



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

# Editorial - February 2010

## Two hearts...one mind?

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Traditionally February is renowned for the coming together of two like-minded souls on St Valentine's Day. But reading through the interview with ACPO president, Sir Hugh Orde and the feature by Paul Yearwood, chairman of Surrey Police Federation, about planned management changes in Surrey Police, you could be forgiven for thinking this relationship may soon be on rocky ground.

Sir Hugh Orde inherited the post of president of ACPO at a time when policing was facing huge financial difficulties and, to his credit, he makes clear in his interview our national resilience must not become vulnerable by losing police officers.

Ironic then, that in the finest traditions of the workforce modernisation programme and as detailed by Surrey's Federation chairman, Surrey Police is doing precisely that (see page 22). However, there's a twist this time; it's middle and senior management at a BCU level they are now targeting. The Federation and Superintendents' Association are doing their very best to ensure that command resilience is not weakened and that public safety is paramount.

Now, I appreciate that money is tight everywhere but I'm afraid my sympathy waned when I saw the staffing changes that have already taken place in Surrey. Ten years ago they had 2,100 police officers and 760 police staff; in 2009 the strength was 1,900 police officers and 2,380 police staff. So, police staff numbers tripled whilst police officer numbers fell by nearly 10 per cent. Well if that's the benefit of workforce modernisation then call me a stick in the mud, but I fail to see the logic behind this wanton destruction of resilience.

The worry is that government eyes still look towards Surrey Police as the bastion of change. To that end Sir Hugh will inevitably have a fight on his hand convincing some of his peers that the resilience of the service outweighs their appetite for ministerial approval.

Mr Orde says that an ACPO priority is to keep people safe. Read into this what you will, but I like to see it as a clear signal that he will fight to retain record numbers of multi-skilled police officers and he appreciates that public safety and a resilient service comes with sufficient numbers of trained police officers. If that is a fight the ACPO president is willing to have, then it's a fight that will see police officers of all ranks united.