



Tony Harper, chairman of the Inspectors' Central Committee

Tackling the shifting sands of modern policing

I recently assumed the chairmanship of the Inspectors' Central Committee (ICC) and I have to say that in all my years with the Federation I have never known a period like the one we are currently experiencing.

Policing has witnessed considerable changes in recent years, but nothing on the scale of what is happening right now. To say it is fast moving is an understatement. The police landscape is one of constantly shifting sands.

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This time of year I visit forces to update the Inspectors' Branch Boards (IBBs) on current issues affecting our members. Usually one update with tinkering will last the IBB period. At the moment it is a complete re-write from one meeting to the next.

Within the last few months, a review of police pay and conditions has been announced, along with the Hutton review of public pensions and, of course, the Comprehensive Spending Review. Each of these will have a monumental impact on the police service. By the time you read this, the situation will no doubt have changed again.

Our role at the Federation is to keep our eye on the ball. We have got to be careful that we don't become political. Our aim is, and always will be, to focus on our members

and what is right for them, regardless of who is in power.

While some of the changes will affect the police service as a whole, there are some ideas currently floating around that are specifically directed at the inspector ranks. We are receiving reports that some forces are considering scrapping the rank of chief inspector in a bid to save money. This would mean inspectors would be expected to take on greater responsibility and workload for no extra remuneration. This is quite simply ridiculous. The chief inspector rank has proven itself to provide the best value for money when compared to other ranks and we will fight any moves to remove it.

There is a long road ahead of us and a lot of hard work to be done. Please do not underestimate my passion for the inspecting ranks of which I have served for over 18 years! As the new chairman of the Inspectors' Central Committee, I have had to hit the ground running. I'm grateful that I have such a strong team around me at the ICC to ensure that we continue to do the very best for our members.