



Metin Enver, Managing Editor

Editorial – March 2008

Flanagan or flannel?

Well, I'm glad I'm not a betting man. If you had offered me a wager that Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary could write a 125-page review of policing and completely avoid reference to the Office of Constable, I would have asked you to hand over the cash then and there.

But hats off to Sir Ronnie Flanagan – he managed it. With officers still reeling over the disgraceful way the Government has treated them over a fair pay settlement, Sir Ronnie manages to turn the heat up again. For someone who I have heard on previous occasions voice support for the independent, impartial and accountable Office of Constable, failure to mention it in his review of policing is extremely troubling.

Was it an oversight? Or is it a case of he who pays the piper calls the tune?

What is desperately needed is a completely independent and holistic review of policing. The Police Federation has been saying this for the past eight years, and last year ACPO and the Superintendents' Association added their voice to the same demand.

Any review must also take into account what the public actually want rather than what the Government and others just assume they want.

We police by consent in this country. That consent is built upon a trust between the public and the police. A trust that policing is delivering what people actually want it to; a trust that the police will be there on the rare occasion the public have the need to dial three 9s; and a trust that the police will be there in sufficient numbers with full powers, necessary equipment and training to help them.

I just hope the Flanagan Report wasn't a missed opportunity to be that holistic overview. And I sincerely hope the Government doesn't misuse his report to put the final nail in the coffin of the politically independent and impartial Office of Constable.

**What do you think? Is the Flanagan report a missed opportunity?
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Print: Wyndeham Heron Limited, Maldon, Essex

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