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‘New’ police work with offenders? Exploring senior and strategic perspectives

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Abstract

Police organisations spend a substantial proportion of their time and resources working with offenders. The nature of police work with offenders and in particular the strategic culture that shapes those working relationships deserves more attention. A series of developments over the past two decades, that can collectively be debated as representing a ‘new’ police work with offenders, has led to the police role expanding in mission and scope, undertaking different roles with offenders and working in novel partnership contexts. These changing modes of police work with offenders include in particular developments in youth justice, the management of prolific and priority offenders, approaches to drugs misuse, and managing those offenders who present a risk of serious harm.

The objective of the thesis is to develop fresh insight through exploring these developments at a senior and strategic level.

The thesis engages with these questions through a grounded theory methodology that encompasses an analysis of national policy documents and a case study based upon semi-structured interviews with senior police officers and key strategic stakeholders from a small shire police area in England.

The key findings identify that the changes in police work with offenders represent a big, ambitious and expansionist policy ambition, manifesting in a more proactive and partnering practice, and founded upon policy drivers of prevention and managing risk. The findings are suggestive of a somewhat chaotic and incohesive policymaking context for policing, suggesting the changes to be chaotic in their genesis and also partly accounted for by ‘gap filling’ in respect of other agencies. The developments sit in tension with short-termism and single-agency thinking, and there is a sense of a predominantly operational-level focus to senior-level thinking and of a ‘retro-fitting’ of legacy police roles to new practice settings. The changes in police work with offenders that are identified provoke consideration of significant policy and practice implications for the police, in particular tensions between ‘core’ and ‘expanding’ ideas for the scope of the police. The findings also identify strategic challenges in the implementation of the changes within policing, most particularly the

challenges of doing things differently and of doing things together with other agencies, and the positionality of the changes as being ‘ephemeral’ and ‘peripheral’ within the wider policing organisation. The changes carry a significance for police culture and professional identities; there are worries of professional ‘degeneration’, of police officers ‘going native’, which prompt in turn consideration of the cultural competence and literacy of the police in respect of the new partnering contexts. Finally, the findings stimulate interesting debates in respect of ‘newness’ and continuity in policing and of the implications of both for police strategy, practice and identity.

Overall, the thesis calls for a cohesive (rather than fragmented) engagement with the developments across police work with offenders, and for deeper and more sensitive understanding of these ‘new’ modes of police work.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Police organisations spend a significant proportion of their time and resources working with offenders. This working relationship with offenders is one of the defining relationships of police work. Strategic considerations about the future of policing have tended towards only a very limited engagement in respect of either how the police approach their working relationship with offenders or how such ‘police work with offenders’ should develop in the future. The nature of ‘police work’ with offenders and in particular the strategic culture that shapes those working relationships deserves more attention.

‘New’ models of police work with offenders?

It is an interesting point in time to engage with the nature of police work with offenders because over the last two decades this working relationship between police and offenders has seen some significant changes. There is a key debate both about the ‘newness’ of these initiatives and also the continuities that are reflected with what has gone before, which will be considered throughout the thesis.

Much has been taking place in this field that represents change. Various initiatives in respect of ‘managing’ risk and dangerousness, working with young offenders, and with ‘prolific’ offenders and drug using offenders, present questions for traditional modes of police practice and ways in which we think about the police and about ‘police work’. These initiatives engage the police in strategic responsibilities, such as preventing youth crime, reducing re-offending, protecting the public and tackling drug use that draw the police into wider social policy objectives. The initiatives engage the police directly in various novel forms of practice. They also engage police officers in working in novel practice settings, co-locating and co-operating with partner agencies in ways that had not previously been the case.

Most of the changes that have taken place also have significant resonance with, and continuities from, more historical and traditional professional practices for the police, and in that sense can be conceptualised as not fundamentally representing a break with the past. Policing as a profession brings very strong continuities of tradition, practice and identity which tend to produce substantive continuity of policy and practice even at times of quite rapid and significant change in thinking and context.

It is interesting to consider how ‘new’ this ‘new’ police work with offenders is, and also what work narratives both of ‘newness’ and of ‘continuity’ may be doing, in respect of police policy, policing practice, and police identity and culture. The thesis seeks to explore how ‘new’ this ‘new’ police work with offenders is, and to develop insight into perspectives of these developments and their meanings and significance at a ‘senior’ and ‘strategic’ level.

Aspects of this potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders

This potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders is characterised by novel models of partnership working between the police and other agencies. The principle manifestations of this have been:

New approaches to ‘managing risk’: Various new forms of direct and systematic engagement by the police in the ‘identification’, ‘assessment’, and ‘management’ of offenders assessed as presenting a risk of serious harm have emerged over the past 20-25 years. The most significant form of this emergent practice is in the ‘Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements’ (MAPPA), which place statutory responsibilities on the police, probation and prison services to collectively put arrangements in place to manage risk. The arrangements typically involve the registration by the MAPPA partnership of high risk offenders in the area, and a practice of multi-agency ‘conferencing’ of high risk assessed individuals and of risk management plans to coordinate the activity to manage risks and protect the public. The police have also developed related powers and responsibilities specifically in relation to sex offenders, including the requirements to keep and supervise a register of sex offenders and the creation of Sex Offender Orders. Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) arrangements have also developed which, as part of the activity, involve the police and other agencies assessing and managing the risk presented by perpetrators of domestic abuse. These changes have involved a major practice shift in terms of offenders, from ‘police

work' being primarily defined and constrained by processes of incident response, investigation and prosecution, to a fundamentally broader brief of risk management planning and related assessment, supervision, surveillance and planning.

Youth offending: This has primarily encompassed the police role in Youth Offending Teams. These were created through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, following an Audit Commission paper '*Misspent Youth*' (Audit Commission, 1996) and the subsequent Home Office response '*No More Excuses*' (Home Office 1997), both of which signalled frustration with the effectiveness and ethos of the youth justice system at the time. The resultant national reforms rolled out nationally in 2000 replaced a network of local authority delivered Juvenile Justice Teams, which were viewed as having a primarily social work ethos, with a new model of local multi-agency teams that brought together key agencies to achieve better coordination and to galvanise around a single new statutory objective of preventing youth crime.

Prolific Offenders: Programmes designed to target offenders who commit high volumes of offending are based in part upon criminal careers research evidence that a relatively small proportion of offenders commit a sizeable proportion of all offences (Home Office, 2001, 2002). This logic has led to increased police direct involvement in targeted programmes towards high-volume offending cohorts, particularly since the mid 1990s in the United States and the early 2000s in England and Wales. Whilst such practice has antecedents in local partnership initiatives that stretch back to at least the late 1980s, the first formal national Government programme which embodied police engagement in offender work with high-volume offenders in England and Wales was the 'Persistent Offender Programme' created as part of the 'Narrowing the Justice Gap' initiative (Home Office, 2002). Through 2002-4 this national policy drive continued with the roll out of the 'Street Crime Initiative' in a series of urban areas (Home Office, 2003) and the roll out of the 'Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme' for youth offenders and a sister programme the 'Intensive Change and Control Programme' for adult offenders. Government policy in this area was further developed, and brought together, through the launch in March 2004 of the 'Prolific and Other Priority Offender' (PPO) strategy.

Drugs: Arrangements that have evolved over the past two decades involve the police in strategic planning to tackle drugs, in providing governance, and in commissioning and delivering prevention and treatment services in their local areas, as well as traditional police enforcement roles. This was initially through their role as designated partners on the Drug

Action Teams established nationally in 1995, and then evolved through the subsequent evolution of partnering arrangements. These local partnerships were created to deliver the national drug strategies locally, with the first national drugs strategy and related programme ‘Tackling Drugs Together’ developed in 1995, with updates in 1998, 2003 and 2008. ‘Arrest referral schemes’, based in police custody suites and with the aim of utilising the point of arrest as an assessment and referral into treatment opportunity, actively involve the police. These began at a local experimental level in the 1980s (Edmunds et al., 1998) and were fully rolled out nationally by 2002. The more recent developments of this new practice in relation to drugs using offenders have manifested through the ‘Drug Interventions Programme’ (DIP; the programme was initially called the Criminal Justice Interventions Programme, CJIP) which consists of a multi-agency team casework model encompassing various facets including mandatory drug testing, active bail management, and the integrated delivery of treatments as part of this wider structured programme of enforcement, supervision and support (Turnbull et al., 2000). Initially launched in thirty localities in April 2003 and expanded through to 2005 when national coverage was achieved, the DIP programme saw a range of local models of practice emerge, all involving the police as a key partner and many involving the police in new roles assessing and case-working drug using offenders.

‘Integrated Offender Management’: The prolific offending and drugs using offender aspects of the ‘new’ police work with offenders began to be fused together from 2008 onwards through the emergence of ‘Integrated Offender Management’.

The approach of the thesis

The objective of this research is to develop fresh insight into exploring this potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders through exploring the policy and strategic-level leadership thinking and perspectives relating to police engagement across these emergent forms of ‘police work’ within the new partnership working contexts.

The research looks across this emergent territory of this potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders with a novel focus that:

- Is holistic in scope and thinking across the changes as a whole (encompassing the breadth of the activity, including the four core aspects of youth offending, prolific offenders, management of risk and drugs work), rather than focusing in upon particular aspects in isolation, which has predominantly been the approach across the policy and research literature;
- Foregrounds strategic and policy issues and thinking, at a senior level, rather than operational level issues of execution and delivery 'on the ground' at the 'front line'.

The rationale for the value of undertaking the research is based upon four key arguments:

- The potentially 'new' police work with offenders is a fundamental strategic development for policing, and the overall strategic implications of these developments for the police have received insufficient attention and have rarely been considered holistically;
- The developments that can be characterised as forming a 'new' police work with offenders provides an interesting site through which to explore current police thinking, professional identities and strategic culture at a senior level. Studies focused on more senior-ranked officers are limited in the literature, with the bulk of police research focusing on front-line, operational officers and their managers;
- The 'new' police work with offender partnerships provide a key site for the exploration of police senior-level relationships with other partnering agencies at a strategic level, which in turn presents opportunities to better understand the interactions and perceptions across professional identities at a senior level, which can contribute to improved models for partnering in the future;
- The police working relationship with offenders has been a relatively neglected aspect within the wider literature on police practice and reform.

The research focuses upon five key research questions:

- Why are the police engaging in different approaches to working with offenders?
- What are the strategic and policy level understandings and implications of this involvement by the police?
- What contributions do the police bring to the new forms of partnership working with offenders, and how are these contributions experienced and perceived?
- Why are new forms of partnering emerging, and how are these new partnership models experienced and understood?
- What are the implications for organisational cultures and professional identities within the police, and what impact have those professional cultures and identities had on the shaping of these developments at a strategic and policy level?

The thesis engages with these research questions through a methodology that encompasses an analysis of national policy documents in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, and a case study based upon semi-structured interviews with senior police officers and key strategic stakeholders from a small shire police area in England.

A focus for the thesis on ‘strategic’ and ‘senior’ level perspectives

The thesis aims to focus on ‘strategic’ level considerations and perspectives in respect of this potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders and to engage those in ‘senior’ and ‘strategic’ roles in the research fieldwork.

It does so in part as a response to a gap across the literature in the consideration of these issues at a ‘senior’ level and on a ‘strategic’ scale; many studies have focused in on issues of tactical design of specific initiatives, and upon the on-the-ground experience of individual schemes at an operational level. There has been much less attention on how these developments as a whole may have more ‘strategic’ implications for police organisations and

for policing, and upon the engagement with them, experiences of them, and thinking about them at a more ‘senior’ level.

Concepts of ‘seniority’ and of ‘strategy’ both defy a single, simple definition. For the purposes of the thesis ‘strategic’ is used as a term to capture issues and thinking that are ‘bigger picture’, longer-term, and policy-focused in nature. Mirroring usage within policing professional settings, the meaning of ‘strategy’ can be set alongside concepts of ‘tactical’ and ‘operational’ to describe things which are less strategic in nature. Strategy can tend to be more engaged with higher-level ‘why?’ questions and what can be seen as the broader ‘how?’ questions; the concept of ‘operational’ in contrast deals with more ‘concrete’ and ‘practical’ practice-based issues, focusing down often into the detailed on-the-ground, front-line, ‘what?’ questions. ‘Tactical’ considerations lie somewhere in-between the two, occupying a ground of detailing the ‘how’ and orchestrating the ‘what’. ‘Strategic’ would be mostly associated with more ‘senior’ and executive level roles. Functionally it would tend to be associated with corporate-level leadership, setting organisational policy and medium-long term planning.

The question (and challenges) of practically defining what is meant by ‘senior’ are explored in more detail in Chapter 5, in terms of how the issue has been addressed in this research in identifying ‘senior’ stakeholders and ‘senior’ officers. There is not a single, natural cut off point that defines what is meant by being ‘senior’. Whilst acknowledging the complexities identified above regarding defining ‘strategic’, there is a connection between being ‘senior’ in the sense the concept is used within the thesis and having responsibilities and spheres of operating which are more ‘strategic’ rather than ‘tactical’ or ‘operational’ in nature.

Structure of the Thesis

The next three chapters (chapters 2-4) of the thesis consider the literature in relation to the research questions the thesis is seeking to address. Chapter 2 considers the wider literature in respect of the ‘purpose’ and ‘scope’ of the police. Chapter 3 explores the literature in relation to the police and partnership working, and chapter 4 engages with the literature in respect of culture and professional identity.

Chapter 5 then describes and discusses the methodological approach of the thesis.

Chapters 6-10 present findings of the thesis. Chapter 6 presents findings from the analysis of national police documents. The following three chapters (chapters 7-9) present findings from the senior officer interviews, and chapter 10 completes the five findings chapters and covers the senior stakeholder interviews. The thesis is then concluded in chapter 11.

Chapter 2

The Purpose and Scope of the Police

The changes in ways in which the police work with offenders identified in Chapter 1, which collectively represent a potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders, has led to the practice activities of the police changing, to the police taking on new strategic responsibilities and to the police adopting new working relationships with other agencies. These changes are significant and present an interesting site for wider considerations of the purpose, role and scope of the police in society.

This chapter and the following two chapters provide a review of the literature to set the context for the research into the ‘new’ police work with offenders, focusing in on three key areas of the literature most pertinent to the research questions. This chapter reviews the literature in respect of police ‘mission’ and ‘scope’. The following chapter (Chapter 3) considers the literature in respect of partnership working and the police, and then Chapter 4 focuses in upon police culture and professional identity.

In reviewing the literature on the ‘mission’ and ‘scope’ of the police, this chapter considers three elements in turn:

- ‘Police work’ and engagement of the literature with issues regarding the ‘mission’ of the police, including the challenges of defining ‘police work’;
- The role of the police profession in shaping policing policy;
- The debates in respect of an expanding role for the police, including an understanding of the factors driving such expansionist thinking and concerns regarding an expanding scope for the police.

Defining ‘police work’ and the ‘mission’ of the police

The ‘new’ police work as a site of disruption and confusion of mission?

One common approach taken in research work into developments of police work with offender initiatives reflects a tendency to conceptualise the new work practices and settings primarily in terms of how police mission is interrupted and unsettled by the new developments, and often in negative terms of ‘disruption’, ‘corruption’, ‘ambiguity’ and ‘confusion’ (Paparozzi and Gendreau, 1993; Chenery and Pease, 2000; Chenery and Deacon, 2003; Worrall et al, 2003 and 2006; Burnett and Appleton, 2004; Griffin et al, 2004; Nash, 2004; Murphy and Worrall, 2007; Dawson and Cuppleditch, 2007; Waters, 2007; Murphy and Lutze, 2009).

An illustrative example of this can be found in two studies from the United States: Murphy and Worrall (2007) and Murphy and Lutze (2009). Both articles are based upon empirical work with police officers and probation officers engaged in a police-corrections partnership in Spokane, Washington. Their empirical work identifies concerns by participants within the new partnership regarding ‘mission distortion’, ‘role ambiguity’, and perceived ‘mission incompatibilities’. This is contrasted with a perceived clarity of mission for the police as an agency (Murphy and Worrall, 2007, 134):

“The traditional mission of police organizations has been a relatively clear one...[the probation] role is arguably more complex and inherently contradictory compared to that of the police.”

Across both articles, there is a sense that such ‘mission uncertainty’ and ‘role contradictions’ are experienced by police officers particularly and peculiarly within the ‘new’ police work with offenders partnering setting, and thus it is assumed primarily as a product of it, in contrast to the mainstream single-agency policing context where there is a suggestion of a “traditional” (presumably suggestive of ‘stability’) and “relatively clear” mission. Murphy and Lutze (2009, 66) talk of the “problem” that police mission has “become” blurred and confused within the new police-corrections partnership.

Three broad challenges arise in respect of this argument. Firstly, that attempts to define purpose, role and scope of the police more generally are, to borrow Murphy and Worrall's phrase, much "more complex and inherently contradictory" than they assess them to be. Secondly, the issues of compatibility of missions may not be being created but instead surfaced within the police-corrections partnership; such incompatibilities may have been less visible but nevertheless strategically undermining to police and probation practice for some time. Thirdly, that instead of the unsettling effect on mission and role being cast as a problem, the police-corrections partnership context may instead be playing a progressive role in exposing the police (and other participating agencies) to new possibilities, thus challenging traditional and conventional thinking and stimulating new (and, potentially, better) interpretations of mission and role.

There is a need to widen the lens, to avoid a focusing in solely on the relatively narrow thinking that the 'new' police work with offenders is problematic in terms of being disruptive or distorting to a police mission, role and scope that is otherwise clear, stable and uncontested. Instead what is needed is a broader engagement which recognises that what is of more interest is the wider complexity, ambiguity and contest in respect of what the police are for, what they do, and what their roles in society should be. The 'new' police work with offenders then becomes an interesting site in which to explore strategic thinking in respect of these questions.

Desires for a new and more clearly articulated police mission

Looking across the literature on police strategy and futures, there appears to be a strong sense of yearning for a new and clearer vision for the mission and role of the police (Bayley and Shearing, 2001; Bowling, 2006, ESRC, 2009; Scott, 2010). Wood and Bradley (2009, 134), writing in an Australian context about the need for a broader, outcome-focused strategic approach across police and partners, suggest that:

“...the world of policing is begging for a renewed vision of what the police do, and what they must stand for.”

This is not a new phenomenon. Cain (1973, 143), setting the scene for her pioneering observational study of police culture several decades ago, argued:

“...it has been taken for granted that we know what the police as an institution really is.”

Policing often suffers from having multiple roles and multiple ends, producing a highly confused strategic picture with a lack of consensus about roles and responsibilities (Miller, 2004; Collier, 2006). This results in “contradictions” across “inherent complexities” (Scott, 2010, 126).

Bayley and Shearing (2001) in their strategic paper about future models of policing, talk of the police as being engaged in “a search for identity”, resonant with the description of policing in Bowling’s paper on police typologies as being in search of a “guiding ethos” (Bowling, 2006, 11). An Economic and Social Research Council strategic paper on the future of the police begins by asking “in essence, what are the police primarily for?” (ESRC, 2009, 6).

What is ‘police work’?

There are many official statements of police mission (Royal Commission, 1962; ACPO, 1990; HMIC, 1999). Most are broad and multifaceted (Reiner, 1995 and 1997; Scott, 2010). Although common themes can be identified across such statements, what is more striking is the variety and inconsistency between them, and the breadth of activities that such statements would collectively legitimise as police work. If one were not familiar with the day-to-day essence of police organisations and activity, of what Reiner (1991, 228) describes as the “profane realities of policing”, it would be difficult to describe the organisation that could possibly fill the space of fulfilling these various lists of objectives.

Bittner (1975, ix) captures the complexity of police scope in introducing his ethnographic work with police forces, when he describes the “inchoate mass of substantively unlimited activity” involved in “calling the cops” (in itself a simplification of police work into a responsive model), and asks:

“What, then, constitutes the special competence of the police, and how do policemen recognise what is, and what is not, their business?”

Finnane (1994, 11), in his historical overview of policing in Australia, talks of the “spectrum of possibilities for the scope of policing”. The breadth and fluidity of these ‘possibilities’ is

illustrated from a historical perspective in Emsley's work on the history of the English police (Emsley, 1996, 3):

“...as the nineteenth century wore on, English policemen found themselves carrying out a variety of tasks... they regulated traffic, ensured that pavements were unimpeded, kept a watchful eye for unsafe buildings and burning chimneys, administered first aid at accidents and drove ambulances, administered aspects of the Poor Law, looked for missing persons, licensed street sellers and cabs, and supervised the prevention of disease among farm animals.”

The ‘possibilities’ for interpretations of mission, role and scope are further complicated when the possibilities of understanding ‘policing’ as something distinct and broader than ‘the police’, or at least the ‘state police’, are considered. ‘Police work’ needs to be understood as one element of the activities, actors and agenda encapsulated by the broader term of ‘policing’ (Johnston, 2003; Johnston and Shearing, 2003; Zedner, 2006). ‘Policing’ overlaps and is interlinked with several other concepts such as ‘security’ and ‘community safety’ (Johnston and Shearing, 2003). More broadly, ‘policing’ has origins in the Greek ‘polis’ and Roman ‘politeia’, embracing broader concepts still of ‘government’ and ‘governance’. Zedner (2006, 78) argues, in her theoretical paper exploring connections between modern British policing debates and developments in the Enlightenment period, that:

“...the symbolic monopoly on policing asserted by the modern criminal justice state may just be a historical blip in a longer-term pattern of multiple policing providers, and markets in security.”

All of this points to a complexity and uncertainty regarding the ‘mission’ and definition of the police. One route that has been attempted to help resolve this complexity is to seek to resolve issues of defining the police by focusing on what is distinctive about police work.

Attempts to define by distinctiveness

One attempted route to seek to crystallise the concept of the police is to identify what is truly distinctive about police work. Such attempts typically focus on the distinct powers of

coercion and enforcement that the police possess (c.f. Bittner, 1975). In this tradition, Reiner (1991, 225) seeks to define policing as:

“... a process of regulating social order by symbolising and using, or threatening the use of, legal sanctions – ultimately the use of force – to control threats to the dominant order.”

In a similar vein, the distinctive defining feature of the institution of the police is viewed by Miller (2004, 171), in her broader engagement with a moral conceptualisation of the police, as being the use of coercive force in the service of legally enshrined moral rights.

Beyond the argument that the police can be defined by their distinctive character of the legitimate use of force, there are several other definitional approaches to the police that deploy a concept of distinctiveness. These include seeing the essence of the police as being in the distinctiveness of operational and organisational manifestations as an ‘emergency service’, ‘blue light’ agency, ‘uniformed organisation’. Likewise, there are attempts to set the uniqueness of the police as embodied in the distinct conception of the Constable: an officer of the Crown rather than an employee, and possessing of distinct warranted powers. In each case, attempts are being made to define the police by identifying what appears different and distinct in the manifestation of police work and police organisations.

The principle limitations of this pathway of definition through distinctiveness are twofold. Firstly, that it tends to over-simplify the distinctiveness and over-estimate the uniqueness of the attributes police work possesses. For instance prison officers, mental health workers, even until relatively recently school teachers, possess legally enshrined sanctions including the use of force in the upholding of rules or protection of individuals. Secondly, that such attempts at definition through distinctiveness tend to fail to engage with and account for the majority of what ‘police work’ consists of which does not qualify as distinctive. A very small proportion of police activity and resource is involved directly in the use of legitimised force, and a sizeable proportion of police work would not even reasonably qualify within Reiner’s broader definitional sense of ‘symbolising’ or ‘threatening’ such force.

Is ‘the police’ still a useful and viable concept?

Ironically, given the emphasis placed upon seeking to ‘define down’ and ‘clarify’ the essence and focus of the police, to establish a fundamental resonance with a legacy of a distinct

professional tradition, and to identify distinctiveness, in fact perhaps three of the most defining attributes of police mission are: (i) fluidity (over time, and in different geographies), (ii) breadth (of activities and outcomes), and (iii) engagement primarily in activities that could in reality be undertaken by a range of different agencies and do not require the distinctive powers of a warranted police officer.

All of this raises the question of whether notions of ‘the police’ and of ‘police work’ are still conceptually helpful? Do the available answers to the dilemmas presented by the ‘inchoate mass’ and ‘spectrum of possibilities’ of police work represent nothing more than to describe and deduce the police role from empirical description of what the police presently do? As Miller (2004, 187) asks, in her work to engage a moral conceptualisation for police work, “does it even make sense” to talk about the police anymore? Clark (2005, 643) considers this question from a postmodernist perspective suggesting that:

“The question now needs to be asked whether the “grand narrative” of the bureaucratic policing model... is able to cope with the postmodern, or, whether it should be deconstructed.”

Definitions of ‘police work’ as the ‘organisational reality’ of the police?

Following that argument, one possibility is that all that ultimately holds ‘police work’ together as a concept is the empirical reality that police organisations as entities gather together activities that collectively are then describable as ‘police work’. Such organisational, structural debates would focus on a consideration of whether narrower organisational definitions and a separation out into more specialised organisational constructs or a continuation of a larger single omnibus organisation is most effective at delivering the activities and the outcomes concerned. These issues were perhaps most comprehensively engaged, albeit now somewhat historically, by the *Review of Police Core and Ancillary Tasks* (Home Office, 1995). The review concluded that “the police should continue to offer a broad service to the public” (1995, 9) and found that peripheral functions “contribute to the wider function of the service” and “therefore operate most effectively as an integral part of the police organisation”.

Attempts to maintain a ‘philosophically driven’, normative debate on ‘police work’

Set against this pathway of a deconstruction of the concept of the police, and consequent reductionism of the considerations of police mission, scope and role to ones of organisational design and efficiency, remains the possibility of attempting to retain a “philosophically

driven” debate (Clark, 2005, 644) about the nature of ‘police work’, despite the obvious challenges of definition of what we actually mean by ‘the police’.

Such attempts are made, for example, in the Economic and Social Research Council strategic paper on the police (ESRC, 2009). Their thinking suggested there should be a “...shift from a model of crime fighting to one of community building”, with a:

“...need to look beyond a traditional concern with the police as a law enforcement and emergency service and consider the ways in which policing is fundamental to social peace-keeping and community building... policing must engage in addressing the long-term causes of problems.”

Such ‘philosophically driven’ conceptualisations of the purpose and role of the police are often broadening of scope and role of the police (Alderson, 1979). The ESRC paper quoted above is only one example of a more ‘philosophically driven’ approach to the issues of mission, scope and role, but the general challenges often encountered in such work are well illustrated by the specific example. There feels to be a lack of conceptual boundaries or limits being applied to the possibilities for future mission, role and scope. If policing involves “the whole community” to “deliver economic and social and community wellbeing”, “addressing the long-term causes of problems” alongside “community building” have we not broadened conceptualisations of policing to the point where they become indistinct from concepts such as social policy, public policy, and government, in effect drawing full circle in terms of the origins of ‘policing’ in the Greek ‘polis’ and Roman ‘politeia’?

Debates about the meaning, content and definition of ‘Police work’

The above brief exploration of the concepts of ‘the police’ and ‘police work’ reveals some key challenges. ‘Police work’ defies single or clear definition, and is heavily contested as a concept. These broader challenges are rarely directly engaged in the literature on the ‘new’ police work with offenders, which tend towards assuming ‘police work’ as a given and then consider the impact upon it of the new developments in roles and work settings.

There is some weight to arguments that as ‘police work’ tends to defy attempts to define it, describe it or set limits to it, that it should be abandoned as a troubled concept that risks muddling strategic thinking. Building on that, there are some merits in the argument that the ideas of ‘the police’ and ‘police work’ are conceptual anachronisms ripe for deconstruction.

Whilst appealing at one level, such arguments can only take us so far. They do play a useful part in reminding of the need for great caution, particularly when concepts of ‘the police’ and ‘police work’ are applied with a confidence that belies the uncertainties and ambiguities of meaning.

But beyond that, simply stepping back and arguing that because the concept of ‘the police’ is difficult it should be abandoned brings little insight in engaging with the realities: that ‘the police’ remains a fundamental core concept across public policy particularly in relation to crime and security; that police organisations are huge and significant agencies; and that the police profession is a dominant (arguably the dominant) voice across swathes of crime and security policy. However confused and confusing a concept it might be, ‘the police’ are still fundamentally shaping work with offenders, and that re-shaping is in turn further disrupting and unsettling the mission, role and scope of ‘the police’.

An adequate response does not feel to rest simply in a deconstructionist zeal for some ‘post-policing’ re-conceptualisation. Rather than a wholesale deconstructing abandonment of the concepts of ‘the police’ and ‘police work’, instead what feels more useful is an appreciation that the concept of ‘the police’ is fluid, contested, ambiguous and complex, and then an engagement with how the ‘new’ police work with offenders is shaped by and in turn is shaping those fluid, contested, ambiguous, complex conceptualisations of ‘the police’ and ‘police work’. As the thesis aims to engage with the strategic implications of this potentially ‘new’ work with offenders for the police, such complexities and fluidities in respect of ‘police work’ represent a significant consideration in that engagement. These considerations of the complexities and fluidities of ‘police work’ are fundamental to the consideration of all five of the key research questions of the thesis.

The next section of the chapter considers the policy environment for the police, and in particular focuses in upon the role of the police profession in shaping the future of ‘police work’ and policing policy.

The role of the police profession in policing policy

The thesis focuses upon developing insight into the strategic-level discourse relating to the police engagement in the ‘new’ police work with offenders, and as such foregrounds senior police officers and their thinking about, and impacts upon, policing policy. This section of the chapter identifies some of the core debates and issues identified in respect of the role and impact of the police profession in shaping police policy and practice

There is a complex policy environment in respect of policing and wider criminal justice. This policy environment can be conceptualised as having three broad elements at play - ‘community’, ‘professional’ and ‘political’ - interacting in shaping the policy and practice of the police and wider criminal justice system (Faulkner, 1994; Scott, 2010). Sitting alongside the community and political elements, police officers remain a powerful shaper of police mission, role and scope. Arguably, senior police officers remain *the* dominant voice in police strategic discourse.

Five facets of what the police profession may bring to such policy thinking seem of particular significance within the literature and will be briefly explored in turn:

- The positionality of the police (as a provider and as a vested interest);
- The emphasis on ‘performance’ reflecting New Public Management rhetoric and thinking;
- Arguments in the literature that the police represent a ‘conservative’ and ‘conventional’ profession that contributes in turn to slowing and limiting thinking and progress towards reform;
- The importance to the police profession of appeals to their history and tradition, and the impacts of such thinking;
- Predominant strategic cultural themes of ‘decline’ and of ‘crisis’.

The positionality of the police profession as a ‘provider’ of services

The level of influence of the police profession in shaping police mission, role and scope is reflective of several strengths that police professionals bring to such debates, most obviously the direct experience of real police work and of managing police organisations. However, this needs to be balanced by two concerns regarding their vantage point on debates about the future. One is that the police are a ‘provider’ of service to local communities, and there are always potential limitations as to the degree such a ‘supply side’ perspective can fully capture the perspective of those who use and rely on services (Hancox et al., 1988; Harrow and Shaw, 1992; Jenkins, 1997; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). And secondly the police profession risks bringing a ‘vested interest’ to debates about police strategy and futures, arguably manifested in commonly projected strategic lines about the need for more resource, and in particular for more police officers, tending to ‘drown out’ calls for more profound innovation and thinking about workforce and delivery (Gash, 2008).

A profession influenced by short-term and narrow performance models

Reflecting wider policy developments of ‘New Public Management’ (Hood, 1991; Selim and Woodward, 1992; Walsh, 1995; Ferlie, 1996), narratives of performance have developed as a strong theme in both political and professional policy discourse regarding police mission, role and scope (Butterfield et al, 2005; Collier, 2006; Shilston, 2008). A sizeable infrastructure of performance indicators, targets, and frameworks has grown across police activity (Neyroud, 2008; Shilston, 2008). The downsides of what Fitzgibbon and Lea (2010, 216) dismiss as “target mania” have received much attention across policing. It is widely recognised that collateral damage of performance approaches may be experienced in increased bureaucracy, unintended consequences such as skewing of priorities, impacts on culture, vocation and morale, tensions between service managers and front-line officers, and a favouring of what can be measured over what matters (Loveday, 2000; Neyroud, 2008). The efficacy of performance approaches is often challenged in terms of capability to yield learning and improvement (Neyroud and Beckley, 2001; Collier et al., 2004; Shilston, 2008). There is only a limited fit between the activities the police engage in, and the manner in which policing performance is defined and captured (Neyroud and Beckley, 2001; Collier, 2006). A short-term delivery ethos, wedded to a performance culture and infrastructure that is dominated by short-term quantitative measures, can significantly skew strategic thinking in policing (Collier et al., 2004; Shilston, 2008; Welsh and Farrington, 2012).

The slow pace of reform and perceived professional resistance to reform

One critique on the police profession in the literature is that the wider landscape in which policing exists is changing fast, and that this represents a pace and scale of change with which the profession of policing has not always convincingly kept up (Jacobs et al., 2006; Loveday et al., 2008; Carter and Carter, 2009; Loftus, 2010). Loftus (2008, 758) reflects this viewpoint in her cultural study of the police:

“The British policing landscape has transformed significantly in recent years... change within the police appears to be slow and uneven.”

There is a widespread view that policy implementation and reform are challenging in the context of a ‘conservative’ and ‘conventional’ policing practice and profession (Loveday et al., 2008; Carter and Carter, 2009). Heumann and Church (1990, 81) writing over twenty years ago, and looking back from that vantage point back to the 1970s, produce a striking tone of hopelessness for the achievement of significant change:

“As we survey the landscape of two decades of work in criminal justice we cannot help but be depressed about its lessons for successful reform. Study after study detail the difficulties of innovation in well-entrenched bureaucracies and outline the way the system manages to preserve the status quo by ‘popping back’ to its former shape.”

One perspective is that reforms to the police tend to occupy a peripheral space, to co-exist in parallel to strong professional continuities within a ‘real’ or ‘core’ police working practice that remains essentially unchanging (Reiner, 1991). Underpinning this, it is argued that there sometimes lurks in the professional discourse a potentially strongly reactionary professional mindset; what Dean (1995, 338-9) elaborates as being:

“...the largely unchallenged assumption...that the “tried and true” work practices and procedures of traditional policing are adequate. This line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that what is needed to fight crime more effectively are more police and more resources. Consequently, there is little perceived need to change the work patterns of how police have operated in the past... [the defence being] but we’ve always done it this way.”

Edwards and Skidmore (2006, 34) call for a fresh approach to achieving real change within the thinking of the police profession:

“The bases on which the police’s status as a profession were once seen to rest are increasingly vulnerable. Rather than a defensive profession trying to shore them up, the police need to become an ‘activist profession’ capable of forging new ones.”

There is an argument that the prevailing tone of the literature is unduly negative to the police profession in respect of capability to change, and that in reality considerable changes have been effectively engaged with and delivered (Chan, 2007).

Powerful professional appeals to history and tradition

History and tradition continue to play an important part in professional narratives about police mission, role and scope. The predominant professional account of the “ontogeny” of policing (Scott, 2010, 126) is broadly ‘orthodox’ and ‘progressive’, typically casting a simple and continuous narrative from the roots of the formation of the ‘new police’ (usually taking the point of the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829), through to the practice of the police today, and characterised as a consistent and enduring tradition of professional practice. A fulcrum for such thinking tends to be the ‘Peelian principles’, with two recent large-scale strategic reviews of policing utilising the Peelian principles at the centre of their argument (Flanagan 2008; Stevens, 2013) and a new core inspection programme for the police launched under the acronym of ‘PEEL’ (HMIC, 2014). With a rhetoric that resonates with the concept of the founding fathers of the United States and the Declaration of Independence, Johnson (1991, 205) writes, at the time as a serving Chief Constable, that “the original vision of purposes, principles and values of British policing set out by our founders” based upon “cornerstone” principles such as policing by consent and prevention is fundamental, and he worries that policing has drifted from these “foundational principles”.

There is considerable challenge to these ‘orthodox’ histories of the police as variously being simplistic, a-historical, teleological, ethnocentric, lacking a comparative dimension, lacking a critical edge, as being more myth and legend than history (Brogden, 1987; Reiner, 1995; Reynolds, 1998; Taylor, 1998). Specifically, the work of Lentz and Chaires (2007) critiques the emphasis on 1829 and the so-called ‘Peelian principles’, evidencing the principles as being brought together in their present form only through twentieth century textbooks, and

questioning overly simplistic interpretations of thinking from 1829 de-contextualised from the very different social and cultural contexts created by a span of almost two centuries.

Nevertheless, this strong and proud tradition of policing, and specific attachment to what is viewed as a distinctive and superior 'British model' of policing, cast a strong shadow over discussions of police reform. The power of what has gone before, bolstered in policing by the dominant 'orthodox' and 'progressive' historical narratives and in particular by the accompanying sense of an enduring professional identity that they provide, remains a powerful force in the profession's strategic thinking about the purpose, role and mission of the police. This can tend towards underpinning, from a historical perspective, a professional attachment to legacy practice and traditional 'ways of doing things' when considering options for change.

Sitting alongside this, there has been an enduring pattern of predominant narratives of 'decline' and 'crisis' shaping the thinking of the police.

Narratives of professional 'decline' and 'crisis'

Associated with the accent of much of this perspective on history and tradition within the police, there is a bleak picture painted by some of a professional 'decline' (Loftus, 2012). A key thread of these narratives is the sense of a lost but glorious past (Reiner, 1991). Sitting alongside these narratives of 'decline', many 'crisis' narratives spanning several decades have emphasised rising threats and 'moral panics' (Cohen, 1987) in respect of crime, alcoholism and drinking cultures, disorder, anti-social behaviour, knife crime, hooliganism, immigration and race related crime, drugs use, the erosion of social inclusion and stability, terrorism and other threats to security, and many more similar themes salient to policing. This sense of threat, and of crisis, appears important in the thinking and 'strategic culture' of the police profession (Loftus, 2010).

The thesis will engage with these themes from the literature in respect of the police profession, and explore them in respect of senior police officer thinking and 'strategic culture' in the context of the novel practice context of the 'new' police work with offenders.

The final section of this chapter explores the literature in respect of the drivers behind, and consequences of, an expanding remit for the police.

An expanding role for ‘police work’

Parent and Snyder (1999), in their large-scale review across the development of police-corrections partnerships in the United States, associate the growth in such developments directly to the wider development of preventative, problem-oriented policing philosophies and approaches. This wider shift in policing approach has seen a degree of shift from policing models focused on enforcement and response, towards broader ones more embracing of community and reflecting a ‘preventative turn’ (Tuck, 1987, Hughes, 2007).

In part, this broadening of the concept of ‘police work’ is a consequence of the narratives of ‘decline’ and of ‘crisis’ explored above. As Crawford (1994a, 58) argues “reliance on the formal reactive approaches of criminal justice” are shown to have “limited effect” resulting in new thinking in which “a growing emphasis has been placed on the proactive prevention of crime”.

Alongside this, expansionism also reflects an appetite for strategic thinking on a bigger scale, consistent with the earlier discussion in this chapter of the tendency for ‘philosophically driven’ conceptualisations of the police to broaden remit and role. The essence of such thinking is well captured in a policy document produced by ‘New Labour’ in 1994, in which is set out a broad philosophy for crime and policing (Blair, 1994, 1):

“...we must decide as a society the extent to which we wish the police to be a crime prevention as well as merely a law enforcement agency...the true role for a modern police service lies in developing the notion of strong community policing...where the police share responsibility with other local agencies in a proper partnership against crime...[this] should be part of a much larger programme of national renewal and change, in which we encourage and develop a strong sense of civic duty and community values.”

This more expansive concept of the police positions policing spanning a much broader public policy canvas, occupying a role as key ‘social influencers’ (Waddington, 1999). It emphasises broad coalitions and collaborative working across partnerships with other agencies and communities to achieve a range of social and public policy objectives, with a strong flavour of ‘whole of government’ thinking. And the emphasis on community reflects a profound shift, as expressed by Edwards and Skidmore (2006, 12):

“...from traditional notions of policing simply by consent... to policing with the proactive engagement and co-operation of communities.”

There are concerns about this ‘profound shift’ and the implications it may have for the police. Blair (2005), giving the Richard Dimbleby Lecture as serving Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, spoke of the “expanding [police] mission... from truancy to terror, from graffiti to gunmen... you want us to do many things”. Clark (2005, 644) similarly refers to “an expanding base of expectations”. Edwards and Skidmore (2006, 22), in their strategic paper on the future of the police, ask “whether it is feasible for the police to continue to cover such a wide terrain”, raising “the risk of overstretch that comes with responding to all these challenges” (2006, 6). Crawford (2006, 471), in a paper exploring the ‘post-regulatory state’, reflects upon the “frenzied quest for ever newer and more capricious modes of control” and identifies the “clash between ambitions and limited capabilities”. He cites reassurance policing as an example of a further over-extending of the “vast and unmanageable social domain” of the police (2006, 458). ESRC (2009, 22) likewise in their policy paper exploring the future of policing, warn about the police being expanded further “into newer, more impossible realms”, saying that “the police service has seen an explosion in responsibilities”.

This final section of the chapter briefly identifies the two key ‘drivers’ behind this expanding conceptualisation of police role – preventative, community-based models of policing, and ‘risk management’ – and then explores the challenges and potential drawbacks in relation to an expanding police remit.

‘Community’ and the ‘preventative turn’

‘Community’, ‘neighbourhood’, ‘preventative’, ‘citizen-focused’, ‘problem-solving’ models of policing have a high degree of definitional ambiguity (Roth et al, 2004; Mastrofski, 2006; Scheider et al., 2009). Most definitions emphasise engagement with communities, pro-active and problem-solving approaches, prevention, and co-operation with other agencies (Shapland and Vagg, 1988; Terpstra, 2010). Derivatives of community policing, such as problem oriented policing (Goldstein, 1990) and zero tolerance policing (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) again emphasise prevention and partnership with communities and other agencies. The core rationales for community-embedded, preventative models of policing are threefold. Firstly, that crime has roots in wider societal and personal issues that require a broader approach than reactive policing alone. Secondly, that early intervention and prevention provide better investment than reactive post-crime models. Thirdly, greater direct embedding in, and

engagement with, communities provides greatest potential for police legitimacy and effectiveness. Community and preventative models are evoked as being ‘progressive’ (Hughes, 2007; Scheider et al., 2009) and as being effective (Goldstein, 1990; Sadd et al., 1994; Walker, 2001; Roth et al. 2004; Blair, 2005; Edwards and Skidmore, 2006; Flanagan, 2008; Wood and Bradley, 2009; Hough et al., 2010; Stevens, 2013).

‘Risk management’

The other core driver for the enlargement of the policing agenda alongside preventative, community-based models has been an emphasis on managing ‘risk’. More broadly than policing, the ‘risk society’ has emerged as a powerful cultural theme (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992; Garland, 1997). Public perceptions of an increasingly unsafe and unstable world feed from a wide range of problems, from local low-level nuisance to international terrorism (Blair, 2005; ESRC, 2009); Kelly (2000:470) talks of “powerful narratives of risk, fear and uncertainty” in the context of her paper expressing concern at the growth in risk narratives in respect of young people and youth justice. Sir Ian Blair, presenting the keynote Dimbleby Lecture in 2005 on the futures of policing, spoke of the new “giant of personal insecurity” alongside the five Beveridge ‘Giants’ of want, idleness, ignorance, squalor and disease (Blair, 2005). Crawford (2006, 457), again in his paper on the ‘post-regulatory state’, reflects on “the greater salience of uncertainty, insecurity and unsafety” as key drivers for shifts in criminal justice and prevention practice, and as drivers of an expanding remit for the police and other agencies. Fitzgibbon and Lea (2010), in their paper exploring the role of community in policing and probation, suggest that the ‘risk agenda’ is akin to an ‘infection’ for both agencies, that has had a profound and deleterious effect across policing and criminal justice. Specifically in terms of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, Nash (1999, 360) identifies the growth in focus on ‘risk’ as the principle factor that has drawn the police and probation services much more closely together in terms of practice and partnering arrangements.

The ‘new penology’ perspective on this broader strategic and operational canvas for the police locates these developments as a ‘paradigmatic change’ across the policing and penal systems from rehabilitative and justice aims towards a more actuarial and technocratic model of ‘managing’ or ‘designing out’ crime and of managing ‘at risk’ populations (Feeley and Simon, 1992). Hannah-Moffat (1999, 72) sets this trend in a broader picture, arguing that:

“...the manifestations of risk techniques is one of several characteristics of an increasingly technocratic and calculated system of governing.”

This new thinking in respect of ‘risk management’ and in terms of ‘community-based’, ‘preventative’ models of policing, are fundamental to expansions in the concept of ‘police work’, of which the ‘new’ police work with offenders represent a key element.

The new, more expansive, policing philosophy evokes a progressive, reformist narrative, seeing itself as stripping away old models fossilised in traditional ways of operating and constrained by bounded thinking about professional roles and organisational demarcations, freeing up instead for a ‘new practice’ centring on an “outcomes-based” approach (Wood and Bradley, 2009, 140-1).

Concerns about an expanding agenda for the police

The risk based and prevention driven expanding of police role has also prompted a range of concerns in the literature. Beyond the issues of ‘overstretch’ in police mission and capabilities identified above, there are broadly five distinct areas of critique for an expanding model of ‘police work’, which are now considered in turn:

- Does the reality on the ground of an expanding mission match the concept?
- Problems in respect of ‘risk management’;
- Challenges to appeals to benign concepts of ‘community’ and of the role of the police in society;
- Worries about the growth in regulatory models, and the consequences for due process;
- Broader concerns about the risk of a ‘criminalisation’ of social policy.

Does the reality of an expanding mission match the concept?

Firstly, there are critiques that the execution has simply not matched up to the rhetoric. This is not in essence a criticism of the idea of a ‘preventative turn’ or of a more community-engaged practice, but instead reflects a deep scepticism that it is realisable. Such concerns are not new, and indeed were reflected over twenty years ago in the influential ‘Morgan Report’ published by the Government on the future of crime prevention (Home Office, 1991); the

report argued that crime prevention remained ‘peripheral’ for all agencies and ‘truly core’ for none.

Whilst much has changed over the last two decades to address the needs identified within the ‘Morgan Report’ for strategy and structure in respect of co-ordinated preventative work, the challenge is whether there is an argument that it remains peripheral rather than truly core. To fully achieve the ‘preventative turn’ would require a shift from a position where “crime prevention is seen to hold a relatively marginal and secondary importance in policing” (Coliandris and Rogers, 2008, 120) through to a “genuine change in the organisational location” for prevention work (Crawford, 1994a, 61).

Problematising ‘risk management’

Expansions of the role of the police, particularly in the context of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, are heavily associated with wider thinking about pro-active and systematic risk management.

The rise in risk and security-based risk narratives has been challenged. Zedner (2003) asks the question whether there can be too much security. In her theoretical review, she cites evidence of the rise of risk assessment, prudential strategies, crime prevention, community safety and private security, identifying the potential costs to society and challenging whether the growth in such security measures is an unqualified good. She argues that security as a concept has been less challenged than punishment, perhaps because consequences for personal liberties are less overt albeit they are still potentially significant.

In the context of working with young people, Sharland (2006) argues that the dominant narratives of ‘risk’ lack a positive framing as a natural and welcomed element of healthy youth development. Critics argue that such narratives tend to constitute risk not only negatively but also largely in terms of what Gray describes in her paper on young people, risk and social inclusion as “individual shortcomings” (Gray, 2005, 939), with social context and socio-economic disadvantage receiving less scrutiny (Muncie, 2002; Pitts, 2003; Gray, 2005; Sharland, 2006), and with overtones of moral rather than social engineering (Gray, 2005). Kemshall (2002, 48), in her paper discussing probation effectiveness and ‘responsibilisation’, argues “social inequalities... are reframed as individual risks, experienced and negotiated individually.”

The definition and management of dangerousness is highly complex and contested territory (Nash, 1999). The principal critiques of the new risk management approaches are that they allow a great deal of discretion and are marginal to frameworks of legal oversight and proportionality; that they are unfair and discriminatory; and that they do not work, in the sense of being unreliable and inconsistent (Nash, 1999; Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Harcourt, 2007; Zedner, 2007). Zedner (2007: 262) warns of dangers of a “pre-crime” society: particularly in respect of erosion of due process and civil liberties and the risks of overstretching limited technical capabilities to predict and intervene. Harcourt (2007) develops a detailed critique along similar lines of argument in respect of what he terms a “new actuarial paradigm” (2007:2) in criminal justice settings, arguing it is not as natural or intuitive as it appears, that it distorts thinking about just punishment and that it creates distortions across justice systems. There are key questions raised in the literature about the fairness and equality of risk assessment and management (Nash, 1999; Hannah-Moffat, 1999 and 2005; Kemshall, 2002; Hoyle, 2008). Hannah-Moffat (1999), in a review of risk assessment procedures on female prisoners in Canada, argued that ‘risk’ was gendered, flexible and ambiguous. She argued that there is limited recognition of the “subjective, moralistic and disciplinary capacity of actuarial techniques” (1999: 72). Hoyle (2008), in her review of risk assessment practices in domestic abuse cases, argues that risk assessments are subjective and need to be understood as social constructs, yet can have life-changing impacts for offenders and others, including their children.

Dangers of benign concepts of ‘community’ and of the police role in society

There are significant assumptions about communities embedded in the thinking about community policing (Manning, 1984; Roth et al., 2004; Scott, 2010; Terpstra, 2010). As Crawford (2006, 453) argues there is a ‘benign’ conceptualisation of community that requires challenge, suggesting that:

“...communities can be wonderfully conciliatory, egalitarian and democratic but they can also be parochial, intolerant, hierarchical and punitive.”

Linked to this, there is a challenge to the essentially orthodox, progressive narratives that an expansion of police mission and role are beneficial, adopting a more revisionist account that foregrounds concern about the negative impacts that a more expansive style of policing might result across personal liberties, community cohesion, and social justice (Uglow, 1988; Reiner, 1995; Crawford 2006 and 2009a).

Uglow (1988), in his overview of policing, argues that the preservation of a liberal society requires careful control over the powers of the police, avoidance of the adoption of a broader mission by the police, and stronger accountability. In a similar vein, Braithwaite (1992, 17) argues:

“It is not clear where desirable order maintenance ends and undesirable reproduction of order begins.”

Such thinking challenges an expanding police remit, in contrast calling for greater clarity of boundaries and for a proper control over the breadth and penetration of the police role in society (Uglow, 1988, Skogan, 1990; Braithwaite, 1992; Reiner, 1995; Loader, 2000; Loader and Walker, 2001; Crawford, 2006; Hughes, 2007; Scott, 2010).

Reiner (1991, 28) suggests that when police roles broaden the police focus risks retaining, but on a grander scale, a sense of “moral street sweeping” reflecting a continuing skewed emphasis towards targeting negatively certain groups in society who are viewed to be “police property”, in particular young, urban males from ethnic minorities (Skogan, 1990; Landau and Nathan, 1983). Whereas the progressive account cites the police as “guardians” of civil liberties, the critique worries that they can also become “eroders” of such liberties (Scott, 2010, 157).

Worries about the growth in regulatory models and displacement of due process

Taking forward his argument, Crawford (2006, 455) worries that “ambitious interventionist government is alive and well” driven by “the politics of behaviour” and a newfound government zeal for “making people behave”. He warns that these increases in state (and in reality principally police delivered) informal interventions and new mechanisms of regulation are evolving at a frenetic pace, citing the phrase of Krauthammer (1993) of the risk of ‘defining deviance up’, with the danger of a “sinking pyramid” of active intervention in which ‘manners are replaced by rules’ (Crawford and Lister, 2004) and in which the state is becoming more frenetic, contradictory and politicised around behaviour, whilst not necessarily becoming smarter or more effective.

In later work, Crawford (2009a, 810) develops this thinking, arguing (in the specific context of anti-social behaviour measures) that:

“...the language of regulation has been appropriated and deployed to cloak and legitimize ambitious (and ambiguous) bouts of hyper-active state interventionism... regulatory ideas are being used to circumvent and erode established criminal justice principles, notably those of due process, proportionality and special protections traditionally afforded to young people. Consequently, novel technologies of control have resulted in more intensive and earlier interventions.”

The expansion and diversification of regulatory mechanisms is argued on the basis that traditional more formalised, principled and judicial approaches to justice are slow, unresponsive and ineffective, and fail to achieve public confidence (Crawford, 2009a).

The risks connected to the growth of regulatory processes are potential losses of due process and legal process, a potential (undesirable?) widening of the net of individuals and behaviours engaged by state intervention, and the risk that agency behaviours in respect of regulation are subjectively shaped by assumptions of individual capacity and motivation (Braithwaite, 2008; Crawford, 2009a;).

Concern about the ‘criminalisation’ of social policy

Concerns in respect of the ‘criminalisation’ of social policy reflect worries that there is a tendency for ever larger aspects of public policy to be seen through the lenses not of welfare and wellbeing, health or development or cohesion, but rather through the lenses of security, behaviour regulation and crime prevention (Loader and Walker, 2001; Rogers, 2004; Gray, 2005; Crawford, 2006; Duke, 2006; Gough, 2010).

For example, in respect of the developments of police work with offenders, Gough (2010, 23) argues that:

“...the creation of multi-agency Youth Offending Teams signalled a further criminalisation of the *raison d’être* of a range of organisations and professions traditionally outside of the formal criminal justice system.”

This process can see many other agencies becoming pressed, it has been argued, into a role as ‘reluctant policeman’ (Rogers, 2004). Loader and Walker (2001, 17) question issues of capacity, expertise and accountability and conclude that:

“...what we have here is a theory of the police’s diffusion across programmes of government that lacks a theory of police limits...a conception of policing as agents of civic governance invites...the ever-present possibility – as the police become embedded within (other) governmental mechanisms and programmes – that questions of public policy become permeated (and steered) by policing and security-oriented discourse.”

The threat identified by Loader and Walker (2001) is of police engagement and leadership having the consequence of severing links between social problems and social justice, depoliticising inherently political issues and exacerbating public anxiety. It can be argued that crime may be the worst issue to try to construct open, tolerant inclusive communities (Crawford, 1999).

Duke (2006) argues that the blurring of the ‘drug problem’ with the ‘crime problem’ has effectively eclipsed social structural factors such as unemployment, poverty, race and discrimination. The increased police role within drugs work has been seen by several commentators as representing a ‘criminalising’ of drugs policy (Parker and Newcombe 1987; Dorn *et al.* 1994; Bennett 2000; Holloway *et al.* 2004; Seddon, 2006). Duke (2006) talks of a ‘merger’ between criminal justice and drugs policy. This ‘criminalisation’ process is characterised as skewing a broad, health-based and harm reduction based drugs policy, into a narrower crime reduction based approach.

In respect of the growth of youth justice practice, and of the police role within it discussed earlier in this chapter, Gray (2005) argues that the growth of new models of crime-led policy have ‘criminalised’ perspectives of youth, resulting in the construction of youthful populations in terms of deviancy, delinquency and deficit.

Conclusions

The developments of new modes of police work with offenders prompts interest in debates in respect of the police mission, role and scope in society. This chapter has briefly reviewed the literature in respect of ‘police work’ and the role and scope of the police. The chapter has covered three core elements of the debate:

- **‘Police work’ and police ‘mission’, including challenges of definition.** The discussion identified that the concept of ‘the police’ is fluid, contested, ambiguous and complex, and that perspectives in the literature of the ‘new’ police work with offenders as a site for disruption and ambiguity in police mission tend to oversimplify by not fully engaging the wider inherent complexity and uncertainty of what ‘police work’ is. The ‘new’ police work with offenders was identified as an interesting site for exploring these wider questions of police role;
- **The role of the police profession in shaping policing policy.** The police profession was identified as bringing a number of challenges in respect of the role it plays in police policy and strategic thinking: the positionality of the police (as a provider and as a vested interest); the emphasis on ‘performance’; arguments that the profession is ‘conservative’ contributing to a slow pace of reform; the importance to the police profession of appeals to police history and tradition, and; the predominance of narratives of ‘decline’ and of ‘crisis’. A key focus of the thesis is on strategic thinking and ‘strategic culture’ within the police in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, and therefore these themes in the literature in respect of the policing profession provide interesting questions to explore;
- **The debate in respect of an expanding role for the police.** The new modes of ‘police work’ with offenders are one significant manifestation of an expanding brief for the police, and therefore the debate identified in the final section of the chapter in terms of the key drivers for expansion (‘preventative’, community-based approaches and ‘risk management’) and the potential challenges (whether it is executed effectively, the risks of risk management, and of benign perspectives on ‘community’ and the police role in society, the dangers of an expansion in regulatory models and the risks of a ‘criminalisation’ of broader social policy) are of key interest to the thesis.

It is striking how many of the core debates in policing strategy resonate with and are manifest within the 'new' police work with offenders. At the heart of the policy discourse around policing there sits a paradox between, on the one hand, a core definitional concept, ideology, identity and tradition based upon the distinctiveness of the police, and on the other a broadening, penetrative, expansive agenda for the police that tends towards the police occupying an ever-expanding territory across a swathe of public policy. Depending on the point of view across that policy continuum between 'core' and 'breadth', the broadening scope inherent in the 'new' police work with offenders can variously be perceived as a problematic site of threat, of mission distortions and confusions and dilutions, or alternatively as a vital, exciting, progressive site for the emergence of new professional practice and identity.

What is clear is that an expanding police role, such as is manifested in the 'new' police work with offenders, brings consequences for the working relationships the police have with other agencies; indeed the expansion in police practice is fundamentally situated within novel models of partnering. In turn, this can bring consequences for the roles and practice of other agencies, as well as holding implications for the reproduction and reformation of police cultures and identities. The thesis now turns to consider these elements: first (in chapter 3) considering the literature relating to partnerships and the police, and then secondly (chapter 4) considering issues relating to the literature on police cultures and professional identities.

Chapter 3

Partnerships and the Police

The core arenas for development of the ‘new’ police work with offenders across youth justice, prolific and priority offenders, management of risk, drugs work and more recently Integrated Offender Management all carry a strong motif of partnering. These new partnership models, which have emerged primarily over the past two decades, reflect novel organisational formations between agencies for both the police and the other agencies involved.

The changes have partly been driven by transformations in the probation service, which have shifted that agency closer to the police through an emphasis on ‘risk management’ (Nash, 1999; Howard, 2010) and a shift in style and substance towards a more “correctionalist paradigm” (Skinner, 2010, 35) focused upon “compliance” and conceptualised as “managing” offenders (Gough, 2010, 23). The result has been much closer working in particular between the police and probation services (Robinson, 2001; Richards, 2003; Nash, 2004 and 2008; Mawby and Worrall, 2004; Fitzgibbon and Lea, 2010).

This chapter explores the literature in respect of partnership working and the police. The chapter is split into two sections, the first covering the arguments in support of partnering, and the second then considering the challenges identified in the literature of achieving effective partnership working.

The case for partnering

The surge in police and criminal justice partnering approaches, primarily from the nineties onwards, attracted significant support from academic studies and evaluations (Hughes 1996, Monahan, 1997, O'Malley and Sutton, 1997, Walters 1996) and from government (Home Office, 1991).

Partnership approaches have grown to become a significant and largely 'accepted' feature across policing and wider criminal justice practice, particularly in respect of working with offenders (Pycroft and Gough, 2010). Wood and Bradley (2009), reflecting upon policing strategy in a New South Wales context, argue that partnerships have become so much an embedded element of practice over recent years that partnering has become "an uncontroversial language" and now feels like "a rather unoriginal proposition" (134).

Crawford (1998, 170) summarises the argument for the partnership approach as follows:

"Crime prevention and community safety lie beyond the competency of any one single agency. Crime by its nature is multi-faceted, both in its causes and effects...A partnership approach allows the co-ordination of expertise and the pooling of information and resources. Most fundamentally, it affords an holistic approach to crime and associated issues which is 'problem-focused' rather than 'bureaucracy-premised'."

The breadth and scale of the challenges presented by crime "transcends the competence of any one agency" (Crawford, 1994a, 58). Partnering has become commonly viewed, as Nash (2006, 147) puts it in the context of the *Street Crime Initiative* and other multi-agency offender focused contexts, as "the only effective way" of working. In the context of youth justice, Pamment (2010, 224) argues that there are significant "advantages" in working together. Howard (2010, 232), looking across 'correctional partnering' as a whole, suggests that "little can be achieved by one agency alone"; reflecting a view expressed from a probation practice viewpoint that 'single agency working doesn't work' (Rumgay, 2003).

In contrast, an absence of partnering and consequential perceptions of lack of integration and cohesion in the various agency responses to crime and offending lead to descriptions of the

criminal justice system as a “non-system” (Crawford, 1998, 170), with resultant duplication, friction, conflict and institutional gaps.

This ‘normalisation’ of partnering has led across the criminal justice system to what Davies and Thomas (2003, 682) describe as:

“...pressure to break down organizational boundaries and promote greater vertical and horizontal integration.”

This broadly held enthusiasm and appetite for partnership approaches reflects in the surge in partnering activity during the last two decades that characterises the ‘new’ police work with offenders. Parent and Snyder (1999, 2), in their review of police-corrections partnering in the United States, suggest partnership working “may help both police and corrections do a better job”. They point to the potential for police-corrections partnering to healthily break down “old patterns of mistrust” and encourage “staff flexibility and creativity in solving community problems” (ibid., 2). Leitenberger et al (2003), again reflecting on the emerging police-corrections partnering in the United States, describe police and corrections agencies as ‘a perfect match’, arguing that cooperation ‘compliments’ the respective roles and powers. Nash (2010, 111), argues in the context of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), that “many heads are better than one” and that “a variety of experience brought to bear” should be celebrated. Wooten and Hoelter (1998), writing about *Operation Spotlight*, a police-corrections partnership in the United States, argue that the growth in police-corrections partnering reflects a positive overcoming of old thinking about organisational territoriality, with a refocusing on outcomes rather than growing organisations and an overcoming of prejudices between the professions, all of which have been partly driven by a shift towards supervising higher risk and more challenging offenders that has helped prompt an innovative spirit of finding new ways of working. Beletsky et al (2005), reflecting on partnering arrangements to engage with drug users, in a similar vein cite the potential for police partnering with health, probation and other agencies as having great potential ‘to find more effective means’ of tackling the core shared agenda of reducing risk and achieving successful treatment outcomes. The agencies have collectively become ‘responsibilised’ in respect of broader outcomes with offender populations and this has drawn their work together (Garland, 2001).

Several studies identify the benefits the police bring to these partnering contexts. De Lint (2003) developed a theoretical model of policing which he then applies to community policing models, viewing the police as bringing a role to the partnerships as “access brokers” (2003: 379), demonstrating an ability to track and locate offenders safely and efficiently. Millie and Erol (2006) undertook empirical research, involving qualitative interviews and observation, of the Prolific and Priority Offender scheme in Birmingham. This work identified a similar theme of the importance of the police in ‘accessing intelligence’ as key to the police contribution. Waters (2007) undertook a range of interviews with professionals, including police officers, involved in the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme, a partnership involving the police aimed at prolific youth offenders. His findings suggest the police are seen as contributing: a street-wise approach bringing first-hand experience of crime and arrest; criminal justice system knowledge; a capability to get things done; knowledge of local areas; problem-solving capabilities and communication skills. Waters also identified symbolic elements to the police contribution, including attributes of credibility, perceived robustness, dynamism and efficiency. Research in the United States develops similar themes. Murphy and Worrall (2007), undertaking an empirical study of a police-corrections partnership, identified that police officers receive a richer picture of offenders from engaging with other colleagues which informs their work, and that this in turn means that they can then better understand what they experience out in the community and feed that back into corrections supervision.

Fundamentally, across these narratives partnering is cast as centre stage in a progressive practice agenda. Partnering is seen as essential to achieve cohesion and integration, and to be successful in achieving outcomes, in work with offenders.

However, the literature also draws upon a number of concerns and challenges in respect of the expansion of partnering approaches, and these are now considered in the second section of this chapter.

The challenges to effective partnering

There is a considerable body of literature that speaks of concerns and complications in the development and delivery of partnering models in criminal justice and policing contexts (Garton, 1980; Corbett, 1988; Corbett et al., 1988; Stein et al., 1992; Walters, 1996; Crawford, 1999; Fionda, 1999; Goris and Walters, 1999; Rumgay, 2000; Gendreau et al., 2001; Hough, 2001; Turner et al., 2001; Jones and Sigler, 2002; Garrett, 2004; Hannah-Moffat, 2005; Gray and Salole, 2006; Rodger, 2008; Nash and Walker, 2009; Pamment, 2010; Skinner, 2010; Watson, 2010).

Crawford (1999, 58) critiques what he terms “partnership mania”, and suggests (Crawford, 1994b, 323) that inter-agency approaches have “assumed the status of a panacea”. Rumgay (2007, 551) critiques that the application of partnering as an approach has been pursued ‘too far’ and ‘too fast’, risking an “indiscriminate application” that threatens to “undermine the value of a good idea”.

Across this broad-ranging literature eight key areas of concern can be crystallised from the various critiques regarding the effective delivery of partnership working involving the police; each is now briefly considered in turn and considered in this second section of the chapter:

- Partnerships remain peripheral and partially engaged by agencies including the police;
- Limited evidence and evaluation of partnering approaches;
- Uncertainties of purpose within partnership working contexts;
- Lack of clarity of accountabilities, responsibility and governance in partnering settings;
- The challenges of cultural differences;
- The police as a potentially problematic partner;
- Power dynamics and conflict within partnering contexts;

- Tendencies for agencies, in particular the police, to take on the work of other partners.

Partnerships remain peripheral, with agencies only partially engaged

The partnerships across the ‘new’ police work with offenders, and indeed more broadly across criminal justice and community safety, take a wide range of different forms. One challenge made in the context of a range of these different partnering contexts is that they fail the test set by Wood and Bradley (2009, 142) that partnering “must be made to matter in sustained, organisation-wide ways.” In other words, they do not necessarily signal a “strategic” rather than “one off” or “peripheral” commitment (Crawford, 1994b, 325).

Limited evidence and evaluation of partnering

There is an argument that the benefits of partnering have often been ‘assumed’ rather than ‘demonstrated’ through proper evaluation (Crawford, 1998; Parent and Snyder, 1999; Rumgay 2003 and 2007; Pycroft and Gough, 2010).

Parent and Snyder (1999, 2) accept this point in their large-scale review of police-corrections partnering in the United States:

“Police-corrections partnerships have not been carefully evaluated to determine how effective they are in achieving their goals or what effect they have on system costs.”

Gough (2010, 26) reflects a similar concern from the perspective of partnerships involving the probation service, suggesting this lack of evaluation is a barrier to establishing what drives effective partnering:

“...there is currently a dearth of academic research or political interest into the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements in probation work...we know very little about what constitutes the key ingredients from which effective multi-agency arrangements are made.”

Continuing on his theme he suggests multi-agency working with offenders “is often taken for granted as being a universally good thing” (ibid., 27), without either a proper appreciation of the diversity, or an assessment of the progression, of the wide range of partnering manifested across various projects and programmes.

Uncertainties of purpose

In terms of clarity of purpose and outcomes, Baldwin and Kinsey (1982), in their review of policing, power and politics, identify theoretical and ideological contradictions in agency goals as being a key challenge to effective partnering. Holdaway (1986, 144), reviewing police and social work partnering relationships, described the resultant complexity of establishing the goals of working together as meaning that partnership working “introduces a lot of greys”.

Crawford (1994a, 62) identified that police and probation officers bring to partnership contexts very different views about the aetiology of crime and “conflicting premises” and “contested understandings” about the solutions to criminality which are “clearly structured by the organisational roles which each performs”. He argues (ibid., 59) that

“Despite the very different training, occupational socialisation and organisational goals, philosophies and working practices, it is assumed that police and probation officers can find common ground.”

Building upon this theme, Crawford (1998, 185) describes partnerships as a site for the “volatile” and “unresolved” management of expectations. This reflects what Howard (2010, 232) suggested as a process by which agencies are “confronted with differing professional agendas and driving forces” (ibid., 232) when they commence work in partnering contexts.

Crawford (1998, 173) refers critically to the multiple-aim “Smorgasbord” approach to partnering, in which analogy something for every agency is placed on the menu, which serves to produce a “big table” engagement into the partnering but can then prove its “Achilles’ Heel” by introducing a volume and complexity of not necessarily consistent objectives.

Lack of clarity of accountabilities and governance

Partnership models can create “challenges of accountability” (Crawford, 1998, 181), aggregating and disaggregating responsibilities in new and complex ways. One danger is that by pooling responsibilities and sharing goals, the result can be a ‘muddle’ as to who is responsible, or even a ‘passing of the buck’ across agencies (Crawford, 1998). Watson (2010, 123), in a child safeguarding context, warns of the risks of “sharing” of responsibility being accompanied by “shifting” of responsibility. Nash (2010, 199) echoes this point in the context of management of dangerous offenders, talking of the risk of an “assumptive” culture in which many hands making light work can translate into no one agency taking responsibility or being properly accountable.

Alongside this potential confusion in respect of responsibility, partnering settings can also become sites of indecision and inaction, lacking the clear lines of ‘command and control’ of individual agencies. Howard (2010, 239) suggests that at times inter-agency working can be “a mode for inaction”.

Mawby and Worrall (2004, 133) refer to those who work in partnering contexts around offenders where several agency powers are assumed into the partnership as “wielding a wide range of powers” but with major issues to be addressed “surrounding accountability, control and transparency”.

Cultural differences

There is a significant literature that identifies the cultural challenges of partnering arrangements involving the police (Garton, 1980; Crawford and Jones, 1995; Goris and Walters, 1999; Nash, 1999; Burnett and Appleton, 2004; Mawby and Worrall, 2004; Field, 2007; Nash, 2008; Nash and Walker, 2009; Pycroft and Gough, 2010).

Bailey and Williams (2000) use the language of ‘shotgun marriages’ and ‘turf wars’ in their evaluative study of early Youth Offending Teams. Mawby and Worrall (2004, 66), reviewing the coming together of police and probation particularly in the context of the *Street Crime Initiative*, talk of the real challenges of implementing with “previously suspicious” partners. Nash (2010, 111) questions, in the MAPPA context, “whether we can hear all the agency voices?” His findings suggest continuing mistrust in terms of sharing information and that the police valued different perspectives less than other agencies. The study concludes that

collaboration across police, probation and others “is fragile” and that “the philosophy and practice... remain some way apart” (ibid., 120).

The process of partnering brings different professional identities together.. These issues can be manifested in very basic but profound ways, such as disagreements about what terms to use in respect of offenders (Robinson, 1999). Crawford (2009) identifies a key problem as being one of ‘stereotypes’ held by professionals in respect of the workers in other agencies. Nash (2010, 118) asks “...is it possible to work with another agency if you have little or no perception of what they do?”

The police as a potentially challenging partner

There is a clear theme in the literature that the police can be perceived to be a challenging partner culturally to undertake partnership working with (Garton, 1980; Crawford, 1994a and 1994b; Thomas, 1994; Edwards and Skidmore, 2006; Murphy and Lutze, 2009).

Edwards and Skidmore (2006, 22) argue:

“One of the difficulties is an engrained ambivalence about partnership working, with the police reluctant to let other agencies take more of the strain.”

Thomas (1994) painted a challenging picture of attitudes within the relationship between the police and social workers, albeit this is now historical and perhaps much has changed in the ensuing twenty years. He described the relationship as “full of good intent at high levels” (1994, 1), but that there was a history of the professions keeping each other “at arm’s length” and of being “openly hostile” (ibid, 2). This was underpinned by stereotypes: the police saw social workers as having a “namby-pamby pussyfooting approach”, felt they were “the ally of the anti-social hooligan in his battle with authority”, they exhibited “unworldliness”, and were “permissive types” who were “naive” and talked “mumbo-jumbo” (ibid, 2). In turn, social workers viewed the police as being “upper working-class, poorly educated conventional males” (ibid., 3).

In a similar vein, Garton (1980) talks from a probation officer perspective of being:

“confronted, as a probation officer... with the sometimes ferocious resentment of police officers towards the probation service.”

The work of Garton (1980) and of Crawford (1994a and 1994b), both of which engage police officers and probation officers in respect of their perspectives of the other profession, reflect that the police and probation both believe that the other profession is distant to their own in terms of key attitudinal areas in respect of crime and offenders. There are also perceptions that the two professional groups disagreed that they were essentially doing the same job, and also that the police felt probation officers were unrealistic about the real nature of crime. Holdaway (1986), undertaking a theoretical review of police and social work relationships, articulates that a common fear is of the policing agenda of social control and intelligence gathering being “cloaked” (1986: 139) under other stated shared agency aspirations. Murphy and Lutze (2009, 75), reflecting a United States police-corrections partnering context, speak of the danger of police “trumping” probation and call for “balance” rather than a police “dominance”. They reflect that “partnerships must not be used for purposes of expanding one agency.” Coliandris and Rogers (2008, 199), reflecting on police leadership and partnering, observe that there are “histories with other organisations”, and particularly between police and probation, that need to be identified and managed in partnering contexts.

There are some distinctly downbeat assessments in the literature about the police role in partnerships. Sampson et al (1998, 491) suggested that:

“The police are often enthusiastic proponents of the multi-agency approach, but they tend to prefer to set the agendas and to dominate forum meetings, and then to ignore the multi-agency framework when it suits their own needs.”

Similarly, Wood and Bradley (2009, 134) suggest that:

“...efforts to sustain meaningful and innovative partnerships remain profoundly challenging for police organisations.”

Garrett (2004, 92) argues that these traits of the police tend to be downplayed in a desire to foreground the successes of partnering:

“...troubling facets of policing are apt to be ignored or neutralised in a bland discourse of togetherness.”

Power dynamics and conflict within partnerships

Blagg et al. (1988) and Sampson et al. (1988), in articles considering the culture and dynamics of partnership working contexts, challenge what they see as a generally held view that ‘power dynamics’ within partnership across the criminal justice system are unproblematic. Across both articles a model emerges contrasting ‘benevolent’ viewpoints of police partnerships producing synergistic solutions that deliver shared goals with ‘conspiracy’ viewpoints which argue structural oppositions may result in police dominance. The latter ‘conspiracy’ perspective foregrounds issues of power struggles and tensions over ownership and resources as being axiomatic of partnership contexts.

Rumgay (2007), from a probation perspective on partnering, talks of a ‘frenzy’ of partnering activity that has led to tensions and short-term ‘power plays’ amongst agencies. Howard (2010, 232), in considering reflective practice and multi-agency partnership settings, identifies the “power dynamics and “potential for territoriality” that need to be addressed. Local personal and organisational agendas have been identified as inhibitors of positive co-ordination (Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994). As Howard (2010, 240) puts it, partnering is an “emotional business” driven by “power dynamics”.

There is an argument that the juxtaposition of ‘conflict’ and ‘consensus’ in partnering contexts, with the former tending to be problematised as a barrier and the latter celebrated as a desired state, has been oversimplified. Crawford and Jones (1995) set out a contrasting viewpoint that conflict dynamics can be ‘creative’ and ‘productive’, whilst the tendency for conflict avoidance in partnerships can erode the development of healthy working relationships producing a false ‘ideology of unity’. Wood and Bradley (2009, 136) argue for a pro-active approach to surfacing issues, suggesting that “...it is necessary to draw out understandings and perspectives which otherwise remain implicit or hidden” to avoid a position of surface agreement covering over latent conflict in aims and thinking. The “incorporation” that can characterise some apparently consensual partnering contexts, when this “digging deep” with a “constructive” and “inclusive” conflict management approach is not undertaken, can prove “exclusionary” of important agency and professional identities, experience and perspectives (Crawford, 1998, 194). The challenge is to “harness diversity” across the participating agencies and professions, rather than achieve a false consensus via “cloning” (Gough, 2010, 29).

As Crawford (1994a, 67) sums up:

“The important question for inter-agency co-operation is how to negotiate conflict in a socially constructive manner whilst recognising and appropriately compensating for power differentials between agencies.”

Doing the work of other agencies?

A final key debate in terms of partnership effectiveness is around the degree to which the changes in the ‘new’ police work with offenders reflect a redrawing of agency boundaries – in terms of ownership, roles and responsibilities – as much as it reflects a coming together of agencies as partners. In other words, whether the ‘new’ police work reflects a redrawing of the cartography of agency roles and boundaries, and in particular an expansionism of the police at the expense of other agencies and professionals.

Hoyle (2008), in her empirical and theoretical paper on domestic abuse risk management processes, touches on this debate when she identifies the expanding role of the police in domestic abuse work. She argues (2008, 325) that:

“...criminal justice agents have for some time been involved in risk assessment and management – from probation officers preparing pre-sentence reports for the courts, to prison probation and parole officers making decisions about the release of a prisoner. Now, the police in the UK are also heavily involved in such practices.”

The argument here is that the practice – in this case risk assessment in the context of domestic abuse – is not essentially novel, but rather that what is truly new is the police involvement in it.

Scruton (1985) expressed concern in his review of policing policy at this shifting and expansionism of police role, arguing that multi-agency working is one facet of a ‘total policing’, in which the exercise of state control spreads ‘intrusively’ by ‘colonising’ of other agency activity by the police.

Conclusions

The new modes of 'police work' in respect of offenders reflect novel organisational formations between agencies for both the police and the other agencies involved; the concept of partnering is axiomatic to these developments. Given this importance of partnerships to a full understanding of the 'new' police work with offenders, this chapter has explored the literature in respect of partnership working and the police.

The first section of the chapter engages with the arguments in support of partnering. It is clear from this account of the literature that there is considerable breadth of support for the concept of partnership working.

The second section of the chapter has then considered the challenges, identified across the literature, of achieving effective partnership working. These challenges are wide ranging, significant and substantial. Several of them inherently relate to issues of culture and professional identity, and in particular the challenges of bringing different professional cultures, identities and practice together.

There are strong linkages between the issues engaged in chapters 2 and 3. The fluidity and ambiguities in respect of police mission and scope are surfaced most dynamically within partnering contexts, albeit many debates about police futures remain essentially single-agency in scope and character. The debate at the end of chapter 2, in respect of an expanding role for the police, fundamentally connects to the partnering contexts engaged with in this chapter in which that expansion is primarily taking place.

Police culture and professional identities can be viewed to play a major part in shaping debates about police purpose and role, and to be a fundamental shaper of 'police work' in partnership contexts. The next chapter, the final one to set the context in respect of the wider literature, focuses on these cultural and identity themes.

Chapter 4

Cultures and Professional Identities

The 'new' police work with offenders involves police officers undertaking tasks that are novel. The partnering contexts in which much of the work takes place also create new work environments for police officers. These novel tasks and new partnering contexts both contrast with the 'traditional' policing occupational roles and setting that have been seen as the formative ground for the evolution of a distinctive occupational culture and professional identity for police officers. It is therefore interesting to consider what significance the development of the 'new' police work with offenders might have for police cultures and professional identities, and also to reflect upon how police culture and identities may have impacted upon the development of this new arena of 'police work'.

This chapter, the last of three reviewing the literature, focuses in upon these issues of culture and identity. The chapter has five main sections:

- The first considers the literature on 'occupational culture' and the police;
- The second explores whether police culture is problematic, and also identifies more positive readings of culture in policing;
- The third section explores critiques and evolutions of the concept of culture within policing;
- The fourth section considers 'professional identity' as a concept, and how this applies in a policing setting;
- The fifth and final section looks at identity and cultural themes in respect of change.

Police occupational culture

Whilst culture has grown to be a dominant theme in police studies, it is a problematical and loosely defined concept. Ajiferuke and Boddewyn (1970, 154) identified, in their review of cultural thinking in a management studies context, that “there are almost as many meanings of culture as people using the term”. Hofstede (1983) argues that culture is simply too complex to be captured by a commonly accepted language. Similarly, Tayeb (1994) suggests that culture is too fundamental to be solved through a tight definition. A consequence of this definitional ambiguity is that the term ‘culture’ is used in the literature to cover a wide diversity of attributes and elements across policing (Loftus, 2012). Nevertheless, there is wide agreement that culture matters in policing (Paoline, 2003; Loftus, 2008).

The concept of an occupational culture for the police has a long history in police research (Reiner, 2000; Paoline, 2003; Loftus, 2012). Since ethnographic studies of policing began to emerge there has been an abundance of research into occupational culture within policing organisations (Banton, 1964; Skolnick, 1966; Cain, 1973; Manning, 1978; Reiner, 1978; Punch, 1979; Fielding and Fielding, 1991; Reuss-Ianni and Ianni, 1983; Graef, 1990; Clifford and Ericson, 1991; Chan, 1996; Reiner, 2000; Paoline, 2003; Chan, 2007; Skolnick, 2008; Loftus, 2012). These characterisations of police occupational culture have cast a highly influential and enduring shadow across understandings of the police and policing, and deserve for this reason alone serious consideration (Reiner, 1995; Paoline, 2003; Skolnick, 2008; Loftus, 2012).

In trying to capture the essence of the concept of a police ‘occupational culture’, Skolnick (2008, 39) refers to “a discernible culture flowing from the nature of the job.” Police occupational culture has been conceptualised as being adaptive to aspects of the police occupational and organisational environment which are distinctive (Manning, 1978; Reiner, 1995; Paoline, 2003). Amongst these perceived environmental shapers have variously been identified: the dangerousness of the occupation; the requirement to create and maintain authority; the capacity and requirement to use force; the pressure of the job, the reactive nature of the job, and the uniqueness of the job (the latter meaning that those outside of the profession are perceived by those within it to lack an understanding of what it is really like, and those within it develop strong bonds and sense of solidarity with one another).

Shaped by these elements of the occupational environment, an occupational police culture is seen as being socialised strongly into new recruits and reinforced throughout policing careers, and through selecting individuals who have a 'value-predisposition' match with the organisation (Reiner, 1995). Waddington (2004, 14) sums up the perceived strength of such acculturation processes in an empirical study of trainee police officers:

“After a brief exposure to life on the streets, recruits returned to the academy deeply sceptical of the value of their training...the aspirations of the training programme to produce paragons of policing virtue progressively collapsed... By the conclusion... most recruits expressed views indistinguishable from generations of their predecessors and similar to those of officers throughout the Western world.”

The resultant adaptive occupational culture in the police has been described as possessing a range of traits, commonly including: suspiciousness; maintaining the edge; risk avoidance; crime fighter persona; an emphasis on 'real' police work; a code of silence; a sense of 'us and them'; isolation and separation; a strong sense of loyalty; a sense of mission; machismo; racial and societal prejudice; authoritarianism; moral and political conservatism; and pessimism.

It is suggested by occupational culture narratives that these occupationally acculturated traits run deep and are significant. Skolnick (2008:35) argues “being a police officer is a defining identity”. Holdaway (1986, 140) suggested a fundamental and far-reaching impact of these occupational cultural formations in policing:

“This occupational culture, by which I mean the attitudes, beliefs and associated actions about policing that officers regard as 'common-sense', acts as a lens through which policy directives are refracted in one direction or another, according to their resonance with the assumptions [the police] make about the nature of their work.”

An element of this account of police occupational culture is that it is defined by distinction and difference between police officers on the one hand, and other professions and the wider community on the other, in terms of cultural traits. In common with many cultural narratives, there is a clear emphasis on the “relational aspect” (Holdaway and O'Neill, 2006: 485) of cultural definition, with many of the cultural traits being defined in terms of difference from other non-police officer populations. Historically, both Rokeach et al (1971)

in the United States and Cochrane and Butler (1980) in England and Wales both identified a ‘values gap’ between police and wider populations. He et al (2002, 217) identified, in their United States based study, that:

“...there is a substantial difference in value orientations and in ideological perspectives between police officers and citizens.”

He et al (2002, 227) argue these differences reflect:

“...evidence of substantial social distance between the police and the policed in terms of the differences in their core values, and in their distinctively dissimilar political orientations.”

There is an argument that the drive to professionalism within the police might have a consequence that police officers are further “moved into their own encapsulated world” (Thomas, 1994, 20), exaggerating the “us against the rest” cultural trait in policing. Thomas (1994, 20) goes on to argue that:

“...inputs to a person with a professional or semi-professional grouping, and surrounded by an occupational culture that offers an everyday wisdom, will be refracted to accord with that definition of reality.”

There is a clearly drawn determinism across some police occupational culture narratives. Waddington (2004, 15) suggests that “we must recognise policing for what it is.”

It is clear from this account of the literature that occupational culture is an important theme in policing. The changes in occupational activity and occupational environment engendered by the ‘new’ police work with offenders presents interesting questions for the future of such occupational cultural thinking. The next section of the chapter considers another key cultural theme in the literature; that police culture is viewed as problematic. The third section of the chapter then engages further with the concept of police culture, identifying how thinking has evolved and refined from occupational culture narratives.

Is police culture a problem?

The impacts of police occupational culture have been primarily portrayed negatively, being seen as underpinning poor and corrupt behaviours, supporting prejudiced positions and actions, rendering the profession a difficult one to work with, and producing a resistance to change (Reiner, 1995; Paoline, 2003; Loftus, 2012).

Particularly strongly drawn across the literature is the sense that police culture stands in the way of change. Culture has long been identified as a barrier to progress in policing (Goldsmith, 1990; Sparrow et al, 1990; Dean, 1995). Dean (1995, 346) discusses “...the potency of the street level police culture” and argues it has considerable ability “to subvert, deflect, and distort” managerial direction and policy innovation. Davies and Thomas (2003, 683) describe the police as a “mock bureaucracy” with a “pervasive” occupational culture lying behind formal policy facades and in effect shaping the nature of the police. Wood (2004, 31) suggests that “...the police possess occupational sensibilities that tend to undermine new ways of thinking and acting”. This is reflective of the earlier work of Skolnick (1966) who talked about the pervasive power of ‘learned solutions’ embedded in the police’s ‘working culture’ that tended to resist any degree of change, and Manning (1977) who talked about policing practice being restricted ‘by rules of thumb’. Thomas (1994, 24) argues that police culture is reactionary, suggesting there is “a sense of security acquired in working in a particular way”. In the context of these challenges, Scott (2010, 149) talks about the “cultural barriers” to achieving change in policing.

O’Sullivan (2005) identifies how an entrenched police culture is reinforced by wider cultural media images of the police. These media images reflect “a bias towards the hegemonic ‘law and order model’ of policing” (2005, 523), and contribute towards a narrow “cultural imagery and language” about crime, about offenders, and about the police. The prominent cultural models for police officers are heavily “caricatured” (ibid., 523), arguing:

“At present, if popular cultural representations affect the would-be police officers who come into the occupation, and the expectations that they bring with them, then new recruits to the police service are either enamoured by the thrill of ‘pursuit and capture’, or fascinated by the potential of forensic science.”

When change does occur, it is often interpreted by police officers as part of a narrative of decline. New developments are variously experienced and expressed by police officers as ‘the demise of the job’, an ‘erosion’ of true policing, and that they render ‘real’ police officers as a ‘dying breed’ (Loftus, 2008). They are also portrayed as the police having ‘lost their way’, that policing is becoming ‘antiseptic’, with the ‘fun and character taken out of it’ and with a ‘lack of discipline’, turning it ‘too soft’ and ‘weak’, and making it ‘less capable’ and with ‘less control’ (Davies and Thomas, 2003). Change is seen as “breaking down some of the cultural things” which are “valued” (ibid., 690). There is a sense that “core identity” has been “challenged” (ibid., 697). Loftus (2008, 756) identifies that this may be a defence mechanism for the dominant cultural formations:

“...narratives of demise and discontent...operate to subordinate the spaces of representation for emerging identities and sustain an increasingly endangered culture.”

There is an argument that these negative narratives in respect of police culture require more balance across the literature than they have received. More positively, the occupational culture can be seen as having a highly constructive role in new officers learning the ‘craft’ of policing and mastering a complex job (Waddington, 1999). Part of the essence of an adaptive occupational culture is that it can buffer the strains of a pressured and very challenging occupation (Brown, 1988; Chan, 1996; Waddington, 1999). The police culture is ‘can do’, helping to underpin police efficiency and effectiveness but also, if harnessed, drive through processes of reform. If properly understood and engaged positively, the police occupational culture can both support reform and efforts to improve conduct (Skogan and Hartnett, 1997). Culture can also prevent and regulate inappropriate police conduct (Goldsmith, 1990). In this context it “becomes imperative to harness the potency of this culture rather than ignore it or attack it” (Dean, 1995, 346).

Some interpretations of police culture, it can be argued, unduly foreground assumptions of it being fixed and resistant to change, and do not allow space to account for the considerable practice, organisational and cultural changes that have occurred within policing. Chan (2007) undertook a longitudinal study of police recruits to describe how officers make sense of reforms that have considerably altered the field of policing. She argues the importance of the concept of ‘sensemaking’ in understanding the evolutions of police cultures and identities. She describes ‘sensemaking’ as a process that officers engage in to explicate their world, so

that when faced with changes in their environment, which police officers have repeatedly and routinely experienced in recent decades, officers try to make sense of uncertainties and disruptions and enact their interpretations into the world to give it a sense of order.

Whether police culture is interpreted as a problematic barrier to change or as an enabler of it, or both, it is clear that police culture is fundamental to understanding some of the challenges identified earlier in chapters 2 and 3. The analysis of the police as participants in the policing policy environment in chapter 2, and of the challenges of effective partnering in chapter 3, both have a clear resonance with these narratives problematising the impact of police culture.

Critiques and evolutions of the concept of police culture

The primary critiques of police occupational culture narratives are two-fold. Firstly, that they are oversimplified, tending towards broad-brush and monolithic descriptors that do not capture the fluidity, diversity and complexity of the ever-morphing cultural realities of policing. And secondly that they tend towards an exaggerated determinism, in which the occupational environment shapes individual police officers, restricting the role of the agency of police officers to interpret, interact with and influence their occupational contexts in a myriad of individual ways.

In respect of the broad-brush and over-simplifying critique, as Loftus (2008, 757) argues, this critique should not be interpreted as entirely undermining a recognition of “dominant narratives” and “prevailing accent” within police cultures. In her interpretation, whilst there should be an approach to police culture that “...does not seek to homogenize the perspectives and experiences of officers”, the cultural account should also recognise and engage that there are strong cultural consistencies across policing contexts, and that “aspects of the police identity have endured” (ibid., 757). There is a balance to be struck between appreciating what Waddington (1999) suggests may be ‘a near infinity’ of multiple sub-cultures on the one hand, whilst not pursuing a postmodernist line of thought towards police culture to a point where there can only be deconstruction into a hyper-diversity of individual identities and experience, denying any patterns, or broader cultural hegemony.

Bolon and Bolon (1994) aim to strike this balance, proposing that the monolithic and integrative conceptualisations of organisational culture are not inherently wrong, but that they do present a simplified version of cultural dynamics and attributes. They argue that the concept of organisational culture can benefit from a greater granularity, to reflect the underlying group cultures. While a single organisational culture can be identified, as has been the case with police occupational culture, it generally represents only a small proportion of the total cultural environment which is present within the organisation. Therefore, they argue, an ‘idiocultural’ perspective might have the potential of bringing future cultural studies more in line with organisational reality.

Chief amongst such ‘idiocultural’ studies of police culture have been those that focus upon officer race and ethnicity, and those that focus on issues of gender (White, 1972; Broderick, 1977; Walsh, 1977; Muir, 1977; Reiner, 1978; Brown, 1988). Morash and Haarr (2001, 4) see

the identities that women fashion in policing as distinct to those forged by many male officers, challenging:

“...persistent tendencies for the public and for some police officers to equate effective policing with crime-fighting by a person with ‘masculine’ capacities for aggression, violence, danger, risk-taking, and courageousness, or even ‘hypermasculinity’ that glorifies aggression, independence and dominance.”

However, this fashioning of “complex, positive occupational identities” (ibid., 3) is not reducible to over-simplifications of male and female policing cultures, but instead there are many “different ways of doing it” (ibid., 5) in terms of professional identity for both male and female police officers, with each individual officer negotiating their own “identity projects” with varying salience to gender identities, police occupational identities, and other cultural factors.

Another key area has been those studies that have seen a segmentation of cultures between officers of different ranks, or in different roles. Ruess-Ianni and Ianni (1983) categorised different occupational cultures for “street cops” and “management cops”. Manning (1977, 1978) developed similar thinking, his “lower participants” being akin to Ruess-Ianni and Ianni’s street cops, but refining the management culture into separate “middle managers” and “top command”. Paoline (2003, 206) suggests that

“...at each level different concerns, orientations, values, norms, and sentiments dominate each culture”.

In respect of the relative neglect of agency in police occupational culture narratives, Sen (2006, 2) argues that:

“...there is a critically important need to see the role of *choice* in determining the cogency and relevance of particular identities which are inescapably diverse.”

The concept of ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu, 1984) is useful in seeking to transcend the dichotomy of agency and structure. Bourdieu engages ‘habitus’ as a concept to explain where features of social life are difficult to account for simply by understanding the combined actions of individuals, but rather are influenced by history, tradition, customs and principles, much of which is not necessarily explicit but is influential. ‘Habitus’ can evolve by imitation as people

unconsciously incorporate behaviours into their lives, imitating other actors within a field through a process of iterative learning. Thus 'habitus' reflects wider cultural patterns and structures, but also allows for agency through a wide repertoire of possible actions. Heslop (2010) employs the concept of 'habitus' and applies it to police officers. He identifies considerable complexity and tensions, with individual officers seeking to adopt and adapt professional identities in contexts of multiple and competing 'reform' narratives, and with ambiguous programmes of professionalisation juxtaposed with reductions in discretion.

These conceptualisations of culture, which allow a more sophisticated consideration of the complexities of culture across policing, feel particularly relevant to environments such as the 'new' police work with offenders where particular and peculiar occupational environments are likely to engender new and interesting cultural formations.

‘Professional identity’

The above discussions of police occupational culture suggest that police officers develop a distinct and significant professional identity. The literature on policing tends to use the language and concept of ‘culture’ rather more than ‘identity’ in analysing thinking and behaviours within police organisations (Loftus, 2012), but there is an argument that a greater engagement with the wider literature on professional identities can provide insight in respect of the policing context. How police officers develop and adapt their professional identities is important for understandings of the significance of the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

What is meant by ‘professional identity’? As with the concept of ‘culture’, the scope and definitions of ‘identity’ are ambiguous and diverse. Campbell et al (2004) conceptualise identity as an ‘argument’, not as something an individual possesses but rather as something they use to justify, explain, and make sense of themselves. Identity is bound up with justifications and belief, about ‘arguing for yourself’ (Maclure, 2001). Individuals undertake identity work to help develop working consensus (Goffman, 1959), and the process of social creation of membership status is a kind of ‘performance’ (Goffman, 1963).

One argument is that professional identities are bound up in the emotional commitments people make to their work (Maclure, 2001). This is resonant in the policing context, where the broad dominant cultural traits identified in the occupational culture narratives foreground strong identification and commitment to ‘the job’ (Loftus, 2012). It can be argued that organisations such as the police are ‘idiographic’ (Pratt, 2001), meaning that they characterise and symbolise ideas and ideals, beliefs, commitments and traits, providing key parts of the context for the professionals (in this case police officers) to shape and reshape.

Hogg and Terry (2001, 2), in their broader work on identity and organisations, explore the varying degrees to which “people derive part of their identity and sense of self from the organisation”, seeing professional identity as something that both “describes and prescribes” (ibid., 3). Bartel and Dutton (2001, 120) describe within their conceptualisation of occupational identity formation the process of “membership claiming”, within which “stating and owning a particular [professional] identity” is a “strategic act”, and a “claiming of legitimacy”. Abrams and Randsley de Moura (2001, 131) characterise the resultant “organisational commitments” as a form of professional and personal identity “anchorage”. Tyler (2001) explicates this sense of belonging, legitimacy and anchorage by suggesting that

aspects of the organisational or professional group help “define salient dimensions of the self” (ibid., 149), carrying an importance in developing and sustaining self worth, pride and respect.

Ashforth and Johnson (2001) develop the concept of ‘nested identities’, or ‘embedded identities’. In their theory, in the police context ‘high order’ identities would be those broad organisational and occupational-spanning elements of identity which by and large are inclusive of police officers and policing as a whole. The ‘lower order’ identities nested within these higher order ones would be those that are more situationally relevant, reflective for example of particular team contexts, or specific roles, or particular personal attributes such as gender, rank or experience.

The identity picture complicates further when the different and fluid identities that the police service adopts at an organisational identity level are considered (Oakes, 1987; Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth and Johnson, 2001). This is of particular interest in the context of new formations of police work, and of police working environments in terms of partnering contexts. Ashforth and Johnson (2001, 46) suggest that “repeated instantiation of multiple identities may lead to dense connections between the identities”. Scenarios develop where “multiple identities are conjoined” (Thoits and Virshup, 1997, 128). In this context multiple identity environments can lead ultimately to the creation of new identity forms, where “their meaning and behavioural consequences may reside in the amalgamation itself” (ibid, 128). A process of ‘identity synergy’ takes place (Pratt and Foreman, 2000).

Trust, status and professional identity

Chapter 2 identified key elements of cultural and power dynamics within partnering contexts; central to these considerations are issues of trust, status and professional identities. Kramer (2001) identifies the strong linkage between ‘identity’ and ‘trust’. Within certain organisational settings, and the dominant police occupational culture narratives are strongly suggestive of policing as being such a setting, he argues that there is a status of ‘presumptive trusting’, based upon “standing”, on a strong sense of “affiliation”, and through a reliance on “shared certainties” (ibid., 173).

In this context, either within the police, or between the police and other organisations, “the liability of merely being different” (ibid., 175) can be very powerful, and ‘social uncertainties’ within and across organisational boundaries can prove highly “aversive” to trust and relationship development (ibid. 172).

One way in which professional identities can help to “define salient dimensions of the self” (Tyler, 2001, 149) is through relying upon a sense of the “positive distinctiveness” of membership of what are perceived as higher status professional groups, thus (by implication) developing differentiation from professional groups perceived as of lower status.

Sen (2006, 1-2), thinking more broadly about the implications of identity rather than specifically professional identities, strikes at the paradox of identity as both ‘benefit’ and ‘curse’:

“...a sense of identity can be a source not merely of pride and joy, but also of strength and confidence. It is not surprising that the idea of identity receives such widespread admiration... And yet identity can also kill. A strong – and exclusive – sense of belonging to one group can in many cases carry with it the perception of distance and divergence from other groups. Within-group solidarity can help feed between group conflict.”

Hogg and Terry (2001, 3) reflect this in the context of professional identities and groupings, suggesting professional identities bring significant benefits including a strengthening of feelings of “emotional significance”, that such identities are typically “consensual” and often form a “glue” that creates a collective spirit in the workplace. But they also recognise the downsides, suggesting that professional identity formation can lead to “.ingroup-favouring evaluative distinctiveness...” (ibid., 3) Such group dynamics play a strategic purpose, with an importance in “underpinning professional self-esteem” and in “uncertainty reduction” (ibid., 6).

One conceptualisation of the mechanism by which these group dynamics emerge is through ‘prototyping’, in which ideal typologies of the in-group are formed and emulated (in the case of the police the ‘ideal cop’). Hogg (2001, 202) describes a “prototypicality gradient”, in which it is argued that:

“...prototypicality is the basis of perception and evaluation of self and of other members, and thus people notice and respond to subtle differences in how prototypical fellow members are.”

Typically, a greater distance from prototypicality will result in a lower perception of professional status, which will reflect in terms of trust and engagement.

Another concept (Hogg, 2001) is that of ‘meta-contrasting’, creating principles and grand narratives that maximise between-group difference, often requiring a salient comparison group to achieve resonance (social workers and probation officers seem to commonly occupy this space for police officers).

The concept of ‘dis-identification’ (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) allies to those of prototyping and meta-contrast, in that it involves identities being forged through the identification of what the individual does *not* find salient and identify.

These aspects of distinction and segmentation in respect of professional identities can risk being exaggerated. Identity, and within that professional identity, need not be seen as being all about segmentation within and between groups and categories, but is as importantly about synthesis across multiple groups and identities. Sen (2006, 16-17) argues:

“...the main hope of harmony... lies in the plurality of our identities, which cut across each other and work against sharp divisions.”

Crawford, (1994a, 58) poses the question “...police and probation officers deal with the same people. Why do their attitudes differ so much?” In essence, the answers are seen by him to lie in issues of culture, professional socialisation, and identity (Crawford, 1994b, 325):

“...the police and probation services are marked by very different training, occupational socialisation, cultures, philosophies and working practices. They represent, at least symbolically, important polar interests within the system of crime control and the criminal justice process. They are traditionally associated with competing perspectives, understandings and definitions... both organisations are structured by different gender relations. This creates considerable scope for inter-organisational conflict, both imaginary and real, and highlights the tensions, problems and possibilities associated with inter-agency working.”

There has been limited comparative research across issues of culture and identity between different criminal justice and community safety professions (Ortet-Fabregas and Perez, 1992). Crawford (1994b, 324) defines this as a key gap to be addressed, given that:

“...criminal justice practitioners are increasingly being urged to form ‘partnerships’ linking organisations with very different goals, cultures and traditions”

and yet:

“...little is known of the comparative attitudes, views and conceptions of collaborative crime prevention work.” (Crawford, 1994a, 59)

A comparative research project was undertaken by Crawford (1994a and 1994b), engaging police and probation officers. He found that the two groups “start out from very different premises” and brought “contested understandings” that were clearly structured by the organisational roles which each performed (1994b, 328). Crawford found that probation officers gave much more emphasis to liaising with others (*ibid.*, 330), whilst police officers had very strongly drawn attitudes in respect of “the job” of being a police officer (*ibid.*, 328).

It is clear that these considerations of ‘trust’, ‘identity’ and ‘belonging’ are critical for understandings of the dynamics of partnering contexts. The final section of this chapter engages with the cultural and identity challenges directly relating to change, and in particular to changed working environments as characterised by the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

The cultural and identity aspects of partnering and change

Considerations of police professional cultures and identities complicate further at times of new organisational partnering and of organisational changes in role and mission. Hogg (2001) explores the challenges of change to professional identities and within that particularly issues of trust and affiliation, arguing that the resultant social uncertainty and identity instability can be 'dysphoric'. At such times, "the prototype will also be in flux" (Hogg, 2001, 202). Research identifies that at times of corporate mergers and acquisitions there is a "great psychological impact" (Van Knippenburg and Van Leeuwen, 2001, 249), with talk of "invading enemies" (2001, 251), and the loss, or at least an unsettling of, "entitativity", the state of having an entity to which one can ally and affiliate with (ibid, 252). At times of organisations coming together, there can be a "dominant" and "dominated" group, who experience the process very differently (ibid., 257).

Issues of culture can get in the way of engaging with new realities and there are real challenges for professions in compromising between retaining consistency and adapting to changing contexts. Souhami (2007) in her study of a Youth Offending Team identifies that engaging at a cultural level is integral to making the partnership work. Culture is often seen as a "barrier" to multi-agency working (Pamment, 2010, 224).

An early study based upon empirical research of a Youth Offending Team in Oxfordshire, (Burnett and Appleton, 2004), identifies that it is important culturally to understand "how the ingredients of reform are being experienced in practice" (ibid., 36). The study identified cultural challenges in respect of differing normative behaviours in the workplace that different professions brought into the new multi-agency arena. The role of police, seen by many of their participants as a dominant professional identity, despite not being numerically the largest represented profession, was identified as a challenging element of the development of the new team.

Souhami (2007), in her cultural study of a Youth Offending Team, identifies how concern over the influence of other professional cultures and the potential erosion of professional identities can negatively impact and obstruct the desired changes within the partnering context.

Murphy and Lutze (2009, 73), reflecting on their study of a United States police-corrections partnership, identified the police as being a particular challenge in terms of cultural flexibility and engagement:

“Law enforcement officers... appeared to be much less fluid in their professional orientation [than probation colleagues]. For instance, no police officer ever expressed a desire to conduct their work more like probation officers... the pressures related to their professional identity appeared to be skewed more toward traditional policing practice.”

Dealing positively with difference across professional identities appears fundamental to the management of cultural and professional identity, which in turn is required to achieve greater success across the new partnering and practice formations. Howard (2010, 232) suggests that if differences are recognised, appreciated and engaged, whilst acknowledging the threat to professional identity and purpose it is still possible that a positive engagement with difference can be a platform for change:

“...inter-agency cooperation is not a straightforward process and requires effort at levels where values, ideologies and organisational philosophies diverge... To some extent, each agency relies on its comparison with other agencies for its sense of identity, purpose and importance... It is the contrast that sets it apart from the others... It is these differences that provide a platform from which to build relationships.”

New cultural and identity formations?

There are signals across the 'new' police work with offenders that some cultural and identity adaptation is taking place. Parent and Snyder (1999) in the United States context identify police-corrections partnering as providing sites of 'adaptation' and 'creativity', alongside their concerns over cultural challenges.

New partnering environments do seem to have the potential to provoke significant challenge to legacy professional identities and cultures. Garrett (2004) talks of 'professional fragmentation', the 'de-differentiation' of expert positions and the 'the blurring of roles' and 'fluid boundaries' between professional groups. Loader (2000) identifies the environment around policing as increasingly 'plural', Shearing and Wood (2007) as 'nodal', and Bayley and Shearing (2001) as 'multi-lateral'.

Pycroft and Gough (2010, 12) see the new partnering contexts of the 'new' police work with offenders as being examples of "organic" organisational development, as being "complex adaptive systems", perceiving the new partnerships as providing "eco-systems" for organisational evolution. Their viewpoint does not just see the partnering context as a site for the collision and resolution of traditional or static professions, but also as a Petri-dish for the creation of new professional and organisational formations and identities. In essence, the new partnering contexts can be argued as creating near ideal conditions for the incubation of new forms of professional roles and identities: providing a new and very different working environment; placing novel demands on professionals, often with limited direction and control regarding the solutions from host agencies; providing very high levels of direct exposure to different thinking and other agencies and professions; often emphasising the newness and innovation of approaches and championing creative and novel practice; placing greater emphasis on lateral networks; providing exposure to external perspectives of their profession from other professionals; and involving a loosening of traditional organisational hierarchies and constraints.

This potential forging of new identities and professional formations can be viewed as bringing an exciting potential for change and progress. It can also be looked upon negatively. Rumgay (2000, 138) uses a language of "loss" to describe threats to professional identity. Heath (2010) refers to the risks of 'blurring' of roles with resultant threat to both professional integrity and identity.

More broadly than policing, there is a wider literature across what has been described as the new ‘networked’ organisational terrain as it potentially forms into (to varying and disputed degrees) a ‘post-organisational’ environment. This can be seen to present a fresh and uncertain context for cultural and identity development, which has resonance with the current changes across the ‘new’ police work with offenders. As Cooper and Dartington (2004, 127) suggest:

“It seems that where there was once a border, now there is a network. In its luminous aspect, it is a symbol generating and containing fabric that modulates, diversifies and expands. In its ominous aspect, it spells dislocation, disintegration and degradation.”

Flores and Gray (2000) describe the traditional organisation-based career as an institution in an unavoidable decline. The “process of disintegration” of traditional organisational models (Castells, 2000, 167), leads to a “new organisational order” (Cooper and Dartington, 2004, 128), with the experience of “a dissolution of boundary, autonomy and control” (ibid., 129) and consequent dismantling of wider professional ideologies, values and practices:

“The demarcation of values and practices associated with these [organisational] domains has weakened... and the great ideological oppositions that underpinned them have also been significantly dissolved.”

This interpretation clearly has fundamental, indeed existential, implications for traditional professional identities forged in the context of single-agency, single-professional contexts. Horowitz (2004) talks about the ‘loss of a compelling space’ to develop as a professional with the dissolution of traditional organisational forms, reflecting Cooper and Dartington (2004, 142) who describe traditional organisations as “historical containers of values and professional identity” and asks, with their loss, where and how future professional identities will be forged and nurtured?

One potential consequence of such an ephemeral ‘networked’ terrain in which the old organisational domains are weakened, is that new professional formations may emerge. In the context initially of the *Street Crime Initiative*, Nash (1999) discussed the prospect of the emergence of a ‘polibation officer’, in essence a cultural fusion of probation and police officer into a new professional identity. Mawby and Worrall (2004), basing their response to Nash

on empirical findings they had undertaken with the prolific offender scheme in Stock-on-Trent, argued that this was an exaggeration, albeit acknowledging that it was clear “the character” of agencies were “growing together” (2004, 67). Nash (2004), in response argued that there was clear evidence of what he termed the “polification of probation” (2004, 68), and that “a new breed of officer is emerging in both services” (ibid., 68) reflecting traits derived from the partnering contexts. In reply, Mawby et al (2007) accepted a “convergence” (2007, 122) and argued for a broader fusion to create the ‘prisi-polibation’ officer, questioning whether a new type of criminal justice practitioner is emerging, at the intersections of prison, probation and policing work. They talk of a “subtle but noticeable” merging of practice (2007, 124). They conclude that ‘polibation’ may be a good thing for delivery, but risks losing valued traditional professional roots and roles. Concluding the series of articles on ‘polibation’, Nash (2008, 302) sums up that “roles have been established which take individual practitioners some way from their roots in terms of professional practice and culture.” Interestingly, he concludes that the experience has had different impacts for probation and police. For the police, they are undertaking different roles but have maintained much of their values and approach, whereas probation are largely speaking doing the same work, but have adjusted significantly in approach and values.

Sitting alongside this potential phenomenon of the fusion of existing professions rests the potential for new cultural and identity forms to emerge. An example of this is provided by Cherney (2004, 116), who identifies the emergence of community safety officers as a process in which “a distinct occupational group has emerged”, that has in turn “created a new institutional complex and body of expertise” through a “process of institution building”.

Conclusions

Whilst there remains ambiguity and fluidity in respect of the defining of police culture as a concept, there is widespread agreement that culture matters in policing. Professional identity feels powerfully drawn within policing settings.

This chapter has explored the occupational culture conceptualisation of the police, developments in cultural thinking in respect of the police, and aspects of professional identity formation. The chapter has also considered the tendency in the literature to problematise police culture and identity.

The literature explored in this chapter prompts an important debate in respect of whether developments like the 'new' police work with offenders bring a potential to unsettle and reform the cultural norms and occupational assumptions and identities of the police. There has been insufficient engagement in the literature covering police culture and police identity in respect either of new modes of police work, or of the implications of partnering. There remains a dominant 'occupational' narrative in respect of police culture that has not yet fully engaged with the rapidly changing nature of aspects of that occupational context. If police cultural formations emerge as an adaptive response to the occupational environment, then the different tasks, different work settings and different objectives that the police are exposed to in settings such as those produced by the 'new' police work with offenders must potentially impact.

There is much more engagement of 'occupational culture' as a concept in policing than there has been with 'professional identity'. This risks missing something very important in respect of the strong 'identity' associated with police work. It is of particular interest how this strong and distinct professional identity of being part of 'the police' and of being 'a police officer' interacts (collides?) with the very different environments, roles and expectations of new contexts such as those across the 'new' police work with offenders.

This chapter and the previous two which review the literature draw together around some key themes. The purpose and scope of the police is ambiguous and fluid, and new modes of working and partnering (both in part driven by underlying drivers of prevention, community and risk) bring the potential to disrupt and transform police practice, culture and identity. The terrain of the 'new' police work with offenders, arguably 'on the edge' of mainstream

police practice and debate, and novel in activity, in strategic responsibilities, in occupational contexts, and in relationship formations with other agencies, provides an exciting territory in which to explore aspects of police purpose, scope, partnering, culture and identity.

The next chapter sets out the aims of the research undertaken in this thesis, and the method adopted. Chapter 6-10 then present the findings of the research, drawing in elements of the literature explored within this and the previous two chapters, with chapter 11 concluding the thesis.

Chapter 5

Method

This chapter sets out the methodological approach taken by the thesis. The preceding four chapters have set the scene introducing the ‘new’ police work with offender developments and identifying some key themes of debate surrounding these developments, in respect of culture and identity (chapter 4), partnership working (chapter 3), and the mission and scope of the police (chapter 2).

The research aims to explore the senior leadership and policy ‘discourse’ and ‘strategic culture’ in respect of these important new developments for policing; how senior officers and other senior stakeholders perceive these developments, engage with them, shape thinking and develop understandings and meanings.

The chapter is structured into five sections:

- The chapter begins by discussing the research design, summarising the objectives of the research, the approach taken and the core research questions engaged by the research;
- The research method is then presented;
- The chapter then explores theoretical considerations in respect of the research design and methodology;
- An exploration of my positionality as a researcher then follows, including reflections on the impact of this for the research;
- The chapter concludes by discussing ethical issues that have been engaged with whilst undertaking the research.

Research Design

The objective of the research is to develop fresh insight through exploring the policy discourse and strategic-level leadership discourse relating to police engagement across new forms of partnership working with offenders which involve the police, collectively conceptualised as the potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders.

Shaped by this, the research presented in this thesis aims to look across this emergent territory of the ‘new’ police work with offenders with a novel focus that:

- Is holistic in scope and thinking across the changes as a whole rather than focusing upon particular aspects in isolation, which has predominantly been the approach across the policy and research literature;
- Foregrounds strategic issues and thinking, rather than operational level issues of execution and delivery ‘on the ground’ at the ‘front line’.

The research aims to develop new insights in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders through adopting a research approach which:

- Looks across the emergent policy discourse of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, to identify key themes and to consider the significance of these themes at a strategic level for the police;
- Explores the impacts of this new policy discourse and the new practice it has engendered upon strategic thinking, and upon professional identity and culture, at a senior and strategic level, through directly engaging senior ranked police officers as participants in the research;
- Considers how the new roles performed by the police and the different relationships they bring for the police working in partnership with other agencies are perceived, experienced and understood at a senior level, by directly engaging senior ranked officers and senior strategic stakeholders from other involved organisations.

The thesis is not intended to be evaluative of the effectiveness of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, nor is there a focus on the tactical and operational refinement of police work with offenders. The thesis does not explore any of the specific strands of police work with offenders in detail, but instead considers the overarching strategic considerations across these developments, and in particular the impact on the police and upon police professional identity, thinking and culture at a strategic and senior level.

The thesis is focused upon developing insight, at a policy and strategic level, in respect of the policy discourse relating to the new developments and how this discourse has been engaged, experienced and understood at a senior and strategic level.

Research questions

Reflecting the focus of the research at a policy and strategic level, the core research questions that the research has been designed to address are:

- Why are the police engaging in different approaches to working with offenders?
- What are the strategic and policy level understandings and implications of this involvement by the police?
- What contributions do the police bring to the new forms of partnership working with offenders, and how are these contributions experienced and perceived?
- Why are new forms of partnering emerging, and how are these new partnership models experienced and understood?
- What are the implications for organisational cultures and professional identities within the police, and what impact have those professional cultures and identities had on the shaping of these developments at a strategic and policy level?

Research Method

The research consisted of two core components designed to achieve the research objective and to address the research questions:

- An analysis of a small purposive sample of key national policy documents across the ‘new’ police work with offenders developments;
- A case study, based upon a single small shire police force area, which engaged both senior police officers and local senior stakeholders from other related partner organisations in semi-structured interviews.

The study focuses on policy narratives and strategic-level leadership thinking and culture, and upon how senior leaders in the police and senior stakeholders have engaged with and been affected by these changes. In view of this a qualitative approach has been adopted that seeks to identify and understand emerging strands of policy and leadership discourse in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. In addition, the case study model, based upon a semi-structured interviewing approach, aims to “...shift the research focus from the grand schemas of planned change, senior management visions...to the micro-discursive nature of everyday lived experiences” (Davies and Thomas, 2008, 628).

The research consisted of:

- fifteen national policy documents selected and analysed;
- twenty-one semi-structured interviews conducted between September 2011 and September 2012, fourteen of which were engagements with senior ranked officers from the same small shire police force, and seven interviews with senior stakeholders from other organisations or partnerships directly involved in the ‘new’ police work with offenders in the same geographical area.

Grounded theory approach

The research method aims to look systematically at the data generated within the study and inductively generate theory from the data, reflecting a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser 1992; Charmaz, 1995; Rennie et al., 1998; Rennie, 2006b). The objective of the research method was to develop new theory grounded in and emergent from the data; theory that seeks to explain, that fits the facts, is understandable, applicable, and practicable to real-life issues (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The research approach is about conceptualising, about a process of conceptual abstraction, and not just about describing.

As described in the ensuing sections that discuss the research method in more detail, the research involved the core practical elements of a grounded theory approach, including a systematic engagement with the data through a coding and memoing approach (substantive and theoretical coding), and being undertaken based upon the principles of theoretical sampling, sensitivity and saturation.

The analysis of national policy documents

The purpose of the policy document analysis was to consider the official policy discourse at a national level and to identify and consider key themes and issues arising from that. It was recognised that to a degree this national policy discourse would frame and influence the thinking of the local case study participants, and therefore this analysis was undertaken first so that linkages between the national discourse and local participant responses could be understood.

Selecting documents for consideration

A sizeable volume of official documents have been developed at national level relevant to the emerging changes in practice of police work with offenders. The study used a ‘purposive’ sampling approach to identifying the documents, seeking to identify documents that were most relevant to the research questions and which were assessed as being likely to provide the most insight (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Marshall, 1996; Cohen et al., 2007).

A ‘long list’ of potentially relevant documents was produced, numbering 210 documents. This list was then honed down to a short-list using the following two criteria:

- A direct and specific relevance to the emerging practice of police work with offenders (in contrast, for example, to being of broader policy interest for the development of policing, or of offender work, more generally);
- A sense of policy influence and impact, based upon (i) professional experience of the researcher (who has worked in the field for more than decade), (ii) the engagement of several other local professionals in the field who were asked to contribute their judgements, and (iii) the degree of citation of, and emphasis given to, documents during literature review.

The documents on the 'short-list' (thirty five) were then read in detail, and a further selection undertaken resulting in the final identification of fifteen documents to be used in the study.

Four of the documents were clearly pre-eminent in the scale of their influence, being very widely cited, identified consistently by professionals as significant, and majored upon in the literature and by Government. These documents were included.

The remaining documents for the study were selected to achieve a manageable quantity of material for the purposes of the study and balancing the following three criteria:

- To achieve a breadth and a balance across the various aspects of the developments across police work with offenders (so the documents achieved a reasonably balanced coverage across youth offending, prolific offender schemes, drugs, and risk and dangerousness);
- To engage with a variety of types of policy-relevant documents (for example policy reviews, audit reports, strategic plans, guidance, inspectorate reports);
- As initiatives had emerged over a period of time, to seek to reflect that period of time in the documents selected.

The fifteen documents selected for the study are listed in Appendix A.

Analysing the policy documents

Once the process had been narrowed down to the fifteen documents, the analysis process had four stages:

- Further re-readings of the policy texts on several occasions, to develop a strong familiarity with the material;
- Categorising of passages from the documents and classifying into subjects and themes;
- Theoretical development based upon the classifying and theme generation, including the generation of theoretical ‘memos’ and longer ‘thought pieces’;
- Further development into a wider paper across the analysis, which ultimately evolved into chapter 6 of the thesis.

In any analysis, one is confronted with a “polyphony of accounts” (Schostak, 2006, 74) and there is no single way of reading the text. The analytical process recognised the inherent difference between these ‘eminent texts’, accomplished works intended for widespread communication and to influence, and the texts generated ‘live’ within the research process through the interview conversations. It was recognised that such public, policy-shaping documents inherently embody a sense of ‘public performance’ – “a large amount of identity work, as performance, involves documents” (Prior, 2003, 103). A key consideration in the analysis was what these documents were aiming to ‘project’ and ‘foreground’.

The analysis was built upon a ‘constant comparative’ methodology, involving the conceptualisation of relations among units of text to produce categories and then clusters of categories (Rennie, 2006b). This reflected a grounded theory approach to the data (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990); but as evolved by Rennie et al. (1988) developing the ‘constant comparative’ concept further to enable the text to be broken into passages called ‘meaning units’ (Giorgi, 1970) which ‘hang together’ in terms of themes, rather than the original grounded theory method of line-by-line analysis. This method maintained a rigorous procedure in respect of the data and kept analysis close to the text, using lower and higher order categorisations from passages in the data from which to build findings.

The process of categorising and clustering passages from the data was intuitive and iterative, so I did not apply any preconceived codes nor did I bring any preconceived thematic areas to the data. In this sense I sought to keep the literature ‘in abeyance’ (Morse, 1994b). The categorisation of passages from the text was undertaken utilising *N-Vivo 9* to facilitate the management of the data.

In approaching the work of categorising the data, and of idea generation from the marshalled material, I found the detailed and rigorous method adopted to be a helpful technique for ‘sorting’, ‘uncovering’ and ‘aggregating’ the data (Morse, 1994b; Rennie, 2006a). Such rigour of categorisation and analysis was “a way of seeing” (Boyatzis, 1998, 1), and to help translate in a valid and robust way from “seeing” to “seeing as...” (ibid., 1). The document analysis was not founded on a theory to be tested, but rather on the area of study; data analysis and emergent explanation and understanding cross-pollinated, eventually contributing to the emerging of broader theory (Rennie, 2006b). To this process I have sought to bring a ‘theoretical sensitivity’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), helping to appreciate what may be important, and seeking to get the “focal length” right (Boyatzis, 1998, 9) in terms of the data.

The local case study

The police area used for the study was a 'shire' English police force. In terms of police forces in England and Wales, it is smaller than average with an officer establishment, at the time the fieldwork was completed, of approximately 1,250 officers and employing in total upwards of 2,000 officers and staff. The county had a population of approximately 700,000 at the time the fieldwork was carried out. The 'new' police work with offender partnerships in the county are broadly reflective of the wider pattern of these developments across England and Wales as a whole.

The case study methodology sought to build understanding through developing a sense of collective experience through different viewpoints (Forsey, 2010). The research benefited from a case study approach to data gathering, collection and analysis; the case study approach allowed the research to access and engage participants who had in-depth knowledge and experience directly linked to the research objectives and research questions (Yin, 2003; Tracy, 2013).

The case study approach involved twenty one semi-structured interviews, fourteen with senior police officers and seven with senior strategic stakeholders. The semi-structured interviewing approach enabled active participation, allowing participants to shape the agenda and 'span' of the interview, to introduce and develop ideas and issues, and most critically to develop and consider meanings (Scott and Morrison, 2007; Husband and Alam, 2011). The interviewing model reflected a participatory model of researching in which context and meaning is important and in which the case study was primarily focused on gaining understanding and insight (Tracy, 2013). The interviews provided the opportunity for the research to generate rich data, reflected the importance of the language used by participants in respect of gaining insight into values and perceptions, and reflected the significance of contextual and relational aspects to engaging with the five key research questions. For the purpose of the research it was important to hear the interviewee's 'voice' and to engage directly with their constructions of reality.

Selecting and recruiting senior police officers for interview

The aim of engaging senior and strategic police leaders was to provide a focus on strategic thinking, professional identities at a senior level, and strategic cultures, as that delivered against the research objective and resonated with the strategic approach and research questions. This decision to focus on more senior and strategic officers was also taken in the context of gaps in the literature: that there is a more developed literature on the views and

experiences of front-line, lower ranked, officers in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders, and that more generally there is a thinness to the research literature in terms of studies of senior police officers.

Seniority was defined for the purposes of the recruitment of participants as police officers who had achieved the rank of Superintendent or above. A total of fourteen officers were invited to participate in the research and all consented to do so: four participants were of Chief Officer rank, five of Chief Superintendent rank and five of Superintendent rank.

There was a degree of complexity involved in developing a working definition of 'senior' and 'strategic' roles as being of Superintendent rank and above. There is no single, simply defined point in police officer rank structure at which roles become 'strategic' or 'senior' as distinct from 'tactical' or 'operational'. Indeed terms such as 'senior' and 'strategic' defy straightforward and consistent definition. A judgement was made, following a review of the roles undertaken by Chief Superintendents, Superintendents and Chief Inspectors in the force from which participants were drawn, that the roles performed by the Superintendent and Chief Superintendents were considerably closer in nature than was the case with the respective roles of Superintendents and Chief Inspectors, and that the latter predominantly had more narrowly defined scope and remit and on the whole considerably less input and engagement into organisation-wide, strategic decisions.

Being a relatively small force, the fourteen participants represented the majority of available officers at Superintendent level or above in the force (fourteen out of a potentially available twenty-one over the period of active fieldwork of the study). All officers of Chief Superintendent level and above were recruited and engaged in the study. All nine of these participants were white, and all bar one were male. There was only one female and one visible ethnic minority Superintendent available and the decision was taken to engage both, leaving a remaining three white male Superintendents randomly selected from an available pool of ten. The diversity of all of the senior officers available to be engaged in the force was limited. In total, there was one senior officer from a visible ethnic minority and two females available for interview, all three of which were interviewed. The other eleven participants were white men.

Selecting and recruiting senior local stakeholders

In addition to a cohort of senior police officers, the study also engaged a number of senior leaders of other agencies and partnering structures that work closely with the police in respect of work with offenders.

The purpose of this engagement was to access senior strategic leads who worked closely with the police but who were not senior officers. This provided a broader perspective into the study, allowing opportunity to understand their perspectives alongside those of the senior police officers they worked with. The decision to broaden the study beyond solely engaging senior police officers reflects the context that the strategic development of policing in general increasingly takes place in a partnering environment, that the delivery of policing practice does likewise and that inherently the developments that form the focus and scope of this study, in terms of the 'new' police work with offenders, have emerged and developed framed strongly within a partnering concept and context.

Seven senior stakeholders were engaged: two directors of the local Probation Service; a senior manager from the local Youth Offending Team; an executive with the Police Authority; a local authority lead for community safety; a local authority strategic partnership director; and a partnership lead for the Local Criminal Justice Board.

As was the case with defining concepts of 'seniority' and 'strategic' level roles in respect of police officers, similar issues of complexity and subjectivity occur when seeking to define concepts such as 'seniority', 'strategic', and 'stakeholders'. The approach taken was to seek to engage a breadth of perspectives, and that each participant would occupy a role that was both broadly similar in seniority in their organisations to the interviewed senior officer cohort, and also of strategic significance to the local development of offender work. In reality, a subjective judgement was applied in terms of equivalence of 'seniority' and 'strategic significance'. There is no entirely objective methodology for establishing seniority equivalence, as the organisations concerned are of such very different sizes and are structured and function in very different ways compared to policing. The existence of a formal rank structure was also distinct to the police in respect of the organisations engaged in the study. Participants were identified who had a clear seniority of leadership shaping the agenda of their own organisations or partnerships at a corporate level, in most cases as *the* senior lead in their particular contexts.

All seven of the participants approached agreed to engage. There was greater diversity in terms of gender (four females and three males), but no visible ethnic minority participants, which again reflected the broader potential population of participants within the case study area at the time of the research.

Semi-structured interviewing approach

Twenty-one interviews were undertaken, fourteen with senior police officers and seven with senior stakeholders. The interviews were semi-structured, focused on allowing the participants space to express their thinking within a relatively loosely constructed interviewing schedule (Kvale, 1996; Warren, 2002; Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The interviewing was undertaken seeing the interviewer akin to Kvale's traveller metaphor – that rather than mining information, the experience is one of a traveller on a journey who has a tale to tell upon returning home (Kvale, 1996, 1). As Kvale expresses (ibid., 1)

“The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, to uncover their lived world.”

The open structure of the interviews reflected a ‘deliberate naivety’ with an openness to the new and unexpected, rather than my going equipped with ready-made themes and categories, and the interviewing aimed to open up personal perceptions and descriptions of the world as the participant saw it (ibid., 30-31). The aim was to give space for participants to develop and articulate their thoughts and perceptions:

“Don’t be misled. The interview is not a simple tool with which to mine information... It is as much about seeing a world – mine, your, ours, theirs – as about hearing accounts, opinions, arguments, reasons, declarations: words with views into different worlds.” (Schostak, 2006, 1)

Interviewing style and content

The interviewing style naturally evolved to some degree through the researching process as technique sharpened and improved, but in essence the focus was on the participant talking as much as possible and the interviewer as little as possible; with my providing a gentle steering across areas for inclusion rather than an interrogative approach with a structured sequencing of questioning. Questions were open and encouraged expansive answers; it felt critical to

enable the participants to talk freely and to have the space to fully engage (Warren, 2002; Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Follow up interventions from myself as interviewer sought to facilitate further developing or exploring of the theme of the participant, rather than to bring the process back to a set script.

Interview content

The interviews were designed to have considerable flexibility of shape, being quite non-directive across broad themes. The process was tested prior to the first interviews by ‘testing out’ potential lines of questioning on non-participants.

The approach to the interviews was a learning, iterative experience: I kept journaling notes, and refined the way questions were phrased and the rhythm and shape of the interviews evolved as I went along.

The broad subject areas covered across the interviews were as follows (with relatively light adaptation for the seven stakeholder interviews):

- What do you think the job of the police should be in respect of offenders?
- Do you think the police approach and thinking around offenders has changed, or is currently changing?
- Why do you think the changes have occurred? Are they positive or negative? More widely, what factors do you think shape policing policy? Who do you think shapes policing policy? How do you see things developing in the future? How would you like to see things develop?
- Do you think differently about how the police approach offenders than you used to? Do you think thinking is changing more widely within policing? Do you think differently to other people in policing?
- Views on the ‘new’ police work with offender partners and partnerships. What are the strengths and weaknesses, benefits and drawbacks of the new modes of working? What are the goals of the partnerships? Are they shared across partners? What are your views on the probation service (and for those outside of

policing, also the police service)? Are seconded police officers effective? Are they doing the right things?

- Views on the roles played by the police. What do the police contribute? How would you like to see police roles develop? How effective are the police in what they do? Do you approve – are these the right things for the police to be doing?
- Who leads and should lead within the partnerships and more broadly in respect of work with offenders?

In the reality of the ‘live’ interviewing situations, often the conversation covered several aspects at once. The interviews typically lasted between fifty minutes and an hour and a quarter, although on a small number of occasions they were longer or shorter than that range.

Recording and transcription

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. In addition to utilising the transcription in analysis, I also listened to the recordings of each interview on several occasions, to develop a familiarity with the content, and made brief notes of key reflections immediately after conducting each interview and after listening back through the recordings.

Transcriptions allowed detailed reflection on the content of interviews, and then for a rigour to be applied to the coding and analysis of the contents of the interviews, but there needs to remain a methodological cautioning that transcripts are always only a partial and imperfect account of the interview experience as a whole, as outlined by Kvale (1996) and Schostak (2006):

“The transcribed interview text renders an incomplete account of the wealth of meanings expressed in the lived interview situation.” (Kvale, 1996, 50)

“There is always a transformation, some would say, a reduction, a loss and thus an impact on validity, truth.” (Schostak, 2006, 68)

Analysis of the Interviews

The methodology and within that the analytical approach, and the theoretical approach underpinning it, were essentially the same as that engaged for the document analysis.

The interview analysis was informed by a social constructionist epistemology, exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings and identities by individual senior police officers and stakeholders. As expressed by Davies and Thomas (2003, 686) in their study of the changes to police thinking and culture at senior level in the context of new public management:

“The Interview material is not claimed as ‘pure data’. Rather in the spirit of a social constructionist influenced methodology, the paper presents ‘living social texts’, recognizing the fluidity of the meanings ascribed... and identities, constructed collectively by the researcher and the researched.”

The approach I took to analysis recognised the situated and shared constitution of knowledge, as ‘living social text’ (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). I saw the interviews as an attempt to ‘get closer’ in terms of professional identity performances, and in particular to participant’s orientations of professional identity within and around the prevailing discourses of policing as manifested in the ‘new’ police work with offenders. The process was to undertake something akin to an ‘exigesis’ (Rocoeur, 1970), aiming to develop a better understanding of intentions and meanings. Throughout the process of analysis I sought to recognise the dangers of seeking to ‘control meanings’ and ‘ascribe truths’ (Schostak, 2006).

I split the interviews into three groupings, two cohorts of the officer interviews and then the stakeholder interviews separately, and initially undertook the analysis distinctly three times, before bringing the two officer groups together. Throughout this period of analysis, I also generated a volume of memos and more expansive ‘thought pieces’ stimulated by the immersion in the detail of the data. Ultimately the analysis was developed and written up as the finding chapters 7-10 of the thesis.

Methodological discussion

The approach to designing the research reflects an epistemological position that recognises the police and strategic thinking relating to the ‘new’ police work with offenders as socially constructed (Burr, 1995). From an epistemological position which supports the creation of knowledge through gaining a sense of individual constructions of thinking, perceptions and meanings, this research ‘provides opportunities for participant voice’ in order to develop insights and understandings (Ortner, 2003). The research approach seeks to offer some level of understanding and insight into how individual participants create and co-create through their individual and collective voice and experiences (Guba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Adler, 1997) in respect of the policy, strategic thinking and culture of the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

The research engaged an **interpretive approach** concentrating on “the search for meanings” (Delanty, 1997, 39). The focus of the research is on emphasising and valuing individual thinking and perceptions. The research fieldwork has primarily involved the development of a local case study approach, developing knowledge within a local, situated context with the aim to ‘make thick descriptions possible’ (Geertz, 1973), rather than to achieve or assume the identification of “universal truths” (Willis et al, 2007, 188) or a “big T truth for everyone” (Miller and Fox, 2001, 675). As argued by Kvale (1996, 42), this research seeks to embrace “an openness to qualitative diversity, to the multiplicity of meanings in local contexts” through the case study approach, with a detailed robust qualitative engagement with individual participants.

The research has adopted a **grounded theory approach**. It aims to be grounded in and as authentic as possible to the data, true to an ideal of objectivity, aiming to be honest to the data and achieve good theoretical ‘fit’ with the data, allowing theory to emerge rather than being forced or predetermined. This is in contrast to alternative methodological approaches that might instead have sought to evaluate the data in the context of predetermined theoretical models, or to identify hypotheses at the beginning of the research which are then tested. The grounded theory approach is in essence a very practical one, focused on an inductive engagement with the data to discover main concerns, establish what is going on, what the main issues are, and how participants seek to resolve them.

The approach to the data was accepting of multiple perspectives and meanings; about discussing, conceptualising and explaining meanings, recognising that meanings are

continuous, emergent and constructed. Data gathering, analysis and theory generation proceeded concurrently and interacted.

The grounded theory approach aimed to discover, conceptualise and explain. Important in undertaking a grounded theory approach was the development of a theoretical sensitivity; developing the insight and the capacity to understand. There were challenges of balancing the sensitising effects of a reading of the literature and of my experience of the policy and practice setting being researched on the one hand against the risks of ‘forcing’ preconceptions and predetermined assumptions into the process of engagement with the data on the other, which are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

As part of the engagement with the data, the research recognised the importance of key narratives and discourses across the potentially ‘new’ police work with offenders. **‘Discourse’** is a word that attracts many different meanings; here it is being used to signify patterns of thinking reflected in key narratives and identifying key ideas, arguments, beliefs and attitudes. These discourses play a role in shaping, constructing, constraining, defining and reflecting parameters of thinking and perceptions.

The research also draws upon the concept of **‘strategic culture’**, in effect an organisational conceptual construct consistent with the above discussion of ‘discourse’: defined as “an ideational milieu which limits behavioural choices” (Johnston, 1995, 46); which serves to define ways of interpreting, analysing and seeing; which reflects “habits of mind” and “preferred methods of operation”; and which can define the sum of professional ideas and conditional emotional responses (Gray, 1999, 51).

As with the use of the concept of ‘discourse’ within the thesis, this thinking on ‘strategic culture’ is not deterministic and does not strip away individual identity and agency. Individual **agency** and the construction and reconstructions of individual **professional identities** are core concepts engaged with by the thesis. There are multiple voices and a genuine complexity across individuals, within the construction of identities (Taylor, 1989). Individuals create space and individually re-perform and re-negotiate identities in relation to a complex interacting web of dominant ‘strategic cultures’ and ‘professional discourses’ (Holmer-Nadeson, 1996). DuGay (1996) sees policy, practice and organisational changes essentially as representing ‘identity projects’. Identities are constituted and reconstituted within the context of multiple discourses. This study has held a focus on individuals and the personal agency reflected in the multiplicities, complexities and fluidities of their professional identities within

the wider discursive environment, seeking to avoid a deterministic interpretation of 'discourse' (Taylor, 1989). Kondo (1990) talks about a 'crafting of the self' that takes place within a discursive field of power and meaning, producing a 'contested terrain' of meanings and subjectivities and that within these points of contestation spaces are presented for alternative meanings and subjectivities and for new forms of practice. It is important that a discursive approach does not dissolve the actor in structures; instead both mutually transform the other (Marcel, 2001, 13).

A key debate across the social sciences and qualitative researching is a consideration of issues of '**validity**' and '**reliability**', and wider issues of how transferable and more widely relevant and significant such a researching model that is focused on a qualitative, locally situated approach can be (Kvale, 1996; Seale and Silverman, 1997; Madill et al, 2000; Maxwell, 2002; Guba and Lincoln, 2005; Rolfe, 2006). All qualitative methodologies involving case studies and relatively small numbers of participants naturally provoke questioning as to the degree to which findings may legitimately be 'generalised' (Gruenberg, 1978; Madill et al., 2000; Maxwell, 2002). Generalisations from social research, quantitative as well as qualitative, should always be engaged cautiously due to risks of concealing difference (Fricker, 2007). Assessing the validity of qualitative research should focus less on positivist questions of 'technical replication', and more on themes of 'trustworthiness' (how 'credible', 'confirmable', 'transferable', and 'dependable' is the work) and 'authenticity' in respect of dimensions of 'ontological', 'epistemological', 'catalytic' and 'tactical' authenticity (Guba and Lincoln, 1994 and 2005).

Researching as an ‘insider’

I have sought to bring a reflexive approach as a researcher to the thesis. Key to this is an appreciation of my positionality in respect of the research work (Nagel, 1989; England, 1994; Mason, 2002; Ballinger, 2003; Finlery, 2003; Georgaca, 2003; Maso, 2003; Hopkins, 2007; Chenail, 2011). I recognise that I bring to the research almost twenty years of active thinking and professional engagement around the issues the thesis addresses, as well as for most of the period of time during which the research was completed having been a senior police staff member in the police service utilised for the case study.

It is never possible to see the world from “no position at all” (Burr, 1995: 152): it is ‘so very hard to be ordinary’ (Sacks, 1984), and not possible to attain a ‘God’s eye view’ (Haraway, 1989) or an “omniscient perspective” (Miller and Fox, 2001, 675), delivering ‘the view from nowhere’ (Nagel, 1989). I recognise that the social scientist unavoidably has a ‘habitus’ (England, 1994, 242).

There are particular ethical challenges in being both a researcher and practitioner within the same organisation (Bell and Nutt, 2002). These issues tend to be most pronounced in research contexts engaging service users and particularly where roles of practitioner and researcher are combined in support, treatment and therapeutic practice settings. Nevertheless whilst that context did not apply to this study, there remain risks of the blurring of multiple interests across roles and relationships as researcher and work colleague.

There are also perspectives that would argue that my ‘insider’ position, my familiarity with the context and individuals participating in the research, risks diminishing the work that I have completed. This viewpoint is summed up by Morse (1994b, 27) writing from a qualitative health research perspective:

“Familiarity with the setting or previous acquaintance with the participants dulls the researcher’s ability to view the setting with the sensitivity one would have when seeing it for the first time.”

There are arguments that serve to balance against these challenges of researching in a setting where I also worked. That many participants knew me quite well as a colleague, and there was an ongoing working relationship with many of them, can be argued to have been

conducive to forming “...the basis for an emotionally empathetic, egalitarian and reciprocal approach” (Duncombe and Jessop, 2002, 108) rather more than if I had been an external researcher, dropping into their lives on a ‘one off’ basis without any embedded ongoing relationship, personal or professional commitment, or established trust.

There is also a counter-argument to the one that familiarity to the context “dulls” my capabilities to research within it. This argument would see a strong immersion in the context – which I have brought in this case - as conducive to effective research. The argument by Boyatzis (1998, 26) that the researcher “should learn everything possible” about the research context before commencing research would appear supportive that my position brings benefits as well as deficits as a researcher. There is an argument that my context as an ‘insider-outsider’ – experienced within the organisation and with an expert understanding of the context, but not a police officer, and not having a long professional career background in policing – brings something positive to the research, as well as needing to be recognised and managed in terms of risks.

Mullings (1999) argues an interesting position on this issue, suggesting that the binary of ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ is a gross simplification and that there exists much instability and contradiction within it. The assumption that ‘insiders’ have privileged access to enhanced trust and access is not always borne out, nor is the concept that ‘outsiders’ bring a greater neutrality of perspective or are less likely to be influenced by the dynamics of relationships with participants. Research relationships can be asymmetrical, exploitative, too close or too distant, too understanding or too critical, too familiar or insufficiently informed of context, across the whole spectrum of possible positions of the researcher in respect of the research participants and context. As Nast (1994) argues, positionality is about dealing with ‘difference’, ‘sameness’, ‘otherness’, all of which are complex, fluid and imprecise concepts in their own right. He proposes that we need to move beyond these surface appreciations of sameness and otherness, of insiders and outsiders, and recognise instead the more nuanced ‘in-between’ spaces that we all occupy.

Throughout the research experience I have sought to deal with the challenges of being a ‘colleague’ and an ‘insider’, in three principle ways.

First, by sticking closely to the data. I have addressed my concern that I risk bringing a greater degree of preconceptions to the data through a methodological rigour in considering and analysing the material; through considerable reflection and caution, and a willingness to

challenge the thinking I have developed from the data. I have developed an approach that seeks wherever possible for the argument and thinking to be presented directly in the words of the documents and the direct quotation of the participants.

Before I began the fieldwork, I wrote a brief summary of my professional and personal positions on some of the issues that I felt would be surfaced through the work, as a discipline to test later at various stages of the work the degree to which my own views and preconceptions might be 'showing through' in the analysis and presentation of the research. This also reflected that my personal perspectives, across the issues that were likely to be raised within the research, tended more towards being interested in the debates and curious and questioning around them, rather than holding strongly held suites of opinions.

Secondly, I sought to address the issue of being an 'insider' by constantly reflecting on my role and behaviour in the research. Key to addressing the issue of positionality has been a 'self-regulation' and 'reflexivity', an awareness of the risks and conscious consideration of them throughout the work. How was I seen by participants - as a colleague, or as a researcher. I discussed this relationship with several participant-colleagues after their interviews, and they expressed clarity about the lines of their engagement and seemed content and safe with the nature of the research work that I was completing.

Several participants did refer to work contexts, or checked out my understandings of their points by reference to shared experiences or thinking as colleagues, during our interviews, but my sense listening back over the interviews and reflecting on the transcripts, is that this was helpful to the process of engagement and understanding, rather than reflecting a confusion of roles or boundaries. They did identify what they assumed were shared opinions or experiences at times about the issues they were reflecting upon. This felt mostly to be helpful in drawing out their thinking; in the sense that those perceived elements of common ground perhaps made it 'safe' to share views they would have been less likely to share with an 'outsider', rather than being a process where they were saying what they thought I expected or wanted to hear, or articulating a kind of mutual 'groupthink'. Most of the participants were, at the time of the study, more senior than my role within the organisation, and my strongly held judgement is that none felt 'obliged' or 'pressured' to participate, or to participate in a particular way, as a result of the wider working relationship. I always made the first approach by e-mail, as I judged that would be a less challenging medium by which the potential participants could reflect about whether they wished to participate.

And thirdly, I aimed to address the ‘insider’ researcher context by achieving a degree of deliberate separation of my work and doctoral researcher lives: I have never referred to my research directly within day-to-day work contexts; I have undertaken the practicalities of these two elements of my life quite separately; I have never seen my doctorate as instrumental to career goals.

None of these aspects of my approach neutralise the potential limitations of my position as colleague and employee, but they do render those issues more visible, recognised and understood, and therefore hopefully serve to mitigate impacts, whilst also recognising alongside that there are also advantages of my ‘insider’ context in respect of the research.

Researching ethically

Ethical considerations have permeated the whole research process (Gregory, 2003). The research has been undertaken in a manner entirely compliant with the British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics. The research project was presented to, and approved, by the Northampton University Ethics Committee process. Data security and management advice has been sought and followed from specialists within the police force in undertaking the study.

Research that aims to be good and to do good

Ethical research needs to exhibit ‘epistemic responsibility’ (Code, 1987). Code (1995, 14) refers to the “power-based knowledge construction process”. Key to this are the relationship issues with participants reflected above, but also issues of openness and accountability. The goal I have striven for throughout this research work reflects the thinking of Doucet and Mauthner (2002, 125):

“to be as transparent, as is reasonably possible, about the epistemological, ontological, theoretical, and personal assumptions that inform our research.”

A key element of the ethical framework for any research is about purpose and application. There is an argument that a “model of ethical responsibility” in researching (Birch and Miller, 2002, 94) needs to engage a clear understanding of what ‘good’ the research intends to achieve, and how it will be disseminated to maximise any such positive impact. In conducting this research I bring a belief that there is much value in better understanding senior-level thinking, professional identity and strategic culture as key elements of what is a strategic development of fundamental importance for the police and other agencies across the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

The research aims, by generating fresh and novel insight into the ‘new’ police work with offenders, to make a contribution to the improvement of policing and to work with offenders, and ultimately by doing so to improve the lives of people living in local communities, those who serve them within the police, offenders and victims. The research will be fed back locally and it is also intended to publish and to present the findings more widely.

Managing and mitigating risks to participants

It can sometimes be assumed that ‘elites’ such as senior ranked police officers and senior strategic stakeholders are not a particularly vulnerable group of participants. Similarly, there is an argument that participation in a study that is focused on professional thinking and identity and which does not engage with subject matter that is particularly personal or sensitive carries a lower risk profile than, say, would research work engaging vulnerable service users or patients. However, my approach has reflected an appreciation that whilst a study of this nature is not at the heightened end of risk of harm to participants, it does potentially carry distinct risks to participants.

Perhaps chief amongst these is a risk to reputation, both of individual participants and of the organisations that they lead and represent. Part of the mitigation for this risk has been to achieve a degree of anonymity across the material presented, which provides a degree of protection for individual participants. I use the phrase ‘a degree of anonymity’ because, amongst close colleagues, there will always be a risk that the direct usage of interview transcript material may leave a potential for identification of the source. I would echo the words of Robert Reiner in the preface of his seminal work interviewing Chief Constables (Reiner, 1991, p vi), which I think reflects the position with this study:

“In the text care has been taken to prevent quotes being individually identifiable. I am sure that police readers in particular will be eager to play ‘spot the chief constable’. However, my experience of their attempts to do this... suggests that these attempts at identification are more likely to be wrong than right.”

Achieving ‘Consent’

Written consent has been gained from participants (Appendix E), after the sharing in advance of a briefing sheet on the research (Appendix D) and a verbal discussion of the research process and of how the data generated by the research would be analysed and used.

Consent can present a challenge in a research study such as this, where the methodological approach is very much an iterative one fundamentally based and shaped by the data in terms of theory building and identifying key themes for further exploration. In that sense, explaining in advance to participants precisely what the study was focused upon or what it might contribute to and impact upon, has been less than straightforward given those elements are not entirely knowable in advance. Miller and Bell (2002, 54) capture this challenge well:

“[if] we identify knowledge as being grounded in individual and collective experiences... this means that the course of the project may only be guessed at initially.”

My explanations to participants about the research have been accurate, but unavoidably have also not necessarily captured the full essence of all aspects of the content of the analysis and findings as they have since emerged.

Conclusions

This chapter has set out the research method of the thesis, and has also reflected methodologically upon the approach adopted.

As set out at the beginning of this chapter, the research aims to explore the senior leadership and policy discourse and strategic culture in respect of these important new developments for policing; how senior officers and other senior stakeholders perceive these developments, engage with them, shape thinking and develop understandings and meanings. The focus of the research is on emphasising and valuing individual thinking and perceptions.

The study focuses on policy narratives and strategic-level leadership thinking and culture, and upon how senior leaders in the police and senior stakeholders have engaged with these changes. In view of this a qualitative approach has been adopted that seeks to identify and understand emerging strands of policy and leadership thinking at a detailed and nuanced level in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders.

The research method has primarily involved the development of a local case study approach, developing knowledge within a local, situated context with the aim to 'make thick descriptions possible', alongside an analysis of national policy documents. The method engaged in the research has reflected a grounded theory approach.

The following five chapters (chapters 6-10) of the thesis present the findings of the research.

Chapter 6

Analysis of National Policy Documents

Introduction

This is the first of the chapters which discusses the findings of the research. The chapter presents an analysis of official national policy documents in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offender changes.

The chapter is followed by three further chapters (chapters 7-9) based upon interviews conducted for the thesis as a local case study methodology based upon a single police force area. Chapter 10 then presents findings from the senior stakeholder interviews.

The purpose of the national policy document analysis was to identify key themes across policy thinking in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offender changes at a national level, which would then set the scene, provoke questions, and provide a context for the local case study, interview-based analysis that follows in chapters 7-10. The scope of the policy document analysis was to look across the breadth of developments of the ‘new’ police work with offenders (youth offending, prolific offenders, risk management, drugs interventions, integrated offender management), and to encompass a range of different types of national policy documents (including policy reviews, policy guidance, audit reports, and formal inspections). The methodological approach to the policy document selection and analysis is summarised in the previous chapter. The policy documents that were selected for analysis are listed in Appendix A.

This chapter presents findings based upon an analysis of the national policy documents and is structured into four main sections covering:

- The principle contributions provided by the police into the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships;

- The key policy themes and debates surrounding the ‘new’ police work with offenders identified from the policy documents, including policy thinking identified in respect of change narratives, risk management, prevention and an expanding role for the police;
- Partnership working;
- Issues of culture and professional identity.

Each section of the chapter considers key themes and debates identified through the analysis of the policy documents. Direct quotations from the policy documents analysed are presented in full speech marks. Longer quotations from the analysed texts are attributed. To avoid cluttering the chapter with referencing, where single words or very short phrases are utilised these are not directly attributed, and in any case will typically reference language which is utilised in several of the policy documents. Single quotation marks are used to identify concepts and themes where the language utilised is not directly lifted from a particular policy document text.

What do the police contribute?

A prominent and consistent narrative across the policy documents is that the police are seen as having a significant part to play across the breadth of the new offender focused partnerships. Analysis of the documents reveals five broad themes in respect of the nature of this perceived police contribution:

- The importance of the police in respect of ‘intelligence’;
- The police contribution to early intervention and prevention ;
- The police as an enforcement agency;
- The police as capable managers of risk;
- The key relationships across communities and agencies that the police bring.

Each of these five areas will be briefly considered in turn, identifying the core arguments within the policy document texts supporting the importance of the relevant area of contribution and also identifying key areas of debate developed within, or provoked by, the policy documents.

The police bring ‘intelligence’ about offenders

The element of police contribution most strongly and consistently drawn out across the breadth of ‘new’ police work with offender contexts is the police capability in respect of “intelligence” and “information”. This area of contribution enjoyed a significantly greater degree of emphasis across the documents than the other four, and was seen as a primary contribution by the police for each aspect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders (youth offending, risk management, prolific offenders and drugs work).

The predominant argument in this respect, looking across the range of the policy documents,

is that the police as an agency are able to identify considerable information about offenders. This is viewed as being a valuable, indeed a critical, resource underpinning the effectiveness of the new joint approaches to working with offenders. In the course of “wider”, “mainstream”, “traditional” policing activities, “intelligence” and “information” are “generated” and “systematically analysed”, much of which is “not known to other agencies”, and which is seen as “a valuable resource” in “improving the effectiveness” of work undertaken with offenders. This argument is particularly emphasised in respect of the management of risk, where it can be argued to be one of the primary practice rationales underpinning arguments in support of the effectiveness of the new approaches. It is however also a central theme across youth offending, prolific offending and drugs contexts, where in each case the contribution provided by police information and intelligence is portrayed as being of high importance, as expressed in this overarching Government policy paper on reducing offending:

“Police, especially neighbourhood policing teams, are the eyes and ears of the community and will know many of the repeat offenders, the types of crime they commit and where they commit them.” (Home Office and MoJ, 2010, ‘Reducing Reoffending cutting crime changing lives’)

The contribution in respect of ‘information’ and ‘intelligence’ is also characterised in several of the policy documents as encompassing something broader; that the police are more in touch and rooted in the reality of offenders’ lives and behaviours than other agencies as a consequence of the wider police work directly out in communities. This was particularly prominent in respect of risk management and prolific offender focused policy documents. The police are portrayed as “out and about” and being “rooted” in communities, symbolising a “reality” that they bring to the various fields of work with offenders.

Building upon this, and particularly with respect to young people and prolific offender practice contexts, there is a hypothesis in evidence that the specialist offender work activity and wider community-based policing activity can enjoy useful synergies and close working, symbiotic relationships based upon the benefits of information exchange.

“... we recommend the YOT PC [Youth Offending Team seconded Police Constable] has strong relationships with their local neighbourhood policing teams, so that information on local young people who have offended can be shared.” (ACPO and YJB, 2010, ‘The YOT police officer review and role

development’)

This is in tune with a wider consensus of the benefits of ‘information sharing’ across agencies.

One notable emergent development in several policy documents is that the concepts and language of intelligence-based policing are being taken and put to new use across the wider multi-agency terrain of the offender management partnerships. This is particularly the case in respect of the management of risk, as evidenced within this extract from a practice guidance document for public protection work with offenders, which transposes the language of intelligence-led policing beyond the origin of such practice concepts in a traditional investigatory policing model and into the new multi-agency partnering context of managing risk and dangerousness:

“The key contributing activity to reducing the risk and impact of harm is the capture, recording and timely dissemination of intelligence, when available, about an offender... The importance of comprehensive and accurate intelligence in successfully and proactively identifying, assessing and managing the risk of serious harm cannot be overstated.” (NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

The capabilities and contributions of the police signalled through the arguments above in respect of “information”, “intelligence”, having a “presence in communities” and a greater “awareness” and “proximity” to the “realities of offenders lives” and behaviours, point to the second theme of contribution by the police fore-grounded by the policy documents: that the police as an agency can play an important role supporting early intervention and preventative work, and that policing is an important and effective site for prevention and early intervention.

Opportunities for intervention and prevention across policing

The police are seen across the policy documents as being an agency that can and should play critical direct roles in early intervention and prevention.

One principle element of the police role articulated in the policy documents in this respect is

that policing provides sites for accessing, assessing and intervening with offenders. The asset the police bring is that the nature of broader, ‘mainstream’ policing activities brings them into contact with a high volume of offenders and exposes the police to many individuals, particularly young people, at risk of offending. The police are often the first criminal justice agency engaged with an offender when they commence criminal activity, providing an ideal context for efforts at early identification and intervention. They also have offenders as a captive audience (sometimes literally) in respect of their roles as an enforcement and investigatory agency, providing practice space for assessment and for referral and signposting to other services.

The Drug Interventions Programme operational handbook suggests that all police officers and staff in police custody contexts should “proactively encourage” the engagement of offenders in drug treatment services, pointing to (as was the case above in respect to intelligence-led policing) to a criminal investigation process being put to a new use, in this case as a recruitment and assessment site for health treatment provision. Likewise, the same source suggests that ‘intelligence gathering’ be synthesised into a new role integrating with this pro-active treatment recruitment model:

“...all CJIT [Criminal Justice Interventions Team] workers based in custody suites should be actively seeking out potential service users based on intelligence from the police.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

Taking this a step further, there is also the suggestion, again within the same document, that criminal justice sanctioning should be managed in such a way as to create an enabling environment for treatment; in effect orientating the investigatory and prosecutorial processes towards a strategic objective of facilitating health treatment outcomes:

“The police should also consider an appropriate disposal for the service user that allows maximum opportunities for the CJIT to engage with the individual. Where the police believe that the individual is using specified Class A drugs, a fixed penalty notice should not be issued. Instead, depending on the nature of the offence, the most appropriate disposal is either a charge or a conditional caution with a DIP condition attached.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

Looking across the policy documents, it is (probably as one would have anticipated) youth offending that sits alongside drugs treatment as the two contexts where this theme of early intervention and prevention is most pronounced as a contribution by the police. In contrast, the third police capability theme of enforcement is most pronounced in the documents focused upon management of risk and managing prolific offenders.

The police bring an enforcement capability

The police are viewed within the policy documents, particularly in risk management and prolific offending contexts, as bringing strength to the partnership models by dint of their specific enforcement capabilities.

This is frequently framed in terms of the police bringing distinct “powers”. There is also a wider, more culturally focused aspect to the enforcement capability narratives within the policy documents. This is the sense conveyed across many of the documents in respect of “authority”, “credibility”, “status” and “style” that the police are perceived to bring as an agency, contributing “robustness”, “rigour” and “vigour” to the partnership working, and balancing out a perceived past skewing towards seeing offender needs before the needs of victims and communities. These elements are particularly emphasised in respect of the police contribution to working with ‘dangerous’, ‘high risk’ offenders, which is considered next as the fourth area of police contribution.

The police as capable managers of risk

The police are instinctively assumed within several of the policy documents as bringing a key role and capability to offender risk management. Terms such as “naturally” and phrases such as “fundamental to the role the police play” imply that this is being interpreted, even if it represents an extension of police practice, as one that reflects a natural continuity from traditional ‘mainstream’ formations of police work. This is somewhat intriguing given the activities concerned (risk assessment and case management) have not historically been roles performed by the police, nor roles to which the agency brings a legacy of particular expertise or training.

One partial explanation for this is that the police are perceived across the policy documents as bringing other valuable capabilities in respect of managing dangerous individuals, which may have led to this broader consideration of the police as central to playing core offender risk assessment and management roles. Firstly, in respect of the ‘intelligence’ elements referenced above. Secondly, they are seen as being capable of being “proactive” and to “outreach”; in essence they are capable of visiting addresses and performing a role of tracking down offenders that other agencies would lack the skill set, equipment and back up to do safely without placing their staff at risk of potential harm. Thirdly, the police can use force and are equipped and resourced to manage dangerous situations. Fourthly, the police are a twenty-four hour operational agency that brings usefulness in some risk management contexts. Finally, the police bring an “experience” and a “reality” to working with offenders which can contribute to risk management.

There are grounds to contend, based upon how the police contribution in respect of risk management is framed within some of the policy documents, that this conceptual ‘scaffold’ of police capabilities (as summarised above) in respect of managing dangerous situations has been stretched to encompass policy positions that the police “naturally” can and should bring other, distinct and specialist, capabilities to the field in question.

The police are envisaged within most of the policy documents as providing a lead and convening role, particularly in respect of the management of risk but essentially across all the practice areas. Even where the police are not the primary convening agency (such as with the youth offending model, where local authorities take that lead), they are viewed as being able to perform an important role due to the “wide” and “diverse” working relationships police organisations have with other agencies. This element of contribution represents the fifth and final key theme of police contribution identified across the policy document analysis.

The police role as builders of relationships and networks

One common hypothesis presented within the policy documents is that the police are seen as providing linkage across local agencies, adopting convening and coordinating roles, as a consequence of the wide diversity of connections the police have with agencies and communities:

“We expect Chief Constables, who have links with all key groups...to provide effective co-ordination and communication.” (Home Office, 2004, ‘POPO Catch and Convict Framework’)

“...supporting delivery in communities by influencing and co-ordinating activities...” (Home Office and MoJ, 2010, ‘Reducing Reoffending, Cutting Crime, Changing Lives’)

These narratives of the police as bringing a contribution in convening and coordinating across partner relationships tends towards the police also occupying leadership spaces within the partnering.

Reflections on the police contribution

It is clear across the policy documents that the police are viewed as bringing a range of capabilities and of playing a variety of roles that result in them being seen as valued and critical partners in the new modes of working with offenders. The policy documents collectively provide an (almost exclusively) appreciative and positive affirmation regarding police involvement in these new modes of working with offenders.

On the whole, the contribution from, and attributed of, the police are largely assumed; taken as a given, rather than seriously argued or critically evidenced. There is a fair degree of assumption to be seen across the documents regarding the traits, culture and capabilities that the police bring. For example, the Youth Offending Team police officer review talks of a policing “skills set” and “experience” without defining clearly what either term means. This concept of the usefulness of “policing skills” is a common theme but there is a consistency in the lack of clarity as to what those skills are and how they specifically contribute.

Whilst police engagement in new modes of working has been nationally mandated, the policy documents reflect that the nature of this engagement has often been very loosely defined, leaving considerable scope for local variation and varied interpretation. The text below provides an example of this phenomenon. It was written a decade after the national roll out of Youth Offending Teams, which mandated by statute the secondment of police officers

into the teams, but evidently without much in the way of accompanying specification in respect of role and contribution:

“This review is the first time either the Youth Justice Board (YJB) or the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have reviewed what the functions and core role of the generic YOT Police Officer should be. There is no existing guidance as to what activities an officer should perform...The role has developed organically over time to meet local need. In some cases this has left large disparity between the scope and scale of work conducted by Police Officers, not only from force to force, but sometimes within the same force area...A vast array of practice was found to be in existence in the YOT PC role.” (ACPO and YJB, 2010, ‘The YOT police officer review and role development’)

There is a point of debate about whether this lack of national guidance and codification of police roles and contributions within the policy documents reflects a lack of clear thinking about the contribution of the police, or whether instead it reflects a delegation to local decision makers, an evocation of ‘localism’ or a determination to foster individual police practitioners as flexible innovators within partnership teams.

Some of the key themes of police contribution identified within the policy documents tend towards placing the police onto professional territory historically occupied by other agencies. Cross-cutting the five themes of police contribution are role expectations around “assessment”, “early intervention”, “supervision” and “managing” offenders that have not traditionally been viewed as inherent aspects of the police. This reflects an extending and extensive scope for the police which can be seen to overlap in particular with traditional conceptions of the probation officer role.

Overall, the five thematic areas of contribution when considered together speak to an articulation of a central, broad and multi-faceted role to be played by the police. All five tend towards driving a policy of enhanced and broadening engagement for the police across work with offenders. The overarching account of the police contribution that the policy documents collectively present can be argued to place a strong recognition on the capabilities the police bring, whilst being little disturbed by any wider arguments with regard to limitations or constraints of police capability and contribution.

The next section of this chapter considers the key policy debates and narratives that are evidenced across the national policy documents. This serves to further enrich an understanding from the documents of the police role in the new partnerships and in particular regarding how and why it has come about

New thinking about police work with offenders

Thinking big

The ‘new’ police work with offenders, as reflected across the national policy documents, suggests expansive and ambitious reformulations of policy. A serious level of policy aspiration is articulated across the documents; enlisting the criminal justice system across a broadening range of objectives. This is a policy discourse that thinks big:

“All those working in the youth justice system must have a principal aim - to prevent offending.” (Home Office, 1997, ‘No more excuses’)

“...to improve the protection of children.” (Home Office, 2002, ‘Protecting the Public’)

“...with the explicit aim of putting an end to the harm which they [offenders] are causing.” (Home Office, 2004, ‘POPO Catch and Convict Framework’)

“...improve public confidence” (Home Office and MoJ, 2010, ‘Reducing reoffending cutting crime changing lives’)

Policy ideas that are strategic in scale and intent are widespread across the policy documents: “reducing reoffending”; “fairness”; “meeting victim needs”; “tackling drugs misuse”; “working with communities”; “set and uphold community standards”; “protection”; “radically reducing alcohol harm”; “early prevention of youth crime”; “better lives for young people”. This policy thinking has potential to destabilise and redraw both the police and other partnering agency organisational scopes and missions.

The rest of this section of the chapter consider the emerging policy in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. Issues of ‘agency’ and ‘primacy’ within the policy environment are considered, in respect of balancing ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ policy directions. The section then discusses how change is engaged and discussed within the policy documents and how the documents give voice to the growth in significance of both ‘managing risk’ and ‘prevention’ as policy and practice concepts. The section concludes by considering whether

the policy documents signal an expanding role for the police and whether there is an accompanying discussion of limitations in respect of police mission and scope.

‘Top down’ and ‘bottom up’ policy making

The variety of types of policy documents considered within the analysis collectively provides a rounded perspective of the national policy environment in which the changes have developed.

One evident tension revealed in the policy documents is between ‘top down’ direction and control of the emergent policy at a national level, and ‘bottom up’ iterative development, flexibility and innovation at more local levels. The same model in this respect is described across policy documents relating to all the core arenas of the ‘new’ police work with offenders (youth offending, risk management, prolific offenders and drugs work). This is a model that seeks a mix of ‘top down’ direction with intent to foster local flexibility in design and implementation. Several examples of language used in the policy documents hint at an uneasy tension between national direction (a language of “definitive” “requirements” and “standards”, and of “clear expectations” that local agencies are “expected to adhere to”) and local leadership and discretion (“advice”, “left to the professional judgement”, “primacy of local sovereignty”, “local commissioners”).

“This document should be regarded as definitive joint advice from ACPO and the YJB as to the expected minimum core services that the generic YOT Police Officer is expected to provide. The delivery mechanism and expansion of the role is left to the professional judgment of the respective heads of service.” (ACPO and YJB, 2010, ‘The YOT police officer review and role development’)

“This document also provides local commissioners clear expectations about the services they should commission... articulate minimum standards that all partners will be expected to adhere to.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

The same document in respect of the Drug Interventions Programme reflects the tensions between a policy approach that champions local innovation and local solutions reflective of

local needs on the one hand, whilst also seeking to build on the evidence-base of best practice on the other.⁷

“...it would be inappropriate to try to impose a single model of how to achieve a required action/outcome, when what is most efficient and effective may depend on local resources and structures.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

“...ensure consistency in the local delivery of DIP through the use of best practice.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

As with drug interventions, there is a strong narrative in respect of “evidence-based practice” and “what works” with respect to prolific offender work, counterbalanced with an acknowledgement that much of the “energy” and “innovation” of prolific offender work reflects “organic” local practice, and of “local agencies working together creatively and differently”.

This in part reflects a reality on the ground that, particularly in respect of prolific offender work, national policy frameworks were evolving against a backdrop of local scheme development and innovation.

“It [the national policy framework] aims to avoid a prescriptive approach wherever possible, limiting the essential requirements to those necessary to establish a coherent national approach. The spirit of the guidance is to accommodate existing work on prolific offenders.” (Home Office, 2004, ‘POPO Catch and Convict Framework’)

There is a language that evokes concepts of ‘sovereignty’ and ‘subsidiarity’ in several of the policy documents.

“ACPO along with the YJB recognise that local delivery is a matter for the Chief Officer of police and the Head of Youth Justice Services to determine the size, scope and deployment of staff to YOTs. They alone are tasked to deliver the best possible services to their communities and have the greatest knowledge of what those needs are. This document does not seek to remove such autonomy, as it is vital that local agencies are able to manage their own

services in the way they consider is most appropriate...The status of this document is one of 'guidance' with local autonomy in policing and the delivery of youth justice preserved." (ACPO and YJB, 2010, "The YOT police officer review and role development")

This tension between 'top down' and 'bottom up' feels inconclusively resolved across the policy documents as a whole.

Narratives of Change: 'failure' and 'success'

Narratives of change articulate strongly across the policy literature. Highly visible in these change themes is the language of 'failure' and 'success'. The argument is most commonly framed that new initiatives are required because of fundamental and strategic failures of what has gone before, that new initiatives have been shown to be successful, that such success is to be celebrated, and that it is to be further built upon.

Perceptions of past failings are drawn upon strongly, invoking feelings of crisis and the need to act boldly. Criticising past practice in quite stark terms, a neo-dystopian reading of the current position, seems to play a significant part in this new policy thinking. For example, pictures are painted of rising crime and of policy and practice that is failing to get to grips with key problems associated with this, which therefore risks issues in relation to crime worsening further and becoming out of control. Previous modes of practice, and indeed previous governments, are said to have 'failed' to tackle the problem. There is considerable investment, but it is not sustainable and is not achieving the desired results. The below passage from an audit review into youth offending exemplifies such narratives:

"Most young people known to offend receive a caution from the police, but very few of them receive any further action. The remainder are prosecuted, but half of the prosecutions are dropped or result in the young person being discharged by the court. The court process usually takes several appearances, over a period of months, before a sentencing decision is reached. The effects of different sentences on re-offending are not monitored. The efficiency and effectiveness of the system could be improved...The agencies dealing with young offenders have different views about what they are trying to achieve...

The process for dealing with young people who offend and end up in court is complicated and may take months to complete...” (Audit Commission, 1996. ‘Misspent Youth’)

In contrast, the new policies are articulated as building upon and achieving ‘success’. There is a strong progressive flavour to the new policy agenda:

“The PPO Strategy builds on the success of the Street Crime Initiative and from numerous, successful local initiatives” (Home Office, 2004, ‘POPO Resettle and Rehabilitate Framework’)

“The PPO programme has made a positive and significant impact on crime reduction and reoffending for the most difficult and damaging offenders across England and Wales.” (Home Office and MoJ, 2010, ‘Reducing Reoffending cutting crime changing lives’)

“The programme has proved a clear success.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

“The establishment and development of these multi-agency arrangements is one of the success stories of the criminal justice system.” (CJJI, 2011, ‘Putting the pieces together – An Inspection of MAPPA’)

Consistent with this, new modes of working are presented as being “positive” and “proactive”:

“...the more positive and proactive approach towards offenders.” (Dawson, 2005, ‘Early findings from the POPO evaluation’)

A feature of these narratives of past ‘failure’ contrasted with the ‘success’ of new ways of working is that such arguments tend towards an emphasis on contrasting the differences between present and past modes of working, rather than seeing a more evolving pattern of practice based upon continuities from past practice.

Narratives of Change: continuity or novelty?

There are uncertainties across the policy documents as to whether the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships is seen in terms of ‘core’ police work and continuity of police practice and tradition, or as novel, transformational and innovative.

Three different excerpts below from the same policy document in respect of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) serve to illustrate this: the first suggests this activity has always been ‘core’ to policing; the second proposes establishing such work to become ‘mainstream’ police activity; the third indicates the same activity is considered as a specialist area of activity rather than mainstreamed:

“The protection of the public has always been core police business.”

“[the need to] establish public protection as a mainstream policing activity”

“staff working in the public protection field...”

(All three references from: NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

There is some portrayal in the documents of the new models of working as being ‘rooted’ in the “history” and “tradition” of the police. In particular that the police are depicted as having a long history of “prevention” as a rationale and that policing has always occupied a role in terms of protecting the public from harm. However, overall the documents conceptualise the new developments more in terms of ‘revolution’ rather than ‘evolution’; more as a discontinuity, a break from the past, than as evolution of the practice that has gone before.

Managing Risk

Reducing risk and protecting from harm are cast across the ‘new’ police work with offender policy documents as key objectives. This is articulated as a pro-active and potentially long-term strategy with the reduction of future harms at the heart:

“...strategies are drawn up to minimise the risk of harm presented by the individual in the longer term.” (CJJI, 2011, ‘Putting the pieces together – An inspection of MAPPA)

This agenda of 'risk management' is clearly axiomatic to multi-agency public protection work but it is also apparent across the other aspects of the 'new' police work with offenders.

Sitting alongside the emphasis on reducing future harm and managing dangerousness, there is a 'risk principle' projected across the 'new' police work with offenders. This principle is that greater focus and resource should be placed on those offenders who pose the greatest risk.

“While it is common practice for police forces to visit all registered offenders on a regular basis, this may take place less frequently in the case of people assessed to be low risk.” (Home Office, 2002, 'Protecting the Public')

“A number of forces have already embarked on focusing staff at young people who pose a higher risk.” (ACPO and YJB, 2012, 'The YOT police officer review and role development')

“Resources following risk - PPOs will have been identified because of their disproportionate offending or the impact they have on their communities, with the resources allocated to them reflecting this.” (Home Office, 2004, 'POPO Resettle and Rehabilitate Framework')

This 'risk principle' of focusing resources disproportionately on those presenting higher risk is in part founded on perceptions, backed by research findings, that a relatively small proportion of offenders are responsible for a sizeable proportion of crime.

“Recognising that a relatively small number of offenders were responsible for a disproportionate number of offences...” (CJJI, 2004, 'Joint Inspection Report into Persistent and Prolific Offenders')

“A few persistent offenders commit most of the crimes by young people...” (Audit Commission 1996, 'Misspent Youth')

One feature of the policy documents is a lack of reflection on the limitations and challenges of risk management and risk prioritised approaches. The documents collectively present an

uncritical account of both ‘risk management’ and the ‘risk principle’, not engaging with the potentially problematic aspects of such thinking and approaches (as identified in chapter 2).

Alongside ‘risk’, the other principle policy argument evident across the documents is an emphasis on ‘prevention’ and the benefits of ‘early intervention’, sometimes conceptualised as ‘demand reduction’.

Early intervention and prevention

References to the concept of ‘prevention’ are rife across the policy documents. This is often a call to action ‘pre crime’:

“...young people at risk must be discouraged from getting involved in offending in the first place.” (Audit Commission, 1996, ‘Misspent Youth’)

This ‘pre-crime’ emphasis has the potential to fundamentally shift the rationale and approach of criminal justice practice.

There is also an agenda of reducing future demand on services across the emphasis on early intervention, which further supports an argument for pre-emptive, earlier interventions:

“Today’s young offenders can too easily become tomorrow’s hardened criminals. As a society we do ourselves no favours by failing to break the link between juvenile crime and disorder and the serial burglar of the future... we will refocus resources and the talents of professionals on nipping offending in the bud” (Home Office, 1997, ‘No more excuses’)

“The general principle behind the PPO strategy is that the benefits of implementation, in terms of reduced offending activity, will generate savings” (Home Office, 2004, ‘POPO Catch and Convict Framework’)

Arguably, this emphasis on prevention is not new, and has been a long standing principle for the police and other agencies. However, there does seem to be a shift in emphasis towards more ‘upstream’ and ‘pre-emptive’ modes of working.

The policy documents do not engage with the questions of whether this expansion of preventative activity is appropriately within the remit of the police, whether this broader preventative agenda is something that should be led upon by the criminal justice agencies. Similarly, there is no direct engagement with the associated concerns (as discussed in chapter 2) regarding the potential for this preventative, pro-active, early intervening agenda to lead to a ‘criminalisation’ of social policy.

An expansionist agenda without a discourse of limitations?

The two policy drivers identified above from the policy documents - of pro-actively managing risk and of an early intervention and preventative strategy towards offenders - both tend towards a more expansively conceived scope and purpose for the police and other agencies across the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships. There is evidence across the policy documents that the new roles for the police are broadly conceived and loosely defined.

This is not a policing practice that can be viewed as constrained by regulated, judicially-overseen and primarily responsive approaches to those who break the law. This is a policy and practice that pushes the boundaries: in respect of pre-emptive interventions; in encouraging long-term commitments to intervene to manage ongoing risk; in creating and exercising new administrative powers and regulatory mechanisms; in developing more flexible thinking and practice as to the appropriate degrees of intrusiveness that should be practiced in respect of managing offending and risk. And across all of this, there is a considerable broadening of the scope for the police, an organisation that occupies a distinct ground in terms of capabilities to use legitimate force and to exercise other policing powers, across these new modes of working with offenders.

This is a policy and practice that potentially concerns itself with “hanging about”, “shouting”, “swearing” and “fooling around”:

“...much of the public concern about the behaviour of some young people is about juvenile nuisance - such as shouting and swearing, hanging about and fooling around in groups” (Audit Commission, 1996. ‘Misspent Youth’)

This is a model of police work that seeks to “handle media interest”, promotes positive messages, briefs policy makers and influences opinion formers:

“Ensure public confidence and reassurance about the Police Service role in public protection while managing public expectations... Two challenges facing forces are how to manage public expectations effectively and how to handle media interest... Improving and promoting communication, awareness and understanding with the public... Promote positive messages about protecting the public and help to allay some of the public’s fears... Briefing policy makers, opinion formers and communities” (NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

It is also a model that, albeit specifically in the context of managing risk and dangerousness, explicitly encompasses “excessive sleeping”, “work problems”, “health issues” and even “excessive masturbation” as legitimate concerns for the police:

“Factors to be monitored to Identify, Assess and Manage Risk...work schedules, hobbies, general routines, evidence of intentional contact including grooming, stalking behaviour...existence or extent of support, work problems, health issues, substance misuse, mental ill health, excessive sleeping, paranoia, suicidal fantasies or gestures, agitation, anxiety...perceived or actual loss of social support including significant friends, partners, family members or social organisations...deviant sexual fantasies, increased or excessive masturbation, rumination on sexual issues, inappropriate comments, use of pornography, prostitutes or telephone sex lines...” (NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

One reading of the above passage is that it reflects nothing more than the current established research and practice understandings in respect of managing sexual offenders. In that sense the material is unremarkable. However it does, taken at face value, position the police as an agency onto some remarkable and novel territory and seriously stretches concepts of what is the legitimate terrain for the police. It is difficult to imagine either a more intrusive, or a more all-encompassing and broad ranging, model of policing society than the one suggested by the extracts above.

Central to this extending of professional roles is the primacy given across the policy

documents to the value of ‘professional judgement’. A policing practice of upholding the law and investigating criminals that was once (at least theoretically) carefully formulated and governed within the bounds of the rule of law and judicial oversight is being reconceived across the policy documents as primarily professional-led and professionally governed, with ‘professional judgement’ paramount:

“The professional judgment of police officers and others involved in risk assessment is central to public protection.” (NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

“The PPO programme allowed local areas to identify and select offenders who are considered [by professionals] to be the most prolific, the most persistently anti-social and those who pose the greatest threat to their community.” (Dawson, 2005, ‘Early Findings from the POPO Evaluation’)

The policy narrative presented here is essentially one that supports an expanding of scope and role and enables new forms of practice, constructed within a conceptual framework in which ‘ends’ (for example, reducing future harm) are assumed to justify ‘means’ (such as erosions of offender human rights):

“As a general principle, the human rights of offenders should not take priority over public protection.” (NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

There is very limited accompanying discussion of appropriate boundaries and limitations. Given the considerable scope of new roles and approaches for the police and other agencies, there is remarkably little attention given to issues of governance; about establishing checks and balances, such as mechanisms for regulation, challenge and appeal in respect of professional assessment and actions. To those who problematise the discretion of police officers the ‘new’ police work with offenders would appear to present new and particularly potent contexts to consider.

There is, for example, nothing across the analysed policy documents that explicitly seeks to define the temporal limitations of either pre-emptive or long-term police interventions to achieve prevention and risk management objectives. Traditionally, police practice with offenders has been (or at least has been argued to have been) defined, and constrained, within timescales set by criminal processes and court sanctions. Presumably if the assessment of

dangerousness remained, intervention would be justified decades after the professional identification and assessment of a risk. Likewise, where are the legitimate bounds of preventative activity set? This is a particularly resonant issue in the context of research findings increasingly suggestive of a crime prevention efficacy to interventions with very young children and indeed pre-birth. Such questions are barely raised let alone satisfactorily addressed across the policy documents.

Bringing together the ‘new ways of thinking’

The policy paradigm reflected across the analysed policy documents in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders can be summarised as:

- Big policy aspirations, broadening the objectives that the police and other agencies are working towards;
- A complex and unresolved picture in respect of whether these are ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’ developments;
- An emphasis on the significance of the changes, emphasising the ‘failure’ of the approaches that went before, celebrating the ‘success’ of the new ways of working, and casting them in a progressive light. There are some narratives of continuity, particularly that protection and prevention have deep historical roots in the policing tradition, but the primary narrative is of a step-change, a clear break, from the past and the novelty of the new approaches;
- The developments are driven by concepts of ‘prevention’ (including early intervention and demand management) and of ‘risk management’ (including a ‘risk principle’ which justifies and encourages the focus of resources, interventions and impact upon those offenders professionally assessed as being of higher risk);
- Driven by the above, a broadening of the role of the police, and of concepts of what represents legitimate concerns for the police to engage with. Linked to this is an emphasis on professional judgement and on achieving outcomes, with very little

emphasis towards governance, regulation and the limitations of appropriate intervention.

Consistent with the dominant narratives across the policy documents of big strategic goals, a step-change in practice, and overarching strategic policy drivers of ‘prevention’ and ‘risk’, and underpinning the expansion and blurring of traditional agency boundaries for the police, the changes have placed a high level of emphasis on partnership working.

There is considerable emphasis across all of the analysed policy documents upon the benefits of “greater integration”, “whole of government thinking”, “cross-sector delivery”, “cohesion” in delivery, “working together”, “busting silos”, “pooling of resources”.

It is to this emphasis on partnership approaches across the ‘new’ police work with offenders that the chapter now turns.

Partnerships, Culture and Identity

Celebrating new modes of partnering

One very strongly drawn narrative across the ‘new’ police work with offenders is the emphasis on multi-agency working: “convergence”, “cohesion”, “cross-working”, “coming together”.

The narrative, essentially universally and uncritically adopted, is that partnering provides the context for a holistic, wide-ranging approach in a way that any one agency working alone would not be able to realise. Partnering brings the skills of agencies together, and in a “pooled” and “co-operative” context these can deliver more than sitting “isolated” in separate single-agency models of practice.

Fundamental to the claims of what partnering can deliver sits the argument that a coherent, linked, co-ordinated and unified focus makes success more likely.

“The basic proposition for the Catch and Convict and Rehabilitate and Resettle strands is to develop a joined up approach, with all partners focused on the same group of offenders.” (Home Office, 2004, ‘POPO Catch and Convict Framework’)

“The key benefit of DIP is that it focuses on the needs of these offenders by providing new ways of cross-partnership working, as well as linking pre-existing ones, across the criminal justice system, healthcare and drugs treatment services and a range of other supporting and rehabilitative services.” (Home Office, 2011, ‘DIP Operational Handbook’)

“Different agencies bring different roles, resources, perspectives and information to risk identification, assessment and management processes. The best chance of delivering and sustaining public protection is where agencies collaborate for the purpose of safeguarding the public.” (NPIA, 2012, ‘Guidance on Protecting the Public’)

Partnering is viewed across all of the policy documents as a critical factor for achieving 'success'. This success "can only be achieved" through the partnering approach:

"Success in reducing reoffending can only be achieved by local partners working beyond traditional organisational boundaries." (Home Office and MoJ, 2010, 'Reducing Reoffending cutting crime changing lives')

This is a rationale of partnering that is generally celebratory of professional difference and diversity:

"The greatest strength of any team is achieved through each person bringing their own unique skills in order to maximise the full potential of the team." (ACPO and YJB, 2010, 'The YOT police officer review and role development')

The degree to which the benefits of partnering are assumed and celebrated within the policy documents is striking. There is no argument anywhere across any of the policy documents that conceptually disputes the ideal of partnering. In marked contrast, the case for partnering is ubiquitous and generally quite evangelical across the documents.

There is some questioning of the effective execution of partnership working, and some acknowledgement of the practical challenges inherent within it, and these issues are considered in the next section of the chapter.

The complexities of effective partnering work with offenders

Whilst the overarching tone of the policy documents is vigorously supportive of partnering as an approach, there are some identifications of concern in respect of effective execution of partnership working.

One issue in respect of the effective execution of the partnership ideal, identified in several of the policy documents, was the sheer complexity of overlapping partnering that has been created across the 'new' police work with offenders:

“...[there is] a lack of clear understanding of the relationship between the C&C [Catch and Convict] and the R&R [Resettle and Rehabilitate] strands of the [Prolific and Priority Offender] programme.” (Dawson, 2005, ‘Early findings of the POPO evaluation’)

“The Persistent Offender Scheme was seen as another initiative fighting for space on already crowded work agendas for all partners... [there were] concerns of “initiative overload” and a dilution of real priorities.” (CJJI, 2004, ‘Joint Inspection Report into Persistent and Prolific Offenders’)

Sometimes the complexity of the ‘new’ police work with offender partnering landscape is recognised within the policy documents as creating confusions in respect of leadership and direction, and also surfacing challenges for partner engagement.

“...difficulties in ensuring ownership of the programme... [and] uncertainty as to how to bring together the different agencies” (Dawson, 2005, ‘Early findings from the POPO evaluation’)

“The range and level of participation of partners varied considerably from project to project, even within the same Area.” (CJJI, 2004, ‘Joint Inspection Report into POPO’)

The flexing, formative nature of partnering can also leave some initiatives feeling “on the edge” and “vulnerable”, particularly at a moment of restrained resource availability, with questions about long-term stability.

“Uncertainties over the long term viability of these intensive interventions hindered their establishment and strategic planning and made it difficult to build them into mainstream activities.” (CJJI, 2004, ‘Joint Inspection Report into Persistent and Prolific Offenders’)

One consequence of the complexity of partnering arrangements surfaces in the identification of fractious and partial resolutions of joint performance frameworks for the work:

“There were no joint performance indicators at an operational level...There was a lack of joint performance monitoring.” (CJJI, 2004, ‘Joint Inspection

This is recognised as potentially leading to a ‘lip service’ being paid to a collective partnering approach, whilst the police and other agencies continue with legacy practices.

“There was concern in all Areas among the police that those identified as persistent offenders by the core definition were largely not those that would be prioritised by the use of the National Intelligence Model. There was little evidence found of any proactive policing being undertaken in relation to persistent offenders. Proactive policing was unlikely to be used on cases not prioritised by the National Intelligence Model.” (CJJI, 2004, Joint Inspection Report into Persistent and Prolific Offenders’)

A key feature of the emerging new models of working with offenders has been a proliferation of partnering structures and of novel organisational forms. Perhaps the most visible trait of this new labyrinth of partnering formations is complexity.

Some of this complexity within the ‘new’ police work with offenders partnering can be argued to simply reproduce long recognised multiplicity and contest regarding the objectives of working with offenders: debates between care and control, and about the complex interfaces and interactions between treatment, control, rehabilitation and punishment. There is an argument that the new partnering arrangements ‘surface’ rather than ‘create’ tensions between agency activities and outcomes, tensions that pre-date the ‘new’ police work with offenders partnership models.

Across the policy documents there is uneasy juxtaposition of language. Concepts of “treatment”, “recovery”, “patients” and “opportunities” sit alongside “surveillance”, “targets”, “control” and “criminals”. The policy documents demonstrate at times the strain put on language and concepts, in seeking to bridge the apparent gaps between different agency thinking. One example is the use of the concept of “meeting offender needs”, or of addressing “criminogenic needs”. What work is this language of “needs” doing here? Is it easier to justify practice that increases intrusion and intervention if such approaches partner with a philosophy that it is in the best interests, is also “meeting the needs”, of the individuals concerned? Certainly the emphasis on wider instrumental and societal (rather than personal) goals, a language of individuals as “targets”, and the foregrounding of “coercion” and “tough punishments” in many of the policy documents, evokes a practice context a long way distant

from traditionally recognised traits for therapeutic, support or treatment based change environments. Does a reinvention of the criminal justice system as a series of “treatment pathways” and “points of intervention” mask a ‘punitive turn’ characterised by a (somewhat hidden) reality of an increased interventionism and intrusiveness in the lives of individuals? Does it provide cover for the legitimisation of considerably enhanced roles for the police in the lives of individuals?

One of the key challenges evident from a reading of the policy documents is the sheer complexity, and overlapping nature, of governance and accountabilities for the new partnering arrangements. The reformulations of responsibility and accountability that attend any collaborating context are always a challenge to resolve successfully. An illustrative example is the MAPPA collaborative arrangements:

“...organisations working within MAPPA are held to account through the MAPPA chair for their actions regarding offenders subject to MAPPA.” (CJJI, 2011, ‘Putting the pieces together – An inspection of MAPPA’)

“MAPPA is not a statutory body in itself but is a mechanism through which agencies can better discharge their statutory responsibilities and protect the public in a co-ordinated manner. Agencies at all times retain their full statutory responsibilities and obligations. They need to ensure that these are not compromised by MAPPA. In particular, no agency should feel pressured to agree to a course of action which they consider is in conflict with their statutory obligations and wider responsibility for public protection.” (MoJ, 2012, ‘MAPPA Guidance’)

A reading of these two passages together reflects some serious ambiguity in terms of lines of accountability. On the one hand, the police along with other agencies would be (in accordance with the first quotation) “held to account” by the MAPPA partnership for their public protection work. On the other hand (based upon a reading of the second quote) the responsibility for that same work fully remains within the statutory responsibilities and command of the police as a single agency. When one adds a third element to this picture – that the police are also a statutory partner responsible for the MAPPA partnership - which is in turn holding them to account, (at least according to the first quotation) it is evident that the arrangements are worryingly opaque in respect of an ultimate clarity of accountability and governance.

Overall, the policy documents present a strong argument in support of partnering approaches, and there is no argument across any of the documents against partnering as a concept. Whilst there are some observations in respect of the effective practical execution of partnership working, the documents devote little attention or space to such questions. There are significant questions prompted by the policy discourse in respect of the complexity and efficacy of governance, and in respect of the cohesion (or otherwise) of language, concepts and objectives across participating agencies, that rest mostly unaddressed.

The final section of the chapter considers another issue that sits relatively unaddressed across the official policy documents: professional cultures and identity.

Culture and Identity

Whilst considerations of professional cultures coming together remain central to most academic research work in respect of the new emerging practice of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, they receive comparatively scant attention across most of the formal policy documents analysed in this research.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given the preference for ‘success’ narratives, the policy literature does identify elements of positive cultural development within the new models of working:

“The working cultures we found were cooperative and open and illustrated the excellent progress MAPPA had made in the time that it has been in existence.”
(CJJI, 2011, ‘Putting the pieces together – An inspection of MAPPA’)

“Overall, staff interviewed were positive about the PPO programme, particularly the benefits of increased partnership working” (Dawson, 2005, ‘Early findings from the POPO evaluation’)

“Interestingly, staff described a number of unexpected benefits of working on the PPO programme. These included staff development, job satisfaction and the improved communication between agencies” (Dawson, 2005, ‘Early findings from the POPO evaluation’)

Prevailing cultures are also included as an identified issue within the ‘failure’ narratives used to justify the new models of working.

“...a need for more fundamental reform to change the culture of the youth court, making it more open and accessible, engaging offenders and their families more closely and giving a greater voice to victims.” (Home Office, 1997, ‘No more excuses’)

There is some acknowledgement that the ‘new’ police work with offenders requires a degree of professional adaptation and learning, to enable new forms of professional practice to flourish. Part of this reflects that across different professions, different professional languages are spoken, and there is often a requirement for effective translation and the fostering of common understandings:

“It meant that staff in all agencies had, over time, to learn to share information and work collaboratively in order to assess and manage offenders who posed a risk of harm to the public.” (CJJI, 2011, ‘Putting the pieces together – An inspection of MAPPA’).

“There was a need, therefore, to develop a common language and understanding in order to ensure that all the agencies were clear about the crucial issues.” (CJJI, 2011, ‘Putting the pieces together – An inspection of MAPPA’)

Where the policy literature seems to fall silent is in identifying issues of deeper cultural dissonance and conflict between professional groups. In essence, the issue of bringing together different professional cultures and working practices is viewed as a ‘tactical’ and ‘technical’ issue (the need for more effective ways of fostering practical understandings, synthesis, trust and practical joint working arrangements on the ground within multi-agency teams), rather than a more ‘strategic’ or ‘structural’ challenge (that there may be fundamental, structural, issues reflected in the different thinking and objectives of the participating agencies).

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings from the analysis of the national policy documents.

In summary, the analysis of the policy documents has identified several key themes:

- The documents positively articulate the contributions from the police into the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships, in particular emphasising the police contribution in respect of:
 - ‘Intelligence’ and ‘information’;
 - The police capability in preventative and early intervention activity;
 - The police role as ‘enforcers’ and in exercising ‘authority’;
 - Police capability as managers of ‘risk’;
 - The relationships and networks that the police bring as an agency.
- The documents reflect an ambitious policy agenda that ‘thinks big’ and is conceived more broadly than ‘traditional’ policing outcomes. In particular there is a much greater emphasis on ‘prevention’ and ‘early intervention’, and upon ‘managing risk’, in respect of the new modes of working with offenders;
- The documents develop narratives of past systemic and strategic failure and contrast these with a celebratory tone in respect of the ‘progressive’ and ‘successful’ nature of the ‘new’ police work with offenders;
- The documents are encouraging of new ways of working, particularly partnership working between the police and other agencies. The consequential development of new partnership formations with broader policy objectives tends towards a broadening of scope for the police. This takes the police onto territory traditionally occupied by other agencies;
- The new formations of multi-agency working generate challenges for clear accountability and governance;
- The expansion of police scope can be argued to lack the accompaniment of counter-balancing and boundary-defining narratives or mechanisms in respect of what is not

appropriately 'police work'. In this sense the growth in scope of 'police work' can be conceptualised as being 'out of control';

- Issues of culture and of professional identity receive relatively little attention across the policy documents.

One element that is almost entirely lacking across the policy documents is integrative thinking across the different elements of the 'new' police work with offenders. Overall, the individual elements of the 'new' police work settings are focused upon with relatively little cross-engagement within the documents.

The findings within this chapter set an official policy context for the local interview-based case study, the results of which now follow across chapters 7-10.

Chapter 7

Senior Police Officer Interviews (1)

The Police Contribution

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews with senior police officers in respect of the contributions they perceive the police to bring to the new ways of working with offenders.

The previous chapter considered the nature and significance of the ‘new’ police work with offenders through the lens of official policy narratives at national level. This chapter together with the following two chapters (chapters 8 and 9) presents findings from a different perspective; that of senior police officers in a small English police force. Following the findings in these three chapters in respect of senior officer perceptions and understanding of the police contribution, chapter 10 engages senior stakeholder perspectives.

In this chapter and the following three which together present the findings from the interviews, wherever possible the words of the participants have been used directly, to seek to authentically capture their thinking. Where full speech marks are utilised within the chapters, it reflects direct quotation from the transcript of one of the interviews. In cases of longer quotations, the participant is identified (in the case of senior officers by rank and a letter, e.g. ‘Chief Superintendent C’). In cases of the quotation of isolated words and phrases, identification of the participants has not been provided to avoid excessive cluttering of the text and in the majority of such cases the language quoted will have been used by multiple participants.

In developing insights into senior officer thinking about the ‘new’ police work with offenders, it is interesting to explore what senior officers believe the police contribution is, and should

be, to the new modes of working with offenders. The senior officer perceptions of the police contribution were analysed as forming into four themes:

- (i) The police have a role in providing intelligence and information;
- (ii) The police identifying offenders for the partnership to work with;
- (iii) The police bring authority and enforcement, and;
- (iv) The police organisationally bring leadership, useful networks and resources.

These four themes will now be considered in turn.

Intelligence and information sharing

All the senior police officer interviews identify the police providing intelligence and information as a core contribution for the police and in the vast majority of cases it was emphasised as being the core input from the police.

Overall, the narratives across the interviews had consistent elements. In this narrative the broader nature of what the police do results in the police being in touch with the behaviour of those who offend and the realities of their lives. The police are perceived to be most “out there”, “in the real world”, “out on the streets”, and with the capability to know “what is really going on”. The police are in a position to “maintain intelligence around their [the offender’s] behaviour patterns”, and in ways that allow “greater insight” and are “more real” compared to other agencies.

This contribution is seen in part to be reflective of the police organisationally having built up substantial information and intelligence infrastructure, borne out of the wider work that police organisations do, which is perceived as a valuable asset to be brought to work to manage and rehabilitate offenders.

Beyond the substantial infrastructural investments by the police in intelligence and information capabilities, the police are seen as enjoying a position and capability as a result of

“who we are and what we do” which makes them “uniquely placed” to know what is going on in offenders’ lives and to make judgements in respect of them. Reiner (1991, 228) describes ‘profane realities’ of police work, and in a sense it is via these realities of the work the police routinely do that participants see the police contribution around information and intelligence as primarily arising.

The bulk of the senior officers put forward information and intelligence sharing as *the* role for the police in these new arrangements; in effect the core rationale for police involvement, as reflected by this input from a Chief Officer.

“I think the police role is to make sure that we provide the most up to date information and intelligence in relation to each of the offenders.” (Chief Officer A)

The emphasis placed across the senior officer interviews upon the police contribution hinging around intelligence and information is interesting to consider in the context of wider strategic thinking about the police. This is an understanding of the police role and contribution that foregrounds the information assets and role of the police as, in essence, the primary element the police bring to these new aspects of ‘police work’. This reflects some wider discourse in police strategic thinking of the critical strategic significance of intelligence and information in future models of policing (cf. Ratcliffe, 2004).

Part of the police contribution is articulated as being about providing a “richer picture”, based on the “experience” and “feel” of officers who fully “appreciate” the community contexts in which offending takes place, and who can draw on knowledge “beyond what is written down”.

"At one level it's about the information that they [the police officers in the offender management project] can bring to the party about offending history, intelligence that's in the system which wouldn't necessarily be available...So it enhances the overall picture of the individual that's being brought into question." (Chief Superintendent E)

Much of the content by senior officers in respect of intelligence and information infers a perception that this process is mostly ‘one way’. - that information-sharing primarily involves the police providing information and intelligence to the partnership and other agencies, rather

than the other way around with the police benefiting from information, or alternatively seeing it as a mutual process where several valuable sources of information and awareness are pooled together.

Policing as a site for identifying and intervening with offenders

One concept developed by several senior officers is that the police are in a prime position as the ‘gateway’ to the criminal justice system, and therefore well placed to identify offenders who need to be worked with.

"I guess we're well placed to identify – through intelligence and who we're arresting and bringing through the door in custody suites – those who are most impacting on our communities through the amount of crime they're committing. So I think identifying who we need to work with is something that we're well placed to do". (Chief Superintendent F)

This can also include a role as ‘early spotters’, with a particular capability being held by the police to be “out there” and therefore able to identify those individuals who may be “on the cusp of offending”, or exhibiting particular elements of “problematic” or “risky” behaviour.

“I think also, though, we come across a lot of individuals who are – to use that expression – on the cusp of offending and so we do identify...We're an agency who potentially do identify kids out and about, sometimes doing what they shouldn't be doing. So there is an opportunity for us to be flagging our concerns because we will be the ones directed to certain locations and certain incidents and if we see the same faces at those incidents it starts to suggest there might be some problems developing.” (Chief Superintendent G)

There is also a perception that the police are well placed to be ‘selectors’ of who is likely to “most benefit” from rehabilitative work.

“Because if you ask cops out on the beat, they will tell you which ones potentially are up for rehabilitation and which, with the best will in the world, the only way you're going to stop them is by locking them up. And it's

somehow differentiating those two categories because you don't want to spend your small pot of rehabilitation money on those that are just always going to be out there committing crime.” (Chief Officer A)

There is a thread of thinking running consistently through these perspectives, both in terms of information and in respect of identification of offenders, which is that the police bring unique and distinct qualities in “really knowing” what offenders are up to, and being able to identify which offenders present the best prospect to work with. There is a subjective and judgemental tone; if the police are “more in touch with the realities” of offender behaviour “out there” “on the ground” this carries the obvious corollary that other agencies are less in touch with those realities and (perhaps) naive to them.

There is an invocation of what “cops out on the beat” are like and what they can bring at work in this thinking. Police officers are perceived as bringing “common-sense” and “reality”, as being able “to see it as it is”, as having a “street-based” “wisdom”, “craft” and “feel”. As being the professional group “best positioned” to apply their practice wisdom and their experience to such questions.

This is potentially saying something important not only about the professional self-confidence of the police at senior officer level, but also about their perceptions of other agencies. In respect of the latter element, what is strikingly largely absent across the senior officer interviews are arguments to contextualise or balance such appreciative observations of the police contribution with reflections that other agencies also bring their own rich and distinct information about offenders that the police do not have, that other professionals bring their professions’ practice wisdom, and their valued professional experience and inputs. There is very little content across the senior officer interviews framing intelligence and information, or early identification and intervention, across the ‘new’ police work with offenders as a mutual and collaborative endeavour. In this regard the interviews may speak to limitations of cultural literacy and appreciation of diversity where the police profession works with others; they may also signal challenges to the creation of consensual appreciative working relationships between the police and other professions.

Authority and enforcement

The senior officers all viewed the police as bringing important aspects of enforcement and authority to the partnerships. Language used included “a sense of control”, “expectation”, “enforcement”, a “hard edge”, in a sense the “stick” alongside other agencies’ “carrot”:

“...in terms of the Integrated Offender Management, actually there’s a more... more edge to it by the fact that these people are identified as a cop because this is carrot and stick.” (Chief Officer A)

The police are seen as good at “holding people to account”. One senior officer argued that the police should manage the identification of officers to be involved in ‘new’ police work with offenders partnership working in a way that is:

“...explicit that you are recruiting cops for their hard line control, you know, [their] bringing to justice type skill into that team.” (Chief Superintendent E)

This in part sources from formal powers. The police are seen as exercising ‘soft’ authority backed up by ‘harder’ formal (and unique) powers as Constables, with the specific warranted powers that the office of Constable brings.

“There’s a word I’m scratching for... Coercement would be too strong a word for it but we have the ability I think to bring people along where other agencies perhaps would be ignored on the basis of the powers that we’ve subsequently got. So there is a level of coercion that is available to us as officers that isn’t available to others, other agencies.” (Superintendent M)

This is sometimes expressed as a continuum that the police bring which includes active enforcement sitting alongside and, in a sense, underwriting pro-active intervention:

“Well, I think part of that is if it’s engagement with those offenders that we’re on about, part of it is about enforcing the law. Part of it is about prosecuting them. Part of it is about...they would call it harassment, I would call it positive policing.” (Chief Superintendent H)

This thinking speaks to a stretching of traditional concepts of law enforcement by the police, toward something more extensive, pro-active and purposeful. When Crawford (2009a) talks of an ‘appropriation’ of the language of regulation, the narratives of senior officers can sound in a similar vein like an appropriation of the language of law enforcement; in order to encompass an (arguably) distinct and different agenda of enforcing programme engagement and compliance.

“...the carrot and stick approach that goes with that in terms of you either work with us or ultimately, if you continue to offend, I will also be knocking on your door but next time I’ll be arresting you.” (Superintendent M)

The concerns of ‘ambition’ and ‘ambiguity’ in respect of the resultant ‘interventionism’ that Crawford suggests is taking place in respect of an expansion in regulatory models (2009a, 810) has a resonance with, and applicability to, this thinking where the police deploy the concepts, language and activity of law enforcement to a wider canvas of offender ‘engagement’ and ‘compliance’ with programmes.

“...we’re going to offer you a chance here and if you don’t take it and you go back into your criminal ways we will be on your case and we will be locking you up. Because that’s what we are able to do. So in relation to what can we actually do, we can be the threat that’s sitting behind somebody if they don’t do what they’re asked to do.” (Chief Officer A)

There feels to be an ambiguity as to where police activity to enforce programme engagement and compliance ends, and where police enforcement of the law begins.

“So if you’re a willing partner we’ll do all these nice things with you. If you’re not a willing partner you still fall into the offender management programme but the offender management programme is much more draconian and much more narrow in its remit. Basically it’s about gathering evidence to take you off the streets if you’re committing crime.” (Chief Superintendent H)

There is an argument that this is not necessarily problematic; that law enforcement should in any case be shaped and driven by broader goals of reducing offending, so is legitimately shaped by such broader considerations of offender engagement and compliance. But some of the language used, of “being the threat”, being “robust”, “harassment”, “feared”, “positive

action” (very much used in a sense that is not intended to be ‘positive’ for the offender concerned!) and “chasing down” at least raise the possibility that what is evolving here is a utilisation of law enforcement as a tool to be deployed differentially and aggressively as a compliance mechanism in scenarios where individuals have not engaged in wider activity to try to address offending behaviour.

“...there comes a point in time where if there is no engagement then we have to take positive action and punishment will follow...” (Superintendent L)

There is talk in several interviews of an “edge”, a clarity of expectation and reality of enforcement, which is seen to help to set boundaries and provide an enabling context for the work of other agencies, which are in turn perceived as less able to establish such rules and boundaries (arguably, as having an absence of edge).

"...if you don't have that multi-disciplinary team [including the police]...you have then a group of individuals who probably want to work with offenders but aren't particularly skilled at or capable of being hard when they need to be hard, if you like, and to bring those boundaries. Because that's not what their value set or their personalities or their skill set actually is about. The police officer brings the ability to be able to enforce the rules or put the boundaries down."
(Chief Superintendent F)

In terms of the police role, the police are portrayed here in the senior officer perspectives as having a sanctioning and controlling function, as the “stick”, the “teeth”, the “authority” and the “muscle”. The attributes the police bring are ones of “being tough”, “being hard”, of having “formal powers” and “statutory powers”, and of having an image as “authority figures”. There is a ‘proto-typicality’ (Hogg, 2001) process at play here; identity work in terms of what makes a ‘good cop’, with enforcement central to the identity narrative.

Interestingly, these are not narratives of a new repertoire of skills and roles for officers, but rather of the application (expansion?) of an existing set of roles, skills and attributes to the new emerging practice context. This is about taking police officers, essentially ‘as they are’, and applying that role model to the new context, rather than a perspective that the new context is a melting pot for defining and developing new modes of working (and prompting new thinking) in terms of police officer skills, roles, powers and attributes. Much has been written, particularly in respect of police occupational culture, arguing that the nature,

demands and context of ‘the job’ of policing shape what police officers do and how they think and behave (Reiner, 2000; Paoline, 2003; Loftus, 2012). The process occurring here is resonant with this thinking regarding occupational culture, but in reverse; here what police officers have traditionally done and how they think and behave in role is being applied to define what their job will be (and should be) within novel practice contexts. To answer the question posed by Bittner (1975, ix) about what represents the ‘special competence’ of the police, the answer is being seen to lie in the distinct job role, thinking, attributes and powers brought by existing police officers and found within legacy police officer functions; the ‘special competence’, in essence, is being interpreted as being what officers are currently ‘competent’ to do.

The arguments that “enforcement” and “control” are inherent to the role and competence of police officers are associated with enduring concepts of ‘continuity’ and ‘tradition’ (Scott, 2010) and of a ‘core’ to what it means to be a police officer defined by the distinctive ‘use of force’ and ‘enforcing’ features of the role (Bittner, 1975; Reiner, 1991; Miller, 2004). This links to the thinking of Murphy and Worrall (2007) and Murphy and Lutze (2009), which was critiqued at the beginning of chapter 2, in which an argument is developed that there is a tight, stable and clear mission for the police (essentially in respect of enforcement) which is then disrupted in police-corrections partnering by the new and broader role expectations placed on the police in those novel practice contexts. In addition to the earlier critique of that thinking, what can be added here is also a challenge as to whether the whole concept – the rationale, scope, activity and fundamental meaning – of ‘enforcement’ and ‘control’ in policing may itself be uncertain and unstable. In particular whether an appropriation of the language and activities of police law enforcement approaches into the different context of techniques to achieve offender engagement in programmes may be potentially disruptive to the whole meaning of ‘enforcement’ and of ‘control work’ in policing.

In terms of senior officer perceptions of partners, once again the narratives of the senior officers portray a confident and appreciative self-assessment of what the police can bring coupled with a distinctly less appreciative assessment of what other agencies bring. Partner agencies are “not particularly skilled at or capable of being hard when they need to be hard”; partner agencies are “soft”. These are narratives of the police contribution framed within a sentiment that other agencies are poor at exercising authority, are not viewed by offenders as carrying “weight” and “credibility”, are “not good at enforcing rules”, are “weak”, and fail to “set boundaries”. In these narratives, partner agencies are viewed as not having the attributes that police officers have. This feels like a clear instance of ‘in-group’ favouring (Hogg and

Terry, 2001) through the creation of 'meta contrasting' and 'positive distinctiveness' (Tyler, 2001), with clear 'dis-identification' with the other professional groups within the partnerships (Taifel and Turner, 1979). These are narratives of 'professional superiority'. Police identity is being forged through an appeal to professional 'difference' and 'distinctiveness'. What is lacking is an appreciative perspective of the different modes of control, leverage, motivation and influence that other agencies can bring to their work with offenders.

Leadership, networks and resources

Beyond the elements of information and enforcement, the other key aspects the senior officers perceive the police as bringing are "leadership", "networks" and "relationships", and "resources".

Taking action and taking the lead

The senior officers consistently perceive the police as being an agency that is good at "getting things done". Police are "action people" who "make things happen". The police are a "can do organisation":

"...a lead role in drive and activity." (Chief Superintendent H)

"...we are the de facto leader of the group...getting on, trying to make a difference, making things happen and this sense sometimes as long as we're doing something at least we're trying to make a difference as opposed to sitting around pontificating about how the world might be. And so that practical, concrete reality of for heaven's sake let's get on and do something." (Chief Officer C)

"...a sort of can do organisation we'll cut through it." (Chief Officer B)

"...it sits with us to drive to manage every day." (Superintendent K)

This dominant role around leading the work is seen as reflective of a wider nature of the police officer role, meaning that the police are decisive and capable of managing risk.

"... the majority of any of these [offender management] groups were chaired by cops... they're probably better at making those sorts of legalistic decisions and taking clear cut decisions to manage risk. Whereas I think some other organisations aren't so I think the thing to mention around the partnerships is the leadership function that we bring to it as well." (Chief Officer B)

This police officer style is often contrasted favourably with other agency styles; it is often accompanied in the interviews by a sense that other partner agencies have a weakness in the areas of leadership and delivery.

"Rather than prevaricate we will force a decision to be made and for something to happen..." (Chief Superintendent F)

"...frustration at what appears to be lack of activity and so on, on behalf of others." (Superintendent J)

This is reflective again of a critical stance towards other agencies and what they bring. There is again a distinctly pejorative tone that partners "prevaricate" and are guilty of "pontificating", that they "just talk", that there is a "lack of activity".

However, to balance these negative narratives of partners in respect of leadership and delivery styles, there is self-awareness and reflection from some senior officers, with some recognition that the police style may be difficult for partners to work with, and that the different, slower and more reflective approaches from partners may not always be inferior to the action orientation of the police.

"But I think that the police are naturally quite assertive... almost [a] bullish style really that doesn't always go down well with partners. I would imagine at times partners probably could find it intimidating working with the police." (Superintendent N)

There is some recognition that the police style of leadership can sometimes be overly-dominant and potentially harmful within the partnerships, particularly where it focuses on pace and action to the detriment of slower, more considered judgements.

“In many ways we’re a good partner but in many ways I think we’re a bad partner as a police service because we do tend to ride rough shod over other agencies’ issues when it suits us. I think we sometimes dress that up on the basis that we’re the only agency that gets anything done. I think we are very good at getting things done but actually I think sometimes we use that as an excuse...” (Chief Superintendent H)

There is awareness that the police focus on short-term delivery and action is acculturated in the context of ‘the job’ of operational response policing, and then does not always translate well to other contexts of ‘police work’.

“So that’s the policing culture is ‘doers’ – we get it done...a Probation or Social Service will be a slower pace, probably more reflective, more considered, more consultative and doesn’t necessarily fit. Quite often that way is better because if you’re dealing with a long-term offender management programme that isn’t a quick decision... But there are, I think there’s a completely different culture there because your first four or five years in the police is all about get it done, get out, make a decision, resolve that crime, solve that incident, move on, here’s another one.” (Chief Superintendent I)

Overall, whilst the senior officer interviews present the leadership role, and the ability and professional culture of the police to take action, as important and valued, there is also self-awareness evident across several interviews that the style the police apply can sometimes be challenging and is not always constructive for other partners.

The police are the better networked and resourced partner

One practical element recognised by senior officers as underpinning this tendency for the police to take leadership is that the police tend to be the largest and best resourced agency engaged in the partnering, and to have a key network of contacts across a wide range of agencies.

“Look, to be fair the police is a public service that is heavily invested in, more than any other. You know, you look over ten or twenty years, the investment into the police service. We’re a 24/7 organisation. We are highly trained, qualified in what we’re asked to do. We’ve got a lot of infrastructure behind us so inevitably in anything to do with partners, the police are very much the one

to be seen to be able to put resources into things. 'To drive things.'
(Superintendent K)

There are several key themes within this senior officer perception that the police bring resource and networks of relationships to the work. The police have significant presence “on the ground” across communities. The police have equipment, training and infrastructural capabilities to manage dangerous situations and people safely. The police typically have by far the largest budget, and therefore are more capable of flexing resourcing if required. The police work so diversely across a range of contexts and agencies that their networked relationships with other agencies, and their related ability to influence across them, is a particular asset.

Roles that senior officers are less supportive of the police performing

Accompanying the supportive thinking of senior officers in terms of the above four key themes of police contribution, there were also worries about some of the broader and as they saw it “softer” aspects of work that police officers were being engaged with in the partnering settings.

“I do question whether we should be involved to the extent that we’re involved without some clear guidelines...I think the information sharing and the threat of enforcement are the two things that we bring to the party. I get a little bit concerned that we try and do the softer social skills stuff that actually is not our job.”(Chief Officer A)

“I would be concerned if our officers were day in, day out delivering counselling support and not delivering that enforcement activity.” (Chief Superintendent G)

“Other agencies can manage that quite well. You don’t need a police officer. That’s a waste of our resource.” (Chief Superintendent I)

Senior officers appear to have a sense of the police role and police officer identity heavily shaped by what the police currently do and by what they are currently skilled and acculturated

to focus upon, that is then being applied to these novel practice contexts of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. The police are enforcers and bring an “edge”; the police are good at making things happen and therefore natural leaders; the police have strong approaches to information and intelligence that they are happy to share. The police are not “counsellors” or “social workers”.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has explored the senior police officer interviews, focusing in on perspectives of the police contribution. Several key findings can be identified across the senior police officer interviews in respect of the contribution by the police to the ‘new’ police work with offenders:

- Four key themes of contribution can be identified across the senior police officer interviews:
 - The police have a role in providing intelligence and information;
 - The police identifying offenders for the partnership to work with;
 - The police bring authority and enforcement, and;
 - The police organisationally bring leadership, useful networks and resources.
- These aspects of police contribution are viewed both as being ‘appropriate’ and ‘value adding’ activities for the police;
- This support does not generally stretch amongst the senior police officers to broader roles for the police within the partnerships in respect of ‘counselling’, ‘support’ and “social work” type activities with offenders;
- Sitting alongside this appreciative account of what the police can and should contribute in these respects is a distinctly less appreciative tone in respect of the capabilities brought by the other agencies concerned;
- There is also a sense that the role played by police officers is being shaped by the competencies brought by the officers, rather than the competencies required by officers being shaped by new thinking and possibilities for different roles in these new practice contexts.

One interesting element of how senior police officers have approached the question of police contribution to the ‘new’ police work with offenders is in the almost exclusively operational focus of their thinking. The new models of working bring very different and much broader strategic-level roles and responsibilities for the police, such as strategic responsibilities to

prevent youth crime, tackle drugs and put in place arrangements to manage dangerousness. The police contribution has been very much understood by the senior officers as a 'practice', 'ground level', and 'front-line' question of contribution, rather than the contribution the police bring (and could or should bring) to this broader strategic activity.

This chapter reflects a supportive sentiment from senior officers that the police should be involved and that the police are perceived as bringing distinct elements of contribution. The following chapter considers the policy context within which this involvement of the police has arisen, and the key policy ideas and debates surrounding the engagement of the police across the 'new' police work with offenders.

Chapter 8

Senior Police Officers Interviews (2)

Key Policy Themes

This chapter presents findings from the senior police officer interviews in relation to the policy context within which the ‘new’ police work with offenders has emerged, and also explores key policy ideas and debates surrounding the engagement of the police across the ‘new’ police work with offenders, including the tendency for these developments to lead to an expanding role for the police.

The senior officer thinking discussed above in chapter 7, in respect of the police contribution to ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships, is suggestive of a broad consensus of support from the senior officers for the police playing a role within the ‘new’ police work with offenders. In that context, it is interesting to explore the senior officer thinking and perceptions across the policy debate within which these new modes of working have come about. There was a wide range of policy themes developed by the senior officers across their interviews. The chapter looks in turn at the issues which were identified through analysis as being policy related themes drawn out across the officer interviews, and is structured as follows:

- The chapter begins by exploring senior officer perceptions of the policy process and environment. This includes identifying themes of a perceived lack of clarity and cohesion in policy development, and of a remoteness and separation felt by senior officers towards the ‘new’ police work with offenders;
- Then the appeal to police ‘history’ and ‘tradition’ by the senior officers is discussed;
- The next section of the chapter then discusses the significance of narratives of decline and crisis for the senior officers is explored;

- The dominance of performance narratives in policing is then identified as an issue for the senior officers in the next section of the chapter, generating a variety of issues and implications;
- The usage of narratives of progress and enlightenment by senior officers is then identified and explored;
- And finally, the remaining sections of the chapter explore the thinking of the senior officers in respect of an expanding model for policing, contrasting ‘core’ and ‘expanding’ conceptualisations of the police role within the senior officer interviews.

A lack of clarity and cohesion in policy-making?

Reflective of the discussion in chapter 2 of the complex and sometimes confused policy environment in respect of the police, several of the senior officers expressed viewpoints that the policy and planning in respect of these changes in police work has lacked both clarity and coherence.

There are frustrations amongst senior officers that there is insufficient clarity and leadership about the police role, including even in basic terms of shared definition.

“I think, as time has evolved in the last decade, we have become more focused on what I would call offender management. Why I say ‘what I call offender management’ is because I’m not sure that the police service, if you want my honest view, I’m not sure that the police service as a whole really have a clear view of what that even means...I think isolated people have a view of offender management but if you go to different senior officers, different middle managers, different police forces, they’ll all have a slightly different variation on this offender management theme.” (Chief Superintendent H)

There is a narrative of chance and accident rather than of strategic thought and planning, attached by some senior officers to the roles the police undertake.

“I think certainly there should be some organisation that’s trying to prevent reoffending. And it just so happens it’s policing.” (Superintendent J)

For some senior officers, these perceived flaws in policy development and strategic thinking are resonant with wider limitations to strategic thinking and planning.

“We don’t see something through, we never do a five year plan...We say we do three year plans sometimes but we don’t. Because priorities change and police leadership changes so much as well. You know, we’re moved about; everyone’s got a different idea and agenda. We don’t, we never see our strategy through. We never look at something and think, ‘right, what do we want to achieve longer-term around this aspect?’” (Superintendent K)

This lack of “clear strategic definition” and “certainty” speaks to the need identified by Wood and Bradley (2009) for a clear and ‘renewed vision’ of what the police do, and ‘what they stand for’.

The sense that it is unclear whether the ‘new’ police work with offenders is something that the force ‘stands for’ in turn leads to concerns that the police may just be “paying a lip service” to an engagement with the new modes of working which is only “partial” and culturally the organisation “still doesn’t really mean it” and it is “still very many miles from the cop culture”.

“In practice, no we don’t do it. We don’t do it. But we’re dealing with a mixed message again now because we want enforcement but, yes, we want to do this offender management stuff [as well]. Well, I don’t think I even know what we’re trying to achieve from it quite frankly... [Others in the force are] resistant. No other word to it...We’ll say everything how great and wonderful it is. In practice we don’t do it...I mean honestly how much have we put money into rehabilitation? It’d be a pitiful amount... And the problem is, we’ve got a few people who are trying to drive the integrated offender management but it hasn’t got the infrastructure around it. It hasn’t got the real support around it so we’re going to play at it.” (Superintendent K)

“I just don’t think a lot of forces, and I include us in this at the minute, have got all of the ducks lined up in the right order to go and deal with it [offender

management]. We've got a grand theory over here and we keep talking in theoretical terms but I don't think there's much of a solid foundation underneath it." (Chief Superintendent H)

There was much reflection across the interviews of "political cycles" (in terms of internal organisational and professional 'politics' as well as wider political contexts) and of "policy that just keeps going round in circles", policy that "changes all the time", and tends to shift towards "the next glitzy shiny new idea".

"It's getting there – work in progress offender managing. I just hope that ACPO don't change it next year and say we're not going to do it anymore! 'Oh, what shall we do this year then?' Because somebody else will come up with a whizzy idea and off we'll go doing something else." (Superintendent L)

There are some worries that this perceived lack of a clear strategic approach may risk the police degenerating from a clear strategic shape for 'police work' into a context where the police end up doing "a bit of everything", with police work "drifting" and "shifting" too far away from "the job". Finnane (1994, 11) talked of a 'spectrum of possibilities' for policing; amongst the senior officers there appears to be concern that this can "degenerate" and "disintegrate" into a tendency to "do a bit of everything".

"I don't think at the moment we are that clear about what our roles are and we try and do a bit of everything." (Superintendent N)

This lack of "clarity", "substance" and "foundation" in police policy in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders resonates with the wider literature on police purpose and strategy. Discussed in chapter 2, key themes identified included a highly confused picture with a lack of consensus about roles and responsibilities (Miller, 2004; Collier, 2006), and a search for strategic 'clarity' and 'identity' (Bayley and Shearing, 2001) and 'guiding ethos' (Bowling, 2006). A key theme across this wider literature is one of an 'expanding base' of expectations (Clark, 2005, 644) and of 'overstretch' across a wide 'terrain' of expectations on the police (Edwards and Skidmore, 2006).

Some of these concerns resonate with wider observations about a perceived lack of leadership across the policing landscape, particularly at a national level.

"I struggle to see us ever getting clarity from ACPO [Association of Chief Police Officers] on offender management or for that matter on anything...Nobody thinks that we know what we're doing in a professional way and we haven't got a single professional body that speaks for us. So we're very divided in our views." (Chief Superintendent F)

Developing this point further, and contrasting somewhat with perspectives of senior police officers as a powerful elite, many senior officers express a view that policing, including the 'new' police work with offenders, is shaped by others and not by the senior police officers themselves.

"[Speaking of chief officers] They're pigs stuck in the middle really, between a new government approach [to offenders] which is strong on rhetoric and yet the expectation of police performance in traditional areas remains." (Superintendent M)

"The difficulty we have in this country is that policing is focused and influenced significantly by government policy. Most of the legislation that comes about isn't brought about by police, it's brought about by some government think tank that decides this is the best way to go." (Superintendent J)

There is an argument essentially being set out here that police policy should be shaped by the police profession and police senior leaders. This reflects the complex policy environment in respect of policing discussed in chapter 2, conceptualised as the balancing of 'community', 'professional' and 'political' elements (Faulker, 1994; Scott, 2010). Overall, the senior officers mostly project a critical sentiment within which the engagement of elements beyond the profession in police policy making is rendered problematic, rather than a more appreciative perspective that might have viewed such wider engagements as potentially positive, for example in terms of unlocking potential additional resource, or enabling innovation, or in provoking challenges to traditional thinking and practice within the profession.

Collectively, these sentiments within the senior officer interviews speak to a frustration about perceptions of a lack of clarity, cohesion, control, and stable direction to police strategy. And sitting alongside that, a sense that practice in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders

is emerging in a complex, iterative, somewhat chaotic and not necessarily sustainable manner rather than in a planned and thought through way.

A separation from mainstream police thinking and practice?

In part reflective of this policy environment, some senior officers see themselves as quite remote from the ‘new’ police work with offender agenda, and also attribute a similar detachment to some of their senior colleagues in the force.

“I don’t really know. I wouldn’t feel very confident or very comfortable about answering that question [about the effectiveness of integrated offender management] because I’m not sure I really understand what it is that they do...Perhaps it’s a sad indictment on the service but I’m not sure if you went and asked many of my colleagues that they’d have a really clear view about what we think we get out of it...Or even what we think we want to get out of it.” (Chief Superintendent H)

"I’m probably too far away in terms of understanding what the Youth Offending Service now do." (Chief Officer C)

A sound knowledge of the new working arrangements is seen by several senior officers as a “niche” rather than distributed at senior level across the police organisation.

“I don’t think we understand it apart from those in the niche roles. You know, like in this force you could probably name ten to fifteen officers that you could probably say properly understand integrated working with partners around the rehabilitation and diversion of offenders. You know, who you could actually sit down with and they could actually tell you all the different routes and what they try to do and what the barriers are. It’s not enough, is it?” (Superintendent K)

This can lead to a sense senior officers at times may express a general support for developments but may not be “in touch” with them, or to be seen by others as having a

“belief” in them. Those who are perceived as ‘genuinely’ behind the agenda are felt by some to be a minority.

“I’ve got officers and staff telling me, you know one very kindly pulled me up yesterday and said to me, ‘We’ve never had a leader that’s actually genuinely believed this stuff.’” (Superintendent M)

There is a narrative amongst some senior officers that the work remains largely separate from the mainstream activity of policing, and is also perceived as not being mainstreamed into police thinking or practice.

“Now we do offender management well in parts but we probably do offender management with offender management teams therefore it’s seen as the remit of someone else to do as opposed to a holistic view about the way that the police function and manage offenders.” (Chief Superintendent H)

“I think at the moment within policing, offender management is still regarded as a nice-to-do and can’t we just leave it with these ten officers over here.” (Chief Superintendent I)

This “disconnect” is identified by some in the lack of integration of the ‘new’ police work with offender activities into the “performance management” and “tasking” of the force.

“... the knowledge of our officers around what the Youth Offending Services can achieve and what they actually do is wanting... I don’t see the join, I don’t see the strategic join... You know, at performance management meetings, tasking meetings, we never talk about what the Youth Offending Service can do.” (Superintendent K)

This separateness can also be seen as creating a “career backwater”, and as being a “sideshow”; being seen not only as “separate” to mainstream policing but also as being different and inferior to core traditional modes of police activity.

“There’s always been these efforts to prevent and divert people away from criminality but it’s only been a niche part of our business. It’s a very small percentage of our resources put into it and it was something that people who

weren't very good at policing went and did a bit of that stuff, a bit of Social Services or work the other side and became native and do-gooders and social workers type thing." (Superintendent J)

Some senior officers question whether they and their senior colleagues have "taken the time" to "properly establish" the purpose of the work and thus whether the police have a clear sense of what the purpose of seconding police officers into the new partnership arrangements is.

"I think we often put it [the role of Youth Offending Team seconded police officers] into the 'too difficult' partnership basket. Do we really understand what we're trying to get out of it by putting three or four cops into it?" (Chief Superintendent H)

"And then you suddenly realise you've got an officer sitting there for five years that, what have they actually achieved for the police? They've effectively been an extra pair of hands for the Youth Service or Drugs Awareness or whatever it's been." (Chief Superintendent I)

This leads to a context where the organisation perceived to "forget" about the officers seconded into the new arrangements; the police have "ticked that box" and "kept everyone happy" by having a secondment arrangement but then "don't really worry about what they do."

"Because for quite a long time nobody was interested in them [seconded officers to the Youth Offending Service]." (Superintendent N)

"...I think as a management team we haven't kept them on track and made sure they're delivering what we want them to deliver and not just what the partners want them to deliver." (Chief Superintendent I)

This sense that the 'new' police work with offenders lacks a "mainstreamed", "core", "integrated" status within 'police work' mirrors wider narratives of ambiguity and ambivalence towards expanding police roles. It speaks to the wider societal decision identified by Blair (1994, 1) of the 'extent' to which policing should become a broader crime prevention as well as 'merely a law enforcement agency'. But it also reflects professional

uncertainties about expanding remits and roles, and about how police thinking and practice has not necessarily 'kept up' with a 'hyper-innovation' (Crawford, 2006) in practice. The changes as yet have not it appears passed the test set by Crawford almost two decades ago of 'genuine change' in 'organisational location' (Crawford, 1994a, 61). As far as the senior officers interviewed are concerned, mainstreaming of the 'new' police work with offenders into police thinking and practice remains some way off.

History and tradition

Several of the senior officer interviews drew with notable frequency upon a sense of policing history and tradition to "root" and illustrate their thinking in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders. It appears that both 'history' and 'tradition' may play important roles for some senior officers in respect of their professional identities and their thinking about these changes and more widely about the future of policing.

Two texts in particular are cited by senior officers across the interviews (almost to the exclusion of any other points of reference in respect of police history) in a manner which suggests they are relied upon as being of a particular 'foundational' importance. One is the Oath that is sworn at the point of attestation to the office of Constable and the other is the (so called) 'Peelian Principles' that relate to the formation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829. This emphasis on particular key texts and historical points of reference reflects the argument by Johnson (1991, 205) when he talks of 'cornerstone' principles that were set out by the 'founders' of policing.

These two texts are put to work a significant amount by the senior officers in terms of helping to define police identity by the senior officers: they use the language of wishing to "root" and "anchor" police work, and to "get back to first principles".

"...one of our wider priorities from Peelian times, whether protecting life or protecting property, preventing crime – when you go back to some of those Peelian principles..." (Superintendent N)

"The reality is, if you go back to the oath and what we're about..." (Chief Officer C)

"...the core principles around the oath that one takes when one becomes a police officer. It's very clear about what we're supposed to do." (Chief Superintendent F)

"Obviously there is always a conflict with this. Obviously our mandate, if you like, from the public and the government and the queen and all that attestation stuff coming out of Peel and so forth is all about protecting the public, fear or favour, etc. etc. fairness and so on." (Superintendent M)

"But going right back to that oath and preventing, detecting, protecting..." (Chief Superintendent G)

"[The mission of the police is] in its simplest terms, I suppose, to prevent and detect crime. Keep people safe. Keep people from harm. You know, in really broad, simplistic terms. Every constable learned that initial definition [from the oath at their attestation] of protecting people from harm, preventing/detecting crime – that's what a police constable does." (Superintendent G)

The senior officers appear to draw upon a very limited reading of police tradition and history here – particularly reliant upon these two specific 'foundational' texts. A narrow convergence on a very small number of historical reference points risks failing to engage other key perspectives and alternative positions in respect of policing history.

On the whole, their engagement with history and tradition also feels like a celebratory and (arguably overly) respectful reading of police history and tradition at work across much of the thinking of the senior officers. The predominant thinking is that the tradition of policing is a "proud" one to be "celebrated", "valued", "respected", and to be "built on" and "drawn upon" and "evolved". There is little or no questioning or critical narrative about police history and tradition. History and tradition are being put to use to argue for inherent "continuities" and "progress"; the future needs to be "built upon" the "strong foundations" and "proud" traditions of the past. The approach adopted by many of the senior officers tends towards history and tradition put to use as constructive myth, as part of a teleological exercise leading to assumptions about the essential nature and inherent (inevitable?) progress of policing. This is not only a limited and uncritical reading of the tradition and history of the police; it is also at times a monumental, romanticised version of that history and tradition.

Oddly juxtaposed alongside this largely uncritical reading of police history and tradition, sits an overarching sense of “failure”, “decline” and “crisis” in and around the work of the police, which is considered in the next section.

Decline and Crisis

If there is a lack of critical edge to some senior officer narratives of tradition and history, there is a balance of sorts to be found in what can often seem overly-critical, pessimistic, unremittingly negative accounts of the current state of the police.

“...so it’s broken from start to finish really.” (Superintendent K)

“...the problem is policing doesn’t work anymore.” (Chief Superintendent F)

“...the stark blazing reality is we are failing.” (Superintendent J)

These are not accounts, despite their negativity, that generally challenge policing in an existential manner. The positions taken by senior officers are primarily that policing remains a good and very necessary thing; it is only that it is not being developed and delivered in the right ways.

The central feature of the narratives of ‘failure’ in respect of the context for the ‘new’ police work with offenders is a sense by senior officers of “a revolving door” with offenders, of the “lack of anything real” that is perceived to be achieved by traditional, enforcement-based models of policing to tackle their offending longer-term.

“...we lock them up, they go to prison, they come out, they start again, we lock them up, they go back to prison.” (Chief Officer A)

“...the conveyor belt of the same people going to prison, coming out the other end. It’s just a vicious cycle all the time.” (Superintendent K)

“...we convict them again for a burglary. They’ll go in for six months, they’ll come back out and start screwing houses again.” (Superintendent L)

“...the idea you catch people once they’ve done something and lock them up just really doesn’t work...If we just wait to lock people up we’ll be at that for a never-ending cycle and it doesn’t actually deliver.” (Superintendent J)

An apparently common cultural story for senior officers referenced in several interviews is of having arrested people when they recall arresting a parent or even a grandparent earlier in their careers, therefore feeding a sense of frustration that what the police are doing is not having a real or lasting impact.

There is a perception by some senior officers that the sense of failure of the police is so profound that the achievement of policing objectives has been primarily through other things beyond ‘police work’.

“...the reality is going out and locking someone up, they can get three months inside. They come out, they do it again, you lock them up – it doesn’t stop the long-term trend. The only things, personally, that’s affected crime rates particularly round the volume crime stuff has been issues that we have no impact on. Such as new design for cars, better security in houses, that sort of thing. Not the policing approach.” (Chief Superintendent I)

Earlier, in chapter 2, the wider literature on narratives of decline and crisis in respect of policing was explored. This identified an enduring pattern of such narratives across policing (Reiner, 1991; Edwards and Skidmore, 2006), including the sense of a lost but glorious past; of a past now lost in which the police had been construed ‘as beloved totems of national pride’ (Reiner, 1991, 230). This sense of perpetual ‘crisis’ and ‘decline’ can contribute to a hurried, chaotic, knee-jerking, crisis-driven approach to police policy that lacks longer-term and systematic thinking and strategic planning (Edwards and Skidmore, 2006; Scott, 2010).

These narratives of failure, of a cycle of enforcement and repeat offending that needs to be broken, point for many of the senior officers to the arguments for a shift from a narrow enforcement based model towards a broader, more preventative model of policing (which are explored further later in this chapter).

Performance

The thinking and language of performance management is one of the core themes shaping the policy thinking of senior officers in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders. The senior police officers frequently frame their discussions of police engagement in the new formations of work with offenders as based upon "outcomes", "results", "success", "benefits" and "value".

That the leaders of an organisation are focused on outcomes and results is unremarkable. What is of more interest, emergent across the interviews, is the predominance of particular framings of "performance" as a fundamental theme shaping the thinking of senior officers.

There is a strong cultural importance evident across the senior officer interviews attached to "performing" and to being "deliverers". The police are seen by senior officers as being an organisation that delivers, contrasted with other organisations that presumably, by inference, are perceived not to. At times this slant on performance feels quite 'hard' and even 'macho' in language and style: this is about being "robust", being "tough", "getting a grip". There is a strong flavour of new public management in all this. "Hitting the numbers" is clearly an important part of the professional culture for these senior officers. In essence, as one senior officer put it (albeit ironically whilst criticising what he viewed as being the prevailing performance culture) "good cops makes the graphs go the right way".

Uncertainty of performance outcomes and approaches in offender partnerships

This strong performance narrative collides somewhat with real uncertainty and ambivalence identified within the interviews about the performance outputs and outcomes across the 'new' police work with offenders.

"I've still not heard from anybody a clear understanding of what we mean by results. How do you quantify in PIs [Performance Indicators] or targets or KPIs [Key Performance Indicators] or whatever." (Chief Superintendent E)

"There are real conflicts that need sorting out in terms of what our joint targets are." (Superintendent M)

The use of the language of "conflict" is important: this feels to be more than an exhibition of mere confusion or an expression of a desire for clarification. This is the 'contested territory'

(Neyroud, 2008, 340) and ‘contention’ (Edwards and Skidmore, 2006, 24) identified more broadly across police performance debates, but writ large in the complex cauldron of uncertain, multi-agency, broad-based partnering coalitions.

The contention and conflict about aims can be exaggerated, most specifically in the context that “reducing re-offending” feels like a commonly shared aim across most senior officers and most of the partners they work with. Nevertheless, even in this regard where the outcome is shared, there is only limited consensus about the means of performing to achieve that outcome.

“...should we try and prevent the criminalisation of our youth so that they can actually make a success of their life or should we simply be bringing them to book for everything because actually a huge deterrent needs to be put out there...It’s [reduction in offending] more due to people being locked up and put away than it is to people who are being rehabilitated.” (Chief Officer A)

These impressions that performance outcomes for the ‘new’ police work with offenders are difficult to define and measure can leave perceptions that the whole approach is vulnerable, given the dominant performance-driven organisational culture.

“...it’s a bit schizophrenic I think. I don’t think it’s thought through...like we’re going through now, just chopping big chunks out...and the offender type management stuff is going because you can’t measure it. It can’t be measured so that’s the stuff that’s not sexy. Well, actually, we’ve got to cut 20% so let’s cut that team there that don’t want to do anything, that’s just nice to criminals so get rid of it.” (Superintendent L)

One challenge that senior officers seem to wrestle with is how to establish the “true value” of the work. They feel “intuitively” that it “must be effective”, but take a view that fully “capturing” this, in “cost benefit terms”, remains “a challenge”.

"What I don’t think we can necessarily demonstrate is the true value of that [Integrated Offender Management] and therefore when you’re into the tricky territory of understanding cost benefit and how you’re going to spend each pound, whilst intuitively your professional judgement says it’s the right thing to

do it's really difficult to demonstrate that that is the right thing to do and it'll bring the benefits that you want." (Chief Officer C)

"I think the problem is the intangibility of success [in respect of a prolific offending scheme] makes it difficult for some people – particularly cops who like to see success as tangible." (Chief Officer D)

A perspective expressed by one senior officer was that this relative lack of tangibility may “go with the territory” of a more holistic thinking and intervention around the problem of offending. This viewpoint reflects that the new, broader approaches to work with offenders is the right thing to do, but may be less “attractive” and “obvious” to some senior colleagues “because they are less straightforward to measure”.

Paying ‘lip service’

Building upon this last point, there is scepticism across several of the senior officers that whilst “in theory” there is police service commitment, in reality this is “lip service” and the approaches have not fully “rooted” and been established in a sustainable manner within the dominant performance psyche of the force.

“But there’s always this fear of ‘Well, how long is this going to last?’ Before they revert? Or the funding is pulled? I think my impression at a senior level, a lot of this is just lip service...In this force I don’t see any sort of serious attempt to genuinely get behind offender management.” (Chief Superintendent I)

The argument here, shared by several of the senior officers, is that a predominant psyche about what performance in policing is (and is not), and how it is measured, has left much of the new developments of the ‘new’ police work with offenders outside this predominant thinking, and therefore the new developments have not become embedded within the fundamental performance thinking of the force but instead are still seen as sitting outside of that thinking.

Performance system having an effect of ‘fossilising’ thinking and practice

There is a tendency for performance systems to ‘fossilise’ current modes of practice. Indicators evolve a kind of normative authority within organisations. The existence of ‘key’ performance indicators inevitably also communicates what is less key, less important. This

can create powerful, deeply embedded cultural understandings of what it means to be high performing.

In the context of the force in question, the senior officers interviewed reflect that the performance model appears to foreground “year to date reductions in crime” (and within that certain categories of crime). Several senior officers reference the pervasive emphasis on “SAC figures” (SAC is an acronym for ‘serious acquisitive crime’, a Home Office statistical crime category incorporating vehicle crime, domestic burglary and robbery, which the force has higher recorded levels of than comparative forces and therefore it had been a point of emphasis for performance management within the force for several years). Some see this as being one of the “most powerful cultural symbols” within the organisation.

“But that [offender management] is going to be a long-term programme of work to actually achieve, and within three months of setting that team up [an Integrated Offender Management team], I’ve been under a lot of pressure from chief officers to close it down and go back to having burglary, auto crime teams. Because it’s not having that weekly impact on the SAC [serious acquisitive crime] performance figures although it’s doing some really good work.” (Chief Superintendent I)

Senior officers see themselves as frequently drawn into processes that emphasise this dominant performance narrative, about the “here and now” of specific crime statistics. There are powerful cultural stories retold in several of the interviews of chief officers phoning down into the organisation on the basis of the figures for recent days or weeks; there are similarly culturally symbolic stories about the movements of senior staff (into and out of posts) on the basis of their perceived success or otherwise against the criteria of ‘reducing SAC’. This kind of model of performance management can in turn entrench and embed current professional practice, if that is what the measurement happens to have been built around.

Single agency performance perspectives

One element of the force’s performance framework identified by several senior officers was the single agency perspective, which one senior officer appreciated does not always “fit easily up against the bigger and broader thinking” characterised across the objectives of the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

The picture of the predominant performance regime painted by the senior officers is fundamentally single agency. The focus is upon police performance; the language is of “force performance”, “becoming a high performance organisation”, a need for a “catching up” with “most similar forces”. This is not a performance conversation that engages the wider conceptualisations of broader social goals and joint working to achieve them identified as paramount in the national policy narratives identified in chapter 6. Essentially, this is a performance conversation about the police as a single organisation hitting short-term crime statistic based targets.

Performance as a “game”

Some senior officers worry that the whole performance infrastructure and approach can degenerate into a kind of “game”. That it can “breed superficial actions”, that it can “tilt” behaviours and shift focus into “the wrong places”. Several of the senior officers link this to a distrust for targets; what one senior officer referenced as “tired old thinking”. Another interview talked of the “immense and lasting cultural damage” perceived to be caused by a “target-obsessed” senior colleague he had worked with previously. This reflects what Fitzgibbon and Lea (2010, 216) dismiss as ‘target mania’, with the many downsides of a target driven practice ethos.

“We shouldn’t be playing those games. We should be playing the game of trying to prevent crime and trying to deliver a quality service to the customers.”
(Chief Officer A)

There is a sense that not playing by the implied rules of this “game” can be limiting in terms of progression for senior officers.

“...and yet the local expectation of performance in traditional areas remains. Here’s me, little Mr X, trying to say, go on – be brave and give it [a long-term offender management approach] a shout. But the bottom line is they’ve got more to lose than I have because they’re altogether more ambitious I guess. Ambition is fed by success, is fed by achievement of figures, fed by the same old approaches.” (Superintendent M)

One consequence of this ‘game’ alluded to by senior officers in respect of performance is a tendency to be “dragged into” short-term thinking and behaviours.

Short-termism

Short-termism appears to be a major theme for senior officers in discussing the apparent disconnect between the ‘new’ police work with offenders and the dominant performance narratives within the force.

“We hold ourselves to account in very, very short timescales...If you’re going to do it [offender management] properly you have to look at it and say what we’re about to embark on isn’t likely to bring a significant result in a short time frame...we don’t look longer term...we just look for the hits we can find now in reality.” (Chief Superintendent H)

A commonly held viewpoint is that the new modes of working with offenders focus on outcomes over a timescale of several years, which clashes culturally with an organisational performance mindset that is focused on days, weeks and months.

“...the trouble with policing for me is short-termism, today’s performance today, not about tomorrow’s performance tomorrow. The energy you put into prevent and deter, you won’t see the results of that for two or three years.” (Chief Officer A)

“Wouldn’t we be better off in dedicating that one and six [team of one sergeant and six officers] to doing some genuine prevention work? But the reality is we’re purely focused on those weekly performance figures. Sometimes even of daily crime figures”(Chief Superintendent E)

Some senior officers reflected that short-termism did not just erode support for the approaches, but also influenced how the police engaged within them:

“And I think we knee-jerk. Our vision of what we want to do as a service about offending management changes from month to month depending on what our performance figures look like. This force is a good example of it. We set out at the start of the financial year with a vision that we were going to do this holistic approach to offender management. We’re now shooting back into yes, but that’s going to be about nicking them at the first opportunity...” (Chief Superintendent G)

A malign effect of a culture of target-setting and performance based reward and promotion systems can be myopia; a dominant culture in which longer-term interests, wider definitions of success and value, and stability can risk displacement in the face of an emphasis on activist approaches and short-term performance achievements against a narrowly defined immediate bottom line. Rather like investors discount longer-term gains, managers discount benefits beyond the periods of relatively short-term tenures. There is a risk in such models of performance management that a bigger picture might be missed. Short-term performance may be critical to success and may well translate into longer-term goals but what is best in the short-term is not necessarily the same strategy that generates value over the longer-term. The challenge recognised by several of the senior officers is that the strength of short-term thinking within the organisation may be distracting their force from a full engagement across the 'new' police work with offenders.

In contrast to this somewhat pessimistic assessment by the senior officers in respect of performance management and short-termism, most of the senior officer identify with the 'new' police work with offenders as being 'progressive' and 'enlightened'. This is explored in the next section of the chapter.

'Progress', 'Enlightenment' and contrasting dominant cultures

Finally in terms of key policy themes evident across the interviews with the senior officers, the 'new' police work with offenders is widely argued as being "progressive", as being "better" than what has gone before, and as being an "enlightened" approach. Whatever the doubts, contradictions and tensions that senior officers wrestle with in terms of the 'new' police work with offenders, there is a balancing of those concerns with a strong representation of the changes as being "progressive" and "a good thing".

A word that is used by several of the senior officers is that the changes are "enlightened". Resonating with wider scholarship on the concept of 'enlightenment', this particular enlightenment in respect of new modes of 'police work' is viewed by senior officers as challenging and sceptical of current thinking. The 'new' police work with offenders is viewed as being broader in vision and rooted in more sophisticated understandings, leading to deeper thinking, and allowing and provoking fresh points of view.

Negative portrayals of the legacy police culture towards offenders

In a sense, there is a 'dark ages' narrative to sit alongside the narratives of 'enlightenment', with senior officers reflecting disparagingly on "old fashioned", "primitive" and "base" police attitudes to offenders.

"Some people in the police view a measure of our success in terms of the extent to which people who are committing crime don't get away with it and are brought to justice. So that's kind of an old-fashioned battle and you measure our success by whether we're winning or they're winning. And that's quite a primitive sort of instinct but it's part of the culture, part of the nature of the beast isn't it?" (Chief Superintendent E)

These 'dark ages' narratives link to the sense of failure and limitations in respect of traditional reactive, enforcing modes of policing.

"I think there's more understanding now within the service. That enforcement, enforcement, enforcement isn't right. Or [at least] won't work long term in all circumstances." (Chief Superintendent F)

"Yes, it's progress and it's progressive. We cannot sustain, and I don't think there's an appetite quite simply because of the financial drain on the nation, to just lock people up. Scientific research tells us it doesn't work" (Superintendent L)

"Shallow" and "negative" perspectives towards offenders are viewed, in contrast, as elements of a "primitive" and "old fashioned" past thinking.

"I think generally policing has a poor attitude towards offenders." (Chief Officer B)

"[the dominant narrative has been...] there are just bad people... bang 'em up... policing as cynicism borne of experience." (Chief Officer A)

"We tend to use words like 'scum' and all that kind of inappropriate labelling...we will talk generally around yobbish behaviour." (Chief Superintendent F)

Some senior officers articulate a degree of “disappointment”, and indeed “exasperation”, with what they view to be dominant cultural narratives about offenders within policing.

"I think the majority do feel it's just about – and this is horrible, being a cop myself... I think the majority, it's just about 'bang 'em up'." (Chief Superintendent G)

These cultural assessments not only contrast with the themes of ‘enlightenment’ and ‘progress’ but also have some resonance with wider cultural narratives about the police. They tend towards engaging a predominantly negative account of police culture, seeing it as a barrier to progress (Goldsmith, 1990; Sparrow et al, 1990; Dean, 1995), as ‘reactionary’ (Thomas, 1994, 24) and as negatively pervasive across attempts to reform (Skolnick, 1966; Manning, 1977; Davies and Thomas, 2003).

Senior officers reflect upon their attitudes towards offenders as having been shaped by the distinct experiences of being a police officer, in particular the “formative years” of being an officer. These “formative” experiences and viewpoints generally are not seen as having been particularly ‘enlightened’, with several senior officers using language of “cynicism”, “hate”, “realism” and “contempt”, and of being “scarred” in views towards offenders.

“I remember when I was a PC - you do get to the stage where you just hate offenders. You see the damage they do, you deal with them day in, day out. You see them going to court and getting away with and it's not a pleasant environment to be in day in, day out. The attitude towards offenders varies depending on what you do...It is fine for me to sit in an office...[as someone who] doesn't have to deal with them day-to-day to have a better view but those on the streets. When you're charged with dealing with them, particularly the violent ones and if you've ever been injured – a couple of times I have. You know, your attitude changes each time. And it's very hard to think of these people as poor individuals who need some support and help. Most people who've been police officers change. And unfortunately mostly for the worse in terms of ... you lose your innocence if you ever had any.” (Superintendent J)

“My views might be quite...well, I'd hope they're not blinkered but you can't help but be battle scarred by your own experiences.” (Superintendent L)

There appears to be an importance attached to this “formative” journey of developing professional experience and identity, which can be seen through the lenses of concepts of ‘membership claiming’ (Bartel and Dutton, 2001), ‘anchorage’ (Abrams and Randsley de Moura, 2001) and ‘belonging’ (Tyler, 2001).

Part of this dominant culture is perceived by senior officers to be reflected in how the organisation operates: what ‘police work’ is valued; what attitudes, roles and approaches are valued, and which less so; “what cops need to do to get on” in terms of preferment and promotion; and what is perceived to make someone “a good police officer”.

"I think probably in policing you've got a majority of 80% plus that are in that control model mindset and then you have a minority which are probably more inclined to the liberal set, about integrating and management and rehabilitate offenders, trying to work with them to prevent. That sort of work because they've probably come with a different value set, they probably thought they were coming to policing to be able to do that. And they are in the minority and in terms of progression they are probably – and I haven't got any data but my gut feeling is that they are probably less likely to have been successful through promotion processes or to hold jobs which are as highly regarded as other parts of the organisation. So I think there's that whole valuing by the organisation of those respected [enforcement] models which constantly reinforces the fact that it's about the control and the bringing to justice bit." (Chief Superintendent E)

“[Speaking of a personal involvement in offender management] This enlightenment could be a serious risk to me in terms of I could be number one branded as a, you know, ‘leftie do-gooder’ in the force. ‘Oh, whatever happened to Mr X?’ I suspect that it could probably typecast me so I've got to be a little bit careful. At its worst it could brand me and potentially poison me.” (Superintendent M)

This has some resonance with concepts of multiple and conflicting professional identities (Ashforth and Johnson 2001). As the new forms of ‘police work’ emerge, there is the challenge for individual officers and for the profession as a whole of achieving ‘fit’ (Oakes, 1987) and ‘situational relevance’ (Ashforth and Johnson, 2001), with a recognition that the

new contexts reflect complex multiple identity environments (Thoits and Virshup, 1997) in which 'mixed' and 'ambiguous' identifications evolve and take place (Elsbach, 1999).

Progressive and enlightenment narratives

The progressive perspective is that "old" and "traditional" thinking viewed the police as being about enforcement, and wider work with offenders as being the remit of other agencies, but that this is something the profession is now "maturing" and "growing" away from.

The sense of 'progress' and 'enlightenment' is driven by what are perceived to be greater "understanding" of, and more "rounded" perspectives towards, offenders.

"I think there's a better understanding of offenders and their context than there perhaps was in the past so it's not about excusing offenders but it is about trying to understand. Why is this person offending? What are the influences? What are the problems that individual's got? And not about taking away culpability but just understanding better the context." (Chief Officer C)

"...my perception is that we've moved, since I joined in the mid-80s, we've moved towards a greater understanding of all those causal factors around offending and how we should be working to reduce individuals likelihood of offending by identifying precursor activity, indicators of I suppose a vulnerability to offend." (Chief Superintendent G)

Thus that which is sensed by senior officers as 'enlightenment' is rooted in their perceptions that there has been a shift in the way that the police think, and in particular the greater "breadth" and "depth" about offending, and of "understanding" towards offenders. This may constitute something emergent and important: a critical spirit, challenging of accepted cultures and traditions. Leading to a more nuanced approach to police work, involving a less "narrow" engagement with offenders.

"There are more people who are willing to want to try and understand what the issues are and address some of the symptoms rather than the causes." (Chief Officer B)

This appeal to the progress engendered by “science” and “deeper understandings” is joined by thinking about a “moral progress” associated with new ways of thinking about offenders, again invoking a ‘dark ages’ contrasting narrative of “base instincts”.

"I think that the more we understand the context of offending the more likely it is that we can match how we deal with offending to an appropriate, rational, fair response to it...And actually that's one of the great things about a democracy and a liberal democracy, is that society as a whole can be one step above base instincts of revenge and hatred and we can choose to have compassion as something we want to try and achieve." (Chief Officer B)

Emergent across the interviews are ‘strategic acts’ (Bartel and Dutton, 2001) of identity separation by several of the senior officers from what they see as the predominant cultural thinking. The grounding of perspectives in the experience of “being a cop” – essentially an occupational culture narrative – is balanced by several senior officers seeking to create a degree of distance and distinction of their views from what they perceive to be mainstream police thinking and culture.

The “negative” and “shallow” views towards offenders that senior officers reflect as still being prevalent in the force are contrasted with “more modern views”; that offenders need to be “understood” and “respected” as “human beings”.

“But actually if we start treating criminals a bit more like human beings than criminals and second class citizens, whatever we might think of them personally that might actually help us build a new way...We might offer a bit of hope to some individuals out there because there's some sad individuals out there that need somebody to spark a bit of conscience, imagination, inspiration in them to change the lifestyle they've currently got.” (Chief Superintendent H)

Within several of the interviews, there is an articulation of a personal journey over the span of their careers in policing that resonates with this progression in thinking and in practice. If professional identity can be conceptualised as an ‘argument’ (Campbell et al, 2004), as ‘performance’ (Goffman, 1963), and as ‘arguing for yourself’ (Maclure, 2001), then it appears that narratives of personal professional journeys are important in this ‘identity work’ for senior officers.

"When I joined 23 years ago, working with persistent offenders to break the cycle of reoffending was probably less enlightened and all we were there to do was enforce the law, and I think times move on, my thinking has moved on and matured, and there's been a broader recognition that actually if your outcomes are about making our communities safer, reducing crime levels, then actually you need to be imaginative and sometimes be prepared to do things outside your more normal remit to actually achieve the best outcomes for your communities". (Chief Officer C)

"It [rehabilitation] didn't have that validity to you because we're out fighting with people on a Friday and Saturday night. That was what policing was. I think as you get a bit older, or on a personal level, you start to recognise that there's – you know I love my metaphors – but it's swamp draining activity that's going to make the difference, not fighting the crocodiles." (Chief Superintendent G)

Some senior officers see their sense of enlightenment as representing a "battle", and of being "isolated" and in a "small minority" against prevailing views which are still less enlightened and more traditional.

"I'm enlightened but I think it does...you do need to immerse yourself in it to get that way. My battle currently is with senior officers who think that's all very well and good but who's going to look after the targets." (Chief Superintendent I)

Phrases such as being "left wing", "left-leaning", and "liberal" are used by some senior officers to differentiate their views from what they consider to be "what most cops think" (one might infer from this that they are suggesting that "what most cops think" might therefore in their perspective be considered to be 'right wing', 'right-leaning' and 'illiberal'). This sense of seeing themselves as "being different" and "not following the crowd" appears to be important for some senior officers.

"I have a slightly different position on this to maybe a lot of senior cops at the moment. My emphasis has always been on prevention as opposed to resolution and I do get into conflict with some of my senior colleagues..." (Chief Officer A)

“...people like me are a rare beast to be tapped into and make the most of!”
(Superintendent M)

There are reflections that it can be difficult to voice more “liberal” viewpoints towards offenders within the prevailing culture, ethos and practice of policing.

"I think I understand that crime isn't as simple as you do wrong, you get punished. And I think deep down most cops do understand that but it actually just becomes hard to justify the job you do for the majority of people to try and get into that difficult area of, 'Well actually I might have got somebody whose quite nice here and they don't deserve punishment, they actually...' So in a sense it can be easier for some cops to adopt the control model rather than the rehabilitation/prevent model. Because it justifies their own existence, their own behaviours, the way that the organisation they're involved in, the culture they're involved in, operates. So I suppose I'm somebody whose quite capable of understanding the left-leaning [perspective]" (Chief Officer C)

There is an acceptance that police cultures in respect of offenders are deeply embedded, and difficult to shift.

“We are so far behind. And that's cultural. That isn't transactional teaching of staff, it's about culture.” (Superintendent K)

“...the culture [about offenders] is quite difficult and behaviours are quite difficult to challenge.” (Superintendent L)

"I think prison creates a mentality that you can lock away your problems and that becomes your rationale around everything." (Chief Superintendent F)

“Rather than walking in and being welcomed as yes, this is the way forward...they [those who believe in reform and new models of working] are left feeling that they're the lone voice.” (Chief Superintendent G)

Intriguingly, a majority of the senior officers interviewed essentially saw themselves as belonging to an enlightened minority of senior officers in respect of offending, which may

challenge whether (to use their language) “enlightened” viewpoints towards offenders are more common than they perceive but that there is a prevailing cultural context, even at senior level, within the police that prevents their widespread articulation.

Some senior officers take the view that their senior officer colleagues across the police profession do not feel at ease “speaking out” and sharing “honestly” their views, particularly in relation to offending if those views do not fit with what they think to be the dominant cultural stereotype of what people expect to hear, within and beyond the service, as ‘the police perspective’. Echoing the work of O’Sullivan (2005), there is identification that police cultures and resistance are reinforced by wider media behaviours and imagery, and by a predominant “groupthink” in respect of public and professional discourse about the role of the police.

"I think there is something around how you can be misrepresented... how your story can be against the norm so you're then with the Brian Paddocks [a former senior Metropolitan Police officer who publicly aired views about legalising cannabis] - How long ago was that? And he's still the officer who said that around cannabis...I think policing in general doesn't like mavericks. There aren't many senior police officers who say something different...there's a lot of 'norms' in the room." (Chief Superintendent F)

There are perceptions that the police service, and within that their senior police officer colleagues, too often take an “easy” but “unproductive” route of saying “what they think people want to hear.”

"...there seems to be more empathy with offenders as people progress through the organisation but then we don't mention that...at least until we retire we don't." (Chief Officer B)

Some senior officers use quasi-religious language, particularly in terms of a sense of personal “conversion”, with one officer talking of their “road to Damascus moment” and another of the moment when after twenty years of policing they “experienced a new dawn” in respect of how they perceived offenders.

“Such is the kind of crusade that I’ve found myself – that I find myself – currently on [for new models of working with offenders]...a crusader believed

in an approach to an extent where they were prepared to drop everything else they were doing in the kingdom and go for it, weren't they? For what they believed in. And I guess I'm almost getting to that point with this.”
(Superintendent M)

‘Core’ policing or an expanding mission?

The findings from the policy document review presented in chapter 6 identified a tendency for the ‘new’ police work with offender partnering to prompt an expansion of the scope of ‘police work’.

In discussing expansion in remit for the police, senior officers seem to draw on two different ideas about the scope of the police. On the one hand, there is the idea of a “core”, “primary”, “traditional” essence of policing. This perspective defines police work primarily by the distinctiveness of a set of “core activities”, which define the police as being “distinct”, “unique” and “different” as they are not undertaken by other agencies, and that they require special powers and deploy unique capabilities such as use of force.

On the other hand, there are concepts that are tangibly driving a much broader interpretation of what police work might consist of. This takes the police into the territory of “being tough on the causes of crime” (a phrase used by one senior officer during his interview, but first coined by Tony Blair as Shadow Home Secretary in the mid-1990s). Driven by broader ideas (ideals?) such as “protection”, “prevention”, “rehabilitation” and “public confidence”, this thinking on police work draws less on a distinctiveness of activity, and more on “outcome-based perspectives”.

These two big ideas on the scope of the police are often juxtaposed as exclusive, dichotomous, in opposition, yet they are commonly engaged in across the interviews with senior officers by the same participants. Another possibility is that both ideas can be thought of as acting as gravitational pulls shaping the thinking and activity of those in and around the police in terms of the scope of police work. Perhaps both serve a useful purpose.

The ideas of a ‘core’ of police activity provides shape, clarity, simplicity, and a tangible substance and identity for *what the police do*, without which police work risks becoming

everything or nothing, a concept without clear form and boundaries. The ideal of a 'core' to policing is also put to work to help the police know *who they are*, reinforcing a sense of a strong and distinctive professional identity. There feels to be something fundamental, perhaps existential, in the manner in which some of the senior officers evoke the concept of a 'core' concept for the police.

There is similarly something potentially fundamental for the future of the police about needing to define policing in terms of purpose and outcomes. Ideas of a broader scope and range of activities for the police shift the focus of thinking way from defined activities and organisational forms and towards outcomes. In particular towards an attempted accommodation of the vast diversity, complexity and depth of problems the police potentially exist to be (wholly or with others) the solution to, emphasising the bigger picture of *what the police are for* (some critics might argue the same ideas are not as good at saying what the police are not for, in terms of defining the boundaries of the police).

Individual positions in respect of the scope of police work with offenders seem, potentially, then to be shaped by how these two competing ideals are held in tension, by the relative attraction experienced by senior officers of the respective gravitational pulls.

The case for 'core' policing

The attraction of a "core" concept of police work has an evident appeal to senior police officers and is evoked within most of the interviews.

"We just need to be so careful that policing does what it should be doing."
(Superintendent L)

"[Speaking of broader prevention work with young offenders] That's not our role. Our role is to protect life and property and arrest and detain bad people and keep the queen's peace. No more than that." (Chief Superintendent F)

This desire for a "core" to policing is balanced by an appreciation that it is not easy to define.

"I think there's this determination that the police should be the police but I don't know what's contained within those six letters in terms of a definition...I think public perception of the police, political perception of the police and the police's delivery of service is confused." (Chief Superintendent F)

This sense of confused and ambiguous thinking is reflected in attempts by some senior officers to define "core" 'police work' that often provoke more questions than they provide answers.

"I think we're more into managing offending behaviour. Probation is more into managing offenders." (Chief Superintendent F)

"...a very simplified focused role in protecting people and preventing crime." (Superintendent J)

Central to the concept of "core" policing tends to be an "enforcement" and "control" function for police work. In this narrative, developed in several interviews, the answer to the question posed by Bittner (1975) - of 'how do the police recognise what is their special competency, what is their business?' - is that the business of policing is to undertake enforcement and control work, and that this represents the special competency at the root of police work for which the police have particular training and are granted distinctive powers.

"When you start nailing down the bit that we first and foremost have to deliver, it is enforcement." (Chief Officer C)

"Traditionally, policing has always been about upholding the law therefore it's always been about more of the enforcement approach." (Superintendent, JM)

This sense of a "core function" draws on traditional (and somewhat 'masculine' or 'macho') concepts of the police as "robust", as "thief takers", undertaking "dangerous" and "challenging" work.

"There is a prevailing culture that we are here to take robust action in order to protect and keep safe our communities. That's what we have powers to do. Thief takers, yeah." (Superintendent L)

“...let’s not lose sight of the fact that we have got a difficult, dangerous and challenging role to do which is what would traditionally be seen as our core function.” (Superintendent M)

There is some reflection by senior officers that if police work expands beyond this control and enforcement core, then there may be skill and capability gaps.

“I’m not sure that the police service alone can manage offenders to be honest because primarily we’re an enforcement agency. Primarily that’s where a lot of our training lies, that’s where a lot of skills set lies – that’s not a criticism, that’s not wrong because someone needs to enforce the law.” (Chief Superintendent H)

The “core” of ‘police work’ is seen as defining relationships between the police and offenders. The police relationship with offenders is viewed as being “different”:

"...if you have the enforcement role you will definitely have a different relationship from an organisation that has less of an enforcement role." (Chief Officer C)

And there are concerns that the ‘new’ police work with offenders may be diluting or undermining this “core” of ‘police work’, taking the police away and proving a distraction from what the police *should* be doing.

“To be honest I’d like the police not to be involved. I don’t think we should be involved in that prevention of offending behaviour because we’re there to be nice to these people or we’re there to enforce the law.” (Superintendent J)

Whilst arguments for a ‘core’ concept of policing, essentially built around ‘enforcement’ activity, are clearly influential for the senior officers, there is also a lot of support for the need to police differently; for the police to take different, broader, more pre-emptive and preventative approaches.

The case for a more expansive scope for police work

The appeal of a “broadening” and “outcome-driven” concept of ‘police work’ clearly sits alongside these ‘core’ policing conceptualisations. Arguably in tension with ideas of a ‘core’ of police work that defines policing, these alternative ideas of police work reflect outcome-based concepts that interpret what the police should be doing as being defined not by distinctive activities but by contribution to broader outcomes for society, such as cutting crime, reducing reoffending, providing security, and building trust and confidence.

"I think in the past the policing saw that our job finished at the prosecution and sentencing stage. I think we are now recognising that you've got to stay engaged with these people in order to prevent further offending." (Chief Officer D)

It is recognised that this sits in tension with thinking of a ‘core’, enforcement-defined, role for ‘police work’.

"...it seems that the measure of success for policing is the number of people that you bring to justice. That seems to be the currency rather than the number of people you might've prevented from committing further offences or those that you've prevented from reoffending. That is old thinking. It's a shame." (Chief Superintendent E)

Part of the broader thinking of senior officers is based on what was reflected upon earlier in this chapter, both about a sense of ‘enlightenment’ and ‘progressive’ ways of working, and reflective of narratives of ‘crisis’ and of ‘failure’. In these narratives, senior officers view the current emphasis on enforcement as amounting to a “revolving door” in which “the root issues are never tackled” and therefore problems persist

"...you can't help but step back and reflect on the fact that these people are coming back time and time again." (Chief Officer D)

"We chase, especially policing, we chase the symptom and not the cause and waste loads of energy." (Chief Officer C)

“I might have shared some of those views [about a ‘core’ policing enforcement approach] going back, I think, with twenty years of policing in my blood and in my head. I suppose there comes a time when you look at the bigger picture, you mature with it, you realise that for all the years of enforcement that you put in place...There are offenders now coming through my offender management team who I personally arrested when they were ten years of age when I was a beat officer. So if you want a tangible example of how the enforcement alone approach with the current criminal justice system – purely punitive and not restorative – if you want any example of what has changed my mind in terms of it, I just think how futile that arrest and all the subsequent arrests ever were. There has to be a different approach.” (Superintendent M)

Even though wider work with offenders is not perceived as ‘core’ police work, it is seen as necessary to be engaged with to achieve results. In this, senior officers are echoing Crawford (1994a, 58), who argued a reliance on the formal reactive approaches of criminal justice has only a limited effect on the desired outcomes of preventing crime and victimisation.

“I don’t think it’s our core business but I think it’s something we are, we seriously need to get engaged with. Unless you rehabilitate, you’re never going to break the cycle.” (Chief Officer A)

"I don’t think it’s necessarily part of our overt mission as a police service but...actually by doing that we’ll spend much less time hopefully doing some of that stuff than we will do running around having to pick up the pieces afterwards and go through the process with victims and witnesses who otherwise would be on the end of some of their activities." (Chief Officer D)

“Prevention” sits as a central ideal driving this broadening, outcome-based mission for police work. This resonates with the wider literature in terms of prevention being central to policy arguments for the development of police-corrections partnering (Parent and Snyder, 1999) and more broadly with the concept of the development of a ‘preventative turn’ (Tuck, 1987). There is a desire amongst senior officers that the police should be "...much more in a prevention territory that we ever used to be." Many senior officers express a personal commitment to preventative approaches, and express a frustration that ‘core’ police thinking and practice does not fully engage with prevention to the extent they would wish to see.

“My view is, and has always been, if we can prevent something happening that’s far better for the victim.” (Chief Officer A)

“...we need to focus on prevention far more than we do and probably learn from some of our Scandinavian partners who are really good at preventative intervention...We just don’t think like that, we tinker at prevention.” (Chief Superintendent E)

This is often traced by senior officers back to ‘foundational’ principles of policing, some of which are seen to have been lost in a shift in practice towards a more exclusive focus upon enforcement.

“What I think the police should be doing with offenders is back to core values around prevention of crime...if you go back to what our priorities are, your protection of life and property then you’re down to your prevention of crime. So actually if you prevent crime, who’s to say we shouldn’t lead?” (Superintendent N)

“...our wider priorities from Peelian times, whether protecting life or protecting property, preventing crime – when you go back to some of those Peelian principles I take a wider view that in certain cases it is prudent and appropriate for the police to be working very closely in terms of trying to change offender behaviour.” (Chief Officer C)

These bolder thoughts potentially take policing a long way from traditional ‘core’ concepts of police work, and ultimately provoke disturbance in legacy thinking about the role of police officers.

“Yes, without a shadow of a doubt [I would wish to see the police getting more ‘upstream’] because, as I say, I think that coercive influence is stronger the further up you get. Albeit, again, you get to the point of what is the role of a police officer, don’t you?” (Superintendent M)

There is a perspective that for a broader, more preventative approach across the ‘new’ police work with offenders to properly take hold, it needs to become “mainstreamed” and the concept of “rehabilitation” needs to be embraced by the police.

“I don’t know how we get there but I think...If we want to embrace this offender management concept truly then it’s got to be something that’s done holistically. Yes, of course there’ll be a team of people that’s skilled in doing X, Y and Z or lead it but actually it needs to be much wider ways that we approach it across the piece as opposed to so-and-so’s people over there do that and my team don’t do it.” (Chief Superintendent H)

One is left with a broad sense of an emerging rationale presented by the senior officers for the police working in new and innovative ways with offenders in order to achieve an ambition to maximise the reduction in reoffending in the public good through preventive and rehabilitative work with offenders. This feels like a potentially radical redrawing of concepts of the nature and boundaries of police work. In terms of *what* outcomes, or results, are being aimed at and *for whom*, “stopping” or “slowing down” re-offending seems to be the primary stated aim, expressed as being in the interest of “communities”, “the public” and “victims”.

“...if it’s going to be in the public good by either there being less crime from our most prolific offenders for example by us engaging them in different things to stop the cycle of reoffending or at least slow it down, then it can be justified as a good investment.” (Chief Officer C)

There is little in this discourse of expanding police work, along the lines of pro-active activity and prevention, of concerns about any wider downsides or dangers of a broadening police role. The views expressed by most of the senior officers reflect the concept of the police as moving towards a professional territory of filling a wider ‘social influencing’ role in society (Waddington, 1999) rather than a narrower law enforcement one. This is not a professional discourse which seems to concern itself with the possibilities of a ‘criminalisation’ of public policy, or which reflects much angst about the proper limitations of policing. The philosophy is that if policing “can do a job” across this broader territory then it should seriously consider doing so; somewhat reflective of Loader and Walker’s (2001, 17) concerns that what is at play is a theory of police diffusion across programmes of social and public policy without a balancing theory of police limits.

However, whilst those broader concerns about the expanding mission in respect of the new modes of ‘police work’ with offenders are not much (at all) evident, there are many other

caveats and concerns expressed, mostly from a professional perspective of what is “right for the future of policing” and “in the interest of the service’s future”.

Doubts about a more expansive scope for police work

For some senior officers, this shift towards new modes of working with offenders provokes a need to “pinch yourself” to check if this is what the police role should be.

“... increasingly over time – certainly in the time of my service – from, say, ten years plus ago, the buzz words became ‘working in partnership,’ ‘prevention of crime’ and up to most recently then ‘preventing reoffending.’ It has, I think, now got to the point where you’re almost forced to pinch yourself as a police officer to say, ‘Oh, actually, is this the police role?’” (Superintendent M)

There is some scepticism of whether, despite a sense of awareness of what needs to be done to reduce offending and re-offending, this should be a police role?

“I mean, how you break the cycle of criminality...People will talk, won’t they, about people getting jobs, education, getting into a stable relationship, all of those socio-economic factors that will potentially stop somebody from wanting to go out and commit crime. How much of that is within the police’s remit to actually enable them to do so is not a lot.” (Chief Officer A)

There are views expressed by several senior officers that a wider remit to tackle re-offending remains one that should primarily sit with other agencies. That this is activity that does not “need” a police officer to do it. This is essentially a ‘core’ policing appeal to the concept that police work can be defined as being based upon distinctive powers and capabilities, and that police officers should maintain a clear professional identity focused upon making such distinctive contributions.

“I have warranted powers. You don’t, as you know. Therefore it’s expected of me that I should use my powers...That’s what we’re here to do. Getting into all this other stuff, buying trainers, giving lifts, looking after little Jimmy, distracts officers from the job.” (Superintendent L)

“I don’t support where you’ve got effectively police officers doing what I would consider to be probation work or social work. You don’t need a police officer doing that.” (Chief Superintendent I)

Even those who are clear protagonists for new models of working, and bring a direct experience of leading on such projects, still express a concern that the role of police officers does not stray too far from what is perceived as a core essence of the officer role.

“I’ve not lost the plot in terms that investigation is what, in the main, officers are trained to do. That’s a primary role. All of my officers that are engaged in this intervention programme, for example, are briefed that I don’t expect them to just do that and if someone gets naughty they walk away. They have to then be the enforcer.” (Superintendent M)

It is interesting that these narratives of senior officer concerns regarding the more expansive scope for ‘police work’ manifested in the ‘new’ police work with offenders focus upon organisational and professional implications. What is missing across the senior officer interviews are arguments such as concern about the ‘criminalisation’ of social policy (Crawford, 2006; Gough, 2010), questions about the uncritical invocation of benign conceptualisations of community (Manning, 1984; Crawford, 2006), or the problematising of risk approaches (Hannah-Moffat, 1999; Kemshall, 2002; Gray, 2005; Hoyle, 2008).

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has explored policy debates in respect of police mission, role and approach, stimulated by senior officer thinking and perspectives in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. The chapter covers considerable ground, with key themes identified from the interviews including:

- A perceived lack of clarity and cohesion in policy making, portrayed as symptomatic of an insufficient strategic leadership model in policing. This was evidenced in perceptions that some of the changes have occurred largely by chance and not in a systematic and planned fashion, and that this risks a degeneration of shape, clarity and distinctiveness of police role. This is coupled with a lack of clear ‘definition’, so strategic conversations about ‘offender management’ in policing were seen to exist in a context that lacked a settled and consistent definition of offender management;
- The ‘new’ police work with offenders is not seen as having been ‘mainstreamed’. It remains separate, with relatively low levels of direct knowledge and engagement from senior police leaders. There are narratives of it being ‘a career backwater’ and of it being ‘someone else’s job’;
- Concepts of ‘history’ and ‘tradition’ seem important to the senior officers but draw upon a very narrow range of sources, predominantly the ‘Peelian principles’ and the ‘Constable oath of attestation’;
- There are some strongly drawn, gravely negative analyses of ‘crisis’ and ‘failure’ in respect of policing, in particular fore-grounding the shortcomings of reactive enforcing models and invoking the concept of a ‘revolving door’ in which offenders continue to offend because long-term change is not achieved;
- In the force concerned a stable and relatively narrowly defined performance framework was seen as a dominant factor in shaping strategic culture. This framework was seen as emphasising short-term reductions in particular categories of crime. This led to five areas of concern: that it resulted in ‘lip service’ being paid to the ‘new’ police work with offenders; it risks ‘fossilising’ existing practice and thus mitigating against the mainstreaming of new modes of working; it could provoke a

context of ‘game playing’; it tended towards embedding single-agency thinking and approaches; and it was instrumental in mainstreaming a context of ‘institutional short-termism’;

- The ‘new’ police work with offenders was conceptualised as ‘progressive’ and ‘enlightened’, with an accompanying ‘dark age’ assessment of a perceived prevailing negative, ‘base’ and unsophisticated police culture in respect of offenders;
- Concepts of ‘core’ policing have a resonance with senior officers, who appreciate the value of clear definition and distinctiveness for the police role. There is an existential sense to some of this thinking, in respect of defining *who* the police are and *what* they do, which in part explains worries that broadening models for ‘police work’ carry the risk of a ‘degeneration’ from this clarity of concept for the police;
- Concepts of an expanding police remit based upon ‘preventative’, ‘pre-emptive’ and ‘pro-active’ models of practice are also attractive to senior officers. Such an expansionist agenda invokes the narratives of failure in respect of ‘revolving door’ enforcement models, in part explaining why such *why*-based thinking is supported, being seen as adaptive and progressive. These two concepts of an expanding objective-driven mission for the police and of a ‘core’ concept of ‘police work’ appear to be held in uneasy tension by senior officers.

Chapter 9

Senior Police Officer Interviews (3)

Partnerships

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the senior police officer interviews focusing in on the partnership working aspect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. The partnership approach has been axiomatic to the developments of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. All of the different strands of new modes of working for the police (youth offending, prolific offenders, management of risk and drugs work) have created new organisational formations drawing together the police and other agencies in collective endeavour.

The chapter is structured into five main sections, each reflecting key areas covered by the senior officer interviews:

- The support of senior officers for partnership approaches;
- Misgivings by senior officers about the delivery of partnering approaches;
- Senior officer perceptions of the Probation Service;
- Their perceptions of the tendency for the police to engage in ‘gap filling’ the work of other agencies, and;
- Cultural dynamics of partnership settings, in particular perceived risks of police officers ‘going native’ and ‘going soft’ when working in such settings.

The benefits of working together

All of the senior officers reflected the dominant narrative in their interviews that working in partnership is a positive approach. The narratives that were particularly fore-grounded by them included recognition of the risk that offenders, particularly young people at risk of offending, can tend "...to fall through the gaps of our confused provision" and that partnering is viewed as a solution to that problem. Partnership models are seen as providing good "opportunities" to "align", to manage a more "collective approach" to resourcing and strategy, to "manage risk more holistically", and to "share information and intelligence". The prevailing strategic view amongst senior officers is that "partnering works" and that there should be more of it. A common language used in the interviews is that partnering is more "effective":

"We're more effective if we do it with partners." (Chief Officer D)

There is a 'progressive' narrative, emphasising the improvement that is brought about by partnership working, as drawn out by one Chief Officer participant in respect of risk management.

"I think we manage offenders better when we're working in partnership with others. We are more consistent, we spot the risks better and the interventions are better managed because we're all sat round the table." (Chief Officer B)

The senior officers present such views on the positives of partnering as being normative, mainstream thinking amongst their senior peers, which is resonant with the consistency of positive narratives about the concept of partnering across the interviews.

"We've all recognised that it makes much more sense to actually be in the same place and to tell each other what you're doing because it saves time, effort and money." (Superintendent N)

A handful of the senior officers talked about wanting to 'go further' in respect of partnership ways of working.

"Actually jump into other people's buildings and start to work in a much more collaborative way is what I'd like to see." (Superintendent N)

These reflections by senior officers are consistent with a wider literature supportive of the concept of partnering approaches, as discussed earlier in chapter 3. This includes an enthusiasm to break down organisational boundaries (Davies and Thomas, 2003), and to realise the advantages of joint working (Pamment, 2010), and also a recognition that little can be achieved by one agency working alone (Howard, 2010). The senior officer views are highly supportive of the observation by Wood and Bradley (2009) that partnering is now an 'uncontroversial' and 'unoriginal' proposition which has a wide professional acceptance within the police.

A narrative developed in some of the interviews was that partnering is the right approach because the police and other agencies are working with "the same people". This was often expressed in terms of personal stories and anecdote, as in this passage from an interview with a Chief Officer participant:

"...[reflecting on a previous project he had worked on] the first bit of work we did was to sit down with education, schools, welfare, etcetera, and identify the twenty families from each agency, from five or six agencies' point of view, we thought were causing the most problems.... And out of the list of twenty, fifteen were the same names that all of the services were putting their energy into." (Chief Officer A)

Another common narrative in the interviews is the argument that "we are all in the same business". A Chief Officer in their interview articulates this argument:

"...what it is that collectively public service and agencies should contribute to society. You could walk round most of those public institutions and the values on the wall wouldn't be too far apart... in terms of what we're here to do, to make people's lives better, and make communities safer and feel safe and work more cohesively together, I don't think we're too different." (Chief Officer C)

A general sentiment across the senior officers that the police and probation service remits align strongly and thus lend themselves to effective partnership working is also consistent with a wider literature on the perceived advantages of police-corrections partnering (Parent and Snyder, 1999; Leitenberger et al, 2003; Beletsky et al 2005) and that partnership-based risk management between police and probation is an effective approach (Nash, 2010).

Misgivings about partnership working

There are also misgivings and scepticism from the senior officers that partnering is effective in reality and manages to achieve what it sets out to do. This is again consistent with wider literature on partnering (Crawford, 1999; Rungay, 2007).

One Chief Officer participant, quoted below, reflects a view - broadly the same argument articulated by several other participants as well - that partnership working, whilst a good thing, has become a “mantra”, a “holy grail”, something that “if we are not really, really careful becomes the automatic solution to everything”.

"I think there is genuine learning that partnership working can produce solutions that single agency can't but it's quite complicated to do. It then became a bit of a mantra, didn't it? You know, do everything in partnership. And in a time of plenty we did lots of partnership working and some was very, very effective and some was less so." (Chief Officer D)

In part, the challenges are recognised as ones of cultural difference between professions. One Chief Superintendent links this “conflict of cultures” to how officers are “trained” and “brought up”:

“...because that's the way they've [police officers] been trained and brought up which isn't necessarily the way things go when you take a more partnership approach. So I think, yes, there's definitely a conflict of cultures.” (Chief Superintendent I)

The issue of cultural challenges and conflict within partnerships is a theme that is prominent in the literature of multi-agency working, including specifically in respect of police and probation officers (Garton, 1980; Crawford and Jones, 1995; Garrett, 2004; Nash, 2008; Crawford, 2009b).

One symptom of doubts about partnering being effective is that the predominant culture reflected in many of the interviews with the senior officers remains one of strongly ingrained single-agency thinking. There is a tendency within the interviews of several of the officers to view the partnership as an external, distinct, separate entity rather than something ‘internal’,

something that is part of their organisation, that they directly operate and 'own'. This leads to talk about partnerships as something external to policing, something the police work with, and the utilisation of language of "us" (the police) and "them" (the partnership), as exemplified in this quotation from a Chief Officer interview:

"Why would Youth Offending Service want three officers in there if they'd got enough people to do it themselves?" (Chief Officer A)

Several of the senior officers do exhibit an awareness of this tendency towards 'territoriality' and 'power dynamics' between agencies (Howard, 2010):

"I think agencies still tend to think of themselves a bit too much first."
(Superintendent N)

"Everybody's inward looking at their own budgets, finance and what can they get away with doing, what can they cut...I don't get the visual of all the chief execs getting together and saying what we're all going to concentrate on is reducing crime. How are 'we' going to do that?" (Chief Superintendent I)

"I don't think the criminal justice system as it is called does have a sense of purpose around those things. I think it's about their part in the process and their focus mainly on those bits of business." (Chief Superintendent E)

In a handful of the interviews, there are expressions of frustration; that "despite all the talk of partnership" the reality is that the behaviours still remain "us and them", and the attitude "what is in this for us":

"[I see] starkly different viewpoints when I'm sitting on the YOS [Youth Offending Service] management board and they're having a conversation."
(Chief Superintendent E)

"Trying to develop a consensus of targets through a myriad of agencies on a local basis... it just leads up to a greater sense of disconnect." (Superintendent N)

In the context of these challenges in executing partnership working successfully on the ground, in terms of working dynamics and delivery in the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships, the relationship between the police and probation is arguably *the* key professional relationship. This is explored in the next section of the chapter.

Perspectives on probation

Senior officers talked a lot about their perceptions of the probation service. Much of their discussion on the subject did not present, as one participant put it, “a particularly flattering or optimistic picture”. Some of this speaks to a history of antipathy, or at least of prejudices borne of limited contact and understanding, between the two agencies.

Level of contact and experience

What is striking is that, despite the significant developments across the new modes of working with offenders, the police and probation services still seem from the content of the interviews to remain markedly remote from each other at senior level. Understandings are often poor, and relationships, even at very senior levels, are quite patchy and thin. Several senior officers admitted that they had experienced very little contact with probation over their policing careers which had typically spanned several decades. Similarly, several senior officers spoke of having little or no current contact with managers from the probation service.

"Our staff survey reveals people don't know what probation do." (Chief Officer D)

"I think there's a lack of understanding [across the force] around all the services that probation can provide... [there is] a lack of understanding about their aims and objectives." (Chief Superintendent F)

It was evident from the interviews that whilst some of the senior officers had experienced significant contact with probation, for others such contact had been very limited, particularly recently and at senior level. It appeared such contacts tended to concentrate with a small number of senior ranked roles, rather than being typical across senior officers.

There seems to be a potential pattern looking across the interviews that perhaps those senior

officers who have had more contact with probation tend to think more positively. One Chief Superintendent participant discusses this in terms of a personal journey of increasing contact leading to increasing awareness and understanding:

“I used to be very jaundiced about the Probation Service, a few years ago. I used to think that the Probation Service was... Not full of...that’s unfair – but it was a barrier and a blocker to what we wanted to achieve. But the more I work with them through things like MAPPA [Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements] and reducing reoffending, the more I became aware that actually I was now getting a better understanding of them.” (Chief Superintendent H)

Other senior officers suggest that having developed more experience of working with probation, they have been “surprised” by what they have experienced. Writ large amongst this sense of surprise is that the probation service exhibits a “harder”, “tougher”, “more robust” stance towards offenders than had been anticipated.

"I’ve found them to be harder line than I was expecting." (Superintendent J)

"I think, over time...they can be as hard on some offenders as we would want to be and in some cases tougher." (Superintendent M)

This reflects a theme in the wider literature that as professions work more closely together in partnership settings, there is a tendency towards growth in professional understandings, including a drawing together around shared experiences and common language (Nash, 1999; Homes et al, 2005; Crawford, 2009b; Howard, 2010).

Critical stances

One Chief Superintendent reflects a view also visible in other interviews of professional criticism of the probation service and of the professionals who work within it.

"I think I’ve met a number of probation officers over the years. I have to say I have questioned their professionalism, the degree of professionalism of some of those individuals over the years." (Chief Superintendent E)

Another participant suggested that amongst the police "neutral to negative is the perception of probation", partly because of “our perception that probation is too offender-centric in its

outlook". This theme of being seen as the "friend of the offender" is surfaced in several interviews. A common theme within the interviews, standing in sharp contrast with the argument earlier in the chapter that "we are all in the same business", is a sense that police and probation are on "different sides":

"I think they [the probation service] see them as offenders' friends as opposed to somebody helping to control an offender's future." (Chief Superintendent F)

"I think there's a sense that they spend a lot of time writing reports that stop people going to prison which might be the right thing to do but police officers would perceive that they're in the way." (Chief Officer C)

"Very much a different agenda to us...You know, little Johnny or Jessica are really good individuals. Please don't put them in jail because we know jail doesn't work. (Superintendent L)

Some of these accounts from the senior officers reflect a degree of derogatory tone:

"I think there is still a perception, apart from those officers that work closely with probation officers, is that it's namby-pamby fluffy..." (Superintendent J)

Some take the view that probation has experienced "a lack of leadership" and "inadequate" management:

"I've found them to be a poorly organised organisation." (Superintendent K)

Limitations of Leadership and Resources

The senior officers mostly viewed probation as the right agency to "take the lead" and as "the responsible agency" when it comes to offender management, but they also perceive that the probation service is often "not capable of fulfilling its role".

"The responsibility lies squarely with the Probation Service but I don't think they get the support to do it properly or effectively." (Superintendent N)

"The fact that it is the National Offender Management Service is kind of a clue, isn't it...But I actually think they're incapable of doing that." (Chief Officer B)

"I am very worried about the probation service because I think their role is pivotal in that they are the lead agency for managing offenders. But their limited resources, there seems to be some sort of politics around losing confidence in the probation service, taking money to almost disempower them but actually they are an important part of the solution." (Chief Superintendent E)

Linked to this, there is a view amongst several of the senior officers that the operational role of the probation service is cast "too narrow" and "too inflexible", particularly in respect of the statutory footing they work within which excludes many offenders, including some that the police view as being the most prolific.

"[Probation are] working in such a narrow band compared to maybe policing and maybe social services and education. A small moment of the rainbow. You know, they're all like indigo and everyone sees red and yellow at either side." (Chief Superintendent F)

"I think they effectively try and operate with one arm tied behind their backs... For the vast majority of our serious acquisitive crime offenders the Probation Service is a bit of a toothless tiger because it doesn't have the authority to make them engage with them." (Chief Superintendent H)

A dominant perception amongst senior officers is that for the Probation Service "things are stacked against them" and that they have a "thankless task" because of a "lack of basic adequate resourcing".

In essence, this is a narrative of 'sympathy', of 'pity'; the sense from listening to the senior officers is not primarily an antipathy towards the probation service, but rather that they feel 'sorry' for those who work in probation.

There is in several interviews a sense that the senior officers “rate” and “respect” many of the individuals they have worked with from probation, but feel that the context in which they work is an “impossible task”, particularly given a lack of adequate resources:

“I’m very impressed by [named senior manager in probation] in terms of her energy but I suppose the reality is ... they haven’t been able to step in as much as we would want around offender management because they don’t have the resources to do so.” (Chief Superintendent G)

"So what I come across is a harassed senior probation officer who’s never sure she’s got a job because the money’s never there. I’m hugely supportive of probation. Can do some excellent work but really hamstrung because they’ve got no money." (Chief Superintendent F)

One Superintendent participant argued that probation had “more strategic vision” than the police in respect of working with offenders, but just lacked the resources to put their thinking effectively into practice.

“It [the probation service] doesn’t fill me with a warm glow, that’s how I’d put it. But I’m not knocking the individuals. I’ve worked with some fantastic individuals who actually have got much more strategic vision around what we should be doing with offenders than we have. It’s just they don’t have the resourcing.” (Superintendent K)

Several senior officers identified the Probation Service as having been “picked out” (one might paraphrase their sentiment as ‘picked upon’) by Government and “singled out” for “cut after cut” because it is “out of political favour”.

“I think they’re just hard done to, to be honest. I think they’re under-funded. I think that they’re the whipping boys and a girls of things...Probation is the Cinderella service.” (Superintendent J)

In part reflecting a context of the probation service not being perceived as ‘filling’ the role and professional space that senior officers perceive that it ought to, the senior officers discussed wider concerns about police strategy being shaped by ‘filling gaps’ in other agency activity. This is now considered in the next section of the chapter.

Filling gaps

There is a concern expressed in many of the interviews with senior officers about whether the police 'fill gaps' left by other agencies, rather than having a coherent strategy for the scope of police work. This perspective fears that the police role is being shaped primarily "in the context of what other agencies do or don't do." In respect of work with offenders, one Chief Superintendent reflects the sentiment of several of the interviews in feeling that there is an inadequacy of broader provision by other agencies to rehabilitate and to support offenders not to re-offend:

"We [the police] keep hauling them out of the pond but you then throw them back in." (Chief Superintendent G)

A common theme across the senior officers was their perception of the tendency for policing to 'fill gaps' in provision left by other agencies. There is a language of the police "filling voids", "filling gaps" and "sucking up" the work of other agencies.

"I think that one of our biggest risks now is us attempting to fill a gap for other agencies...we've been sucking up some of the work that in actual fact in effect the Probation Service should be doing." (Chief Superintendent I)

There was a perception expressed by some of the senior officers that in respect of the 'new' police work with offenders the police were essentially already doing the core work of other agencies, in particular the Probation Service.

"I think we are in danger of filling a gap and I think we're doing it now. I think our Offender Management Team is already doing work that Probation should be doing." (Chief Superintendent I)

One senior officer suggested that the police as an agency "likes to say yes" and therefore has a tendency it needs to manage carefully of occupying the ground of other agencies responsibilities:

“... there are big dangers... we need to avoid too much ‘mission creep’ into other agencies’ work or responsibilities... we are the service that likes to say ‘yes’.” (Chief Superintendent F)

Linked to this, as reflected in the quote below from a Chief Superintendent participant, there is a language of needing to be “cautious” and to “hold back” from “making do” and ‘cobbling together’ in the context of other agencies not ‘filling’ their professional space. That whilst the police have a tendency to ‘take on’ such activity in the absence of other agencies it is nevertheless “not the right thing to do” and “not what should be happening”.

“We have to be careful not to take on too much of other agencies’ work. I see it with Integrated Offender Management in that I think that there could be a tendency for us to do quite a bit of probation’s work. What we’ve tried to do is cobble together ways of trying to do that. But that’s not right, that’s not what should be happening.” (Superintendent N)

This includes a tendency, worried about by some senior officers, of the police taking on the lead for things where the police ought not (in their view) to be the lead agency, as expressed by one Chief Officer participant:

"What we shouldn't be doing is leading on offender management but in the absence of somebody else we'll do it." (Chief Officer B)

The tendency to “fill gaps” feeds into perceptions of the police as being what one senior officer refers to as a “backstop agency”:

"The reality is that it probably should be a relatively small part of what we do but my perception is that, as with most things, we are a backstop agency and we continually take steps forward into things because morally and ethically we think it's right to get involved." (Chief Officer D)

This is expressed by another senior officer as being potentially construed as the police providing other services “on the cheap”:

“Policing should not be perceived to be probation on the cheap or YOS on the cheap or whatever.” (Superintendent L)

This tendency to 'fill gaps' is not always perceived negatively across the interviews. It is also viewed as a positive trait: that at least the police are "capable" of doing things that need to be done, that they have a "can do attitude", and that this is a positive process of filling "a gap in the market" to perform an "important role" given that "no-one else is filling that void".

"I think we do gap fill...I do think that we have a culture in the organisation which is very much about a can-do attitude." (Chief Superintendent H)

One Superintendent argued that in the absence of other agencies breaking the cycle of offending, it is right for the police to step in and do so:

"I guess what I'm saying, in a nutshell, is that I think in a perfect world if there was another agency that could fulfil that perhaps it ought. But in the absence of that...I pinch myself but am entirely comfortable that in the absence of another service that can do that, then it is the right and proper use of those resources to try and break this cycle of offending." (Superintendent M)

However, there are worries that the tendency to "fill gaps" can "undermine" and "divert" from 'core' police work and resourcing. This is described by one Superintendent in the language of the police needing to fight their own rather than other agencies' battles:

"We need to be very mindful that we make appropriate use of police resources and we should not be plugging a gap because AN-other statutory partner – or even nonstat – can't do what it says on the tin. That is their battle to fight, not ours." (Superintendent L)

Two other Superintendent participants reflect in the quotes below their concerns that the tendency to 'fill gaps' can lead to the police trying to "do everything", and risking becoming a "jack of all trades and master of none" by 'branching out' into activities which the organisation does not have the specialist skills to deliver:

"...jack of all trades and master of none which is a summary of the police service really. We try and do everything." (Superintendent K)

"You know, we're police officers – not social workers, we're not housing experts, we can't give that sort of support and guidance." (Superintendent J)

Several senior police officers reflect that there are elements of the police culture and psyche, and attitudes towards other agencies that underpin this tendency to expand remits and ‘fill gaps’.

"So as an organisation, arrogance and our ability like a chameleon to change shape very easily...so we throw resources at it, duh-duh-duh [mimicking sound of police siren], and push others out of the way. And we're very good at reshaping ourselves, intruding on other people's property doing it – so we go into schools and we teach, we do some probation roles although probably not as well as probation." (Chief Superintendent F)

One senior officer reflects that he feels his senior colleagues and the wider organisation tend towards ‘filling gaps’ because there is a lack of appreciation of the capabilities and contributions of other agencies.

"Actually the other agencies are really good at this as well – we don't need to do their bits...to intrude further up the continuum." (Superintendent J)

Another Superintendent suggested that the police as an agency did not take the time to understand how other agencies wished to work and the contribution they could bring, expressing this as an unwillingness or incapability ‘to listen’, and a sense that the police sometimes think ‘they know all the answers’:

"...we tend to think we know the answers and we don't tend to listen to what the other agencies say." (Superintendent M)

One participant used the striking phrase that the police might be “the devouring lion” in respect of the tendency as an organisation to cross organisational boundaries and “intrude” on the business of other agencies:

“But are we the devouring lion because we don't do boundaries and we see no action so we intrude?” (Superintendent N)

One Chief Superintendent used the term “dysfunctional” to describe the tendency for the police to ‘fill gaps’ and therefore the fundamental gaps in provision were not clearly identified and addressed:

“... there is a theory that sometimes the police service’s willingness to fill gaps is actually dysfunctional. Because sometimes perhaps we ought to allow things to fail in order for the problem to be highlighted clearly so that money was put into offender management properly. As long as we’re backfilling it then the problem doesn’t become visible to the government and things won’t change”
(Chief Superintendent E)

There is a tension that can be identified across the interviews between the problematising of the police tendency to “lose shape” and to “fill gaps” on the one hand, and seeing this same tendency more positively as perhaps a key adaptive, almost an evolutionary, quality on the other. The latter point of view is that the future of ‘police work’ may be found not through pursuing the purity of a ‘core’ but rather in a perpetual shifting of shape to accommodate opportunities and challenges across this broader strategic delivery of outcomes. The challenges of such a viewpoint would be that in changing shape too much and too often, the police lose something of their professional character and identity, and may extend beyond core capabilities.

There is also a clear tendency for these narratives from senior officers, framing as they do the ‘new’ police work with offenders as being a pragmatic, almost accidental, consequence of the shifting topography of other agency roles and resources, to unsettle the narratives of ‘progress’ and ‘enlightenment’ identified earlier in chapter 8.

“Going native” and becoming “soft”

In terms of cultural and identity themes exhibited across the senior officer interviews, by far the strongest was the expression that police officers “go native” in ‘new’ police work with offender partnership settings. The issue is engaged with ubiquitously by senior officers across the interviews, albeit with some recognition by some of the officers of an unease over the use of language, and potentially racist and imperialistic overtones of the phrase.

“I think we have a history of police officers that go into it [Integrated Offender Management] turning native. That’s a highly emotive term, I’m not sure if I am comfortable with it, but police officers must be police officers.” (Chief Superintendent H)

This language of “going native” talks to a sense of cultural or professional superiority: of the risk of being assimilated; of a contamination of professional purity. There is a prestige, an identity, an authenticity attached to the professional self of the police which this perceived sense of “going native” in some way threatens: “Police officers must be police officers”. Whilst it may not quite carry the connotations of a ‘corruption by a barbarism beyond’ that the term historically carried in British imperialist contexts, the parallels in usage are clear.

The phrase is coined with striking frequency across the senior officers. Their usage suggests that the officers who are perceived as having “gone native” are no longer doing the tasks that police officers should do and as significantly (if not more significantly, in the eyes of senior officers) are no longer reflecting the cultural norms and behaviours of police officers.

“You hear police officers talk about that our police secondees are going to Youth Offending Services and going native. You know, ‘I thought they were cops’, that kind of comment” (Superintendent K)

The sense of not quite ‘being cops’ anymore, and of “morphing” away into a different (suggestive of inferior?) professional identity is strongly drawn.

“They’ve kind of – I hate the term – but kind of gone a bit native. I think they’ve kind of turned into, they’ve morphed into sort of Youth Offending

Service staff really as opposed to being a police officer that walks in the door to try and help those Youth Offending staff engage.” (Superintendent M)

One concern expressed is that the police officers are no longer distinct, no longer visible and different in their role as police officers:

“I’m not convinced that half the time, when young people [in the Youth Offending Service] meet our police officers they’re not even aware that they’re police officers.” (Chief Superintendent H)

Dominant cultural stories are told in several of the interviews of how seconded officers are no longer exhibiting the professional traits expected of police officers.

“...the officers in there [Integrated Offender Management team] had effectively gone native. None of them were wearing uniform, none of them were making any arrests, none of them were putting any intelligence...And I was over at [the partnership team workplace] four weeks ago, and it was like talking to people that weren’t police officers anymore.” (Chief Superintendent I)

There is a commonly used language of “needing to bring them back in”, to “re-orientate” officers, to “draw them back into the tent”, to “remind them who they are”.

“They went native, the [officers] that we’ve got in there. We’re trying to draw them back into the tent now, so to speak.” (Superintendent N)

In a similar vein, some seconded officers are felt to have travelled so far in role and culture that they are perceived by some senior officers as “not really police officers anymore”.

“...they’ve all gone a bit native and so they don’t wear a uniform, they work 9-5 Monday to Friday, they are more social work than police work. They’ve not been police officers for 7 or 8 years and they don’t go out enforcing the law, they’re not really up to speed on what happens. Being a police officer is what you do in the police, not what you do in another agency. So I think ‘going native’ is I suppose the term but I can’t see the value of them being a police officer anymore because they don’t have policing skills.” (Superintendent J)

There is a process – clearly looked upon as an issue of concern – that other professional cultures are absorbed by the police officers who are seconded, and non-police cultural norms become dominant within the new partnering settings.

“They absorb the culture that’s around them at that time. Be it the working hours, be it the whole philosophy and approach to things...They tend to then fit in with the culture that’s there. Because generally, of course, the sort of officer that’ll apply for that role will already have a mental make-up that suits. Because you’ll get some officers who would never dream of applying for that kind of role because they joined to become a law enforcer or they joined to be an investigator or whatever. So already you’re almost sort of half way there.”
(Chief Superintendent I)

There is a narrative here that at least touches on themes of professional ‘degeneration’, and even in parts to a professional ‘betrayal’. Part of this is a sense of having “forgotten” that they are police officers, but also there are overtones of officers being seen as not living up to the expected style and role of a police officer. Some senior officers feel that there is a clear role for a type of police officer, typically “harder edged” and able to “instil” a sense of “authority”.

“...they’ve actually forgotten that they’re a police officer... [there] to do what policing says on the tin...What’s happened in reality is those police officers have forgotten that, actually, first and foremost they’re a police officer...This isn’t, ‘Oh, you’ve got no money so let me give you a lift so as you can TWOC a car to get back.’ This is actually about, ‘This is your last chance,’ and it’s about being...you know, not frightening and not terrifying but actually trying to instil in that individual that you should respect authority and play by the rules otherwise you’re ultimately going to get punished.” (Superintendent L)

Various senior officers use language of such officers as “swanning about”, “having the good life”, “taking it easy” and “going slow”. They are “sucked into” social work, in contrast to engaging in ‘police work’. One senior officer evokes the concept of the “Stockholm Syndrome” – of a kidnapped individual becoming sympathetic to their captor – to describe the professional dynamic of “going native”.

“Yes. And there’s the Stockholm syndrome... because it’s not like sitting on a van with fifteen experienced officers at three o’clock in the morning when you’re cold and wet and hungry and just want to be at home. It’s not that type of environment. It’s a much more calmer environment and therefore it probably files down some of your sharp edges, policing edges as a person.”
(Superintendent L)

Because these officers have become withdrawn from the cultural environment of the force, they are also perceived to have become less “sharp” and lost their “edge” as police officers.

“They definitely tend to slow down when they work with the other agencies.”
(Chief Superintendent I)

“They were happy just to swan around and just engage with the young people without bringing the hard edge of policing.” (Chief Officer A)

This can extend to not ‘looking the part’ as a police officer:

“I don’t actually understand this need of why do police officers...If they’re doing that kind of work, why do they suddenly have to grow their hair long, have a beard and all this...you know what I mean?” (Chief Superintendent I)

There are a number of cultural stories that underpin this thinking which paint a particular impression of partnership working with offenders: including ‘helping them with shopping’, ‘buying them trainers’, ‘taking them on holiday’, ‘giving them lifts’. These same stories appear with a consistency across several of the interviews.

“I think they’ve seen their role more as support for offenders and almost as driving them about, doing things for them, helping them with shopping.”
(Superintendent N)

“The policing role should not be all that social work stuff sorting out their school timetable or buying them their trainers or taking them away on their one-in-a-lifetime trip.” (Chief Superintendent I)

At times, the sense of ‘betrayal’ extends to perceptions that such officers are “working against” real policing, or refusing to perform the basic inherent tasks of being a police officer.

“We should be police officers first and foremost. Not pseudo-social workers because their agendas, their KPIs are different to ours. We shouldn’t deliberately work against ourselves. You know, if a young offender is committing crime and the officer says they’re not.” (Superintendent L)

If what is being described here is a ‘degeneration’, a journey away from a ‘true’ or ‘pure’ police professional identity, then there are signals from senior officers of what they see as at least some of the key symbols of this new degenerative professional state. Three key concepts stand out: becoming “friends” with offenders; becoming “soft” and losing “edge”; and becoming more “sympathetic” to another organisation’s norms and values than to those of the police. Summing up all of these traits seems to be wrapped up in a shorthand that such officers are becoming “like social workers”.

“Sometimes the criticism of them was that they were social workers.” (Chief Superintendent G)

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter, the third and final chapter presenting findings based upon the interviews of senior police officers, has focused upon the partnership working aspects of the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

Key themes for the senior police officers identified in the chapter have included:

- The senior police officers are supportive of the concept of partnership working in terms of the ‘new’ police work with offenders, reflecting wider dominant professional and academic narratives in respect of the benefits of partnership approaches;
- Alongside this conceptual ‘in principle’ support for partnering, the senior officers articulate misgivings ‘in practice’ relating to the effective delivery of partnering approaches. These include recognitions of the complexity of delivery, of cultural challenges and conflict, and of a lack of cohesion towards shared aims and objectives. The senior officers exhibit a tendency to ‘externalise’ partnerships and to maintain an essentially ‘single agency paradigm’ in their thinking. In the light of these challenges to partnering ‘in practice’, some senior officers reflect that partnership working may have become a ‘holy grail’ or ‘mantra’, in essence viewing the concept of partnering as ‘overextended’ or ‘running ahead’ of practice realities on the ground;
- Senior officer perceptions of the Probation Service reflect a lack of confidence in the service to deliver. This seems primarily not to be an emotionally driven issue of antipathy between two professions but rather in part to be a product of limited contacts and understandings at senior level between the two agencies and in part based upon perceptions of insufficient capacity and resources;
- The senior officers have concerns about the tendency for the police to engage in ‘gap filling’ the work of other agencies. The interviews suggest that the senior officers have some concerns in terms of distracting the police from core activity and risking overextending the police beyond core competencies. There are some mixed views in respect of whether this ‘filling of gaps’ is a good thing, with some arguments suggesting it is adaptive and evolutionary for the police. Predominantly the senior officers portray the process as dysfunctional, and as being reflective of negative

cultural facets of the police organisation, in particularly exposing issues of failing to listen to and recognise the contributions of other agencies. The sense that the 'new' police work with offenders is to a degree a product of the police reshaping in response to the vagaries of a shifting cartography of boundaries and activity by other agencies unsettles senior officer teleological narratives of 'progress' and 'enlightenment' (explored in chapter 8).

- Cultural dynamics of partnership settings, in particular perceived risks of police officers 'going native' and 'going soft' when working in multi-agency workplaces, are of concern to the senior officers. Whilst senior police officer narratives emphasise their concerns about seconded officers 'going native', 'going soft', 'becoming social workers', and not 'really being police officers anymore', what feels more challenging is the senior level police thinking in respect of professional 'superiority', and in relation to cultural competencies to value professional difference, that such arguments can be argued to expose. If the overarching policy project of the 'new' police work with offenders relies on organisations coming together and working creatively, respectfully and differently, the strategic culture of the police requires more attention than it has to date received.

Chapter 10

Senior Stakeholder Interviews

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the interviews with ‘senior stakeholders’. The focus remains primarily on the police involvement in these new modes of working, but what these interviews provide is a perspective on this police engagement from beyond the boundaries of the police organisation and profession. This is a perspective which is often not available in studies of the police.

The preceding four chapters have presented the findings of the thesis firstly through an analysis of national policy documents (chapter 6) and secondly through the perspectives of senior police officers in a small English police force, who were interviewed as part of the study (with the findings from the interviews presented across chapters 7, 8 and 9). This chapter takes the same case study geographical area as the senior police officers were engaged from, but in contrast to the ‘insiders’ (senior ranked police officers) the interviewed participants are seven ‘external’ ‘senior stakeholders’; external to the police profession but with a direct involvement in the ‘new’ police work with offender developments from the standpoint of being leaders of other agencies involved, or occupying related governance or partnership coordinating roles. The methodology of identifying participants and of the interviewing and analysis processes is summarised in chapter 5. The semi-structured interview schedule is attached as Appendix C; the interviews purposefully covered a very similar terrain to those of the senior police officers.

The chapter is structured around four broad areas covered by the interviews of the ‘senior stakeholders’:

- What ‘senior stakeholders’ saw as the contribution of the police and of other agencies to the partnership working across the ‘new’ police work with offenders;

- Key themes from the policy debates surrounding the ‘new’ police work with offenders;
- Debates about expanding models for police work, stimulated by the ‘new’ police work with offender developments;
- ‘Senior stakeholder’ perceptions of the effectiveness of partnering, including cultural and professional identity aspects relating to the police involvement.

In presenting and discussing the findings from the interviews in this chapter, there has been an emphasis on using the participants’ own words, to seek to authentically capture their thinking. Where full speech marks are utilised within the chapter, it reflects direct quotation from the transcript of one of the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews. In cases of longer quotations, the participant concerned is identified by a participant letter (the seven participants each given an anonymised identifier as Participants A to G). In cases of quotation of isolated words or phrases, identification of the participant has not been provided to avoid excessive cluttering of the text, and in many cases the language and phrases presented will reflect more than one participant.

What do the police contribute?

Previous chapters explored what contributions the senior police officers perceived the police make to the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships (chapter 7) and what aspects of police contribution the national policy documents emphasised (the first section of chapter 8). It is interesting to add to these findings by considering the ‘outsider’ (in terms of the policing profession) perspective of the ‘senior stakeholders’.

Overall, analysis of the interviews reveals broadly similar elements of contribution were identified, with five primary themes of contribution emerging: (i) intelligence, information sharing and a site for intervention, (ii) enforcement and authority, (iii) capability in managing risk, (iv) being an organisation comparatively rich in resources, and (v) leadership. Looking across the three sources, it is striking how similar the areas identified are; this feels positive in terms of coherent and consistent understandings of police contribution to the ‘new’ police work with offenders. The senior police officers placed less emphasis on the police role in managing risk but with that one exception not only the themes but also the relative emphasis placed upon each showed considerable agreement across the three sources.

These five themed areas are now considered in turn.

Intelligence, information sharing and a site for intervention

This element of contribution was resonant with the perspectives of senior police officers and the national policy documents, both of which also identified information and intelligence as a primary contribution by the police.

As with both the policy documents and the senior officers, the concept expressed here by ‘senior stakeholders’ is broader than simply the contributing of information or intelligence systems and processes; it also reflects the police as being “uniquely situated”, as being the “eyes and ears” for partners due to policing practice that is perceived as spending a great deal of time “out there”, “in communities”.

One participant conceptualised the police contribution across ‘surveillance’, ‘intelligence gathering’ and ‘monitoring’, each of which implies not only the police intelligence system and

process technical capabilities but also the police operational positioning in the community to carry out such tasks:

“[The police bring] surveillance, intelligence gathering and monitoring of offending.” (Participant P)

Another stakeholder talked about “a police perspective”, again inferring the advantages of the police being placed in the community and well-informed on the realities of offender behaviour:

“It is intelligence, isn’t it? ...it is intelligence and awareness from a police perspective and the sharing of that information around partners...identification of the cohort.” (Participant Q)

The police are portrayed by most of the stakeholders as being “well placed”, the “eyes and ears”, and “in touch”. They are viewed as occupying a “pivotal” position, a “vantage point”, particularly in respect of early identification, and in terms of holding the information to enable selection and diversion. Policing is a “critical point of intervention”, with various policing activities with offenders providing information about which offenders to engage and a gateway and access point for doing so. One participant in particular expressed enthusiasm for the possibilities of policing as a site for positive interventions, but this was a theme identified by others in their interviews as well:

“I think the police as an organisation has a lot of opportunity to actually divert adults from the criminal justice system...I’m thinking of some of the really good work that’s happening here around the arrest referral scheme where people are arrested maybe for substance misuse and rather than bringing them into the criminal justice system, the formal criminal justice system, give them conditional bail or give them cautions. Provided that they then go for some kind of intervention or support. I think that’s working very effectively.” (Participant R)

When some of the senior stakeholders talk of the police bringing ‘intelligence’ into partnerships there is very clearly something being identified about the police as being “in touch” with “reality”. The benefits of this were reflected appreciatively in the interviews, a view illustrated in the below quotation from one participant who reflects the advantages the

police have over probation in this regard, and what the police bring which is distinctive and valued:

“I think where probation has benefited very much in terms of the IOM [Integrated Offender Management] scheme is through that sharing of intelligence between the police and probation which means that you can confront the offender with their behaviour. Because sometimes the police are a 24 hour a day, 7 days a week service in a way that probation isn’t. They bring a level of knowledge and information intelligence to us as an organisation which we wouldn’t normally have access to.” (Participant R)

The police bring information about offenders that is “real”, “fast”, “dynamic”, “in touch”, and reflective that the police are “out on the streets”, and can therefore identify for offenders “what’s going on when they’re not sat in here [an office where offenders are supervised]”. Several participants were very positive about the advantages this police contribution brings:

“I think some of the work with priority prolific offenders, the fact that we have joint morning meetings where all police and probation staff get together, they share the intelligence on offenders that’s been picked up that night. It’s fast, it’s dynamic and it makes us more responsive to risk and that has been a big plus.” (Participant S)

This can enable more “challenging” approaches, “enriched” by “real” intelligence about behaviours.

“[The police bring] an intelligence role, an information exchange role. I want police to be saying...do you know what, that person you’re supervising was out at 11 o’clock last night and a police officer stopped them and searched them or whatever. You need to know that because actually when you’re challenging behaviour...” (Participant T)

Overall, the interviews reflect that this element of police contribution is very much valued. In particular, it is seen as being “mission critical” to public protection. The benefits of having police intelligence and information are very strongly fore-grounded across the ‘senior stakeholders’ in respect of risk management, as reflected in this quotation from a participant:

“I think what they clearly bring is intelligence and if I look at the world of MAPPA [multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements] the intelligence that the police hold on offenders, often very informal intelligence, is critical to – or has been critical to – developing risk management plans. Without some of that intelligence I think and fear that there would’ve been some pretty terrible serious further offences or an escalation of a risk of harm.” (Participant S)

A broader related aspect to the police bringing intelligence, of also bringing a sense of “victim perspective” and of “reality”, is identified in several of the interviews. This has in turn, in the perspective of some of the participants, helped prompt “a different pattern of practice and behaviour” from probation staff. It has changed “some patterns of thinking”, providing “a clearer line of sight” to the “dangers” that some offenders pose.

‘... what I’ve seen here in probation is a real commitment by staff to enforce the order and a very real awareness that some people are very dangerous...I think some of that awareness has developed over time because of the working relationships with the police...I think it brings a reality to probation staff so that they can see the risk that offenders can pose. It’s about the dangerousness that offenders can pose to communities, to victims.’ (Participant R)

The ‘stakeholder’ interviews do emphasise the information contributions of other agencies more than the senior officer interviews and are altogether more appreciative of the contributions of all professions and agencies, whereas the senior officer interviews tended towards a focus particularly on what the police brought, with an inference that what other agencies bring is more limited. Across the senior stakeholders there is much more of a tone of mutual endeavour, of “bringing together”, of various agencies possessing “pieces of a jigsaw”, and of all agencies (including the police) benefiting from this, of all agencies having something to gain and to learn. Nevertheless, the appreciative tone in respect of the police contribution is supportive of the value placed upon what the police bring in this regard by the senior police officers.

There are some concerns that police intelligence approaches can risk “shifting the nature” and the “philosophy” of the work with offenders, but these were much less articulated than the positives outlined above. One participant struck a note of caution regarding the police seeking to transform offender supervision and interventions into an ‘intelligence agency’:

“Without – and this is the problem for me – without the police starting to make the YOS [Youth Offending Service] into an intelligence agency because we’re not that. We’re a change agency and what some police officers want to do is, they want to come in and gather lots of intelligence and then go out and nick them again.” (Participant T)

Overall, the interviews reflect a strikingly positive and appreciative account. The police are perceived as contributing in a critical and valued way in respect of information and intelligence, are seen as being usefully in touch with the realities of offender lives, and are perceived as being very well situated to identify and facilitate interventions. There can be no ambiguity taken from the interviews that the police contributions in this regard are welcomed and valued.

Authority and enforcement

As with the national policy document analysis and the senior officer interviews, the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews identified the importance of the role of policing powers and enforcing capabilities, and also perceptions of the police as bringing “authority”, “credibility”, “status” and “rigour”, and of a “robust” approach to offenders that reflects an ethos centred on victims.

“It’s the threat of charge, isn’t it, that’s what they could use.” (Participant Q)

This was generally, in the thinking of participants, broader than the direct use of police powers. The police are felt to be capable of exercising ‘authority’ and bringing an ‘ethos’ which helps balance with other agencies, particularly by fore-grounding victims and impact on communities within work with offenders.

“The key role [for the police] is very much around authority, it’s very much around control, it’s very much around the impact that crime can have on the victim. It’s very much around the impact of crime within local communities because I think in terms of youth justice there is a very strong welfare ethos in Youth Offending Teams...The police provide balance and a different perspective” (Participant R)

One participant felt the police bring a “visible presence” around “the enforcement agenda” coupled with a useful refocusing upon ‘risk’:

“If it was just pure probation staff, because obviously the training is different, they may focus more on the needs of the offender which are very valid and they have to be addressed but where the police come in is a role of strength is that they really bring in a focus on the risks the offender would pose to the community... balance it back to the community, to victims and it’s also about having a very visible presence around the enforcement agenda where offenders commit crime. (Participant R)

The formal powers and related capabilities of police officers are viewed as leading to them being more capable than other professions in terms of “outreach” work with offenders, particularly when offenders may not be complying or in situations where there could be perceived to be a degree of danger to staff.

“I don’t think the probation role would be to go and knock a door for fear of...Obviously police officers have utility belts and they have different tools, don’t they, that they can use in case a situation escalates.” (Participant Q)

Linked to the enforcement role, there is some recognition that the police bring a sense of “gravitas” to partnership working with offenders, inspiring public confidence in the work:

“...actually police personnel, they bring a gravitas to a situation like that that maybe ordinary civilians don’t bring.” (Participant U)

Again, this is on the whole a highly appreciative account of the police contribution. However there was greater evidence of concern in respect of these elements of the police contribution. One worry is in terms of the consequences of the police emphasis on enforcement becoming a dominant narrative within the partnership, and in particular that it can distort the work of the partnership as a whole towards shorter-term enforcement solutions and away from achieving longer-term change. This is articulated as a concern very clearly by one of the ‘stakeholders’:

“We’re very much looking at the medium term to try and actually motivate those offenders to change over time...The police role as it stands is very short term and this is where I have a lot of clashes with the police actually...saying, what are you actually trying to achieve? If you’re trying to stop this person offending then jumping on them here and now doesn’t necessarily bring the results that you’re after. And what we actually need to do, we need to work with this person longer term so that we can change attitudes, behaviour, those sorts of things.” [Participant T]

Such concerns in respect of enforcement-focused short-termism reflects the issues identified in the wider literature both in respect of police short-term performance frameworks and also narratives of failure in respect of dominant ‘core’ reactive policing models that are perceived as failing to deliver sustainable change (discussed in chapter 2). Similar concerns were also salient to the senior police officer participants: the concern about short-term performance frameworks and the pervasiveness of weekly and year-to-date crime figures within the police was expressed by several senior officers, as was recognition that enforcement based models were culturally dominant but perceived as flawed (covered in chapter 8).

Some ‘senior stakeholders’ also perceived the police as sometimes “wrestling” with a “confusion” between being enforcers and the other roles they were called upon to perform within the partnering work. This potential blurring of enforcing and supervisory roles can also lead to concerns about wider “criminalisation”, especially of younger offenders.

“The problem of criminalisation in that one of the effects of youth offending services is, in the first few years, that the criminalisation actually increased quite dramatically...There are academics around that say that the fundamental problem with the creation of YOTs [Youth Offending Teams] is that we’ve actually criminalised far more young people because we’ve got an industry to do so.” [Participant T]

There was also a critique from some ‘senior stakeholders’ that there is a naivety and an oversimplification to some of the enforcing and supervisory elements of police work with offenders.

“... the fact that you’ve got a copper keeping an eye on you isn’t necessarily going to stop you from doing it... I think it is a naive view.” [Participant U]

Overall, ‘senior stakeholders’ saw the ‘enforcement capabilities’ and ‘authority’ that the police bring as a clear ‘asset’, as ‘value-adding’ to the joint work with offenders, and albeit they also had concerns that the police emphasis on enforcement and control might distract from, diminish and skew other elements of working with offenders, the fundamental tone of the interviews was appreciative and positive.

The police as capable managers of risk

The police are seen as having the ‘resources’ and the ‘practice experience’ to bring expertise and capability to managing offenders who present particular risks in terms of dangerousness to society.

One participant makes the link back to the enforcement capabilities of the police in this respect:

“When it comes to more serious offenders and in particular around sex offenders I think there needs to be someone supervising those individuals who has the power to actually do something there and then if they see that that individual is veering away from whatever it is they’re supposed to be doing. And the police do have the power to detain...” [Participant U]

The focus in the interviews on police contribution in respect of risk management is upon ‘intelligence’ and ‘enforcing’ capabilities, reflecting the above two broader elements of police contribution, and interestingly there is not an accompanying narrative of particular police competence being perceived in respect of ‘assessment’ or ‘supervision’ of high risk offenders.

Resources

The police are also recognised as bringing significant resource to partnerships, as an agency that is much larger in terms of staffing and budgets to other entities such as probation. This is resonant with senior police officers, who saw the greater scale and capability of police organisations as one of the aspects the police bring to the partnering.

“What else do I think you bring? Resource...budget is ten times the size of ours” [Participant V]

Leadership

Participants echoed the sense conveyed by senior officers that the police often lead in these arrangements, although this is more commonly seen as problematic by the senior stakeholders.

There is again a great deal that is appreciative in the ‘senior stakeholder’ account here: police are seen as offering “strong” leaders, as stepping in to fill a degree of “vacuum” of leadership across agencies, and of being “good at getting things done”.

However, several of the participants felt that this was not always with a style that brings all agencies positively into the picture, as illustrated by one participant who desired a clearer emphasis on ‘joint working’ and “we” from the police:

“But I think the word ‘jointly’ is sometimes missed out of the delivery [by the police] on communications. I would stress that it would be more helpful, more powerful, more particularly likely to join together and work together which is where we have to be, if we talked about ‘we’ have achieved...all components come together to make the whole picture.” [Participant V]

Whilst the police management style is generally portrayed as positive on delivery, it can also be seen as encumbered by rank-bound bureaucracies that are cumbersome and add time to the taking of decisions, and as reflecting a management style that encourages less dialogue and has limited scope for critical appraisal as decisions are taken. These critiques can be seen to

contrast somewhat with senior police officer self-perceptions of the police as faster and more dynamic in decision making, and as ‘doers’ contrasting with other agencies who they perceive as being ‘all talk’ and less capable of being decisive and delivering. The language of the police being “slow”, “laborious”, “hierarchical” and “stuffy” around decision-making is strikingly contrasting to the views expressed by senior police officers, to the point where one feels it surprising the different perspectives have arisen from the same working relationships and partnering contexts. One participant saw “deference” and “rank hierarchy” as being negatives in respect of both police decisiveness and the quality of decision-making:

“If you were to say to me what is the fundamental difference in the culture, I think first of all the people management style in the police is interesting – the rank hierarchy is just fascinating. The view that the higher up you get you call ‘sir’ or ‘madam’...or ‘ma-am’ is it? And that there is a deference and sometimes with that deference and respect I think there’s a view that I can’t act and I can’t challenge and I can’t contribute, that I can’t make a decision unless it’s passed up all the ranks and then they get a sign off and it’s passed all the way down.”
(Participant S)

There is also a portrayal of a contrast between “reflector” styles in probation and “activist” styles in policing (albeit this assessment sits uneasily with the above narratives of the police as “slow” or “laborious” in decision-making).

‘Most of my [probation] officers tend to be more reflectors – so they will slow down I would suggest the activist style of some police officers, they would engender an approach of discussing from a plan. Tell me the information. What is the intelligence? They would question and challenge the intelligence and the validity of it. They would then match it with what we know about our assessments. They would require and demand a case management type approach...Let’s spend time and get this right rather than rushing off.’
(Participant R)

Also contrasting with other views expressed by ‘senior stakeholders’, but consistent with this ‘activist’ analysis of the police, some police behaviours and leadership in partnerships is perceived as being “bullish”, that police leadership behaviours can sometimes be “about going so quickly others don’t get a look in, don’t get a say”.

There is an identification of differences in styles, of use of authority and the nature of internal relationships within police and probation.

“There’s often a joke about the probation service saying...You get a group of probation officers together and you say do something, they’ll say, ‘Why?’ There’s that challenge. We expect challenge. Whereas if you say it to a group of police officers they’re, ‘Yes Sir,’ or ‘Yes, Ma’am.’ And sometimes I think the lack of challenge and constructive criticism and feedback is a potential inhibitor [for the police].” (Participant P)

Sometimes policing is seen as bringing a more “macho” style of decision making that makes other partners feel uneasy.

“I get the impression, and this is just impression judgement, that if you go into the police you have to be quite macho and strong and have incredible gravitas and be forceful. Particularly senior leaders...and often at meetings I’ve found that it’s not as inclusive in terms of debates, dialogue, exchange as in the probation service...I think it [our culture] is poles apart. We are much more empowering...I think challenge and scrutiny is critical to keep an organisation safe and open. I think without that challenge and that scrutiny and that rigour things can be missed” (Participant S)

Overall, the police role as leaders across many of the ‘new’ police work with offender partnering contexts is acknowledged, and in some aspects appreciated, but there are significant cultural differences in leadership style identified as concerns, and compared to other aspects of police contribution a great deal more direct criticism is levelled towards the police role in respect of police leadership style.

Debates on police mission and role

‘Senior stakeholders’ broadly saw policing as “complex” and “confused” in policy terms, identifying “a wide range of competing demands and interests” shaping police policies, with “an unstable picture” in which policy initiatives “shift about” in attempts to establish “balance” between “competing requirements”. This sense of complexity and uncertainty is expressed across policing as a whole, not just specifically in relation to the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

In the context of the discussion in chapter 2 in relation to the argument (Murphy and Lutze, 2009) that engagement by the police in police-corrections partnering ‘creates’ complexity and uncertainty in police mission, the ‘senior stakeholders’ by and large seem to dispute that argument, and instead to take a view that policing mission and policy is ‘complex’, ‘unstable’ and ‘uncertain’ before it touches the complex terrain of the new forms of partnering.

Some of the views expressed by ‘senior stakeholders’ resonate with the argument of Reiner (1991), in that ‘what the public wants’ is an overly simplistic notion upon which to build policing strategy. One participant summarises this challenge:

“It’s looking at what particular community or indeed what stakeholders and trying to determine what their needs are. Also realising you can never match all those needs, you can’t be everything to everybody...being cognisant of the tensions, the pulls.” [Participant U]

One ‘senior stakeholder’ argued that whilst thinking around police practice has evolved a lot – principally towards more preventative and multi-agency modes of operating – wider public understandings and public perceptions have not necessarily kept up with those shifts or been cognisant of them.

“Just as police are about catching people, prison is about containing people whereas probation is about changing people... in terms of how they [the police] are perceived more generally I think there is still a feeling amongst the general public that it’s more that kind of enforcement, looking for offenders, catching offenders and bringing offenders to justice and they don’t necessarily

understand some of the more preventative, kind of touchy-feely kind of community policing. I think.” [Participant T]

Most ‘senior stakeholders’ seem to seek something of a blend of different policing approaches, perhaps reflecting a desire to see policing occupy a range of positions across what Finnane (1994) referred to as the ‘spectrum of possibilities’ for policing policy.

“It shouldn’t be all touchy-feely policing in the same way it shouldn’t be all big stick and catching offenders and locking people up.” [Participant U]

As with wider debates around policing, the debating by ‘senior stakeholders’ around policing role and futures suffer at times both from contradictions and from failings to articulate consistently and clearly thinking about the future of policing. In the same manner that the national policy documents frequently fall short in respect of clearly defining the role and expectations of the police, likewise the thinking of ‘senior stakeholders’ has similar limitations. Across the same interviews, some participants appear to develop arguments both for narrowing and broadening of police role, and for both encouraging further police engagement in the ‘new’ police work with offenders whilst also expressing major concerns about the lack of boundaries to the self-same policing involvement. In essence, several of the ‘senior stakeholders’ were not sure what they felt the police role *should* be, independent to their also thinking that police policy was shaped in a “complex”, “short-termist” and “chaotic” policy environment.

Some ‘senior stakeholders’ worried about the narrow thinking they perceived to exist across much of the police profession, which was felt to be a “real barrier to genuine engagement” with new modes of working with offenders:

‘I don’t think some police officers have come into the job to rehabilitate – I think some of them have seen themselves as being arrest and get a conviction, the horrible expression ‘potting’ [meaning imprisoned]. We got them ‘potted’, they’re locked away, nothing to do with us, we’ve done our job. So I think for some it’s been moving into unknown new territories which traditionally have been the realms of Probation Service or the Youth Offending Teams.’ [Participant S]

There is recognition about the police moving onto “different turfs”, historically seen as belonging to someone else, and not traditionally seen as ‘real’ or ‘core’ police work, and that culturally the police may be struggling to keep up with these changes.

The capacity for offenders to change and the ambition to rehabilitate were seen as the “essence” and “core” of probation work,

“So there’s an ingrained belief in staff in probation that people can change and there’s an ingrained belief that we’re there as an organisation to support people’s ability to change and to skill people – I’m talking about offenders – to change... So there’s a fundamental belief... that people can be good. That people can change at different points in their lives.” [Participant R]

This is accompanied by recognition that whilst rehabilitation may be emerging in thinking at a senior and policy level in respect of policing, it was not yet seen as being embedded in the ethos and training of the police:

“You have people doing foundation degree in policing and I don’t know if enough is done about rehabilitation. I think that the recruits coming through are still, potentially, on that arrest and convict as opposed to this ‘new world’ as I call it. So I think for some of them, psychologically as well ‘I didn’t come into the job to do this, I wasn’t trained to do this.’” [Participant S]

Linked to this, there is a theme identified of concern regarding narrow, short-term, performance narratives by the police, which were perceived by one ‘senior stakeholder’ to “still rule the world”, in reality shaping behaviours across the partnership. This resonates with a clear theme across the senior police officer interviews (discussed in chapter 8).

The senior officers perhaps reflect being more attuned to and aware of progress and change in respect of police thinking and attitudes, and more optimistic about change, possibly suggesting that whilst that sense of more ‘progressive’ and ‘enlightened’ thinking may be becoming more visible internally within the police, at least at a senior level, it remains less clearly visible to ‘stakeholders’ beyond the police. From the ‘senior stakeholder’ perspectives, they still seem left seeing more of the ‘conservative’ and ‘conventional’ nature of police thinking (Carter and Carter, 2009), the ‘reactionary professional discourse’ (Dean, 1995) and ‘the essentially unchanged nature of police practice’ (Reiner, 1991), than feeling the full force

of the ‘enlightenment’ spirit evoked by several of the senior police officer interviews. The ‘senior stakeholders’ do not perceive the police to see the ‘new’ police work with offenders as ‘core’, instead believing it remains marginal to mainstream police thinking and practice.

Perhaps not surprisingly, given this wider policy context, there were concerns that the police role has not always been very clearly defined, nor thoroughly understood:

This is in part linked to a lack of national consistency and clarity:

“One of the problems has been what is the police role within a YOT. Every YOT has got a different answer. Every police force has got a different answer.” [Participant T]

One participant argued that whilst the police had clearly committed, and put in officers and other resources, they seemed to remain unclear about their role:

“The police are heavily involved, lots of people and resource, but I am not totally sure they always know why, or what they are there to do” [Participant P]

Interestingly, another participant seeks to anchor discussion around the police role in respect of what the police bring which is ‘unique’ and ‘special’, essentially invoking the argument that policing should be defined in terms of what is distinct and unique about it (a concept explored in chapter 2)

“I think there’s a blurred line, isn’t there? Police are there to police, but what does that mean – yes, they are heavily involved in rehabilitation and protect, reduction, but what’s the special or unique role of the police?” [Participant Q]

Overall, this sense of uncertainty over police role is perhaps less strongly drawn by the senior stakeholders when compared with the senior police officers; on the whole the senior officers tended to talk more, and in stronger terms, around issues of confusion and uncertainty of role.

The ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews contained little of the argument, presented quite strongly both in the national policy documents and the senior police officer interviewers, that policing was in ‘crisis’ or ‘failing’. Whilst several of the senior officer interviews effectively cast the

police as a failing organisation, that does not seem to be a narrative shared across the ‘senior stakeholders’.

There are however some linked themes drawn out in terms of the limitations of reactive, enforcement-based models, with again the “revolving door” deployed as a commonly used metaphor.

“I think purely arresting somebody, you have your nice outputs but you can’t demonstrate to the public that you’re reducing offending. They go into prison. They come out of prison.” [Participant S]

One participant was particularly sceptical of police-led enforcement-based operations in terms of their effectiveness to reduce crime over the longer-term:

“But the basic fact is that as soon as you pull out that resource, as soon as you stop doing Operation xxx [the name of a local, primarily enforcement-based police operation], give it six months and you’ll find the decay rate in terms of the crime levels will wear off and those patterns will slowly start to reassert themselves probably within the space of a year.” [Participant P]

Another participant critiqued enforcement-based models as lacking the ability to achieve more sustained and significant change in communities:

“That lack of ability to really influence longer-term the change in the local community.” [Participant T]

There is much less evidence of appeals to history and tradition in the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews, although interesting on the occasions where such historical contexts are referenced, the Peelian principles are again a predominant reference point. There is however a narrative, similar to one drawn out within the senior officer interviews, that the current police involvement in preventative work with offenders has echoes to past policing practice, albeit representing a more updated and sophisticated mode of working.

“I suppose it’s a slightly more modern way....You often hear that police officers used to give them a clip round the ear...I think this is a slightly more sophisticated way of doing that.” [Participant U]

One policy worry in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders is a sense of “doubt” as to the “real” and “lasting commitment” of the police beyond their ‘core’ territory and a sense of “overstretch” with the wider territory the police are now occupying, linked to the police potentially “playing lip service” to the new modes of working. One participant likened the current police commitment to the partnerships with other examples they had experienced in the past of police commitment that was not ultimately sustained:

“That’s a major piece of police culture, actually, which I’ve seen over the years...Where people are allocated to a very worthwhile job that isn’t valued by the organisation and then they get pulled out.” (Participant T)

This sense that ultimately traditional, ‘core’ models of policing may prevail over the new modes of working has some resonance with the wider analysis of Heumann and Church (1980) that the police and wider criminal justice system have a habit of shifting back to original shape in the context of efforts to reform. Wood and Bradley (2009, 134) argue that sustaining meaningful and innovative partnerships remains profoundly challenging for the police, and this seems to be a view that at least some of the ‘senior stakeholders’ would subscribe to. This reflects in concern that the police have not been perceived to ‘mainstream’ the work, that officers appear to be seconded and then “forgotten”, and that the new areas of work have not been “properly established”.

An expanding mission for the police?

The two principal elements underpinning a broader mission for the police – the shift towards a more preventative practice and the new emphasis on risk management – both appear widely accepted and mostly uncontroversial to the ‘senior stakeholders’.

The literature suggesting ‘risk management’ to be contested and complex territory (considered in chapter 2) is not the prevailing sentiment across the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews, in which the concept of risk management approaches presents as orthodox and fully accepted thinking.

In respect of a more preventative practice, the interviews seem to reflect again that such thinking is widely accepted and viewed to be right, and that the police are perceived to be ‘catching up’ in developing an understanding of the importance of a broader, preventative thinking and practice that has represented mainstream thinking within other agencies for some time.

There is a recognition of tensions; of a moment of ‘decision’ and ‘debate’ within policing seen from the perspective of those sitting outside of the police profession. The language of policing as a “service” is viewed as sitting uneasily alongside a still prevailing “enforcement mentality” of “nicking villains” and “feeling collars”.

“What is the police role all about? I think policing in the UK sits at a monumental moment of choice. Are they social workers walking round on the street advising people and helping people or are they dealing with serious crime, are they nicking people left, right and centre?” (Participant Q)

In terms of debates about the breadth and expansion of scope of the police, a broadening of the police role is widely recognised as a reality including in respect of working with offenders:

“I think the police role has broadened considerably” (Participant V).

“There’s more involvement with offenders. It was always the police are on this side of the fence and the offenders were over there but now the police are crossing a lot.” [Participant Q]

There appears to be some support for this broadening of police role with offenders. This is mainly in terms of the advantages of a cohesive, collaborative prevention-based and risk-based approach. One perspective from a participant expresses this as making sense even within the confines relatively ‘traditional’ and ‘core’ thinking about police role:

‘So actually if the police are engaging with young people or offenders in activities that may prevent them from reoffending or getting into offending behaviour surely it makes sense because it saves a lot of police time down the line.’ [Participant U]

Balancing this support, there are essentially three misgivings expressed in respect of a broadening police mission.

Firstly, as has already been touched upon earlier in this chapter, there is a debate about how sustainable and mainstream the new police appetite for a broader agenda is and whether at some point there will be a retreat back into a ‘core’, traditional policing model. There is little emphasis on the concern identified in earlier debate that there is no clear rationale of limitations to expanding thinking on the police role. Instead, the concern is much more that the police should appropriately be on a broader territory, but that there are doubts that they will occupy it consistently and over a sustained period, particularly in the context of public sector austerity, and concerns over what happens if the police ‘retreat’ from this work

Secondly, there is a sense that elements of this broader, somewhat uncharted territory for the police may more appropriately belong to other agencies.

“I think that there’s a way of engaging with young people that the police can and have got involved in. I’m thinking about some of the diversionary activities but again I don’t think it’s the primary role of the police to be doing that. I think there are other partners, other agencies, for whom that is more of a primary function.” [Participant U]

And thirdly (a point developed in more detail in the next section of this chapter reflecting on partnering approaches) there is a concern that a broadening of police role may be taking the police beyond areas of competence and expertise.

Partnerships and the police

In praise of partnering

The ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews set a positive tone about partnership models of working. There is no evident philosophical or principled opposition across the interviews to such approaches. All of the interviews place some focus upon the advantages of agencies working together collaboratively and most of the interviews identify evidence of progress already achieved through partnering. The prevailing sentiment of the interviews suggests an appetite for taking partnership models of working further.

There is an emphasis in these discussions on partnership approaches that the police are seen as an important partner in this model of partnership working. The two participants quoted below, each in a context of youth offending work, reflect their perspectives that the police have a “key role” in making such partnerships successful and that without the police engagement within the partnership “we couldn’t do our job effectively”:

“I still think that there’s a key role for the police and I think it would be really to the detriment of Youth Offending Services if the police were withdrawn from that structure in the future.” (Participant R)

“Now the reality is that to make youth offending effective it is a partnership arrangement. If we were simply in the local authority, which is what happened with up to 16-year-olds in the past, pretty ineffective actually. Our influence and our ability to really make substantial change is actually based upon the multi-agency nature of how we are and the police need to contribute as a major criminal justice partner...that’s what makes this successful and so for me, I think if we didn’t have that police input we couldn’t do our job effectively.” (Participant T)

Building on this, there is an argument evident in several interviews and articulated in the quote from one participant below, that the police and probation services are “complementary”, provide “balance” and provide “challenge”:

“Because I think what the police have brought into the youth justice system and what the police have brought into probation is that dose of reality. Because they deal with the victims, they see the victims at the front end...So I think what the police and probation do together is that they actually balance each other and I think it’s a healthy relationship. I think it’s a healthy challenge that the two organisations can provide to each other.” (Participant V)

There is a positive narrative in respect of perceived progress and success through working in partnership, consistent with the success-based narratives in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offender partnerships identified within the policy literature (discussed in chapter 6).

Some participants framed partnering as “more than” or “beyond” agencies working together in partnership, and about agencies being recognised as all fundamentally “doing the same job”.

“I’ve sat at a number of Criminal Justice Board meetings and actually said quite openly to all colleagues, ‘We are all doing the same job. We’re just doing different aspects of it.’ And it falls on deaf ears mostly...we are all in business in the Criminal Justice System to prevent offending.” (Participant T)

One participant viewed partnership working as “the only approach” that can effectively manage risk, essentially echoing the argument of Nash (2006). Another argued that “single agency working simply doesn’t work”, again a very close reflection of the argument of Rumgay (2003).

The overarching argument for partnering is widely understood and engaged across the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews, with no dissent ‘in principle’. However, as was the case with the senior officers, there were some misgivings expressed by the ‘senior stakeholders’ in terms of the practical execution of partnerships ‘in practice’, particularly in respect of governance and competence.

Misgivings about Accountability and Governance

The most prominent concern expressed by the stakeholders looking across their interviews was that in a context of multiple agencies working together it was not always sufficient clear in respect of accountability and governance. This closely echoes an issue raised in chapter 6 in which the challenges of accountability and good governance models within the complexity of new partnering formations is identified as an issue. One participant framed the accountability question using the language of “where does the buck ultimately stop”:

“The police will have some responsibility, probation will have some responsibility...In terms of where does the buck ultimately stop, I don’t know.”
(Participant P)

These concerns also resonate with a wider literature on partnering, as discussed in chapter 3. Crawford (1998) identified one of the challenges of community safety partnership working as being the aggregating and disaggregating of responsibilities in new and complex ways. Watson (2010) argued, in a child safeguarding context, that sharing responsibility is not always a recipe for clarity of accountability.

Stretching the police beyond their competence

As briefly touched upon earlier in the chapter, there are also concerns that the enthusiasm for the police to participate widely in new partnering arrangements can take the police profession and policing organisations away from areas of their ‘core’ expertise and competence.

One ‘senior stakeholder’ frames this as a danger that the police ‘will try’ to do things beyond their capabilities:

“If you’re talking about someone with a chaotic lifestyle whose got substance abuse issues, housing needs, doesn’t have a job – all those sorts of issues – well, to be honest, the police aren’t going to be able to sort that individual out in terms of enabling them to rehabilitate and recover and participate in society, and yet the danger is that they will try.” (Participant P)

At worst this can be seen to lead to a somewhat “clumsy”, “amateurish”, “pieced together”, “fire-fighting” approach, lacking the nuanced professional skills other professional groups would bring to the work.

“[The police approach to some aspects of work with offenders is...] Shallow, superficial...there just aren’t the skills and experience and supervision and training, the basic know-how, within the police to do a decent job...it’s assumed anyone can work with an offender, anyone can do our job.” (Participant V)

“[The police contribution is...] at best maybe a bit of rather clumsy mentoring. ‘Sort your life out’ blah-de-blah-de-blah.” (Participant P)

“Somehow they [the police] think they’re great at doing all this stuff that they don’t really understand.” (Participant S)

This is contrasted by several of the ‘senior stakeholders’ with the probation service, which is seen as having greater “sophistication”, and the requisite “training” and “skill set” to accomplish effective work engaging offenders and changing their behaviours. One participant paints a contrasting picture between police and probation:

“I also consider that the way probation work with offenders contrasts with the police quite sharply – again it [the probation approach] is based upon offender engagement models, research, how to engage better, motivational interviewing styles and I think we equip staff to have the skills to work with offenders in a much more holistic way.” (Participant R)

One participant in particular used quite strong language, reflecting a frustration with the police tendency to “think they know the job of rehabilitation”:

“They think they know the job of rehabilitation and they don’t. It’s about knowing what you do well and what you don’t do well and having a learning culture. We’re prepared to learn, for example intelligence sharing really helps us but I think they also need to know that you don’t walk in from being a police officer one day – arresting, charging and custody suite – to moving into PPOs [prolific and priority offenders], into the rehabilitation world and

thinking you know it all. Because we have had professional training, ordinarily around two years, and then continual learning to tell us about how we do our job. Whether it's managing risk, evaluating risk, determining risk and I just think there's different skills set and there needs to be more respect for the difference in skills sets.” (Participant S)

This argument resonates with concerns expressed in the senior police officer interviews, in which one participant bemoaned ‘we’re police officers - not social workers, we’re not housing experts’. As identified in chapter 2, there are concerns in the wider literature in respect of police over-stretching. Edwards and Skidmore (2006) identified concern about the increasingly wide professional terrain the police were seeking to occupy. Crawford (2006) discusses the clash between ‘ambitions’ and ‘limited capabilities’.

There is also a linked argument put forward by some of the ‘senior stakeholders’ that the police are simply “on the turf” of other agencies, and that this is perceived to serve little purpose:

“What is said, [by police officers representing the offender management project in court] is what could be said by a Probation Officer.” (Participant Q)

In this sense, the argument is not that such new functions take the police beyond their competence, but a different argument that there is simply no purpose served by the police in undertaking the work of other professions.

Police ‘Fillings Gaps’ and ‘Taking Over’

A key theme emerging across the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews was one of the police “filling gaps” due to the perceived “failure” and “limitations” of other agencies, and with a particular focus on probation.

‘Is there police involvement because they [probation] have capacity issues? Is that the reason why the police are involved in the first place?’ (Participant Q)

“As I see it the main reason they [the police] are involved is the total,

cataclysmic, failure of probation over many, many years.” (Participant V)

What is perceived as a “diminished” and “ineffective” model of probation practice is seen as driving greater police engagement across the ‘new’ police work with offenders.

‘[Probation supervision] was literally them turning up and signing in and having a five minute chat with their probation officer. It wasn’t actually meeting very many of the rehabilitation needs of the offenders. So the police moved in because they were under massive pressure to manage targets in terms of preventing PPOs [Prolific and Priority Offenders] and getting crime rates down and basically making sure that they [offenders] were being properly surveyed. Probation seemed to be very much in the shadows. I think that is a winding down of probation and I don’t know whether that was deliberate or conscious.” (Participant P)

This sense of probation as being in “decline” and “in retreat”, as “neglected” and “under-funded” by Government, because it is believed to have been politically “out of favour” and seen as “ripe for abolition” was articulated across several of the participants.

Building on this, one participant portrayed the whole probation model as “discredited” and ‘dysfunctional’:

“I think it [probation] is actually discredited as an organisation nationally. I think that can be evidenced by virtue of the fact there’s very little investment going in. There seems to be very little support for it...the difficulty is that once any organisation like that reaches that point of almost national dysfunction it becomes very, very difficult for them to operate in anything other than core business. Because ultimately if they’re not being given the scope or ability to innovate and to do things differently and all they’re seeking to do is hit performance measures to preserve hopefully their own existence, then you are very limited in what you can actually do.” (Participant V)

Another participant not only identified a “retreat” for probation but also fundamentally questions whether probation work has ever been adequately resourced:

“The other partners have flooded in to fill that gap [left by probation], to solve that problem....probation retreated massively for a variety of reasons...probation resources seem to have diminished...I’m not sure that we really have ever, at a national level, properly resourced the community sentencing function.” (Participant P)

The probation model is seen by some of the ‘senior stakeholders’ as being “archaic” and “out of date”.

“I think the role of probation needs to be rethought because to be honest... the model is fairly archaic.” (Participant U)

The probation model is seen as being “insufficient” to occupy the territory of managing offenders effectively. In essence, probation is viewed as having become a “bit player” on the professional terrain that should be the ‘core’, “fundamental” territory for the service.

“I think there has been a vacuum in terms of probation. It’s been there for quite a long time and certainly from my experience...probation were very minor players in what should’ve been a fundamental aspect of their core business...Probation was very much a bit player in their own game.” (Participant P)

These perceptions of stakeholders are resonant with the thinking of most of the senior police officers, who drew out the same issue of probation decline and of the police ‘filling’ the professional space as a consequence. Those ‘senior stakeholder’ participants who were directly working within probation were less evident in these broader critiques of their service, but did use language of being “besieged” and “overworked”, and of it “being a struggle to do the job we want to do”, that feel consistent with elements of this narrative.

Whilst participants had developed this understanding of a logic, a rationale and context, for police “gap filling” in respect of perceived vacuums around probation practice, they nevertheless mostly saw it as being ‘problematic’ rather than ‘functional’ or ‘adaptive’. One participant framed this that the police “have become a victim of their own success”:

“I think the police fill gaps that other agencies should fill all the time. I think, again, it comes back to this whole issue of the ‘can do’ attitude. There’s a

problem – we’ll try and do something about it. And, whilst that’s great on one level, they aren’t the right people to be doing it with everything...the police have become a victim of their own success and people will automatically turn to them.” (Participant U)

Whilst the ‘can do’ culture of policing is seen as a strength, there are also risks with this ethos. It can become “overwhelming” for other agencies and “take the developmental space away from them”, “removing opportunities” to “grow” and “innovate”. One argument, illustrated by the quote from a participant below, is that a strategic developmental space in respect of offender management is being ‘crowded out’ with a “sticking plaster”, “let’s find a quick fix” approach dominated by the police.

“It hasn’t been terribly effective I think because it has been a sticking plaster approach.” (Participant P)

It seems that at worst police expansionism can be experienced as a form of professional ‘imperialism’, with language that the police presence can “swamp” and can risk police “supremacy”.

‘If you don’t have a sufficient gravitas from an agency it’s very easy to be swamped by police because [the police are] so big, massive budget, ten times the budget, and massively powerful across crime policy, massively influential.” (Participant S)

These issues in respect of “gap filling” are resonant with the senior police officer interviews. There is an evident frustration amongst some of the ‘senior stakeholders’ that the police “assume” they can do the specialist work of other agencies. Some of the issues touched upon here are about managing difference, respect, trust and relationships across agencies in partnering contexts. In respect of difference, Crawford (1994a and 1994b) reflected that police and probation bring very different professional perspectives and training, and it is an oversimplification to assume common ground will always readily be found. Nash (2010) asks the question, in a public protection context but it applies more widely, whether all the voices can be heard in partnering contexts, with a clear inference that the police voice can sometimes ‘crowd’ or ‘drown out’ others, something which at times seems to be the case in the eyes of some of the ‘senior stakeholders’. Nash sees trust as crucial, based upon a mutual appreciation. Again, this does not always seem to be the experience reflected in the ‘senior

stakeholder' interviews in respect of some police behaviours in the partnerships. Having said that, there is nothing like the degree of hostility or resentments reflected here when contrasted to some of the earlier literature in respect of police relationships with probation officers and social workers (Garton, 1980; Thomas, 1994), where professional relationships are couched quite strongly in a paradigm of 'distrust' and 'hostility'.

Being exposed to different professions and 'going native'

The 'senior stakeholders' identify significant 'cultural' and 'identity' elements of the police engagement in the 'new' police work with offenders. Despite some expressions of unease over using the language of "going native", it was widely adopted across the 'senior stakeholder' interviews.

"Most of the officers that come into YOTs [Youth Offending Teams] stay too long and they do 'go native', we do end up with officers who struggle to communicate with their police colleagues as a result and you then end up with all sorts of resentment and all sorts of stereotyping on both sides which is really unhelpful. They do go native." (Participant T)

The language of 'going native' across the senior police officer interviews talks to a sense of cultural or professional superiority, of negative risks of assimilation, or of contaminations of professional purity. There is a prestige, an identity, an authenticity of the professional self of the police which 'going native' in some way threatens. The ubiquitous use of the term by 'senior stakeholders' - those from other professions beyond policing - is therefore intriguing.

Some 'senior stakeholders' recognised aspects of the senior police officer conceptualisation of 'going native', and the associated cultural thinking in respect of professional status and identity.

"Because they perceive themselves to be professionally and socially superior, sorry, that's a very personal view, to everyone else around them." (Participant V)

"They talk a language of vocation, of everything that is so totally unique about

being a policeman or woman...they're just so utterly soaked up and taken in by their own professional specialness.” (Participant Q)

In terms of the ‘senior stakeholders’, whilst their language of ‘going native’ is the same, there do appear to be some marked differences in usage.

One aspect of this difference is a more multi-directional reading of “going native” that recognises the general cultural cross-fertilisation between professions in multi-agency contexts; in contrast to the senior police officer interviews, where the term was essentially universally applied to the police. There is overall a more optimistic and positive tone, and perhaps arguably also a more sophisticated viewpoint, applied to the mixing of professions in partnership contexts, which can be seen as “healthy” and “vitalising”.

“If I look at IOM [Integrated Offender Management]...you know, the way our staff work in a very close way with the police staff I think is commendable. I think what there's a danger of – and I know this was something that was of concern from some police forces – was that people might ‘go native’ so that actually police officers may lose some of their discreet role, their discreet responsibility. And I think similarly for staff in probation with more of a welfare role that they may become too much down the line around enforcement and punishment. But I think as long as there's a healthy challenge between the two organisations I can only see benefits for both and I hope the relationship will continue to develop along those lines.” (Participant R)

This is reflective of similar positive strands across the literature, such as Parent and Snyder (1999) who suggested that police-corrections partnerships can bring benefits for both professional groups, developmentally as well as in terms of effectiveness. As Nash (2010, 111) argues many heads are better than one, and that there is a positive broadening of exposure for professionals in working together as well as a ‘value-add’ in terms of achieving outcomes.

Typically, in senior officer accounts the notion of police officers becoming like social workers often has the tone of a professional degeneration. Within the ‘stakeholder’ interviews, in contrast, there are arguments that the same developments are ‘evolutionary’ and ‘beneficial’ to the police profession, as “scales falling away from eyes” as the result of “new

understandings”.

“They [seconded police officers] start to understand the world that we operate and they also start to see. Do you know what, we can actually make a change in this person’s life and in their family’s life. We can make a difference which will stop that offending.” (Participant T)

“Cognitive dissonance or something like that so that they start to actually... They’ve gone in absolutely crystal clear in their own minds what they’re about and they go out scratching their heads and saying, ‘Do you know what, this is a bit more complicated than I thought it was.’” (Participant S)

The potential cultural insularity of the police professional can make it feel parochial to the ‘senior stakeholders’, lacking the cultural ‘curiosity’ to explore and positively engage with the cultures and customs of other agencies. Rather than portraying ‘going native’ as a problem, instead some of the ‘senior stakeholders’ see the police profession as in effect being in need of more of it, of being overly insulated from fresh external thinking and agents of change, as being inward-looking and self-referential as a professional group.

“One of the problems with the police is the career path...it is that insular world...You don’t get police people with experience outside of the organisation. All you get is police officers who have been PCs and work their way through.” (Participant T)

A sense of lack of cultural understandings and appreciation can lead to a sense that the profession of policing is aloof, superior, even arrogant.

‘I think the perception from our point of view, about the police moving into ‘our world’, I think it’s been welcomed by us because we are cognisant in terms of the work we do that it’s real value added by working with partners. I would suggest though that our approach is one of we value and we respect and we don’t think that anyone’s got a monopoly. It may be heresy to suggest but I don’t feel that some, some police officers, have the same view of others...[they are] a bit arrogant.’ (Participant S)

One ‘senior stakeholder’ reflected that the problem remains that new cultural experience is

perhaps “resisted” and “rejected” by “the dominant culture back home in the police station”, which has not “been enriched” in the same way by the contact beyond the single professional domain of the police.

Overall, what is being argued across some of the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews can be seen as a positive claiming of the ‘going native’ narrative. The analysis in chapter 9 in respect of ‘going native’, based upon the senior police officer interviews was construed negatively, was problematised, was seen as reflecting a professional ‘superiority’ and ‘exclusiveness’ and an absence of police professional ‘cultural intelligence’. Here, ‘going native’ is instead perhaps beginning to be reframed, within the narratives of some of the participants, as no longer necessarily problematic. Instead, such external influencing and exposure of the police profession and the consequent professional change it can provoke can be seen as a desirable goal. One participant neatly sums up this perspective:

“In the end, part of me wishes every police officer would go native.”

(Participant Q)

Summary and Conclusion

The interviews explored in this chapter with ‘senior stakeholders’ provided an ‘outsider’ perspective often not available in studies of the police. Key themes identified from the interviews with ‘senior stakeholders’ include:

- They recognise essentially the same elements of contribution from the police as identified by the senior officers and within the policy documents: (i) intelligence, information sharing and a site for intervention, (ii) enforcement and authority, (iii) capability in managing risk, (iv) being an organisation comparatively rich in resources, and (v) leadership;
- Their account of the police contribution is markedly appreciative; the police role is welcomed and seen as valuable;
- The ‘senior stakeholders’ have difficulty themselves in articulating clearly and consistently argued visions for the future of ‘police work’. They perceive policy thinking in respect of the police as complex and confused, characterising it as a balancing of many different demands, and view the policy environment of the police as tending towards short-termism;
- They express some experiences of the police profession as insular and narrow in thinking, and believe this can sometimes be a barrier to progress in the partnership working settings;
- There are some concerns expressed in respect of police style of operating and leadership within the partnerships which is not always experienced as constructive and inclusive;
- The expanded role for the police is welcomed; the police are seen as playing a critical role. The new arrangements involving the police are cast as being ‘progress’ and representing ‘success’;
- There is less emphasis on narratives of ‘crisis’ and ‘decline’ in respect of policing, but the interviews foreground similar concern to the senior officers about reactive enforcement models and the tendency for such approaches to be a ‘revolving door’;

- There are concerns about the sustained commitment of the police and whether the new models of working have been effectively mainstreamed within the police. There are also concerns that at times the police are doing the work of other agencies and lack the capability to do such work well;
- The term 'going native' is used by several of the 'senior stakeholders'. This reflects a more multi-directional interpretation of the concept than the senior officers and it is also suggested that there may be benefits, a positive opportunity for professional growth and adaptation, in such professional exposure and change as well as it being seen as a problem.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

The Aims of the Research

This thesis has aimed to develop fresh insight into the ‘new’ police work with offenders, a range of new initiatives and partnerships that have collectively involved the police in new models of working with young offenders, prolific offenders, drugs users and offenders assessed as presenting a risk of serious harm. The research presented in the thesis has aimed to look across this emergent territory of the ‘new’ police work with offenders with a novel focus that:

- Is holistic in scope and thinking across the changes as a whole (encompassing the breadth of the activity, including the four core aspects of youth offending, prolific offenders, management of risk and drugs work), rather than focusing in upon particular aspects in isolation, which has predominantly been the approach across the policy and research literature;
- Foregrounds strategic and policy issues and thinking, rather than operational level issues of execution and delivery ‘on the ground’ at the ‘front line’.

The research is important because the ‘new’ police work with offenders initiatives collectively amount to a potentially fundamental strategic development for policing, and yet the overall strategic implications of these developments for the police have received insufficient attention and have rarely been considered holistically. The ‘new’ police work with offenders also provides an interesting site through which to explore current police thinking, professional identities and strategic culture at a senior level.

The thesis set out to develop insight in respect of the policy discourse relating to these developments in police work and into how this discourse has been engaged at a senior and

strategic leadership level both within the police and by ‘stakeholders’ who work closely with the police.

The thesis was structured around five key research questions:

- Why are the police engaging in different approaches to working with offenders?
- What are the strategic and policy level understandings and implications of this involvement by the police?
- What contributions do the police bring to the new forms of partnership working with offenders, and how are these contributions experienced and perceived?
- Why are new forms of partnering emerging, and how are these new partnership models experienced and understood?
- What are the implications for organisational cultures and professional identities within the police, and what impact have those professional cultures and identities had on the shaping of these developments at a strategic and policy level?

The approach has been to develop insight into the ‘new’ police work with offenders developments through a methodology with two key components: an analysis of key national policy documents, and a case study based in a single small shire police force area which engaged both senior police officers and also local senior stakeholders from other related partner organisations through a semi-structured interview approach. The methodological approach is set out and discussed in chapter 5. The detailed findings from the research have been presented in the preceding five chapters (chapters 6-10).

This concluding chapter begins with a section that identifies the key findings of the thesis and discusses the significance and implications of the key findings for police policy and practice and their relationship to the wider literature. It then briefly proposes recommendations based upon the study, reflects on strengths and weaknesses of the study, and makes proposals for further research.

Discussion of Key Findings

Major themes emerge across the preceding five chapters which present in detail the key findings of the thesis. In concluding the thesis these themes are now drawn out and evaluated:

- Analysis across the findings reveals evidence of a big, ambitious and expansionist agenda in respect of police work with offenders;
- The findings render problematic the policymaking context for policing;
- The changes in police work with offenders that are identified provoke consideration of significant policy and practice implications for the police;
- The findings also identify strategic challenges in the implementation of the changes within policing;
- Finally, the findings stimulate interesting debates in respect of ‘newness’ and continuity in policing and of the implications of both for police strategy, practice and identity.

Each of the major claims of the thesis will be taken in turn and subjected to critical appraisal, with consideration given to issues of originality, significance and implications.

The findings suggest a big, ambitious, expansionist agenda.

Wide ranging and ambitious policy aims for police practice with offenders are surfaced repeatedly across the findings.

This is particularly marked within the policy document analysis findings (chapter 6). Big and aspirational policy objectives are conspicuous across these formal policy narratives. That the police and others working with offenders aim to prevent offending and in particular young people offending, that the work aims to protect the public and manage dangerousness, that offenders will be managed and rehabilitated, that drugs misuse will be tackled, to list only the more prominent of a wide array of policy ambitions. These aspirations point to a more

proactive and partnering policing practice, and appear rooted in policy principles of prevention and protection.

A theme that emerges at several points across the findings is of an expanding role for the police driven by this policy thinking; that the police are taking on strategic responsibilities and adopting elements of practice that expand the policing role.

There are arguments within the findings that debate the novelty of these apparently ‘new’ aspirations and the ‘newness’ of the related expansion in practice, and identify continuities with what have gone before. These are discussed later in this key findings section of the chapter. Notwithstanding these debates, the thesis looking collectively across the various initiatives considered as ‘new’ police work with offenders, does strongly support the claim that there is something newly expansive and particularly ambitious represented collectively by the developments. During their period of emergence over the last two decades, the research confirms that these new initiatives in police work with offenders have seen the police aggregate a significant list of new strategic responsibilities, police organisations have begun working in new contexts and under new partnering frameworks, and police officers have begun to do work that they did not historically do.

The thesis is novel in considering these ambitious policy goals and the related developments of an expanding policing practice across the ‘new’ developments in police work with offenders as a whole. These considerations locate more broadly as being consistent within a wider literature that points to broadening roles and new more expansive ambitions for the police (Crawford, 1994a; Clark, 2005; Edwards and Skidmore, 2006; Crawford, 2006; Hughes, 2007).

The ‘new’ and expanding mission and role for the police across these developments do bring potentially significant implications for the police in respect both of police policymaking and strategic implementation; issues which are considered below.

The findings identify challenges and limitations in police policymaking

The findings point to some significant challenges and concerns in respect of the police policymaking environment. Across the findings, a picture develops of policy and practice developing in this arena in a somewhat accidental and confused manner: of lack of clarity of

thinking, definition and process; of patterns of police practice reflecting a 'gap filling' in relation to other agencies; of problems of short-term and single-agency policy thinking; of the predominance of operational rather than strategic thinking; and of a 'reverse engineering' of existing police roles, competencies and practice into new policy and practice contexts.

Collectively, these problematic aspects of the police policy environment drawn out from the findings carry a significant weight and concern not just in considerations of the future development of police work with offenders, but also more broadly in terms of how future policy in respect of policing is developed and executed.

Across the findings there are suggestions that the police policy environment around these developments is problematic; characterised as being 'complex', 'chaotic' and 'confused', and as lacking in 'leadership' and 'cohesion'. Particularly stark are perceptions exhibited by some of the senior officers that elements of the changes across the 'new' police work with offenders have occurred largely 'by chance' rather than in a systematic and planned fashion. This is perceived to risk a degeneration of 'shape', 'clarity' and 'distinctiveness' of the police role. There are also perspectives identified across the findings from senior officers that the developments have in their view been coupled with a lack of clear 'definition', resulting in strategic conversations about 'offender management' in policing progressing without a shared definition and understanding of what was being talked about.

The senior officer interviews in particular also suggest a perceived tendency for the police to engage in 'gap filling' the work of other agencies. Participants talk of the police as a 'chameleon' and 'devouring lion', of the risk of overextending and of distracting policing, and of 'trampling' on the professional 'territory' of other agencies.

Suggestions both that new models of 'police work' may have emerged at least in part 'by chance' from a 'messy' policy environment, and in part as a response to the shifting cartography of other agencies, provide a counterbalance to interpretations of the changes as a 'progressive', 'enlightened' and planned policy-based strategic response to new thinking and ambitions. The very clear sense across these findings of an 'accidental' and 'incoherent' policymaking context for the police is not one that is drawn out in the literature, and which carries important implications not only for police work with offenders but also more broadly for police strategy and practice as a whole.

Key emergent themes from the findings are of police policy thinking being 'short-termist' and 'single agency'. This in part reflects perspectives that there is an influential, stable and narrowly defined police performance framework which is seen both in senior officer and stakeholder interviews as a dominant factor in shaping police strategic culture. This framework is seen by participants as emphasising short-term reductions in particular categories of crime. This led to five areas of concern that are developed within the detailed findings: that it results in 'lip service' being paid to the 'new' police work with offenders; it risks 'fossilising' existing practice and thus maintaining the marginal and uncertain engagement of new modes of working; it could provoke a context of 'game playing'; it tends towards embedding single-agency thinking and approaches; and finally that it is instrumental in maintaining an organisational psychology of 'institutional short-termism'. In these respects the findings of the thesis are novel in drawing out these themes across the collective context of police work with offenders; these are themes which are consistent with a wider field of literature in respect of critiques of police performance (Butterfield et al., 2005; Collier, 2006; Shilston, 2008; Neyroud, 2008; Welsh and Farrington, 2012).

What does appear distinctly novel and important in the findings, in respect of policymaking thinking and behaviours in the police, is the emphasis on an operational-level focus and perspective from officers who are senior and who occupy strategic roles. One key element of how senior police officers have approached the question of police contribution to the 'new' police work with offenders is in their almost exclusively operational focus. The new models of working bring very different and much broader strategic-level roles and responsibilities for the police. Nevertheless, the police contribution has been very much understood by the senior officers in terms of 'front-line' practice (for example, secondment of officers to youth offending teams) rather than the contribution the police bring across this broader canvas of strategic roles and the 'responsibilisation' of the police for broader policy goals (for example, preventing youth crime). If this finding were to be more widely replicated then it would carry significant implications for how police organisations are led and particularly how new areas of policy and practice are understood, approached, designed and developed.

Another novel and potentially highly significant finding of the thesis is what can be described as being a 'reverse occupational culture' phenomenon, particularly evidenced in the findings from the senior officer interviews. There is a clear theme that emerges across the senior officer interviews that police thinking about the contribution provided by the police is being shaped by the competencies and traits possessed currently by police officers. This is in contrast to the competencies required by officers in the future being shaped by new thinking,

by the possibilities for different roles and requirements within novel practice contexts and new strategic goals. Within a more expansive and innovative conceptualisation of the future of police work, such as appears to be the case in the 'new' aspects of the 'new' police work with offenders, this would appear to carry the risk of being an 'evolutionary drawback', restraining the police to a backward-looking and conventional thinking that inhibits adaptation to new practice formations and partnership environments. This is not a theme developed in the wider literature, and presents a real challenge set against the interpretation of Pycroft and Gough (2010) of the 'new' partnering environments as being like a 'petri-dish' with a potential for stimulating new and exciting professional identity formations. What instead is suggested by these findings is that conventional and legacy police officer roles and competencies, rather than being reconsidered, exposed and reformulated in the context of new contexts and challenges, are instead largely being maintained and 'retro-fitted' to the very new and different partnering environments in which the police are now working. If that finding were to be replicated more widely, it would have serious implications for efforts to re-imagine policing within a rapidly changing policy and practice context.

The implication of these findings in respect of police policymaking, and of the related senior and strategic-level thinking and leadership around the developments, is collectively highly significant and critical for policing, not just in respect of police work with offenders but more broadly across policing strategy as a whole. The findings suggest that more attention should be paid to the manner in which policy and practice emerges within police organisations, particularly suggesting more work with senior officers. The suggestion from the thesis is that there is anything but a straightforward translation of high-level policy thinking into policy and practice at a senior level within police organisations. The implication of these findings is that considerations of policing strategy need to engage with and respond much more to challenges within a police policymaking environment that, on the basis of these findings, appears problematic across a number of fundamental dimensions. These include being insufficiently coherent and lacking in a sufficiently planned approach, lacking the exhibiting of clear thinking and definition, being skewed towards operational and single-agency thinking, being unduly shaped by legacy roles and capabilities, and lacking in longer-term and whole system, holistic approach. These apparent deficits across key dimensions of the police policymaking context seem critical given the context identified in the wider literature (cf. Edwards and Skidmore, 2006; Flanagan, 2008; ESRC, 2009; Stevens, 2014) of this being an era of particular and peculiar challenges and choices for policing strategy.

Changes in police work with offenders suggest significant policy implications for the police

The major claims made by the thesis in respect of policy implications for the police are: Firstly that these developments surface a tension between ‘expansionist’ and ‘core’ concepts of the police role; secondly, related to expansionist thinking, that they have a *capacity* to challenge, ‘unsettle’ and ‘redraw’ the scope and mission of police work; and thirdly and finally, that the developments can be conceptualised as risking being ‘out of control’ in policy terms.

One debate that runs throughout the thesis engages with a fundamental policy question for police mission and role. On one side of thinking about police strategy sit concepts of the value and attraction of a ‘core’ definition of policing. Defined by a distinctiveness of purpose, activity, powers, and capabilities. Founded upon the particular powers conferred to the office of Constable and stably built around delivering ‘traditional’ policing activities such as patrol, response and investigation. On the other side lie concepts of an expanding outcome-based thinking about police work based upon ‘preventative’, ‘pre-emptive’ and ‘pro-active’ models of practice typically forged in partnership with other agencies and locating the police towards aims, into activities and across delivery capabilities that are beyond the traditional territory of the police and which have less (or at times no) distinction with the work of other agencies.

There is an argument drawn from the findings that this expansionist, outcome-based thinking, such as is so clearly evidenced across the policy narratives and practice formations of the developments in police work with offenders, has the potential to ‘unsettle’ and ‘redraw’ police mission and role, with fundamental implications for police organisations and police officers. Certainly, in terms of ‘unsettling’, there is a strong sense that tensions between ‘core’ and ‘expanding’ arguments for the police role are quite deeply unresolved across the thesis findings; particularly this is the case within the senior officer interviews. Concepts of ‘core’ policing have a resonance with senior officers, who seem attracted by the clarity and assurance that definition, stability and distinctiveness for the police can bring. There is an existential sense to some of this thinking, in respect of their need to define *who* the police are and *what* they do, as well as importance in respect of identity. This is evidenced in worries that new models for police work with offenders carry risks of ‘erosion’, ‘distraction’, ‘degeneration’ and ‘disintegration’; there are fears of an incorporeal future for policing, of a dilution and diminishing of the profession.

Alongside this there is also evidence across the findings of a strong attraction for senior officers of a less confined, broader interpretation of the police role with offenders. This thinking is driven by objective-based *why* thinking, by the primacy of ‘prevention’, ‘protection’ and ‘partnership’ as favoured professional concepts, and by narratives of ‘failure’ in respect of legacy traditional police work with offenders, in particular perceptions of a ‘revolving door’. In terms of the potential to ‘redraw’ police mission and role, outcome-based and expansionist thinking such as is evidenced across the findings but particularly in Chapter 6, can tend towards a radical rethinking of police practice with a reshaping, potentially ultimately towards deconstructing, of the concepts of ‘the police’ and of ‘police work’.

In respect of an expansion of police mission and scope, the research points to a key issue in terms of the lack of an accompanying narrative of limitation; of a counterbalancing narrative and clarity of boundaries for police work to set against the expansionist policy and practice tendencies. Throughout the interviews with senior officers and stakeholders, but particularly in elements of the policy document analysis, there is considerable evidence of a discourse of expanding mission and role being clearly articulated and engaged. There is an almost complete absence throughout the thesis findings of a counterbalancing discourse of boundaries and limitations in respect of police mission, role and operational activity. There are also linked, more practical concerns expressed in the findings that the drive towards an expanding police scope can take the police beyond their skill and capability to deliver, and that these developments as a whole have in some important respects resulted in a lack of clarity of governance and accountability. Given this context within the findings, the growth in scope of police work with offenders can be conceptualised as being potentially ‘out of control’.

The sense from the findings of policy and practice with offenders being expansionist and potentially ‘out of control’ prompts some significant concerns, well rehearsed in the wider literature. These include the risk of a ‘criminalisation’ of wider social policy and the disadvantages of such a phenomenon (Uglow, 1988; Reiner, 1991; Loader and Walker, 2001; Crawford, 2006), of the ‘creep’ of policing into wider spheres of life in respect of concerns of governance, human rights, due process and state intrusiveness (Uglow, 1988), of the risks of policing becoming a predominant voice in partnering arrangements and ‘drowning out’ other agencies (Murphy and Lutze 2009; Howard, 2010; Nash 2010), of a loss of ‘shape’ and ‘distinction’ for policing role and the dangers of ‘mission creep’, ‘distortion’ and ‘confusion’ for front-line officers (Murphy and Lutze, 2009), and of the drawing of the police well

beyond areas of their core capability and competence (Crawford, 2006; Edwards and Skidmore, 2006).

The findings suggest strategic challenges for implementing new models of working

The thesis finds that the ‘new’ developments in police work suffer from being both ‘ephemeral’ and ‘peripheral’, and also identifies themes about both the challenges of change in police settings and also of the challenges to the police and other agencies of working together.

One question prompted by and explored within the research has been how committed are the police in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders? There are worries expressed in both senior officer and stakeholder interviews that the police commitment to the ‘new’ police work with offenders is ‘ephemeral’, that it has not been ‘mainstreamed’ by the police, and that there are relatively low levels of direct knowledge and engagement from senior police leaders. There are narratives from senior officers of it being seen as ‘a career backwater’ and of offender management being seen as ‘someone else’s job’ within the police. Emergent from the stakeholder interviews are issues of the work being beyond the ethos and skills of the police and that changes that have taken place within partnering settings are not translated back to the police station and mainstreamed into the wider police organisation. There are concerns expressed across the research findings about how financially fragile the emergent practices of police work with offenders may be, given the context of budgetary cuts.

One key related finding is that senior officers appear to exhibit a tendency to ‘externalise’ partnerships and to maintain a ‘single agency paradigm’ in their thinking. This speaks to the importance cited by Crawford (1994a, 61), two decades ago, that in terms of partnering approaches and the police what is required is a “genuine change in organisational location”; the impression from the research is that this has not been achieved in the force in question in respect of the ‘new’ police work with offenders. Such conclusions are also broadly in line with those of Wood and Bradley (2009) who identify (in a New South Wales, Australia context) the challenges of genuinely creating a central and committed position for new modes of working and new partnering arrangements in a policing context.

The findings of the research are consistent with a considerable wider literature in identifying that working in partnership is an accepted and supported model within policing contexts. Alongside a clear support across the findings ‘in principle’ for partnering, there are four

principal concerns 'in practice' in respect of partnering reflected within the findings. Firstly, a general scepticism about the effectiveness of 'execution' of the partnership models, in particular symbolised by lack of 'shared outcomes', lack of 'cohesion' between partners operating in the partnership contexts, and lack of 'contribution' and of genuine 'commitment' from partners. Secondly, challenges in respect of clarity of accountability and quality of governance of the partnership arrangements. These challenges include the growth in 'regulatory mechanisms' and primacy of 'professional discretion', problems of fairness and transparency attendant to 'risk' assessment and management, and issues of opaque and overlapping accountability structures coupled with the inherent complexities of delivering clear accountability models within collaborative working contexts. Thirdly, the risk that agencies working together can lead to agencies trying to do the work of others, with the implication of the police potentially lacking the capabilities to competently do so.

The fourth area of concerns in the findings in respect of partnering are founded upon issues of power and cultural dynamics within partnerships. Much of these issues of cultural dynamics within partnering represent a well rehearsed territory across the wider literature (Garton, 1980; Corbett, 1988; Thomas, 1994; Crawford, 1999; Rumgay, 2000; Edwards and Skidmore, 2006; Wood and Bradley, 2009; Pamment, 2010; Watson, 2010). The development of initiatives in which the police undertake different kinds of work, and work within settings in which they intermingle with other professionals, is likely to carry significant implications for police occupational cultures and professional identities. The issue of the cultural competence of the police in respect of working with and respecting other professions feels important to draw from the research. If the overarching project of the 'new' police work with offenders relies on organisations coming together and working creatively, respectfully and with high levels of trust, then there is an important implication that the 'strategic culture' of the police in respect of their style and leadership in partnerships, reflective of their thinking and approach towards other professionals, needs to evolve.

However, alongside this there also needs to be a greater appreciation of police culture and professional identity. It can be too easy to join in with the orgy of critical bias against police culture; it is thus important to foreground that this research also reflects very many positive police cultural traits of authority, gravitas, credibility, ability to deliver, and many more that are seen as fundamental to police contributions, and that those police contributions to the work and partnerships are assessed to be highly valued and critical. The self-same senior stakeholders who express frustrations with elements of police style and culture also talk of learning a lot and gaining professionally from their exposure to the police profession.

Whilst these cultural findings largely reflect themes already well drawn out in wider literature on partnership working, they remain important issues for the future success of initiatives involving the police working in partnership.

The two aspects of findings in respect of partnering and culture where the thesis is on more novel ground, in respect of the wider literature, are in the perspectives of senior officers towards the probation service, and in the senior officer narratives of police officers 'going native'.

In terms of senior officer perspectives of probation, traditional narratives identified in the literature tend to focus on professional difference, distance and antipathy. The findings in the thesis are different and distinct from these prevailing narratives. Here the discourse of senior officers primarily is one of sympathy and concern, entailing views that probation work is under-resourced and a 'thankless task' being undertaken by people that the senior police officers broadly respect.

The findings about police officers 'going native' in the thesis are not entirely novel; there is some coverage in the literature of concerns about how police roles change in partnering settings (Burnett and Appleton, 2004; Coliandris and Rogers, 2008; Murphy and Lutze, 2009; Wood and Bradley, 2009). However, what appears distinct is the scale and strength of findings in this respect; there are some very strong themes in terms of assimilation, professional purity, degeneration, superiority, abandonment and loss that are significant, and which feel worrying in respect of future partnering work involving the police. Across their interviews, senior officers placed a significant emphasis on their concerns about the cultural impact of partnership settings for police officers, in particular perceived risks of police officers 'going native'. In effect, seconded police officers are assessed as falling down a gradient away from the prototype of the ideal police officer; their journey away from 'being a real cop' is characterised by the violating of important professional cultural norms, particularly by looking and behaving like other professionals and specifically within that 'becoming like social workers', losing their 'edge' and becoming 'soft'.

The term 'going native' is used by several of the 'senior stakeholders' as well in their interviews. Their usage reflects a more multi-directional interpretation of the concept than the senior officers and it is also suggested that there may be benefits, a positive opportunity for professional growth and adaptation, in such professional exposure and change as well as it

being seen as a problem. In contrast, the police narratives of 'going native' are not generally multi-directional and sit alongside unflattering portrayals of the work of others in derogatory terms such as 'namby-pamby', stoked by pervasive cultural stories of naive professionals who are 'on the side' of offenders. These 'going native' narratives from senior officers seem to reflect a fear of professional 'degeneration'. This in part signals preciousness for them of the police professional identity resonant with the anchorage and legitimacy provided by 'core' policing ideals embodied in the distinctive role and character of the Constable. It could also be understood, or perhaps some in the police profession might argue misunderstood, as an underlying prejudice of professional 'superiority', raising questions about cultural competencies in respect of being able to recognise and value the contributions and professionalism of others. Such meta-contrasting and dis-identifications by the police in respect of other professions may be symptomatic of insecurities regarding a police professional identity which is strongly idiographic for them but which is also perceived to be at risk. These cultural dynamics certainly imply the potential to cast a significant shadow over the effectiveness of partnering arrangements involving the police.

The findings stimulate debates about 'newness' and continuity in policing

Across the findings of the research, there are evident tensions between on the one hand the 'newness' and novelty of aspects of police work with offenders, and on the other a strong sense of continuity between these developments and wider traditional and legacy formations of police policy and practice. The findings suggest both 'newness' and 'continuity' are important themes engaged with across the policy documents and both senior officer and stakeholder interviews. These findings prompt fundamental questions in respect of change and policing; what both 'newness' and 'continuity' mean for participants and how they impact, within a complex milieu of change and continuity, for policing policy and practice?

There are powerful narratives of 'continuity', particularly within the senior officer interviews. The senior officers draw quite heavily on readings of police history and tradition which they see as locating 'protecting' the public and 'preventing' crime (arguably the two key policy drivers behind changing patterns of police work with offenders) as being long-term, historical, traditional, and 'foundational' principles for policing. These readings of police history have a teleological tone and rely on narrow interpretation of a very narrow range of sources; they link closely with arguments that the change which is occurring represents a continuity of 'progress', building naturally from legacy police thinking and practice.

Such senior officer narratives in respect of the fundamental continuities within ‘new’ practice are no doubt in part simply justified by the realities of the recent developments and their relationship to what has gone before; change rarely represents something wholly ‘new’, and there are clear arguments across the findings that aspects of the recent changes around police work with offenders are quite deep-rooted in respect of connections to past policing thinking, tradition and practice. The senior officer accounts of ‘continuity’ may also be in part explained in the context of the unresolved tensions between ‘core’ and ‘expanding’ models for police work, and the importance to police officers of their police professional identity. Narratives of ‘new’ practice emerging as part of enduring ‘continuities’ for policing may be attempts to ‘square the circle’ for senior officers; maintaining a distinct identity narrative for the police whilst also embracing the attractions of ‘new’, expanding outcome-based thinking and practice which otherwise potentially threaten that professional identity and tradition.

Sitting alongside and in contrast to these narratives of continuity, the findings of the thesis foreground a strong emphasis on perspectives that these elements of police work with offenders are ‘new’, being portrayed as representing a distinct and significant break from what has gone before. This is particularly evident within the arguments for change constructed within official policy documents, and also is drawn strongly from across the senior officer interviews.

These ‘newness’ narrative seems to be doing important work both for policymakers and for senior officers. Across the policy documents and within the senior officer interviews, there are strongly drawn narratives of ‘crisis’, ‘decline’ and ‘failure’ in respect both of policing and of the wider justice system. This is resonant with a wider literature of narratives of ‘decline’ and ‘crisis’ identified in chapter 2 (Reiner, 1991; Loftus, 2012). Some of the tone of such arguments by the senior officers is particularly stark. These themes are less strongly drawn out in the ‘senior stakeholder’ interviews, but all three elements of the research foreground the shortcomings of legacy response and enforcement based models of policing, caricaturing the strategic failings in policy and practice as creating a ‘revolving door’ in which offenders continue to re-offend because fundamental issues are not addressed and thus long-term change is not achieved. Such narratives of crisis and failure serve to create a case for change, a ‘policy space’ for bigger and broader policy ambitions to emerge, and a negative platform to

contrast with positive narratives of ‘new’ initiatives and of the achievements they represent for current policymakers and leaders.

Consistent with this, the findings also identify a significantly positive tone in respect of the ‘new’ developments, seeing them as representing ‘new’ and significant change, and casting that change variously as being ‘progressive’, ‘enlightened’ and ‘successful’. These narratives of ‘enlightenment’ in respect of ‘new’ approaches to police work with offenders are contrasted by the senior officers with some accompanying ‘dark ages’ perspectives of perceived legacy police cultures towards offenders which are construed as being ‘base’ and ‘unsophisticated’. The policy documents in particular place distinct emphasis on the importance of the ‘success’ of these ‘new’ initiatives in making the case for them, contrasted with the ‘failure’ of what has gone before. In part these positive narratives about change can be seen as consistent engagements with the call from Edwards and Skidmore (2006, 34) that the policing profession be an ‘activist’ profession ‘forging new’ modes of practice and new thinking in respect of their profession, rather than a ‘defensive’ profession ‘shoring up’ declining legacy models of practice. In part it could also be argued, for the senior officers, that the strategic leaders of police organisations have a personal and professional motivation to cast things that are changing on their watch within policing as representing real and significant change, and of casting that change as progressive and as being successful. Clearly in respect of the policy documents, policymakers who are producing texts to either launch new initiatives or to promote change (as several of the documents are) have a clear interest in emphasising the advantages of the ‘new’, of producing strong critiques about what has gone before, and of emphasising the difference that is being created, foregrounding the ‘newness’ and the related impact and success of the new practice.

Across this significant complexity of themes in respect of ‘newness’ and ‘continuity’ in the findings, it is interesting to step back and appraise a broader questions of how ‘new’ the developments appear on the whole to be, and to assess how much they represent a ‘continuity’ with what has gone before. There seems relatively little controversy at one level that much is ‘new’ here. There are indeed in concrete terms certain incontrovertible elements of ‘newness’: new initiatives, new work practices, new settings, new relationships with other agencies, and new strategic responsibilities, all identified consistently across the research. Having said that, the findings also reflect strong continuities of thinking, and of a police policy and practice that may well be engaging with new policy and practice but is evidently

also bringing a great deal of continuity of thinking, capability and practice to those ‘new’ aspects of police work. The research findings may well (as discussed earlier in this chapter) suggest that these changes have a capacity to ‘unsettle’ and ‘redraw’ traditional thinking and practice in policing, but there are also, evident across the findings, pervasive reactionary forces shoring up an essential continuity in policing thinking and practice. There remains a question across the findings of how significant the disruption these changes have wrought on what has gone before has really been, against the degree to which the realities of police policy and practice have, in many respects, continued on largely as they were. In respect of the latter argument, this is most particularly drawn out from the findings in respect of evidence for a ‘reverse occupational culture’ phenomenon, the tendency to engage with the issues at operational rather than strategic level, of the cultural tendencies towards single agency mindset and short-termist thinking, and of the changes existing in an ‘ephemeral’ and ‘peripheral’ space within the wider police strategic and practice context; all of these elements point towards a narrative of ‘newness’ that whilst to some degree reflecting real change also to some degree masks strong underlying realities of pervasive continuity of police thinking and practice.

These debates generated from the findings in respect of ‘newness’ and ‘continuity’ have significant implications not only for police work with offenders but more broadly for the whole wider future of police policy and practice. The sense that police policymaking, strategic thinking and practice development exists in a constantly reproducing milieu characterised by a juxtaposition of ‘newness’ (dominant and continuous narratives of crisis, failure, decline, success, enlightenment, progress, the significance and importance of change) with ‘continuity’ (the importance of tradition, legacy roles and practice, stability of identity, cultural stagnation, remaining true to what is viewed from the legacy of policing as being core and important) suggests a sub-optimal environment to develop policing for the future. It also suggests a particularly complex and uncertain environment where these competing forces need to be understood and navigated successfully by anyone wishing either to achieve change or to maintain things as they are. The continuous tensions and constant ‘newness’ also carries a considerable potential to be both confusing and exhausting for those caught up in or dependent upon the police policy context, whether officers, stakeholders, leaders, policymakers, or local communities.

The key findings of the thesis

The key findings of the thesis collectively foreground some significant challenges for the police in respect of policymaking, policy implications and strategic implementation across the big and ambitious developments of police work with offenders. They also stimulate interesting debates in respect of ‘newness’ and ‘continuity’ in policing, and the important work done by both concepts.

The final sections of this concluding chapter now consider recommendations based upon the findings, reflect on the study and consider further avenues for research.

Recommendations

The key findings of the research cover a broad ground and identify several complex and strategic challenges that by their nature do not provoke simple solutions and recommendations for change. In this context the recommendations emerging from the thesis are strategic and broad-ranging in nature and span across policing as well as the specific context of police work with offenders, seeking to identify some of the key implications identified in the previous section:

- (1) Future policy should seek to **develop a strategic approach to offending in a more holistic and planned way**. The role of police work within that endeavour should be considered collectively and cohesively. This is in contrast to a current context where strategic thinking in terms of police work with offenders seems to be: (i) fractured over a range of specific sub-framings of practice (e.g. youth offending, risk management); (ii) lacking much if any strategic coherence across the organic, iterative and at times chaotic growth of specific initiatives, and (iii) hampered in terms of becoming genuinely strategic by dominant short-term, operational, and single-agency perspectives;
- (2) Attention needs to be given to how senior and strategic engagement with policymaking and change within policing, particularly by senior police officers, can become more cohesive, planned, clear in thinking, holistic, multi-agency, longer-term and outcome-based. There are potentially a wide range of things which may need to occur for this to become the case. There needs to be reconsideration and renewal of aspects of 'strategic culture', which will in turn need to reflect in **senior officer progression, competencies, training and support**. Key aspects of the police policymaking environment and processes also need to be reviewed, to understand how to inject clarity of thinking and greater coherence of process, and alongside that new, broader, and longer-term thinking, into **processes of police policy design and development**.
- (3) A more strategic and planned approach to the development of the police role across the developments in police work with offenders could in turn lead to or form part of a **clearer long-term 'professional blueprint' for the future role requirements of police officers**. Ideally this could be both appreciative of the strong identity foundations of the police and yet also supportive of an evolution of police roles

towards future needs and innovative new formations of partnerships and of practice. This would help address the concern that the future of police roles across offender work may be being prescribed and constrained through a backward looking, reactionary and conventional thinking. It would also address concerns that something is being lost in an iterative and unplanned expansionism of police role which risks a 'degeneration' of distinctiveness and shape, and feels 'out of control' and 'unrestrained'. Such a professional blueprint could help better address issues of capabilities and skills not keeping up with changes and expansion in role.

- (4) Police 'cultural competence' and 'cultural literacy' across new practices and particularly within partnerships might be benefitted by **greater exposure of senior police officers to the work of other contexts and agencies**. In addition, **future approaches to police professional development** should enable and encourage officers to gain direct experience of other agencies, and then should foster recognition of such breadth of exposure and experience in career progression and embed a sense of the value of such experience and perspective across police leadership culture;
- (5) Efforts should be made to **tackle the 'institutionalised short-termism' of the police**. This not only requires reconsiderations of performance frameworks but also seeks cultural change at a senior leadership level and strikes at organisational development challenges in terms of the frequency of 'churn' of role tenure. To be effective, the success of new offender strategies founded on principles of 'prevention' and 'risk management' need to be understood and evaluated over much longer-term timescales than they are currently;
- (6) More attention needs to be paid to the **effectiveness, clarity and robustness of accountability and governance** across the developments in police work with offender partnering arrangements;

Reflections on the Study

This thesis has made a contribution to the current literature by developing a novel approach that has considered the developments in police work with offenders collectively and from a policy and strategic, senior leadership standpoint.

The study has added new insight across the five research questions. It set out to develop a 'thick description' of the policy and senior leadership discourse in respect of the potentially 'new' police work with offenders, something that was lacking in the literature. The detailed approach to analysis and the determination to present findings in a way which retains an authenticity of the contributions of participants (wherever possible in their own words) have hopefully gone some way to achieving that aim. The considerable depth of material across the findings of this thesis, and in particular the substantial contributions from the twenty one participants, deserves to be taken seriously.

This is however only one relatively small qualitative research project, primarily based upon one case study comprising a single police force area, within a wider field of research that deserves considerably more attention. As such an epistemological caution should be applied to generalising from the specific findings of a research project involving a small number of participants towards nomothetic assumptions that either the particular case study area or the participants engaged within it can be assumed as 'representative'. No doubt were this study to be replicated elsewhere then some similarities of findings would emerge; indeed much has been written about consistencies of occupational cultures in respect of the police, and the 'new' police work with offender developments explored in the case study have been reproduced in many respects in very similar ways across different localities. However it is important to reflect that professional cultures and identities are nevertheless produced, reproduced and performed locally and individually. The developments in police work with offenders is also a fast-moving field of policy and practice, and more widely police organisations are subject to a scale of change viewed as unprecedented; the 'thick description' of this study can seek to claim nothing more than to have attempted to capture a particular moment within that fast-changing picture.

The methodology of the study has sought to develop an authentic insight. Inevitably that authenticity will be to some degree touched and spoilt by imperfections in method and execution. I would take the view that it would be naive to assume an absence of effect from

the positionality of the researcher in respect of the findings of any piece of qualitative research work; my familiarity with field and participants may well make this research more sensitive and informed but also may be accompanied by a greater potential for a pollution by personal positions and opinions. The interviews felt very open and engaged; it is nevertheless unknowable how far the material in the interviews reflects a 'reality' of lived experience and thinking. Any process of analysis and presentation of findings involves a vast number of choices, not all of which will have achieved a (theoretical) perfection of objectivity.

Whilst the study has sought to explore and give voice to the individual inputs of the participants, neither the methodology nor the findings develop a particular sensitivity to the differences between specific participants. Future research could usefully explore in particular whether the issues explored in the thesis are sensitive to gender, race, age, years of service, professional background and other aspects of personal and professional difference.

Opportunities for Further Research

There is a wide range of findings across this research which stimulates a breadth of research questions. The thesis calls in particular for four areas to be considered in future research:

- Further studies of senior police leaders and their perspectives of and engagement with 'newness' and 'continuity' in terms of modes of police work, and within that 'new' partnership relationships, strategic responsibilities and work practices. Relatively little is known about how senior police officers think about and are engaging with change and continuity within policing policymaking and practice, and in respect to their professional culture and identity within policing. The research undertaken by this thesis suggests that developing greater insight into 'strategic culture', 'professional identity', policymaking and policy perspectives at a senior level within the police is helpful in developing a richer picture of how national policy initiatives are understood, interpreted and enacted locally. Such research promises to have the potential to provide deeper understandings than would be achieved simply by an understanding of formal policy narratives alone, either at national or more local level;
- Research that covers similar ground to this study, but with greater sensitivity to issues of gender, age, experience, race, ethnicity and professional background would be

valuable;

- Further research which engages senior police officers and senior external stakeholders within the same studies would seem highly useful, particularly across the territory of the developments of police work with offenders. There is a sizeable body of studies that focus upon front-line and first and second tier managerial roles in police and professionals from other agencies around the contexts of the 'new' police work with offenders and similar partnership settings, but very little across the literature that engages at a senior leadership level researching across agency boundaries.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored issues around the potentially 'new' police work with offenders. The research demonstrates the importance of developing greater insight into senior and strategic level policy thinking, strategic culture and professional identity in respect of these changes, which are important to the future of the police.

The key findings identify that the changes in police work with offenders represent a big, ambitious and expansionist policy ambition, manifesting in a more proactive and partnering practice, and founded upon policy drivers of prevention and managing risk. The findings are suggestive of a somewhat chaotic and incohesive policymaking context for policing, suggesting the changes to be chaotic in their genesis and also partly accounted for by 'gap filling' in respect of other agencies. The developments sit in tension with short-termism and single-agency thinking, and there is a sense of a predominantly operational-level focus to senior-level thinking and of a 'retro-fitting' of legacy police roles to new practice settings. The changes in police work with offenders that are identified provoke consideration of significant policy and practice implications for the police, in particular tensions between 'core' and 'expanding' ideas for the scope of the police. The findings also identify strategic challenges in the implementation of the changes within policing, most particularly the challenges of doing things differently and of doing things together with other agencies, and the positionality of the changes as being 'ephemeral' and 'peripheral' within the wider policing organisation. The changes carry a significance for police culture and professional identities; there are worries of professional 'degeneration', of police officers 'going native', which prompt in turn consideration of the cultural competence and literacy of the police in respect

of the new partnering contexts. Finally, the findings stimulate interesting debates in respect of 'newness' and continuity in policing and of the implications of both for police strategy, practice and identity.

Overall, the thesis calls for a cohesive (rather than fragmented) engagement with the developments in police work with offenders, and for deeper and more sensitive understanding of these 'new' modes of police work.

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Appendix A: Policy documents selected for analysis

Youth offending

AUDIT COMMISSION (1996), *Misspent Youth: Young People and Crime*. London: The Audit Commission.

HOME OFFICE (1997), *No more Excuses – A New Approach to Tackling Youth Crime in England and Wales*, Cmnd. 3809. London: HMSO.

YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD (2004), *Sustaining the Success: Extending the Guidance Establishing Youth Offending Teams*. London: Youth Justice Board.

ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS and YOUTH JUSTICE BOARD (2010), *The YOT Police Officer Review and Role Development*. London: ACPO.

Public protection and managing risk

HOME OFFICE (2002), *Protecting the Public: Strengthening the protection against sex offenders and reforming the law on sexual offences*, Cmnd. 5668. London: HMSO.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE JOINT INSPECTION (2011), *Putting the Pieces Together: An Inspection of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements*. London: HMIC and HMIP.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (2012), 'MAPPA Guidance 2012: Version 4'. London: MoJ.

NATIONAL POLICE IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (2012), *Guidance on Protecting the Public: Managing Sexual offenders and Violent Offenders*, Second edition, Version 2. Wyboston: NPIA.

Drugs

HM GOVERNMENT (1998), *Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain*, Cmnd 3945. London: HMSO.

HOME OFFICE (2011), *Drug Interventions Programme Operational Handbook*. London: Home Office.

Prolific offending

HOME OFFICE (2004a), *Prolific and Priority Offender Strategy – Initial Guidance Catch and Convict Framework*. London: HMSO.

HOME OFFICE (2004b), *Supplementary Guidance: Rehabilitate and Resettle Framework*. London: HMSO.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE JOINT INSPECTION (2004), *Joint Inspection Report into Persistent and Prolific Offenders*. London: HMIC, HMIP, HMCPS, HMIP, MCIS, Audit Commission.

DAWSON, P. (2005) *Early Findings from the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Evaluation*. London: Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office.

General offender management

HOME OFFICE and MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (2010), *Reducing Reoffending, Cutting Crime, Changing Lives: Guidance on new duties for Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales*. London: HMSO.

Appendix B: Topic guide for semi-structured interviews, senior police officers

TOPIC	AREAS TO EXPLORE
Role	What do you think the job of the police should be in respect of offenders/criminals?
Change	<p>Do you think there have been changes in respect of offenders in police thinking, attitudes and practice during your career? Do you think there are presently changes occurring in this arena within policing?</p> <p>Why do you think these changes have occurred?</p> <p>Are the changes positive or negative?</p> <p>Do you personally think differently about how the police approach offenders than you used to? Do you think differently to other people in policing?</p> <p>How do you see things developing in the future?</p>
Contribution	<p>What contribution do the police and other agencies bring to the new partnerships? What parts do they respectively play?</p> <p>Should the police be involved? Are the police doing the right things? Are seconded police officers doing the right things, and operating in the right ways?</p> <p>Is the police contribution effective? Does the contribution the police play in the partnerships and in offender management support performance?</p> <p>Personal knowledge of, and involvement with, the 'new' police work with offenders</p> <p>Where next for the contribution of the police?</p>
Partnering	<p>Support/resistance to the partnership approach to work with offenders. Personal 'ownership'/'engagement' with the partnership approach</p> <p>Strengths and weaknesses of the new partnerships. Is the partnership working with offenders effective?</p> <p>Aims: What are the objectives of the partnerships? Are these clear? Do you think partners share the same goals?</p> <p>Leadership: Who should lead the partnerships? Who should lead work with offenders? Who does exercise leadership at the moment?</p> <p>Views about the probation service</p>
Police policy	<p>What factors do you think shape policing policy?</p> <p>Who do you think shapes policing policy?</p> <p>Is the way police policy is developed effective?</p>

Appendix C: Topic guide for semi-structured interviews, senior stakeholders

TOPIC	AREAS TO EXPLORE
Role	What do you think the job of the police should be in respect of offenders/criminals?
Change	<p>Do you think there have been changes in respect of offenders in police thinking, attitudes and practice during your career? Do you think there are presently changes occurring in this arena within policing?</p> <p>Why do you think these changes have occurred?</p> <p>Are the changes positive or negative?</p> <p>What has been your personal experience of working with the police in respect of offender work? Has this changed over time?</p> <p>How do you see things developing in the future?</p>
Contribution	<p>What contribution do the police and other agencies bring to the new partnerships? What parts do they respectively play?</p> <p>Should the police be involved? Are the police doing the right things? Are seconded police officers doing the right things, and operating in the right ways?</p> <p>Is the police contribution effective? Does the contribution the police play in the partnerships and in offender management support performance? Where next for the contribution of the police?</p> <p>What is your personal view about the strengths and weaknesses of the police contribution?</p>
Partnering	<p>Support/resistance to the partnership approach to working with offenders, and particular to working with the police on this agenda. Personal 'ownership'/'engagement' in respect of the new partnership approaches</p> <p>Strengths and weaknesses of the new partnerships. Is the partnership working with offenders effective?</p> <p>Aims: What are the objectives of the partnerships? Are these clear? Do you think partners share the same goals?</p> <p>Leadership: Who should lead the partnerships? Who should lead work with offenders? Who does exercise leadership at the moment?</p> <p>Views about the probation service and the police.</p>
Policy	<p>What factors do you think shape policing policy?</p> <p>Who do you think shapes policing policy?</p> <p>Is the way police policy is developed effective?</p>

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

Police Work with Offenders

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Invitation to participate

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Purpose of the Study

The research is a study into how the police work with offenders. It is examining how the police approach at a senior leadership level thinking about, and engaging and working with, offenders with a particular focus on recent changes in approach. The study is particularly interested in strategic and theoretical considerations, particularly in respect of purpose and implications.

Why have I been invited to participate?

The study aims to engage participants who are senior police officers, of Superintendent and ACPO ranks, from across a number of Forces in England and Wales.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed, lasting approximately 60 minutes, covering a range of topics relating to the strategic priorities and implications of police approaches to working with offenders.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part? (where appropriate)

Apart from taking up valuable time, it is not anticipated that there are any specific disadvantages or risks in taking part in the study. The issues covered in the research will not be of a personal or of a sensitive professional nature.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

In reality, there are no specific personal benefits for participants, beyond contributing to a research project which aims to develop thinking and practice in respect of police work with offenders.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept confidential (subject to legal limitations). All data will be anonymised and stored securely.

What should I do if I want to take part?

Sign the consent form, and arrangements will be made to establish a date for an interview.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research will be presented in a thesis for a PhD submission at the University of Northampton.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is funded by Northamptonshire Police, under the auspices of the National Police Improvement Agency Bramshill Scholarship Programme. The research is being undertaken under the research governance of the University of Northampton.

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Northampton University

Contact for Further Information

For further information, potential participants can contact the researcher, via iain.britton@northants.pnn.police.uk

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, participants can also contact the Chair of the Northampton University Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet.

Iain Britton

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

Police Work with Offenders

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet in respect of the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason, including after the interview has taken place.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.
4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded
- 5 I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications
6. I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored and that this data may be used for future research.

Signed.....

Dated.....

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