Wednesday 3rd March, 1:00pm
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'Community Policing, a post COVID strategy for Global policing?'

During the pandemic, police across the world have had to refocus and reorganise to meet the challenges of supporting compliance with the restrictions. In survey of the impact of COVID, we found that police had themselves socially distanced operations by moving reporting online or to telephone, reduced the use of custody and curtailed face to face interactions. The most heavily affected aspect of policing was community policing. Yet, community policing is a key strategy for sustaining police legitimacy. Drawing on an evidence review for the UNODC, the seminar will explore the potential for community policing to be a crucial strategy for policing globally in the new normal after the COVID pandemic.

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For GDPR reasons the Q&A has not been included in the recording, a transcript of the questions and answers can be found below.

With thanks,

Loraine Gelsthorpe, Director

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Public Webinar: Community Policing, a post COVID strategy for global policing?
Mar 3, 2021 13:00 GMT

45mins into recording, Questions and Answers:

In respect to English and Welsh Policing, does Peter have any evidence of how elected Policing and Crimes Commissioners view and might influence neighbourhood policing?

It's interesting that one of the things that seems to have happened during the Pandemic, is that the Policing and Crimes Commissioners have been very quiet, actually. I suppose it's a product of the fact that this is a major incident, and structurally within England and Wales policing, certainly, that means that the chief officers become the lead player working with the local resilience forums which is structurally what the law says, and it has been an odd process of effectively reversing who is out front when it comes to policing. It has become, again the Chiefs, whether that is a healthy position or not, certainly the PCCs have been much quieter in that respect.
The extent to which PCCs can influence neighbourhood policing? Well they aught to be able to with respect to their plans, they still have power, although again, we are in a peculiar position in English policing certainly, where the Home Secretary appears to want to take back quite a lot of control, partly as a result of

the fact that if you give the money for 20 000 extra officers, you as the Home Secretary and the Treasury tend to want something back for your money, and that is an inevitable part of the process.

Do You [Peter] think the Policing governance structures we have in England and Wales can support the kind of transformation needed to embed community policing?

In short, with difficulty. One of the benefits we had in 2004-5-6 as we were introducing the processes, we had a national policing plan and we had, although this is slightly biased to put it mildly, we had a national improving agency which I spent a lot of my personal time toiling away to create; but what it did allow us to do was to do what has to happen if you are going to make a transformation in policing. Which is you have to focus on three things simultaneously: the people, so developing the skills of the people; the processes, particularly the processes that go around engagement and problem solving; and the technology, the investment in significantly better technology in order to support the problem solving. If you haven't got a single agency, or organisation capable of helping to support police forces to do those three then I think there is a problem with the existing Government structure, and that is the opinion of someone who was responsible for creating an agency to do just that, and had the agency abolished by the incoming Government, so you could say that was a slightly biased opinion.

How easy is it to have Global Best Practice given National differences in Law, Culture and Religion?

It's interesting because one of the things I was trying to do in the piece of work for the UN was to have a look across as many different countries in as many different parts of the world with different religious and cultural backgrounds to see if there was evidence that the basic principles and mechanisms in Community Policing would work in all of them. And it does appear that Community Policing is capable of being effective in a pretty wide variety of different places.
There are some very obvious inhibitors of which corruption is a major part. You could argue, there are quite a lot of papers written about, for example, doing community policing in China, you could argue that the lack of a very obvious and clear Democratic Governmental model is a dis-inhibitor, I'm not so sure that that's entirely the case, certainly within local policing in China, there is quite a lot of involvement of community in the process so it aught to be capable of the principles being applied even though I'm not sure that some groups in China would feel they are getting the deal.
I would say that it links with a piece of work I've been doing on Rule of Law, you have to start with a very clear understanding of what the presumptions and the embedded assumptions are about how Law is going to be put in place in the relationship between individuals, communities and the state and then you start to design your Community Policing scheme taking into account those principles, but the mechanisms of community policing would appear to be widely applicable, in a wide range of jurisdictions.

Do you have any works done on Community Policing in Conflict Affected Areas with an extremely weak state presence?

It's a Very good question. So there have been, but this is where we get in to the point at which, so what does the research tell us about the point at which it is possible to pursue Community Policing, when you have just

recently had conflict. Number one, if it is a current a conflict war zone, you are not going to be doing Community policing, because you have to have some level of safety and lack of conflict in order to put normal, or more normal policing on the ground.

However, I have just recently reviewed, or gone through a paper written by Professor Rob Blair, from Brown University looking at the effectiveness of UN Peace keeping operations incorporating community policing in a variety of quite obviously conflict areas, and essentially he is saying that is capable of being an important part of that process. He has done a randomised control trial, which is much bigger than the EGAT one that was done in Liberia that has had some significant conflict and a relatively weak state presence and that has shown some very significant positive effects and it's a big study. I think it was about 80 different communities that were in the study and it's compelling, and you have to think about what the alternative might be. So the alternative is a reactive policing model in a place where the citizens and community groups quite clearly need some significant level of reassurance. I don't think the alternatives is compelling compared to Community policing, I think that Community policing on that basis and the studies I have looked at it looks like a pretty effective strategy.

'Normal Policing' is perhaps being too often led by the police rather than the public, how can greater public engagement work both ways work? Raises again the point about community policing; well, who's community? And how do we make sure that all constituents in the community can be reached in some way?

This is one of the areas where the Policing and Crime Commissioners have a really distinct role to do, which is to push the police service to get that balance right and to have some level of oversight in tracking what is happening. The critical thing we discovered with the National Neighbourhood project, to pick up we used Martin Innes' work on *Signal Crimes* as a critical part of the model to try and get the police service to focus, you can't do everything, but to try and focus on the things that were causing maximum concern, and also to find ways to reach out beyond; the classic image of community policing meeting could be summed up as in *Vicar of Dibley* terms, for those who have watched that programme, of a church hall with folk focused on very small things, actually very small things quite often matter a lot. But what we tried to do with the *Signal Crimes* approach was to reach out, Martin Innes and his colleagues in Cardiff did a lot of work, in fact I am in the process of reviewing a brand new book which I can commend, as I have had a chance to read it: *Neighbourhood Policing - The Rise and Fall of a Policing Model, by Martin Innes, Colin Roberts, Trudy Love and Helen Innes.* One of the things they do is give a lot of information about how to reach out to groups in different ways, to be imaginative about making sure that you have created ways in which people can get their message across to the police and encouraging as much transparency from the police about who they are listening, the priorities that they are proposing to act on and being held to account in as public a way as possible. I think the held to account piece is where the PCCs can make their mark in insisting on that process being as public as possible.

Policing Future Communities, Post COVID: a number of changes predicted; more housing in the high street as shops close, so potentially more conflict between night time economy and residence, how do we support policing, to plan for policing future communities?

Well there is a step before that I would say, if what has happened in the pandemic is of course a massive shift to remote working, which I think was running at about 70%. It probably isn't going to stick at 70% remote working, but it's not going to go back to where it was before, because there was a trend pre the pandemic for people to be able to work more flexibly, and I think for those that have discovered the benefits, and of course

the disbenefit of endlessly looking at a screen, but the benefits of being able to work remotely and not having to commute there will be more people working from home and there'll be more people working from home in the suburbs as well as in the centres of towns, that means a different population in the day time in places which would have largely not been, which will have an impact. It would be fascinating to monitor the impact on daylight burglary, for example, it's going to change.

It indicates that this unsettling 12-18 months is going to have unsettled allot and the police need to go and reconsider, and certainly to get engaged in the planning debates that will follow, because of course every time you change the shops in the high street there has to be a planning application to go in and police need to pay attention to the planning applications and their implications. And they need to think about, as well if you're going to go down the community policing strategy, well maybe the price to of being happy to agree to some of those changes is to gain a small police office in the high street that would create an opportunity for the police to be in that community.

Maybe there is an opportunity for community spaces in some of those closed shops, which would bring together different organisations including the police, that's an opportunity that could be done, after all you could have a pop-up police station in a closed shop whilst that process is being resolved. And you could be quite creative about that just at the moment, there are all sorts of owners of high street venues who might be very, very keen to have the premises in use and that might be very handy. I suspect we are going to see an increase in the level of rout sleepers as a result of some of the dislocations that have happened I'm afraid to say.

One of the key lessons of the work that we did on rough sleepers more than a decade ago is that you can't do that from a desk you have to get out and you have to find ways to help people to get back on their feet and off the street where the risks to their health and to their well-being are enormous. That's the kind of community policing that really makes a difference, very fast and it's not about clearing the streets of undesirable people, it's about helping people back into a successful life. And that's a very positive thing and getting that across and working with the community to do that would be a great thing to be able to do.

As a result of the pandemic are you more, or less optimistic about the future of Community Policing in England and Wales? And if so why?

Well, I'm more optimistic and I think that the pandemic gives a springboard, but actually there is an issue, putting 20 000 officers coming back in to policing and young officers, I think there's two things: firstly, if you do not go down the route of community policing then that is 20 000 3Rs Police officers, doing reactive response, random patrol etc. and that would be a disaster in five years time, that's training British policing to fail.

If you do invest in a Neighbourhood community policing approach as those officers come in, then you are training the 20 000 to be 20 000 community policing officers and you are putting the lessons that we learnt ten years ago in to action with young officers and bringing them in to a system that we know can work and rebuilding the relationship with the public. (cont.)

Not only will that potentially deliver reductions in crime and disorder, but it also should deliver a stronger level of public confidence in policing, so yes I am optimistic that it could be done, but it does require real leadership and it also requires the rhetoric of general deterrence and severity in punishment to be toned down from the centre as well. We need to see messages and hints that one of the things post pandemic strategy in policing in England and Wales should be a community policing approach that reengages and reassures our public.

Related to the above question around the delivery of Community policing by PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers)?

The issue of what has happened with PCSOs, and part of that is both part of the benefits and dis benefits of the move towards PCCs is that you've got 43 police forces doing very different things, some have chosen to retain, or indeed 1 or 2 cases expand the number of police community support officers and others have chosen to abandon them. And with the given financial pressures which meant that one of the various few areas of the organisation you could legally dispense with after you have cut your support staff back to the bone was the PCSOs, I'm not that surprised that some Chiefs selected to take them off the books. There's only a couple of forces that have completely removed them.

If, and then the other thing of course that has happened, in being given the target of recruiting 20 000 police officers, I mean frankly if you gave most Chief Constables a budget, rather than 20 000 officers they probably wouldn't recruit 20 000 officers. Just now they would probably recruit a mixture of both directly recruited Investigators, PCSOs and Constables. There is definitely a pressure on the model, but at the end of the day, you go with what you get as a Chief and 20 000 Officers that you can train to do problem solving, and neighbourhood policing alongside investigation and all the other things you have to do in policing is still a positive place to be. And I think critically emphasising, the one thing the College of Policing did absolutely right at the beginning of this was to pick up the literature on the procedural justice, partly because we had done so much investment in the National Policing Improvement Agency firstly in the first systematic review on Legitimacy and Policing and then on trying to build and test procedural justice training to pick up on the 4Es model and try and encourage officers to start with education and encouragement before you ever got anywhere near enforcement. Was a bold and courageous thing to do in the face of a language of enforcement and severity, and general deterrence which has been increasingly problematic.

And some of the things that we were asked to look at in SAGE including Electronic tags for people who were isolating, which I felt was well past my tolerance level; I mean we can't treat citizens that you are asking to do something as if they were under sentence in my view, you encourage them to do something and only after you have encouraged them and they have failed to act do you use enforcement, and that seems to me to be something worth holding on to and I would like to see some decent evaluations of the impact between Scotland and England which have had slightly different models, but never-the-less, I think have followed that through.

In UK polling trust in policing has remained remarkably stable at about 66% it's much lower for senior police officers and that's a substantial minority who do not trust the police and politicians score even lower?

I'm not sure about the 66% figure, it depends on what you are including in the data, but when we were doing the neighbourhood policing project, one of the things we are trying to do was to raise, on a variety of questions, the level of public confidence in policing and in actually it did rise from 2005 through to 2010, it's fallen back a bit and the question comes as to who, what segments of the community you are asking, what age groups you are asking and I think that if there is any one of the polling data on compliance during the pandemic it is to make sure that we are really focused on segmenting the population, because the most non-compliant group on what's called major compliance, according to the data that we were supplied with on SAGE turns out to be my generation, the bolshy 60s and up. Who turn out to be -that's Loraine and I by the way, she is much younger than I am obviously- we, pair of us are a very bolshy generation and were much, much less compliant on things like self-isolation, despite the fact that we were the group most at risk. You might think defies reality, but I think it is just getting stuck in your ways and prepared to be bloody minded as well.

Most of the reinforcement went in on young people and I think if you look at, or think that one through it is not dissimilar to some of the issues on public confidence there is a difference; there is a class difference in terms of confidence and we always tend to focus on stop and search on young black males, but young white males from poor estates also get a pretty poor deal and also have a level of problem with public confidence. So the issue for me has always been, with community policing and public confidence data, is to be self critical and to think very carefully about, and track the operations that you are doing. There had been a very important report last week by the HMIC on disproportionality in stop and search, and in particular disproportionality on stop and search with drug searches, which I think should cause a very significant re-

examination of what on earth we are doing with searches for small quantities of cannabis and the dibenefits in terms of public confidence hit.

In Indonesia, similar to other developing countries (PN doesn't like the term developing countries as in most countries, like Indonesia and India there are some highly developed pieces and underdeveloped pieces, and thinks instead high, medium and low income is probably more helpful as it talks to you a bit more about the capacity of the country to be able to invest) one of the problems regarding policing is corruption, in relation to that there are some factors that make it very hard for the society to transform the police, we the Indonesians have experienced it directly because many of the reform programmes have failed. Is it impossible to transform a corrupt police body in the third world?

No. It's not impossible, researching this piece of work for the National Academy of Sciences, and do watch out for this work that Larry Sherman is Charing and Justice Tankabee is on the Committee, it has a very strong Cambridge presence actually. I have to say it is one of the most difficult papers I have ever written is trying to write a paper on strategies that sustain the Rule of Law using International Data, but one of the things that comes across in it is that there are some very clear strategies for reducing the impact of corruption.

Of which the most obvious are the form of auditing and inspection processes; there are some very good examples from India that the Economics Nobel Prize winners led by Bannergee have done in looking at reform on police stations, developing sufficient audit inspections and incentives to encourage better behaviour can act as a springboard for transforming even some of the things such as traffic policing which is notoriously corrupt. There are ways of achieving that, for example in Hyderabad they are paying more to traffic cops in return for no bribes and wearing a body work camera and using it and then tracking the use of it. There are ways of overcoming these things, if you think it through and try it and test it and track it, then it's possible to do. Once you start moving down that road and build some confidence in that, Bannergee's studies in India are quite persuasive that it is possible to make progress and you've still got to tackle the big political end of it, but nevertheless it is possible to do.

Relating to Future Community policing, we've been talking very much about geographical communities, neighbourhood communities , but what about online Communities; will the new focus within policing on cyber crime, will that continue; but also whether the new focus on Domestic Violence, which has been taken more seriously than fore hitherto, do you think that will continue as well in the new normal?

I would be very, very surprised indeed and extremely disappointed if the Community Policing approach that I am advocating didn't have a very strong focus on reducing harm in families, very strong focus. And actually the whole, in fact there is some very interesting, emerging work as it were online community policing and it's potential, for example - and I would love to get one of our Master students to look at this- is the use of applications like *Next Door* which effectively casts a geographic net over an area and allows people to form little sub groups within that and I've got one for my home village in Hampshire. Incredibly useful information comes out of that, the local police officers appear regularly on it, giving out information and sometimes taking stick. For example somebody had posted a concern about people taking pictures in a

field at the back of some houses and immediately the Neighbourhood Policing officer popped up and said actually that is very useful information as we are investigating a set of burglaries in that road, please keep them coming, and gave them both a public and a private place to put that information. That's kind of Community Policing in an online way and could reach out to a whole series of people who don't always interact with the police. It can get a bit tech at times, but online can, but the advantages of *Next Door* the process has always got someone moderating it, which means it is a space that you can do policing in. In terms of wider Community Policing in a Cybercrime space there's some real potential which I don't believe has yet been realised, that goes much better than simply recording online. Which is useful and a good process and has helped in the middle of the pandemic, but being much more proactive in that space, it seems to me to be incredibly important, which we have seen TV programmes recently of people undercover in the webspace, but actually, we also need to be very publicly available in the web spaces where people are coming to get advice. And much less beuqacratic that things like *Action Fraud,* God help us, that's not Community Policing in any known sense of the word. So yes there is a challenge there, but there is evidence that it can be quite positive.

1:15:50 Loraine gives thanks to audience etc…