

Federation will look at whether they should embrace wider police family

Delegates at conference voted overwhelmingly for a working party to examine admitting ancillary police staff including community support officers to the Federation.

Ninety per cent of officers agreed that it was too soon to vote on whether or not CSOs should be allowed to join the Federation and a working should be set up instead.

Federation representatives from the 43 forces will sit on the group and have a year to decide whether to recommend that non-sworn officers to join organisation, in what would be a historic move.

Rod Dalley, former vice-chairman of the Federation, began the session, by saying there were a

'complexity of issues' involved in extending membership.

He said: 'Before deciding whether or not to make a historic change, we must have some vision of what an enlarged police federation would look like.'

'There is the question of conflicts arising between the interest of police officers and what may be the different interest of police staff.'

Mr Dalley said the Federation could 'shoot itself in the foot' if it rushed into a decision. He urged the conference to support the working party.

'These are truly monumental decisions. In my view we have only scratched the surface. If we rushed into a making a definitive



Rod Dalley: Reform raises complex issues

decision today, it would constitutionally curtail our work, and prevent us from bringing this issue back to conference for two whole years. We would be playing into the hands of those outside the service who would like to see a

weaker Federation.

'We need to have properly undertaken the research required; before we discuss these issues in-depth; before we know the implications of our action.'



Police leaders highlight issues of opening membership

Two senior Federation figures highlighted some of the issues surrounding CSO membership in a film specially made for conference.

Alan Gordon, vice-chairman of the sergeants committee, argued against including CSOs, for the purpose of the debate.

He said: 'I don't see how this is going to work. I don't know if it is what officers want, I know the branch boards don't want it.'

'If we take civilian staff we become a union. I think many officers are proud of the fact they don't belong to a union.'

'Officers are different, they always will be different. We represent police officers. The most important part of the service is the police officer and it always will be.'

Ernie Hanrahan, deputy secretary of the Federation, speaking for defence, said it was important to make a decision on whether to admit CSOs and other police staff first before attempting to discuss

how it would be managed.

'We have to find out what officers want before we take any decisions. We can look after CSOs as effectively as any other organisation.'

Mr Hanrahan said the interests of officers and CSOs did not necessarily conflict with each other.

'For example if a civilian member wants to become a cus-

tody officer, they could be told they must become a sworn police officer first.'

But a Thames Valley Federation representative said: 'How can we represent non police officers and hope to preserve the office of constable?'

One delegate called for a national ballot, but Malcolm Bunker, from Surrey Federation, said they had already conducted a survey of their force where officers voted against the idea, although another unnamed force voted in favour of admitting CSOs.

Glen Smyth, chairman of the Met Federation, said the 'real danger' was that CSO could one day sit on the Joint Central Committee.

'Then they would be defining our jobs, not us defining theirs.'

But Ian Leyland, from Merseyside Federation, who supported the call for a working group said: 'We need to make an informed decision next year, not now when the issues have not been clearly explained.'



Glen Smyth, chairman of the Met Federation joins reform debate

The Police Federation wants:

- Conference agreed to establish a working party to review the impact of police reform and workforce modernisation on the future of the Police Federation to report no later than conference 2006.