



Andy Wilson is chairman of Cumbria Police Federation

## Chief concerns

Like many forces around the country, Cumbria has just welcomed a new chief constable, Craig Mackey. Mr Mackey comes from Gloucestershire Constabulary and we are very encouraged by his strong background in neighbourhood policing and patrolling. He has experience in HMIC and has worked overseas. He seems to be a 'people' person and is keen to listen not only to the people of Cumbria, but also to members of his own workforce.

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Mr Mackey is perhaps more fortunate than some chief officers as he has taken over one of the top performing forces in the country. The issue is whether or not that high performance can be sustained and whether we can hold onto some of the best people in the service. In 2005 we reached a plateau where police numbers are concerned and now we are starting to lose officers. In a force the size of Cumbria, the loss of one or two officers can make a considerable difference. We now have officers going to work in Canada and Australia. We also have an issue of officers with less than five years in the job resigning. One of Mr Mackey’s biggest challenges will be to stem this flow.

In advance of him taking up his new position, we surveyed members of the local federation. The results revealed concerns around bureaucracy, low morale and people’s ability to perform their roles.

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Another challenge is getting the right police family workforce mix. The public want to see more police officers on the streets, but they also want to see more CID officers investigating local criminals who are active in the community. If there is a role for CSOs my submission would be that this role is not to replace, but to supplement sworn officers. The public want police officers with full powers to do the policing. I am concerned about what will happen in 2008 when the funding for CSOs stops. How will they fill that gap?

We welcome our new chief. Cumbria is a great force. There are lots of challenges ahead. To paraphrase history; Mr Mackey should ask not what his police officers can do for him, but what he can do for his police officers.