

Calls for independent policing review

The Federation has challenged Home Secretary Jacqui Smith to “be brave” and agree to a full independent review of policing, pledging to “accept and abide by” any findings.

The challenge was thrown down by outgoing Federation Chairman Jan Berry, who also repeated a call she made in her first speech as Chairman, urging the Government to “get off our backs and let us get on with our jobs”. Mrs Berry told the conference that it was time to “look holistically” at the future of policing, and put an end to the “quick fixes and interest-free promises to paper over the cracks” that had been put forward by recent governments.

Referring to the soon-to-be-published Green Paper on policing, Jan Berry said: “I suspect it will be nothing more than a school report on your achievements and a testing ground for the next manifesto.

“We’ve had our fill of partisan studies, agreed in advance by the Prime Minister, and watered down from their most sensible findings.

“Today I challenge you Home Secretary – be brave! On this stage, at my last conference, call my bluff; agree to a full independent review. We will support you. We will take an active part. We will accept and abide by its findings – even the ones we don’t like. Together we can rebuild trust and confidence.”

The Federation Chairman also offered the Government a solution to the problem of workforce modernisation, by calling for the conversion of all 16,000 PCSOs to sworn police officers.

“Give them the training, give them the powers, give them the equipment. It would strengthen neighbourhood policing, it would improve resilience and give the public what they want – a fully trained, sworn, politically independent bobby on the beat,” added Mrs Berry.

Jan Berry: Let us get on with our jobs



Photography: Anderson Photography

Immigrants put frontline policing under pressure

The influx of migrant workers and immigrants into eastern England from Europe and beyond is continuing to present serious problems for frontline policing, according to Cambridgeshire Chief Constable Julie Spence.

Mrs Spence told delegates that while a recent Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) report claiming that the flow of people into the country was slowing and many eastern European were returning home, the experience of frontline officers in her force is “still the same as it was before”.

The county was now “super diverse”, said Mrs Spence, with 93 different cultures and 100 different languages spoken across the force area.

There are now growing numbers of Czech migrants in Cambridgeshire as well as a significant number of Russians pretending to be Poles. There were also arrivals from much further afield, with a new phenomenon of Vietnamese immigrants who had dual Bulgarian nationality. In some cases these immigrants were linked to the growing number of cannabis factories discovered in the force area.

With Cambridgeshire now the fastest growing county in the country – and set to continue to be so until 2016 – the mix of cultures and languages is creating a number of policing issues, including:

- A growing group culture among young males of carrying knives
- Continuing issues of sex trafficking, along with a new “trafficking of workers”
- Massive problems around the use of alcohol, particularly in relation to motoring and shoplifting
- The added time and costs needed to deal with cases where translators and interpreters needed to be used.

Chief Constable Julie Spence: immigration puts police under pressure



Photography: Anderson Photography