

Six-Steps to Policing Transformation

James Slessor identifies six steps UK police forces can take to meet today's policing challenges



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The core principles of policing remain as clear today as when Sir Robert Peel established the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in London in 1829. They are to keep the peace, to protect life and property and to enforce the law – and to do so with the confidence and trust of the citizens they serve. Today's police leaders bear the responsibility of preserving those core principles while dealing with the complex challenges and threats of modern-day policing. The challenges Accenture's recent study, *Preparing Police Services for the Future*, drawing on the views of senior police officers from around the world, found most forces are encountering three common challenges:

- **Rising citizen expectations**– citizens want more. They expect the police to offer flexible ways of interaction, including the ability to share information using new technologies including smart phone applications, citizen portals and social media. Citizens are also seeking an effective customer-focused and 'joined-up' approach from police similar to that which they might receive and experience from a bank, retailer or telecommunications provider. At the same time, they want public spaces to be safe, with an expectation of a re-assuring policing presence to help them feel secure;
- **The growing sophistication and changing nature of crime**– over and above crime and anti-social behaviour at a local level, police forces face an increasingly complex threat from organised crime networks, which are often global and equipped with the latest technology to facilitate criminal activities. According to a report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, organised crime has increased 127 per cent in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries over the past ten years. It is estimated organised crime generates annual cash turnovers running into tens of billions of pounds in the UK alone; and

- **Severe budgetary constraints**– forces must meet these increasing citizen expectations and crime threats at a time of significantly reduced budgets. In the UK and elsewhere, governments are reducing the funding provided to police services and asking forces to "do more with less." Preparing for the future While today's police leaders understand there is no 'silver bullet' solution, Accenture's study found that forces are eager to embrace operational, technological, organisational and cultural change. The study identified six steps police forces can take to overcome the challenges of today and prepare for the challenges of the future:

- 1) Engage citizens
- 2) Empower police officers
- 3) Optimise ways of working
- 4) Predict and improve services through analytics
- 5) Enhance collaboration
- 6) Proactively manage change

As the corresponding diagram below illustrates, the first three steps should be viewed as outcomes (the vertical bars) while the fourth, fifth and sixth steps identify new ways of working and thinking to help police forces achieve these outcomes.

 **Engage citizens:**

The public are willing and able to assist the police. To enable and encourage this, citizens must be engaged by the police in new and different ways. Engaging the public to fight crime in the digital age requires using the full range of digital and social media channels available to improve interaction between police and citizens. A recent Accenture citizen survey found that more than 70 per cent of citizens said they were likely to see the greater use of digital channels by police, and more than 50 per cent said they would like to see an increase in the use of dedicated police websites and citizen portals. The importance of Twitter, Facebook and similar technologies is already clear and new and dynamic police-



citizen apps are emerging, allowing citizens to report crime, share and request information in real-time, and interact in a more personalised and efficient way with police. Facewatch, which was created by a London wine bar owner, has developed evidence-reporting templates that allow the business community to swiftly report thefts in bars, pubs and shops to police. Separately, it has also developed the 'Facewatch ID app', which uses smartphone technology to enable citizens to search images of people of interest uploaded by police and submit details confidentially through the system back to the police. The work of Facewatch illustrates the potential for a more dynamic and effective digital relationship between police and the community they serve.

Empower police officers:

It is critical that police officers are equipped and enabled to be as effective as possible in their role, including having the support to allow them to make informed real-time decisions. It cannot be acceptable that the smart phones officers use in their private lives are more effective tools than some of the outdated radios and computer terminals they are provided with to undertake their jobs. Officers arriving at the scene of an incident need real-time access to information and intelligence, presented in an intuitive and intelligent way – following the logical flow of questions an experienced officer would ask. The

ability to be presented with the history of a location, the background of its inhabitants, and potential presence of a weapon is vital information that will not only help

improve the way officers handle the incident, but might help keep them safe.

Optimise ways of working:

Police forces must also look to how they are structured and organised to ensure they are best positioned to utilise new technology and collaborate with other forces, agencies and partners. The integration and sharing information between previously standalone criminal justice and law enforcement systems is vital to developing more efficient ways of working and enhancing levels of collaboration. Accenture recently supported the Toronto Police Service (TPS) to undertake a strategic review to help improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its policing services and to gain a better understanding of the number of officers required to meet current service demands and to draw correlations between strategic decisions and force size. In the UK, the creation of Police Scotland has brought together eight territorial police forces and the Scottish Crime and Enforcement Agency into one national force to help provide access to national and specialist services and expertise whenever and wherever they are needed.

Use analytics to achieve predictive policing:

Forces in the UK and around the world are using increasingly sophisticated analytics to predict criminal trends and behaviours. The ability to incorporate social factors and local demographics can play a significant role in enhancing intelligence-led policing and can

help forces to anticipate crime, tackle chronic recidivism and manage risk more effectively. Forces are also putting processes in place to ensure officers and staff enter reliable and consistent data that can be quickly analysed to enable the delivery of real-time insight. Kent Police is currently using predictive analysis software to analyse past crime trends and current information about offences to identify areas where crime is likely to occur, and in London the MPS has applied social media analytics to find more effective ways of communicating with the community and identify trends and patterns within online activity.

Police forces can, however, continue to learn from the speed with which the private sector uses analytics to support real-time decision-making. Accenture is the analytics partner of Tesco, supporting the supermarket chain on its 'Big Price Drop' campaign – enabling Tesco to find the optimum price point of thousands of products and know the instant impact of price modifications to enhance its competitiveness and profitability.

All police forces recognise the risk of being overwhelmed by the volume of data they hold and gather each day. A single major incident, such as the murder of Private Lee Rigby in Woolwich, or the bombing of the Boston marathon, can trigger a vast wave of images, text, voice messages and other pieces of data from citizens – to both police and media outlets. Effective analytical filters are therefore vital to enable police to screen out the 'noise' and identify the elements of value, the 'golden nuggets' that must reach investigators quickly to support effective real-time operational and investigative decision-making.



Enhance collaboration:

Forces must ask themselves if they have adopted collaborative working practice to their greatest potential – not only with other police forces and criminal justice organisations in the UK and abroad, but also more innovative partnerships with the public, private, charitable and voluntary sectors, and even with citizens themselves. For example, the fight against cybercrime can only be strengthened by greater collaboration by police with both academic institutions and the technology sector. Some initiatives are already bearing fruit, for example, Facebook has recently created a dedicated team of IT professionals to collaborate with European police services by freezing user data where necessary to support police investigations and where an official police request has been made. More can, and must, be done to ensure police forces and the technology industry work together to combat the growing threat of web-based criminality.



Proactively manage change:

For technical, organisational and cultural change to be successful and sustained, it is vital that all employees, including officers, clearly understand the objectives of the changes and grasp the benefit they will bring to their own working lives. Leadership among police officers will be crucial here, not just at senior level but also on the front line,

involving experienced sergeants and constables on the street. If frontline officers realise that adopting new processes or technologies will help them identify and catch criminals – or that a new system can allow them spend less time on data entry or administrative tasks – they will be more receptive to change and adopt new work practices with rigour and enthusiasm.

Maintaining the morale of officers and staff, by persuading them that they will be trusted to do a difficult job and supported with effective technology and intuitive processes, is a major challenge for today's police leaders – though not the only challenge. The College of Policing is working with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to equip leaders with the range of skills needed to guide forces into a more effective and efficient future. As Sir Hugh Orde, president of ACPO, said recently: "Future police leaders will, among others, need risk management, change management and business skills, and an understanding of IT." The six steps identified in Accenture's study and examined in detail over the course of this series can help the current generation of police leaders to implement real transformation and meet the evolving challenges of policing today, next year and into the future. These steps can help deliver more holistic, joined-up police services that will engage and serve citizens more effectively, and deliver better policing outcomes. James Slessor is managing director of Accenture Police Services in Europe, Middle East, Africa and Latin America.