

POLICE CONFERENCE 2018

POLICE AUTONOMY – WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

Commissioner Grant Stevens APM

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- ▶ Elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), **England & Wales**, 2011.
- ▶ Operational matters v the “objectives and priorities set by the PCC”.
- ▶ **Home Office**: the scope of operational independence is “fluid & context-driven”.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF POLICE AUTONOMY

- ▶ What is an operational matter and what is a policy matter?
- ▶ Political information seeking v influence wielding.
- ▶ Who should have political oversight over police?
- ▶ Little agreement on these questions, and others...

MUST THE RELATIONSHIP BE FLUID AND
CONTEXT-DRIVEN?



- ▶ Resourcing decisions such as the level of funding for police.
- ▶ Appointment, most senior roles.
- ▶ Organisational structure and management.
- ▶ Organisational policy.
- ▶ Priority setting, affecting resource deployment.
- ▶ Deployment decisions.
- ▶ Appointment, more junior roles.
- ▶ Specific operational decisions.

A LIMITED CONSENSUS?



- ▶ The appropriate relationship for the place...
- ▶ The appropriate relationship for the time...
- ▶ Public attitudes change, to policing and politicians.

IS BEING FLUID AND CONTEXT-DRIVEN
A PROBLEM?

- ▶ The rule of law... rather than narrow politics.
- ▶ Separation of powers...politicians make the law, police enforce it.
- ▶ Police expertise...we are the experts at what we do.

WHY IS POLICE AUTONOMY
IMPORTANT?