Holding the Line: The Sustainability of Police Involvement in Crime Prevention

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INTRODUCTION

The opening lines of the handbook issued by Sir Robert Peel to all officers of the Metropolitan Police in 1829, were these:
'It should be understood at the outset that the object to be attained is the prevention of crime. To this great end every effort of the police is to be directed. The security of person and property, the preservation of the public tranquility, and all the other objects of a police establishment will thus be better effected than by the detection and punishment of the offender after he has succeeded in committing the crime.' Quoted in Reith (1948:62). Mayne, one of the first two Commissioners, added this principle: 'To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment.' Quoted in Boyd (2012). What exactly they meant by prevention is open to interpretation, and whether this was just a ruse to help convince a suspicious public that in England 'continental' methods of repression would not be adopted is not clear. But by the late 19th Century the reactive approach of catching criminals or 'feeling collars' had come to predominate; and in the 20th, the politically-significant rhetoric of 'fighting crime' achieved consensual hegemony, delivered huge resources to policing over the years and of course powerfully shaped the policing organisation. It was not until the 1960s that the first signs of resurgence of an explicit, practical, preventive role were seen.
In this chapter, we examine the role of the police in crime prevention in the UK, how it has developed over the years, the position that it has reached currently and where it should be heading in the future. We begin by defining what is meant by crime prevention, its relationship to similar functions, such as 'crime reduction', 'crime control' and 'community safety' and its dependence on law enforcement processes and the criminal justice system which provides the very foundation underpinning the preventive process. We distinguish between enforcement-based 'judicial' prevention in which the police service is heavily involved and the broader notion of 'civil' crime prevention to which the police make a valuable contribution through mobilising, or working in partnership with local communities, statutory agencies, voluntary groups and the private sector.

The role of police Architectural Liaison Officers (ALOs) and Crime Prevention Design Advisers (CPDAs) is a good example of direct police involvement in offering advice – based on evidence, experience and theory – on designing out crime in new build and enhancing the security of existing properties. The delivery of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) has developed into a specialised service over the past two decades supported by local planning policy and practice. The police role involves 'case work' such as reviewing major developments from a crime prevention perspective (scrutiny of development plans, analysis of crime data, site visits) and training others (e.g. town planners) in the principles and application of CPTED. Recent changes in both policy and

practice run the risk of severely jeopardising both the delivery and quality of crime prevention advice. As a non-frontline service, posts in this area have been particularly vulnerable in the current economic climate: the number of ALOs/CPDAs fell by 32% from 347 in January 2009 to 236 by August 2011 and as of June 2012 there were 196 ALOs, 44% fewer than in January 2009. Furthermore, the Localism Act of 2011 in deregulating the planning system has abolished Policy Planning Statements which stated the need to consider designing out crime in new developments and has placed the onus on local communities to develop their own neighbourhood plans. Planning deregulation, together with the downsizing of the ALO service, will restrict the community's ability to make evidence-based decisions regarding the crime risks of proposed developments in their areas. Drawing on both local and international experience, we discuss how communities in the future are likely to receive advice on what works in designing out crime and suggest alternative ways in which the dissemination of high-quality practice might be maintained.

The last 20 years has seen the development of various frameworks and analytical models such as Problem-Oriented Policing (Goldstein,1990) the National Intelligence Model (National Criminal Intelligence Service, 2000) and the Crime Reduction toolkits (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100413151426/crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/toolkits/index.htm). A more recent model, discussed further, below, is the 5Is Framework (Ekblom, 2011) which is a detailed process model for guiding prevention and capturing knowledge of practice. All of these have sought to equip the police with both the knowledge and skills to facilitate problem-solving and to make evidence- and theory-aware decisions on the targeting of crime prevention resources and interventions. Much has also been learned on the threats to effectiveness in crime prevention posed by implementation failure and how best to avoid or mitigate its impact. We expand on this later.
Access to and use of the results from good-quality crime prevention research and evaluation studies is a necessary precondition to effective problem-solving and the recognition and adoption of best practice in crime prevention. The capture, consolidation and dissemination of knowledge on what works in crime prevention is crucial to this process. We discuss attempts to manage practice knowledge over the past decade, the current situation and what needs to be done to ensure that lessons from past successes and failures in the design and implementation of crime prevention measures are not lost.

Crime prevention within the police service is not a particularly high profile activity compared with other police functions and this is reflected in fluctuations over time in the prioritisation of crime prevention training for police officers whether provided in-house or outsourced. The Home Office Crime Reduction Centre (HOCRC) established in 1995 offered formal training to police officers and community safety practitioners and hosted the Crime Reduction Toolkits Website. The HOCRC closed in 2005 and the Crime Reduction Toolkits were archived in 2010. Police budget cuts in 2010 have been accompanied by a de-prioritisation of crime prevention training. Drawing upon personal accounts from police officers and trainers in a Northern Constabulary, we present views from the grassroots on recent changes in crime prevention training and where it might be heading in the future. We pay particular attention to the need for crime prevention training, the demand for it within the police service and by whom, where and how it should be provided.

CRIME PREVENTION: DEFINITION AND POLICE ROLE

Many definitions of crime and its prevention exist. We define *crime prevention* as 'ethically-acceptable advance action intended to reduce the risk of criminal events' (this and following definitions adapted from Ekblom, 2011).

Risk reduction can be achieved through a) eliminating the possibility of the criminal events, often by design; b) reducing the probability by intervening in the causes or alternatively stated, by frustrating criminal goals by disrupting activities and organisations directed towards them; and 3) reducing the harm by advance preparation to eliminate, reduce or mitigate it. In all cases, the causes or risk and protective factors intervened in range from the immediate to the remote, and from the offender to the crime situation.

Crime reduction is a broader and simpler concept than prevention: any intervention made before, during or after criminal events to reduce their frequency or harm. Crime control involves holding the frequency of criminal events, or their harm, below a tolerable level, or halting their rapid growth. Much reduction and control is delivered via prevention.

Community safety focuses less on individual criminal events and more on harm reduction and the positive quality of individual and collective life, e.g. delivered through reassurance (e.g. Ekblom, 2011).

It is rarely appreciated in crime prevention circles that the very *existence* of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in dispensing fair and satisfying justice, sets the conditions for all other forms of prevention to be possible. In this sense, the CJS is inherently preventive because it helps to channel blame and revenge into a formal, controlled and relatively impersonal public arena, and to avoid the slide into extremes of vigilantism, personal retaliation, feuding and 'terrorist justice'. Effective and pervasive law enforcement – both supported by, and contributing to, the wider climate of policing by consent – plays an enormous part in establishing these conditions and more prosaically in making society safe enough for 'civil prevention' to be workable. By this term we mean interventions in everyday life ranging from youth shelters to parenting classes, and secure car designs to better-managed bars, intended to reduce the risk of crime.

The police not only undertake the majority of prevention-through-enforcement (or more broadly 'judicial prevention' – Ekblom, 2011); they also contribute significantly to civil crime prevention, whether via preventive patrolling, resolving neighbour disputes, advising on building security and supporting interventions with young people at risk of offending. Other contributions that the police make to civil crime prevention, whether acting alone or with other agencies and individuals are through:

- the capture, maintenance and supply of crime data;
- their knowledge and expertise about local crime patterns;
- their awareness of local crime attractors, generators and risky facilities;
- their intelligence on local offenders;
- their expertise in crime and its prevention;
- acting as a channel of referral to third parties;
- their presence and authority to influence third parties (inherent legitimacy).

All of these qualities and skills underpin the success of Repeat Victimisation, one of the most successful crime prevention targeting strategies. For example, the particular variant of repeat victimisation known as 'Once-Bitten' (Farrell and Pease, 1993) developed an explicit strategy of moving from *universal* situational prevention for all potential burglary victims, to *selective* additional situational prevention for those already victimised once, to *enforcement* by catching offenders by setting up surveillance and installing alarms for the few multiply-victimised homes. One might wish to consider whether interventions targeting repeat victims would have been feasible without *any* of the above-mentioned contributions by the police.

A more critical review of the preventive role of policing and that of other agencies and institutions comes from Hallsworth and Lea (2011). They take a perspective which sees a marked shift from the welfare state to the 'security state' controlling not just terrorism but risks of all kinds including from

sub-populations marginalised by economic pressures and the global movement of business investment. From this viewpoint the coercive powers of criminal justice agencies are progressively being extended, in the service of boosting a flagging degree of community cohesion, to cover pre-crime and post punishment phases – respectively, for example, the institution of ASBOs and the prolonged incapacitation of sex offenders on release from prison. Such 'pre-emptive criminalisation' (Fitzgibbon, 2004) can be classed as judicial crime prevention in the schema proposed above. However, from the critical perspective taken by the authors they might debate the extent to which the interventions are 'ethically-acceptable' as per the definition of prevention here. The central (albeit not exclusive) role of the police in such coercive forcing of cohesion is certainly a topic for discussion. But one presumes the issue is the extent and nature of their involvement rather than the principle of pre-emption – it would be hard to envisage a society that got by without our long-standing anti-conspiracy laws, or 'going equipped' offences, for example.

CRIME PREVENTION DESIGN ADVICE

Advice on Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in England and Wales is delivered on the ground by specialist police officers and civilians who have, until recently, worked within a broad regulatory and policy framework. Although some are called Architectural Liaison Officers (ALOs) and others Crime Prevention Design Advisors (CPDAs) their role is essentially the same. It involves liaising with planning officers, architects and developers to embed CPTED principles in design and developments, training activities and promoting the Secured by Design (SBD) award scheme. Historically, there has been at least one individual in each of the 43 police forces responsible for reviewing planning applications and offering CPTED advice.

Recognition of the role which planning and design can have in the reduction of crime has grown following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and this has been reflected in planning policy and guidance within England and Wales. Prior to 1998, the only policy which referred to crime prevention within the planning system was an 11 page circular 5/94 – Planning out Crime. This offered little in the way of guidance, other than highlighting the importance of consultation with police ALOs.

The publication of the Urban Policy White Paper – *Our Towns and Cities: The Future* (ODPM, 2000) emphasised the importance of crime, disorder and the fear of crime within urban renewal, development and the planning system. This communicated a clear message, namely, that *"...good design of buildings and the way buildings and public spaces are laid out can help prevent crime"* (ODPM, 2000), and that *"properly designed developments can also discourage crime"* (ODPM, 2000). Crucially, the White Paper also included the recommendation to review and update circular 5/94, and in 2004 the joint ODPM/Home Office guidance *Safer Places – The Planning System and Crime Prevention* (ODPM/Home Office, 2004) was published.

Other guidance and legislation followed. The 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act required local authorities to produce Development Plans. Many local authorities declared, in their general statements contained within their Development Plans, that planning decisions should take crime prevention into account and reinforced these statements of intent with Supplementary Planning Guidance focusing solely on crime prevention. Additionally, Design and Access Statements, also brought in under the 2004 Act and submitted as part of the planning application process, had to demonstrate how crime prevention would be addressed in proposed developments.

Two further policy instruments, Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 on Sustainable Development and PPS3 on Housing were published in 2005 and 2006, respectively. PPS1, although not specific to crime prevention, emphasised the importance of crime prevention in good and

sustainable design. It highlighted how *"...poor planning can result in a legacy for current and future generations of run-down town centres, unsafe and dilapidated housing, crime and disorder, and the loss of our finest countryside to development* (DCLG, 2005, p.2). It also stated that *"Planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access...Key objectives should include ensuring that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion"* (DCLG, 2005, p. 15). PPS 3, which was specific to housing also emphasised that safety should be considered when assessing the design quality of property developments.

In 2007, building codes and design standards were introduced that offered incentives to developers to embed security into their designs. The 2007 Code for Sustainable Homes awarded credits to developments that met certain sustainability criteria. Security was one of these (cf Armitage and Monchuk, 2009) and credits were awarded for consulting with ALOs and for complying with the physical security element of the SBD Scheme. In the same year, the then Housing Corporation introduced various Design and Quality Standards one of which was the requirement for housing to be secure (Armitage et al., 2012).

As this brief review has shown, by the end of the 2000s, there was a raft of guidance and legislation in place to facilitate the incorporation of CPTED principles into urban design and development. At around this time, a review of the ALO/CPDA service across England and Wales (Wootton *et al.,* 2009) counted 347 ALO/CPDAs in post in England and Wales in January 2009 and showed that by August 2009, only 21% of all police forces in England and Wales had two or fewer ALO/CPDAs in post – every force had at least one ALO. However, an update of this review in August 2011 revealed that the number of ALOs had fallen to 236, and although each police force still had at least one ALO, 31% of forces (as opposed to 21%) had two or fewer ALOs in post.

Whilst it is clear that the period of 1998-2011 saw some major improvements in the consideration for crime prevention within planning policy, reforms introduced in 2011 have brought substantive changes. The Localism Act (2011) has introduced major alterations to the planning system within England. It has abolished regional planning in favour of neighbourhood planning and introduced Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders. The former allow communities to come together through a local parish council or neighbourhood forum to produce a plan which sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land within their neighbourhood. Whilst there may be many benefits to allowing those who live within a community (and know the local issues and concerns) to make decisions regarding planning and development, there are also risks, particularly where a lack of resources (ALO/CPDA cuts) and lack of guidance/policy (removal of planning policy statements) restrict that community's ability to make evidence-based decisions.

In addition to the introduction of Neighbourhood Development Plans and Orders, the move from regional towards neighbourhood planning, and the associated emphasis upon deregulation, has also seen the replacement of 44 documents including PPS1 *Delivering Sustainable Development* and PPS3, *Housing,* by a solitary fifty-nine page National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012). Besides replacing key Planning Policy Statements, the National Planning Policy Framework discourages the production of Supplementary Planning Documents, such as those that had a specific focus on crime prevention. Hence:

> *"Any additional development plan documents should only be used*
> *where clearly justified. Supplementary planning documents should*
> *be used where they can help applicants make successful applications*
> *or aid infrastructure delivery, and should not be used to add unnecessarily*
> *to the financial burdens on development"* (DCLG, 2012, p. 37).

Importantly, the National Planning Policy Framework has retained some key references to the importance of considering crime prevention within planning and development, and crucially, these references refer to the consideration of crime prevention within the production of Local and Neighbourhood Plans.

> *"Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments….create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion"* (DCLG, 2012, p.15)

There are two main problems with the current system – a lack of ALO/CPDAs to deliver an effective service on the ground, and also deregulation within the planning system. On the former, we have fallen back from a position where each police force had a senior Force ALO/CPDA and several ALO/CPDAs, each working closely with their respective local authority to offer CPTED advice (a reactive service) but also to influence local planning policy to enhance the consideration for security within design and development (a proactive service). Many police forces/local authorities had Supplementary Planning Guidance specific to crime prevention, and for those which did not, crime prevention was largely referred to as a recommended consideration within Development Plans. The cuts to police budgets have resulted in vast reductions in ALO/CPDA numbers meaning that many forces no longer have a Force ALO/CPDA to lead on strategic/policy issues, and there have been several police forces where ACPO CPI have had to intervene to avoid the loss of the one remaining ALO/CPDA. Not only, does this mean that, for many forces, all major planning applications cannot be assessed, more crucially in the long term, it also means that ALO/CPDAs are reluctant to push for consideration for security within local planning policy because, should this occur, they would be unable to deliver the service. Historically, one of the main policy aims of ALO/CPDAs was to become statutory consultees. Yet, should this take place, the current cuts in services would mean that this would be impossible to deliver.

The second concern relates to the deregulation within the planning system, whereby neighbourhood planning has placed decision making in the hands of communities to decide where and what development should take place. Given the removal of national planning policy statements and local supplementary planning guidance, as well as the cuts in ALO/CPDA numbers, what resources will be available to these communities/neighbourhood forums to assist in making evidence-based decisions regarding the risks or benefits of proposed development within their area?

Throughout the budget cuts, one police force in England has managed, not only, to avoid cuts to ALO numbers, but also, to develop and grow as a crime prevention service. Greater Manchester Police's (GMP) approach to delivering the ALO/CPDA role involves a team of consultants and one dedicated crime analyst under the title of *Greater Manchester Design for Security Consultancy* (GMP DfSC). Although the team are based within GMP Police Headquarters, have access to police recorded crime data, Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) and other relevant police intelligence, the DfS consultants are civilian staff with a background in a built environment profession such as design, architecture or planning. Whilst the (entirely) civilian background is unique to GMP, it is by no means the only difference in their approach. The second major variation is the emphasis placed upon pre-planning consultation between the developer and DfSC. Greater Manchester includes ten local planning authorities. Where a client wishes to apply for planning permission, the application which is made to the local planning authority must adhere to national planning policy, but also to the requirements of each local authority's Validation Checklist. The latter requires that the submission of a major planning application be accompanied by a Crime Impact Statement (CIS). The CIS contains an analysis of local crime figures, offender *modus operandi,* observations from site visits and specific

recommendations by the consultant. Whilst the local planning authorities inform clients that the CIS can be compiled by DfSC, there is no stipulation that it is they who *must* produce the report. However, given the content of a CIS, which relies upon police recorded crime data, knowledge of common offender *modus operandi* and local police intelligence, it is difficult to see how this could be delivered (to the required standard) by any other agency.

Although the CIS is a document which contains an analysis of local crime, an evaluation of the proposed development and recommendations, it also represents a process, and it is the process as much as the document itself which marks GMP as being so unique in its delivery of the ALO role.

The final unique element to the delivery of the ALO role within GMP, and one which has proved to protect the provision of this service within the current economic climate is that, although a not-for-profit organisation, DfSC does charge a fee for the production of a CIS. The fee is based upon the number of dwellings within the proposed development, and although this is a small proportion of the developer's costs, it provides DfSC with an income stream to support the retention of staff, a dedicated crime analyst, the provision of equipment and software besides CPD and training opportunities.

There may also be models of good practice from overseas. New South Wales, Australia has an approach very different from that in England and Wales, and one where the police have little involvement in the process of offering CPTED advice; rather, the service is largely delivered by private security consultants. In New South Wales, there is a legislative requirement for a Crime Risk Assessment to be conducted for any development considered by the local council to pose a crime risk. One potential implementation weakness relates to the threat to independence where a Crime Risk Assessment is conducted by a company who may have a vested interest in seeing the development go ahead with little or no alterations to the planning application. There is also concern regarding the level of intelligence available to non-police agencies in terms of point-level data regarding crime risk.

If the current system of offering crime prevention design advice in England and Wales must be adapted to resource limitations, models of practice elsewhere, such as those discussed here, might usefully be explored.

CRIME PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND DISSEMINATION

The delivery of crime prevention design advice and repeat victimisation strategies exemplify some of the benefits from police involvement in crime prevention. The latter, however, is not all about delivery, it is also about acquisition of crime prevention knowledge and the skills required for its successful application.

The need for managing knowledge of crime prevention and using this knowledge to design interventions and feed into training and on-the-job guidance is recognised internationally. This recognition accords a central role to evidence based practice and policy (Sherman et al., 2002; Pawson, 2006),), That approach privileges knowledge obtained through rigorous research and evaluation of impact or cost-effectiveness, where possible assembled through the equally-rigorous process of systematic reviews such as are conducted through the Campbell Collaboration (Farrington and Petrosino, 2001; see www.campbellcollaboration.org).However, the knowledge required to help practitioners, delivery managers and policymakers *select* appropriate practices, programmes and policies from the record of prior art, *replicate* it intelligently customised to new contexts; and where evaluated knowledge does not exist (a commonplace occurrence), *innovate* based on first principles

based on tested theory, is far wider than impact and cost-effectiveness alone (Ekblom, 2011: 265-6). The United Nations (United Nations, 2006: 298-9) compendium of standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice, recommends that Governments and/or civil society facilitate knowledge-based crime prevention by, among other things:

- Supporting the generation of useful and practically applicable knowledge that is scientifically reliable and valid;
- Supporting the organisation and synthesis of knowledge and identifying and addressing gaps in the knowledge base;
- Sharing that knowledge, as appropriate, among researchers, policymakers, educators, practitioners from other relevant sectors and the wider community; and
- Applying this knowledge in replicating successful interventions, developing new initiatives and anticipating new crime problems and prevention opportunities.

Various Home Office research and/or administrator-led efforts to capture, organise and disseminate practice knowledge have come and gone sporadically over the last decade or so. A good example is the development, around 2000, of the Crime Reduction Toolkits for guiding the on-the-job work of the (then) Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Although these were produced with some haste and lack of consistency, many were quite rich in content and drew on a combination of evidence and experience. Unfortunately, the maintenance of these only outlasted the 2005 demise of the Home Office Crime Reduction Centre by a couple of years, and now they are embalmed in the National Archive following an across-the-board decision, by the Coalition Government, to freeze all prior government websites.

During the National Crime Reduction Programme (1998-2002) ad-hoc *practice guides* were also produced based on commissioned process and impact evaluations of interventions and covered, not only what works and what does not, but also, factors shown to be critical to successful implementation. Unfortunately, the Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate, manifesting what can only be described as vacillation between dedicating effort to supporting knowledge needs of policymakers and of the practitioners who delivered that policy, was unable to foster any continuity of these on closure of the Programme and the 'Development and Practice Reports' series petered out in 2007 after some 40 volumes.

Maguire (2004) documents the failure to capitalise on what was originally planned to be a major opportunity to apply, create and assemble knowledge of what works in favour of a rush to get crime numbers down, and argues for the slow and steady accumulation of evidence rather than this failed 'big bang' approach. The long-running Police Research Series finished at number 155 in 2002. http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/prgpdfs/prs155bn.pdf.The 2005 IPAK Initiative ('Improving Performance through Acquired Knowledge') appeared with ambitious aims of assembling examples of effective practice; knowledge about crime and crime types; and tacit knowledge/ 'know-how' of practice. A Pilot evidence base on burglary was published but the initiative lapsed, in 2007. (http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100413151441/http:/www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/ipak/ipak01.htm). The street crime 'crisis' of 2003-4 engendered an ad-hoc assembly of preventive initiatives whose practice knowledge was systematically captured (Tilley et al. 2004) whilst ironically draining resources from other preventive knowledge capture and application initiatives such as that on design of products against crime (Ekblom, 2012).

Much of the above remains available; while the original sources are now quite difficult to locate in the National Archive, the National Police Library www.npia.police.uk/en/5218.htm maintains a good collection for the police service.

Other sources of preventive knowledge have been more steadily developed and maintained, principally the peer- and academic-reviewed US POP (Problem Oriented Policing) Center guides (www.popcenter.org), covering problems (e.g. theft of scrap metal), responses (e.g. sting operations) and problem-solving tools (e.g. using offender interviews), built up over some 11 years and despite funding concerns, still going strong. While funded for and primarily oriented towards a US police practitioner audience, the guides draw on international experience including UK research and evaluation; indeed in some cases the authors have been British (e.g. Johnson et al., 2008); and they are a useful resource for UK practitioners in all cases. Systematic Reviews under the international Campbell Collaboration http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/crime_and_justice/index.php have also covered, for example, CCTV (Welsh and Farrington, 2008) and 'hot spot' policing (Braga et al, 2012).

There is much evidence of *implementation failure*, whether of local civil crime prevention schemes (Hough, 2006) or within major national programmes such as the US Community Crime Prevention Program of the 1980s (Rosenbaum 1986), the UK Safer Cities Programme 1988-93 (Tilley, 1993; Sutton, 1996) or the UK National Crime Reduction Programme (Ekblom, 2002; Hirschfield, 2004; Bowers and Johnson, 2006; Homel, 2006). It is vital to document, explain and address such failure, not least in order to maximise the chances that the advice on police-related crime prevention emerging from the Stevens Commission successfully and durably influences practice and programme delivery rather than falling into the same traps. Implementation failure has variously been attributed to prosaic factors like poor project management or centralised funding constraints, or organisational ones such as a police subculture and career/reward structure hostile to civil prevention, and deficient training. These may well be important but it has been argued (Ekblom, 2011: chapters 2-4) that underlying much poor performance and limitation of scope of civil crime prevention practice has been inadequacy in the management (including transfer) of knowledge. In particular failure to *know what works* through evidence based approaches drawing in particular on systematic reviews, and failure to share that knowledge nationally and internationally; failure to *implement* what we know to work, by matching 'what-works principles' to specific local problems and contexts (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Ekblom, 2011); and failure to *anticipate, innovate and adapt* to emerging challenges from adaptive offenders exploiting social and technological changes. The latter may involve new forms of antisocial behaviour, new ways of stealing cars, new forms of criminal organisation or new techniques of terrorism (e.g. Ekblom, 1997; Pease, 2003; Ekblom and Pease, in press).

The police subculture and organisational ethos have rarely encouraged positive learning from mistakes and failures and such salutary lessons are rarely sought out, disseminated or acted on. More generally, the detailed study by Bullock et al. (2006) of UK entries to the Tilley Award for POP projects showed *no trend of improvement in quality of entries over the period 1999-2005,* a time of both intensive and extensive effort in communicating, implementing and funding POP principles. This shows, fairly conclusively, that knowledge is necessary but not sufficient in improving performance.

One approach which could be used in conjunction with hard 'what-works' reviews, is the 5Is framework (Ekblom, 2011 and http://5isframework.wordpress.com). This strives to capture and organise detailed information to enable intelligent, problem- and context-based replication and innovation rather than superficial 'cookbook-type' copying. However, it so far lacks institutional adoption (Sidebottom and Tilley 2011), arguably because of an absence of 'official' support enabling investment in key practical infrastructure e.g. in terms of an interactive tutorial, toolkit and knowledge bank. It should, though, be noted that despite decades of effort the more conventional

model for Problem-Oriented Policing, SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) continues to face difficulties of adoption (Bullock et al., 2006; Scott, 2006; and Goldstein, 2003).

In early 2011, the National Policing Improvement Agency published a highly ambitious and wide-ranging *Police Knowledge Action Plan* based on wide consultation and sophisticated thinking which sought to integrate previous efforts (e.g. the POLKA knowledge bank) and establish a complete system for creating, sharing and using knowledge across the police service, addressing issues ranging from the cultural and organisational to the technical. However, uncertainties exist given the current winding up of NPIA. According to the NPIA Website, knowledge functions are going to the new College of Policing, a 'professional body to increase professionalism in policing'. Whether the ambition remains, and whether it is adequately executed, resourced and maintained, or whether yet another initiative falls by the wayside, is a question whose answer should be of interest to all in the crime prevention world. Certainly the requirement for the knowledge function to be fully supported officially in one or other form is beyond all dispute; and the College of Policing almost by definition seems the right place to locate it. However, that leaves unresolved the extent to which crime prevention knowledge is as valid for and valuable to a wider range of institutions than the police alone. On the one hand, we should ask how far the *policing institution* should keep the most developed knowledge of *policing activity* to itself given that this activity is undertaken by many other institutions and informal interventions in society; and on the other, whether civil crime prevention knowledge in particular should be organised and supported in its own terms rather than tied to one, albeit dominant, institution.

Whatever the case, how crime prevention knowledge is managed has to adapt to wider changes than government-instigated 'institutional churn'. Relevant considerations include:

- Increased professionalism in a context of frequent staff moves which requires rapid and efficient transfer of expert knowledge (of the 'get smart quick' kind) rather than reliance on individuals building up that knowledge over a long-term career; and then that knowledge being placed in jeopardy when, as now, those experts are required to retire in cost-cutting exercises (as appears to have happened with police ALOs).

- The drive towards 'localism' which requires that professionalism is capable of adapting to local problems, contexts and priorities – in fact, this resonates with the message from research on the kind of approach to prevention that is most effective. How the knowledge of crime prevention will intersect with the heightened political dimension of local policing introduced by the advent of PCCs is unknown territory – but these individuals, recently in post following the November 2012 elections, will require a good-quality and accessible knowledge bank for their own purposes. The Local Government Association has begun to develop such a bank at the time of writing, see www.local.gov.uk/pcc/.
- It is a moot point whether a more specific and officially-sanctioned knowledge bank (of the sort that, say, the Ministry of Justice prepares for Judges and Magistrates) is feasible or appropriate in this more political context; and whether policy/political issues surrounding prevention (such as fairness in distributing resources, or how to navigate the tricky waters between a criminal responsibility perspective and one of dispassionate causal analysis in support of 'rational' prevention) can be drawn out in a non-partisan way. The significant number of independent PCCs now in post (some 30%) lacking a party briefing may indicate that some such support would be beneficial.

Although the crime prevention knowledge bank built up in the UK up to around 2007 remains available, albeit not always easily-retrievable, what we have is essentially a 'wasting asset' as the material becomes rapidly out of date due to changes in police practice, organisation and operating

environment (including in the law and in police powers); societal and technological change; and adaptations and innovations by offenders (Ekblom, 2005). This is not the best position to be in when there are growing expectations to deliver good practice in local settings (e.g. Neighbourhood Plans) against a background of diminishing back-office support and reductions in the number of police officers in the crime prevention arena.

CRIME PREVENTION TRAINING: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE?

Crime prevention training in England and Wales has been subject to continual change, usually as a response to fluctuating perceptions held by politicians, police and public alike, of its level of priority in relation to other aspects of police work and training needs. It is not our intention to discuss these changes in depth here, but rather, to focus on the views and perceptions of a diverse group of police officers and police trainers from a police service in the North of England who were interviewed specifically for this paper. Notwithstanding this, some developments are worthy of a brief mention just to set the scene.

Crime prevention training for police has been a journey that started with the creation of the Home Office Crime Prevention College in 1964, through the centralised provision to police officers and members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) of the 1990s and early 2000s, to the idiosyncratic and eclectic mix of individual service level provision that we see today.

By the mid 1990s, the Home Office Crime Prevention College was providing a range of residential courses for police Crime Prevention Officers(CPOs), including the intensive two week 'Standard Crime Prevention' (CPO) and 'Architectural Liaison Officer' (ALO) courses. Demand remained high and waiting lists long, due primarily to the reputation of the courses and the fact that they were financed by the Home Office, so provided to police without charge.[1]

Following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, courses were provided not just for police, but also for their local crime reduction partners (CDRPs). Alongside formal training, the re-named Home Office Crime Reduction Centre (HOCRC) organised regular crime reduction conferences for practitioners and housed and maintained the Crime Reduction Website with its range of 'toolkits'.

By July 2004, the decision was made to stop providing the free CRO and ALO courses and a year later, in an effort to save money, the HOCRC was closed. Responsibility for training police CPOs was shifted to *Centrex*, the National Police Training School. In 2007, Centrex itself was absorbed into the National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) which took responsibility for most police training including crime prevention. Training provision is now subject to further change with the demise of the NPIA as part of the Coalition Government's reforms and reduced budgets announced in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR).

A recurrent theme from our interviews with police officers and police trainers was that the police budget cuts, announced in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), had been a *major* factor in the general de-prioritisation of crime prevention training, in favour of what were perceived to be more pressing 'frontline priorities' (i.e. detecting criminals rather than preventing crime). This shift was compounded by the fact that no targets for crime prevention were set in the 2010 CSR, which understandably led police service leaders to conclude that crime prevention was simply not a priority for them.

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[1] We should acknowledge at this point that one of us worked as a trainer at the HOCRC from 2003 to its closure in 2005.

This de-prioritisation of crime prevention has had an obvious 'knock-on effect' on those on the ground. Those trainers we interviewed said that the demand for crime prevention training at present was 'pretty non-existent' mainly because police managers (e.g. operational sergeants) did not see it as a priority. Consequently, they were less likely to sanction requests for training in this area, even if it was identified by their officers. Although we only interviewed trainers from single force in the North of England, they were of the opinion that this was situation applied more generally.

Outside of police service provision, crime prevention training is offered by some higher education establishments, and at a number of different academic levels, ranging from one day courses focusing on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to Masters degrees (e.g. the Masters in Crime Science offered by the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science at University College London http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdi/). Other universities offering criminology and crime science degrees with a strong practitioner emphasis include; University of the West of England, Glasgow, Leicester De Montfort, Huddersfield, Northumbria, and the Open University. Although none of the officers and trainers we interviewed doubted the calibre of university-run crime prevention-focused courses, they did highlight practical considerations which often made them inaccessible to police officers; namely, their cost and the time an officer would need to be abstracted from frontline duties in order to attend and complete such courses.

In a re-cap of where crime prevention police training is now, we must not blame its apparent de-prioritisation simply on the CSR of 2010. Crime prevention training began to decline after it ceased to be provided free of charge by central agencies such as the Home Office Crime Reduction Centre and is best summed-up now as being both eclectic and idiosyncratic according to individual police service priorities and ethos. For example, the police trainers and officers we interviewed believed that the problem solving element of crime prevention training was probably ingrained in their Force because it was championed by the Deputy Chief Constable.

We arrive at two fundamental questions. Is there still a need for police crime prevention training? And if so, where and how should it be provided? One recurrent suggestion raised by the police trainers and officers we interviewed was that the term crime prevention was antiquated and pejorative in the sense that most officers considered it to be simply about locks, bolts and other techniques for 'target hardening'. Historically, the role of Crime Prevention Officer was seen by many police officers to be the last role before retirement forever associated with giving crime prevention advice to home owners or organising Neighbourhood Watch areas. It appears that, for some, the term crime prevention is still inextricably linked with this perception. When asked if crime prevention training is needed, most officers will, therefore, answer 'no'. Many have changed their position to Crime Reduction Officers (a post itself now quite scarce in most police services) in an attempt to distance themselves from the past. One CRO we talked with suggested that the demise of the original crime prevention certificate meant that the role no longer had currency as there was no tangible evidence that they had been trained to do the role.

The point being made is that by framing questions about training need in terms of crime prevention, one is not likely to get a true reflection of levels of training need due to a pejorative interpretation of the term. We suggest that if trying to determine knowledge and training needs from police, the term 'crime reduction' be used instead or the activity framed within a broader problem solving context.

Even though all our interviewees considered crime prevention knowledge to be vital in modern policing, only one stated that a central training agency (such as the HOCRC) should exist once again. All, however, considered the loss of the Crime Reduction Website, with its facility for

sharing prevention ideas and practice, to be a far greater blow and all called for a similar facility to be available to all police and practitioners as soon as possible.[2]

All of our interviewees emphasised the importance of the problem solving element of crime prevention training (e.g. SARA) They considered this to be a vital aspect of all police training and at all levels, not just for new recruits.

CONCLUSION

We strongly believe that the police should continue to play a key role in crime prevention but the sustainability of this is dependent on the core activities of preserving, building upon, disseminating and utilising the evidence base on effective practice in crime prevention. The three areas we have highlighted (designing-out crime, knowledge management/transfer and crime prevention training) are all examples of where the continuity of these core activities may be seriously at risk. To address these concerns, we believe that careful consideration be given to the following, namely, that:

Crime Prevention Design Advice

- The role of providing crime prevention design advice (both anticipatory and remedial) is beneficial and must be maintained.

- Each police force should have at least one senior force Architectural Liaison Officer to provide strategic input into local authorities and to ensure that crime prevention advice has a sufficiently high profile locally and nationally.

- There needs to be a sufficient number of crime prevention advisers on the ground to support local communities in knowing how to design out crime to comply with the spirit of the Localism Act 2011 that crime prevention be regarded as an 'important consideration' in Neighbourhood Plans. Therefore, priority should be given to a sustainable funding model for the crime prevention design advice service (ground staff).

In 2009, Armitage and Monchuk conducted a piece of research for ACPO, DCLG and the Home Office to investigate the feasibility of setting up a National Police Crime Prevention Service. This included on online survey of all ALOs and focus-groups with every police force in England and Wales. The results revealed large discrepancies in provision, management, training and delivery, and the report concluded that a National Police Crime Prevention Service would promote consistency and improve delivery. Unfortunately, this report coincided with Comprehensive Spending Review and the recommendations have never been acted upon. Whether or not this can be re-visited in the fiscal climate remains to be seen.

Crime Prevention Knowledge Management and Transfer

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[2] The NPIA has recently developed a knowledge database (POLKA) for police personnel to access and exchange crime knowledge and practice, but this is exclusive to police only, so does not permit any exchange with other non-police crime reduction practitioners.

- High-performance policing in crime prevention needs a knowledge management plan that is thorough and adhered to consistently in the long-term. However, evidence of past initiatives has shown failure to maintain any continuity and consistency of effort in the knowledge management area (e.g. toolkits).

- The Police Knowledge Action Plan of 2011 www.npia.police.uk/en/docs/Police_Knowledge_Action_Plan.pdf has the potential to offer this but there are serious questions about what will happen in the light of both history and the current context of financial cuts, abolition of the NPIA and transfer of responsibilities to the College of Policing.

Police Crime Prevention Training

- The new College of Policing should recognise the importance of crime prevention training and give it a sufficiently high priority. The emphasis here is on assigning a high profile to crime prevention. Such training need not necessarily be provided at a central facility or at zero cost to the end user.

- The College needs to provide a repository of knowledge about effective crime prevention, and lessons learned from what does not work.

We have set out what we see as future priorities in the three areas that we have examined. In an age of austerity, where resources for policing are under severe pressure, reducing the demands on the police by preventing crime happening in the first place is more important than ever. To do so successfully, decisions about policy interventions and the targeting of scarce resources need to be informed by sound evidence, not only, of what measures are most likely to be effective under different conditions but also, on how best to implement them.

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