

LENGTHENING THE ARM OF THE LAW

Relentless fiscal pressures faced by the public police over the last few decades have meant that police organisations have had to find new ways to obtain and harness the resources needed to achieve their goals. Through entering into relationships of coercion, commercial exchange, and gift with a wide variety of external institutions and individuals operating in both public and private capacities, police organisations have risen to this challenge. Indeed, police organisations are increasingly operating within a business paradigm. But what are the benefits of these relationships and the nature of the risks that might accompany reliance upon them? This book examines these modes of exchange between police and ‘outsiders’ and explores how far these relationships can be taken before certain fundamental values – equity in the distribution of policing, cost-effectiveness in the delivery of police services, and the legitimacy of the police institution itself – are placed in jeopardy.

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Lengthening the Arm of the Law

*Enhancing Police Resources in the Twenty-First
Century*

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Foreword

I was delighted to be asked to write a foreword to this book. It is one of those really thought-provoking and original books about policing that come along all too infrequently, but when they do, they cause you to reflect hard about developments that have become, almost surreptitiously, a part of the wallpaper. The central focus of this book is money, the demand to account for it, the lack of it, and the way that police forces have sought to fill the gap between demand and supply by privatising, reducing core functions, seeking sponsorship, and entering partnerships. I recognise all of these dimensions.

My own career started at the beginning of the 1980s when a rapid expansion of British policing numbers was swiftly followed by a growing interest from the British Treasury in finding ways to hold policing to account for expenditure. Initially, this was through accounting for numbers of police officers. Over the next two decades, it evolved into full-blown managerialism, with a series of attempts to link budgets with performance data. The accompanying scope for chiefs to square the circle between inputs and demand by raising income, securing sponsorship, and entering into partnerships has changed the relationship between the police and the citizen in many, often subtle, ways.

This book explores not only the financial developments but the consequences of each development. There have been a number of studies of police reform that have looked at the impact of corruption and crisis; very few, like this book, have looked behind the headlines and explored the ways in which resources and accounting for them have affected policing. As someone who has been the ‘accounting

officer' for multimillion-pound budgets for policing, I am particularly pleased to see this, because my own experience has shown that one of the most important parts of a modern chief officer's role is securing and managing the resources necessary for the organisation. Furthermore, the most intense democratic scrutiny has been reserved for my budget proposals rather than my operational decisions.

This book pushes us toward a critical and overdue debate about 'value-added' policing. Through the last twenty years, public demand for policing and of policing in the Western world has risen inexorably. Political leaders have promised more and more security and pushed policing to achieve stretching performance targets. However, there comes a point, particularly with pressures ranging from neighbourhood policing to counter-terrorism, when choices have to be made. The balance between policing local communities and managing risk is at the heart of the dilemmas that police leaders face, with limited ability to identify the objective standards that might help make the best choices. Given the complex resource mechanisms discussed in this book and the wider pressures on public spending, the time has come for an open, informed public debate about the trade-offs between resource, policing, and risk.

Peter Neyroud
Chief Constable and Chief Executive
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