



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

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Reap what you sow

As the economy continued to slump and even the Prime Minister himself admitted we're in the midst of a recession, national negotiators on the staff side of the Police Negotiating Board secured a three-year deal for the UK's 170,000 police officers.

Whilst most could see the sense in the settlement the initial reaction from a few was anger and frustration but soon the realisation of what it could have been dawned.

An economic downturn, predictions that inflation will fall sharply next year and the introduction of a pay review body with a chairman appointed by the Prime Minister and members appointed by the Home Secretary - hardly the right conditions for bumper pay increases in the coming years.

This coupled with an impending Police Arbitration Tribunal (PAT) that, despite best efforts by staff side, was likely to deliver a one year deal of just 2.325 percent as the official side used the arbiters recommended index from last year to determine the offer they tabled of 2.325 percent.

Faced with all these facts the three-year deal was by far the best possible to ensure that officers get the maximum remuneration possible and stability for future years.

Part of the agreement around the settlement was the Home Secretary kicked a pay review body into the long grass which gives the PNB a chance to once again operate effectively without the suffocating presence of Home Office bureaucrats skewering the process.

And a chance to finally negotiate an on-call allowance?

It was made very clear to the Home Secretary that it's totally unacceptable to expect officers to be on-call on rest days, to have to remain contactable by phone, to be within a reasonable distance from work and fit for duty; all for nothing?

This has to change. The three-year settlement may have been the best possible deal but that doesn't mean that police officers just forgive and forget the way this government has treated them.

Decades of good will, harmony and understanding that existed between the government of the day and the police service, was killed when Jacqui Smith failed to honour last year's pay deal. The government chose to kill good will and put a price on policing. Now they must reap what they sow.

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