

Home Secretary,

At the end of last year's conference, I left Blackpool by car to attend the funeral of PC Ricky Gray. It was a tragic reminder of the terrible price police officers can pay for their heroism on a daily basis.

I am as ever humbled by the sacrifice of our fallen colleagues.

Bravery is a word banded round easily in this media led world – but not in our Police service.

Our annual Police Bravery Award nominations once again display the finest stories of personal sacrifice, courage and dedication. They are an inspiration to us all.

(Video)

Home Secretary this is my sixth and last Annual Conference Speech. So much has happened.

2 Prime Ministers and counting, 4 Home Secretaries, 4 Police Ministers, 5 Police Bills through Parliament, 5 Home Office reviews, 16,000 PCSOs, , 3 leaders of the Opposition, 2 pay reviews - 1 disputed, 140,000 police officers and 5 annual conference speeches.

I remember my first conference speech vividly ...

...a tribute to the professionalism of police officers

...a warning as to the expanding role of PCSOs

...and a challenge to the Home Secretary on workforce modernisation

On that day in May 2003 I pledged to take up the challenge to fight for the rights of police officers...

to place common sense at the heart of policing...

and to work in partnership with government

I have tried to be true to those words but I feel let down.

Too often the door has been slammed in my face and only opened when decisions have already been taken.

[pause]

At my first conference, I introduced the opportunity to ask questions of the Home Secretary.

Although some Home Secretaries have subsequently regretted it – the session has been an important and healthy exchange of views.

Home Secretary - I admire your courage. You didn't have to come here today and I know conference will treat your office with the respect it warrants.

I am sure when your Private Secretary reminded you of today's event you felt like reaching for the nearest stab proof vest - and perhaps slipping into old habits and lighting up to calm your nerves...

[pause, smile]

... But as you have reassured us, you have moved on from these past indiscretions...

Your recent crimes have been more for the serious fraud office than the drug squad!

[pause]

It was a momentous day in January when 25,000 police officers marched through the streets of London.

That demonstration and our continuing 'Fair pay for Police' campaign has shown police officers at their best:

- **Disciplined**
- **Proud**
- **Honourable and**
- **Fair**

It also demonstrated a Government at its worst: Acting with opportunism rather than integrity.

We met in your office at the House of Commons that night and you were faced with one direct question.

One direct plea from one very direct police officer...

Constable Kath Kane looked you right in the eyes and asked:

"Home Secretary - who speaks up for the Police in Government?"

You could not answer her then - but I hope you will answer her today.

Because you need to rebuild trust with Kath, with the Federation and with the entire police service.

[pause]

So much of what we do as police officers relies on trust.

- **The trust of a father who can safely take his son to a football match**
- **The trust of a small rural community in their local Constable**
- **The trust of our fellow officers when we call for urgent back up**

The trust we have in one another

These relationships are underpinned by a bond of trust between the communities and their police service - and the police service and the Government.

Your decision not to honour the pay award was a breach of faith.

It was a monumental mistake and I do not say this lightly when I say you betrayed the police service.

[pause]

You will say that you could not take any risks with inflation by conceding on police pay.

But let me ask you this.

How was it that the government found 2.7 billion pounds to dig itself out of a tax hole in advance of a by-election but couldn't find 30 million pounds to honour our pay deal?

And listen to this.

When teachers went on strike, the Prime Minister and the Education Secretary's response was to say that it would be 'irresponsible' to over-ride the settlement recommended by their independent pay review panel.

So it suited Mr Balls to defend the teachers' panel deal but it didn't suit you to do the same for us.

Home Secretary, what is it that Mr Balls has but you do not.....

[pause]

For 29 years, we have had a system that provided fair and honest pay deals – based on trust.

That system is now broken.

And how did you offer to build bridges?

By offering a multi-year pay deal based on an index of rigged and misleading pay rises.

This government - with a crunch in its own credit rating - has the cheek to ask us to sign up for a pay deal on the ‘never...never’.

Appropriately Home Secretary, under the terms you are proposing, that is exactly my response. ‘NEVER...NEVER.’

[pause]

There is now a pressing need to have a system that will restore our confidence.

Sir Clive Booth’s recommendation for a pay review body, against the balance of evidence, does nothing to restore that confidence and is more about the Home Office’s desire to micro-manage pay and conditions.

We have proposed the use of an IDS index as a fair means of increasing police pay. It reflects a balanced mix of public and private sector pay deals recognising our professionalism and the fact that police officers do not have the same industrial rights as other workers.

We want a Police Negotiating Board that actually does what it says on the box – negotiates. It must be allowed to negotiate free from Home Office bullying and interference.

And when decisions are reached at arbitration – they must be binding.

You may have read in this morning's papers that we have voted for the right to strike.

There ARE people in this room who believe that they should have that right.

But equally there are many who would only take that step if arbitration does not become binding on all parties – and that includes you.

[pause]

We are awaiting the results of the Judicial Review into your decision to ignore the independent police arbitration award. While we hope the Review will look favourably on our claim, if it does not, let me tell you straight: Police officers have voted overwhelmingly to lobby for a change in our industrial rights if we do not get independent binding arbitration.

[Pause]

It is a shame that so much of the recent debate has centred on pay.

The future of policing in this country is best judged by officers at the sharp end.

The Federation represents a wealth of experience but the government rarely seeks to draw on it.

From recent Governments, we have had a succession of quick fixes and interest free promises to paper over the cracks

There have been consultations but they have been paper thin.

We need to stop and look holistically at the future of policing

Only by agreeing the responsibilities of policing in the 21st century can we truly decide the roles of police officers.

[pause]

You know it is only 20 or so years ago since I was a humble crime prevention officer in Kent.

It was about that time that the slow but incessant process of reducing policing down to the base level of 'costs' and 'prices' began.

As soon as we were asked to count - we were asked to measure....

Once we were asked to measure...we were required to justify need by requirement....

And once we were required to justify need by requirementwe spun the numbers.

And so over time -

- out has gone common sense and in has come 'activity analysis'

- out has gone intuition and empathy and in has come metrics

We are a police service lost between statistics and reality.

We are a police service who know the price of everything and the value of nothing

We have lost the morality of successful policing.

[pause]

So where do we go from here...

There's an old Irish story – probably a myth - where a man asks the way to Cork and is told: “Well now it depends which way you've come from”

When it comes to the future of policing - it is, I think fair to say - I wouldn't have started from here.

Successive governments have always avoided long term planning. They've opted for short term piecemeal solutions – most of which are designed to fix political challenges and fit in with the election timetable.

Whilst the police service over the years has evolved and adapted, the time comes when you have to pause and take a strategic overview of where you want to go and what you should be doing.

What you need is a clear vision.

- a clear vision for 21st century policing**
- a precise definition of function and requirement**
- a governance structure that allows flexibility and policing skills to broaden not diminish**
- And accountability that informs not manipulates priorities.**

[pause]

Home Secretary you are shortly to publish a Green Paper on policing

I suspect it will be nothing more than a school report on your achievements and a testing ground for the next manifesto.

I believe the Green Paper should be the tendering exercise for the independent review we have long called for into the future of policing.

We want a genuine independent review of policing – an Independent Commission – and if you need someone to Chair it, I'm free from Friday!

We have had our fill of partisan studies, agreed in advance by the Prime Minister, and watered down from their most sensible findings

Today, I challenge you Home Secretary... Be brave!

- on this stage at my last conference

- call my bluff

- agree to a full independent review

- we will support you

- we will take an active part

- we will accept and abide by its findings – even the ones we don't like

- together we can rebuild trust and confidence

[pause]

Workforce modernisation is workforce disintegration by any other name.

We have always agreed that there are plenty of roles that support staff can undertake which will free up police officer time and resource.

However if re-engineering the police service means we arrive at a position where police officers deal only with confrontational situations...

We will have established a paramilitary force and one fundamentally different from the concept of policing by consent.

Ministers always say to me: Bring me solutions, not problems.

Well I have a solution for you today.

Convert all 16,000 PCSOs into sworn police officers.

Give them the training, give them the powers, give them the equipment.

It would strengthen neighbourhood policing, it would improve resilience and give the public what they want – a fully trained, sworn, politically independent bobby on the beat.

[Pause]

Don't get me wrong – we are not a professional body that opposes modernisation for opposition's sake.

But the inept management of modernisation is nothing short of a scandal.

The government has paid a fortune to consultants to tell us what we already know.

Maybe that's where our back-dated 30 million pounds has gone – into their pockets

Ministers declare pilot studies a triumph – when they launch them!

Sir Ronnie Flanagan's review claims the workforce demonstration sites are a success before they have even started.

Police officers have always believed in improvement

Just show us the improvement and we will deliver the modernisation.

[pause]

I speak to you today as I started...as a Constable.

It is an office I continue to hold with pride

It is where my heart has always been and where it will remain.

One case has always stayed with me above all others.

I was a young Constable when called to the home of an old lady in Sevenoaks

She had been burgled, and everything in her home taken. It wasn't much but it had huge sentimental value.

She was distraught, frightened and lonely and I comforted her as best I could.

But in those days, we knew who the local toe-rags were, we knew where they lived. Following inquiries, I recovered the possessions and put the criminal away.

I will never forget the look on her face when I returned her photographs, little ornaments and knick-knacks. It made my job worthwhile.

It is not an exciting or dramatic story - it is common to you all I am sure, but it highlights something very important for me...

It was about local understanding, working the streets, pulling a team together. Righting a wrong

These are the instincts of a police Constable that are being eroded.

[pause]

Last year I was talking to a well known politician about the Office of Constable. He said, what's that? Is it a room in the Home Office?

I was frankly horrified at the level of ignorance.

So the Federation has set out to show how the office of constable is as relevant to modern day policing as ever.

Today we are publishing a pamphlet setting out the history, legal status and value to our society of an office that acts as a reassurance to the public and a check against the tyrannical abuse of power.

It is a proud office and one which I have had the honour to hold for 35 years.

[pause]

So where do we go now....

Well I go in the words of any self-respecting Home Secretary (and I have seen a few come and go) to spend more time with my family – and Selhurst Park.

You won't have to entertain me at Villa Park next season!

Policing is part of me - I have always cared passionately about it – and will continue to do so.

In my very first speech as Chairman I concluded by asking the government “to get off our backs and to let us get on with our jobs”

We all joined up because we want to make a difference. We want to protect the good guys and make the bad guys feel anything but safe.

But Home Secretary, stop making us feel like the bad guys.

[pause]

What's happened in five years?

Policing is more professional than it was

There are more of us now

We are better equipped

We have been catching more criminals and the prisons are full

You've listened to our concerns by changing the performance framework but we have yet to feel the effects of this on the ground

As I move on, the Federation will be there for police officers, to stand up for their right to do what they believe is best, free of vested interest.

It may sound glib but we are the voice of common sense and this has been the core of my approach. I have always tried to bring solutions rather than be part of the problem.

I know we have had our differences Home Secretary but you need to trust us and we need to be able to trust you.

So what I say to you today is no different to five years ago: Get off our backs and let us get on with our jobs.

I have loved this role and been proud to serve you all.

I will miss it big style.