



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

Editorial – September 2010

Reap what you sow

This month political enthusiasts and commentators will be in their delight as they descend on Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester for the main political party conferences.

Traditionally the conferences were a time for open debate, disagreement and real party politics. Regrettably now, they are little more than slick, stage-managed events designed to capture headlines and propel key politicians into the public limelight. However, the back rooms are where much of the business of influence takes place, and never more so than this year with a host of new faces following the election. With so much at stake for policing the Police Federation will be at the heart of these discussions.

In the last month we have seen a leaked report from ACPO which clearly shows that some chief officers are prepared to sell the rank and file down the river to save their own skins. Don't forget, they too started at the coalface, but they were less keen to reduce numbers when it might be them needing back-up on the streets. And what absolute tosh to suggest that police regulations hinder their ability to use their officers as required; that's a poor excuse for poor planning. For those chiefs that need reminding – New Year's Eve is 31 December.

The government's review of police terms and conditions is just around the corner, and the coalition has already talked of possible 25 percent cuts to police funding. With cuts of that magnitude there will only be one winner; the criminals and those who prey on the law-abiding. But it's easy to fall into the trap of seeing this all as a done deal. The Comprehensive Spending Review is not until October, and the government must realise they will reap what they sow. Cut policing now and they may regret the inevitable increased lawlessness and mayhem that will face the public when they head to the ballot box in five years time.

My plea to all politicians – look carefully at what the leaders of ACPO are saying, sift through the self-interest and note there's far less substance. Listen to those chiefs who openly say they need sufficient numbers of police officers in all areas to be able do the job society expects. And have the courage to put your head above the parapet and protect your police service. The consequences of saving a quick buck today and burying your head in the sand are far too severe to contemplate.

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