There is nothing remarkable in this, but over the years, the very fact that such policing is manpower intensive has resulted in a reactive "fire brigade" type of response to the detriment of community support.

The government and people of our country were so concerned at the country's disturbances that an eminent judge was appointed to investigate the public disorders in Brixton. His subsequent report made a

number of recommendations regarding policing methods and training, including:

- 1) Arrangements for statutory consultation between the police and the community;
- 2) An urgent study into ways of recruiting more members of ethnic minorities;
- 3) Courses in community relations of all officers; and
- 4) Reexamination of methods of policing inner cities, in particular, patrolling patterns, the role and status of uniformed constables, and opportunity for more continuity and community contact.

Long before the publication of this report and in direct consequence of the recommendations of the working party, a system of traditional policing was introduced in the Derby East subdivision for a 1-year experimental period beginning January 1, 1982. Many of the recommendations subsequently published in the judge's report



had already been incorporated into the experimental policing scheme, reinforcing the view that our objectives were in line with the desires of the law-abiding majority of the public.

#### The Derby East Scheme

The Derby East subdivision encompasses a population of 92,000 and is commanded by a superintendent, with a chief inspector deputy. It is one of the busiest subdivisions in the United Kingdom, and for the purposes of the experiment, it has been divided into four distinct areas.

#### Area 1—Pear Tree/Normanton

This area is densely populated and is the main immigrant settlement of Derbyshire. Housing varies from low-class, run-down terraced properties to the better class, but still older-type properties on its periphery. The area has outward signs of urban deprivation with a certain amount of redevelopment.

There is virtually no industry, but nightclubs, discos, restaurants, and bars attract a considerable number of people, not necessarily from the immediate vicinity. The streets are seldom "asleep," and street walkers and pimps are noticeable to the discerning eye.

#### Area 2—Sinfyn

At present, less populated than area 1, this is a rapidly developing area with regard to light industry, including the home of Rolls Royce which has 28 sites in Derby Division, and housing. New housing estates and blocks of flats have taken large numbers of people displaced by redevelopment.



#### Area 3—Allentown/Wilmorton

This area comprises the older-type, terraced and semidetached private and council dwellings. There is a large industrial estate fulfilling the needs of service and direct consumer requirements.

#### Area 4—Alvaston/Rural

This area contains a main arterial route along which development of private housing is evident. The largest of the four areas geographically, it embraces rural pasture land and has an attractive marina and county show ground, as well as a selection of typical English country villages.

Before embarking on the experiment, it was necessary to gauge public sensitivity to a changed police emphasis. Reaction was tested at meetings to which community leaders, council and education officials, and the general public were invited. A social survey designed to evaluate public attitudes

toward the existing and proposed policing methods was undertaken in the Pear Tree/Normanton area. Therefore, the scheme was implemented with a high level of public awareness and predetermined idea of their needs.

Each of the four areas was placed under the command of an inspector, which in itself implied a greater degree of autonomy and responsibility for the policing of that area on a 24-hour basis. Each had 3 uniformed sergeants and a number of uniformed constables varying from 19 in area 3 to 30 in area 1. Detectives were allocated to each area in sergeant and constable rank.

Officers at all ranks were selected on proven ability and potential to be effective law enforcers. It was necessary that they possess a correct attitude and inclination to relate well to the public they served.

The public wanted locations within easy reach of their homes where they could meet and discuss matters with their local officers. Accommodations have been acquired for use as public "surgeries" to fulfill this need.

Essentially, personnel are on foot, but cycles are provided for mobility without being detrimental to public contact.

Training was given to all officers. This took the form of a 1-week community relations course at force headquarters, supplemented by a day of briefing on the aims and aspirations of the scheme by senior police officers. This latter briefing enabled officers to voice their opinions and suggestions and allowed them to identify themselves with the scheme and primary objectives.

Officers were reminded of the important role they play in the scheme

and that throughout the experimental year their views and suggestions would be considered through channels arranged by each inspector.

The constables were also made aware of the aim to enhance their office. The constable, at the root of so many of the day-to-day achievements, more than anyone, is called upon to make decisions and to take action relating to a broad range of police work rather than any particular specialist activity. His experience, training, and stature should reflect that responsibility.

It was clearly explained to all officers concerned that whatever changes made in accord with the climate of the times and the requirements of the public, in the way we go about our work, preventing crime, detecting offenders with a view of ensuring punishment appropriate to the circumstances, protecting life and property, and preserving public tranquillity remain the overriding objectives.

The ethos of the scheme revolves around three aspects—consultation, cooperation, and credibility.

#### Consultation

As previously mentioned, public meetings were held prior to the experiment's inception and two such similar events have since taken place where the temperature of public attitudes has been tested.



Formal liaison meetings take place on a regular basis at police and elected representative levels, ranging from the beat constable and parish councillors exchanging ideas and perceptions through to Police Authority dialog directed by the chief constable. Such liaison meetings, which are arranged locally by the area inspector on a bimonthly basis, involve representatives of county and city councils, the Commission of Racial Equality, educational and social service bodies, community association representatives, and minority group leaders. These meetings are a useful way of airing grievances and discussing problems, ideas, and projects. It enables the groups to monitor community feelings.

The goodwill which emanates from nearly all factions clearly illustrates that police efforts are appreciated in the majority of cases. Requests for advice to solve potential problems often leads to more than satisfactory solutions, if only because agencies and associations now have a better understanding of the police function.

#### Cooperation

Informal construction at the grass-roots level, particularly by the officer on the beat, enhances public confidence. The regular areas of contact are with schools, youth organizations, places of religious worship and public gatherings, coffee bars, old peoples' homes, and resorts of public entertainment and recreation.

A conscious effort was made to resist publicity for the scheme prior to its introduction, for it was not the intention to imply that in the Derbyshire Constabulary, a "utopian" scheme had evolved which would be the panacea for all social ills. However, the unique aspects of the proposed scheme, insofar as it involves every member of the subdivision, attracted the attention of the press, television, and radio agencies, so that the publicity decision was reviewed at the appropriate time. Suffice it to say we did not want to publicize what we hoped to achieve but rather what we had achieved.

#### Credibility

In the first 6 months of the experimental scheme, the demoralizing and seemingly inevitable trend of steadily deteriorating crime rates in Derby division over recent years, particularly with regard to housebreaking and thefts of vehicles, appears to have been reversed. For a welcome change, the crime statistics are good news.

The total number of offenses reported to the police is down 3 percent in the Derby East subdivision, compared with the same period of the previous year. This is not a dramatic improvement in itself, but very encouraging when set against a 4-percent increase elsewhere in the Derby Divi-



**"Informal consultation at the grassroots level, particularly by the officer on the beat, enhances public confidence."**

sion and a 14-percent *increase* for the rest of Derbyshire.

It is in the more serious preventable categories that the biggest improvements are evident. Burglaries of dwellings are down 26 percent. In other words, for every four housebreakings in 1981, there were only three in 1982. This compares with a very slight reduction in numbers for the rest of Derby Division and a large increase by almost a quarter for the rest of the force area. Similarly, vehicle thefts have fallen 10 percent and thefts of cycles by almost 30 percent, largely against the general trend.

In contrast, the statistics appear to present an unfavorable picture for some other types of crime. Thefts from vehicles, for example, are up 19 percent, a much larger rise than elsewhere. Also, increases of 16 percent for miscellaneous thefts and 8 percent for criminal damage to property are significantly higher than elsewhere, and at first sight, discouraging.

However, the very strategy of bringing the police to the public would be expected to result in a greater proportion of less serious offenses being reported to us. While, under the previous system of policing, the victim of a small value theft or damage offense might have thought it not worth the trouble of notifying the police, it is now not only more convenient for him to do so but hopefully he will believe that is it worthwhile, not just a formality.

To sum up, the picture presented by crime statistics so far is distinctly encouraging. Numbers have fallen in the more serious preventable categories, and the greater readiness of the public to report less serious offenses can, to some extent, be taken as a sign of increased public confidence. It is only fair to add that detection rates have so far failed to show significant improvement, but it is perhaps early to expect results in this area.

These are the tangible results. But what of those matters we cannot quantify and will never be able to prove, yet are nevertheless factors which are worthy of consideration?

First, the improved working relationship between uniformed officers and their detective counterparts has consequently resulted in improved morale. Secondly, there is an easier exchange of information between public and police and an acceptance of officers as members of the society they serve rather than an extension of government. Also, the amount of tension in situations requiring firm but tactful handling by officers now trained in public awareness has lessened. And finally, there are considerable benefits to be derived from the consultative methods the police and public use in dealing with all situations affecting the well-being of persons in the community.

Obviously, it is necessary for a scheme such as this to be flexible and open to modification during its formative period. At the conclusion of the experiment, independent appraisers will prepare their reports on the basis of information processed. In addition, we will benefit from an independent social survey conducted by a national polling organization on public

response. Also, the reactions of the personnel involved, the public, and official representative bodies like the police federation will be considered.

This scheme cannot be the sole remedy for problems facing society or any enforcement agency, but at least, we are making positive efforts to give the public what they desire within the bounds of lawful authority and fiscal policy. This scheme is labor intensive, and its cost effectiveness may never be truly assessed. Job satisfaction is hard to measure, as is the achievement, if any, in the reduction of vandalism, crime, accidents, and prosecutions. However, this is a positive goal for which we as police officers must strive in order to secure a more ordered and law-abiding state of society. The problems of that society as it exists today are not the burden of the police alone, but we must ensure that we are making a full contribution to their solution. This experiment forms part of that contribution. **FBI**

**END**